

The Global Compact

Launched by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2000, the Global Compact is a call to world business leaders to commit themselves to a set of nine principles on human rights, the environment, and labour — based on several existing international instruments. Since the original 50 companies in 14 countries, the number of participants has expanded to 1,200 from 52 countries. Even cities have signed up.

The Global Compact organizes a yearly dialogue among participating companies and non-governmental organizations. Dialogues have examined issues such as working in zones of conflict, HIV/AIDS, sustainable development, and increasing investment in the Least Developed Countries. The private sectors of many countries, including Brazil, Chile, China, France, Germany, India, Norway, Poland, and the United Kingdom are actively involved in the Global Compact.

Canada and the Global Compact

As a result of the Global Compact's policy dialogue, *The Role of the Private Sector in Zones of Conflict*, a series of regional conferences have been organized to promote the objectives and activities of the Global Compact and to encourage dialogue and co-operation among business, labour, civil society and UN agencies at the local level. Canada will support this work by funding a conference in Colombia, scheduled for the spring of 2004, through the Human Security Program and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Additionally, CIDA has recently provided \$200,000 to the UN Secretariat for the soon-to-be created UN Partnerships Office, which will bring together management of the Global Compact office and the UN Fund for International Partnerships. The Partnerships Office will also work to improve UN coherence in its private sector partnerships.