



Codes of Conduct

Participants who addressed codes of conduct focussed their discussions on whether Canada should concentrate its efforts on the establishment of domestic or international codes of conduct. They also discussed whether these codes should be voluntary or mandatory, who they should be applied to and how, and who should be involved in the discussions and in the decision-making. Participants agreed that a core set of domestic values should be established. Once this is accomplished, Canada could then work towards the adoption of these core values internationally, possibly through a body resembling the ILO, or perhaps through existing bodies. They agreed that discussions on codes of conduct should involve all sectors of civil society since these codes effect all aspects of life. They felt that it was highly unlikely that voluntary codes would be specific enough to be effective.

What responsibilities remain with the Canadian people, and with the government they elect to act for them?"

Policy Options

1. *Canada should re-examine the role of business in the promotion of human rights. Instruments should be put in place to encourage businesses to work in partnership with NGOs and communities to develop a Canadian Code of Conduct.*
2. *Canada should ensure that appropriate corporate codes of conduct, based on agreed principles of best practice, are applied to Canadian overseas trade and industry receiving federal government support. Government trade and industry programs should be linked to best practices including anti-corruption, working conditions, security of products, health and safety, the environment, child labour and gender discrimination.*
3. *Canada should facilitate a partnership approach to increasing awareness of appropriate codes of conduct and practices for Canadian overseas trade and industry, using a range of educational tools (e.g., business schools, media).*
4. *Canada should facilitate multi-stakeholder consultations for the development of appropriate corporate codes of conduct for Canadian overseas trade and industry, based on contextual and sectoral factors.*
5. *Canada should promote the adoption of codes of conduct at NAFTA, OECD and APEC. A multilateral international process would help ensure the success of the initiative.*