

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY 8000 (SA8000)

The text of "The Framework for SA8000 And CEPAA" is found at <http://www.cepaa.org/sa8000.html>. The code itself has copyright provisions. It is available for \$10.00 from CEPAA, 30 Irving Place, 9th Floor, New York. NY 10003. We include our own summary of the provisions here. See also:

Fabian, Teresa, 1998. "Social Accountability 8000 (SA8000) - The First Auditable, Global Standard for Ethical Sourcing Driven by CEPAA." New York: Council on Economic Priorities. Available at http://www.citinv.it/associazioni/CNMS/archivio/lavoro/Presentazione_SA8000.html

The Framework For SA8000 And CEPAA [excerpts]

Social Accountability 8000

In early 1997, the Council on Economic Priorities Accreditation Agency (CEPAA) was established and convened an expert Advisory Board (see list, Appendix I) to assist in drafting standards to address workers' rights. Representatives of unions, human rights and children's rights organisations, academia, retailers, manufacturers, contractors, as well as consulting, accounting, and certification firms are helping to develop a draft standard, Social Accountability 8000 (SA 8000).

Based on conventions of the International Labour Organisation and related international human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child—SA 8000 is a common standard for companies seeking to guarantee the basic rights of workers. Sufficiently specific to be used to audit companies and contractors alike in multiple industries and countries, SA 8000 represents a major breakthrough: it is the first auditable social standard, and creates a process that is truly independent. (It is not a government project, nor is it dominated by any single interest group or constituency.) Notably, SA8000 addresses the need for wages that meet basic needs—an issue not addressed in many corporate codes and related documents.

To certify corporate conformance with SA8000, every facility seeking certification must be audited. Thus auditors will visit factories and assess corporate practice on a wide range of issues: child labour, health and safety, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, discrimination, disciplinary practices, working hours and compensation. Auditors will also evaluate the state of a company's management systems, necessary to ensure ongoing conformance in each of these areas. The goal is continuous improvement, not exclusion. However, as more and more firms become certified to comply with SA8000 retailers and brand name manufacturers will be able to state their preference for (or decision to deal exclusively with) suppliers in compliance with SA8000.

Factories will need to make improvements and abide by a timetable for verifying that problems have been addressed; they must document progress in problem areas. For example, a factory which employed