

INTRODUCTION

This review was supported in part by the John Holmes Fund of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy, and has been submitted to it as a component of a report on the first year of "The Business of Change" project. The project, with the Steelworkers Humanity Fund as the lead agency, provided staff and research support to a "learning circle" of non-governmental organizations and unions in 1997-98. The project was established to provide an opportunity for discussion and evaluation of a range of models and approaches to labelling or product certification systems and corporate codes of conduct in the promotion of fair trade, sustainable development and core labour rights.

A review of codes and labels as a contribution to a proposed multi-sector national task force on sweatshop and child labour was not anticipated when the project was established, or even by the time of the last meeting of the "learning circle" in March 1998. However, when it became apparent in April, 1998 that a national task force might be established, it seemed useful to write part of the report for the John Holmes Fund in the form of a briefing document which would be helpful to participants. Responsibility for the contents of this review lies entirely with the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

KEY FEATURES OF SELECTED CODES AND LABELS

This document provides a review of selected codes, labels and related initiatives which may be relevant in discussions of a national task force on sweatshop and child labour in Canada and abroad.

Characteristics of codes reviewed

The corporate codes, product labels and groups reviewed represent only a few of many international initiatives. They have been chosen for their likely relevance to discussions by a task force because they have one or more of the following characteristics:

- are Canadian-based, or supported by some Canadian organizations or consumers;
- contain features that may represent the emerging "minimum standard" for codes and labels;
- apply to more than a single company or producer;
- are applicable to both domestic and international production;
- address issues likely to be considered by the task force, such as sub-contracting standards.

Key or "leading edge" features

Key or "leading edge" features that appear on one or more of these codes and labels are listed