



## -PRESS RELEASE-

### NEW WEBSITE SPOTLIGHTS HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT OF 2000 COMPANIES: LAUNCHED TODAY IN DAVOS BY MARY ROBINSON

[www.business-humanrights.org](http://www.business-humanrights.org)

**Note:** The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility's (ICCR) Promoting Human Rights Working Group has contributed information on human rights developments with U.S. based corporations to the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre on a regular basis.

ICCR's Promoting Human Rights Working Group has also provided materials to the Centre on its campaign in support of the United Nations' Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Regard to Human Rights. The Working Group is chaired by Doris Gormley of the US Jesuit Conference and John Wilson of Christian Brothers Investment Services. David Schilling, ICCR's program director for human rights, is a member of the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre's International Advisory Network.

Davos, 28 Jan – Today the world's first website covering the human rights conduct of 2000 companies was officially launched in Davos, during the World Economic Forum.

Mary Robinson, launching the non-profit **Business & Human Rights Resource Centre**, said: *"No debate can move forward, and no positive change can be made, without facts. This website is an essential tool for consumers and investors, companies and campaigners. It helps them make decisions that make a difference."* Robinson chairs the Resource Centre's Advisory Network; she is former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights & President of Ireland.

For the first time anybody, anywhere, can go to one place for news and reports on the worldwide social and environmental activities of most major multinationals: [www.business-humanrights.org](http://www.business-humanrights.org).

The website **brings abuses to international attention**: from discrimination to pesticide poisoning; child labour to drinking water contamination; sexual abuse to the displacement of indigenous peoples.

It also **highlights positive steps** certain companies are taking, such as promoting diversity, increasing access to HIV/AIDS drugs, reducing harmful emissions, improving working conditions in their supply chain.

Recent issues covered include:

- **Iraq:** Allegations that security firms were involved in torture at Abu Ghraib prison
- **Tsunami relief** by companies (special section accessible from homepage)
- **Beijing Olympics 2008:** Calls for corporate sponsors to raise labour abuse concerns with Chinese Government.

The site is **free and updated hourly**. Already it gets 1.5 million hits a month. It links to reports in English, Spanish and French. And it's easy to find: type "business human rights" into Google and it comes up first.

Speaking at the Davos launch event were:

**Mary Robinson**, Director, Ethical Globalization Initiative; former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and President of Ireland

**Dan Henkle**, Vice President, Global Compliance, Gap Inc. (member company, Business Leaders Initiative on Human Rights)

**Kenneth Roth**, Executive Director, Human Rights Watch

**Björn Edlund**, Senior Vice President, ABB (member company, Business Leaders Initiative on Human Rights)

**Salil Tripathi**, Researcher - Economics & Human Rights, Amnesty International

**Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish**, Founder & Chairman, SEKEM Group (Egypt) (Dr. Abouleish has been named Outstanding Social Entrepreneur)

**Ulf Karlberg**, Founding Chair, Amnesty International Sweden Business Group; former Executive Vice President, AstraZeneca; Co-Chair Business & Human Rights Resource Centre

**Christopher Avery**, Director, Business & Human Rights Resource Centre

Special features live from today on [www.business-humanrights.org](http://www.business-humanrights.org):

- **Weekly Updates – including company responses**: These free alerts – highlighting top stories of the week – will be sent to thousands of decision-makers worldwide. A unique feature: companies will be invited to reply to items that criticise their conduct. This ensures balance, and encourages companies to publicly address concerns raised by civil society. **Anyone can sign up via our homepage.**
- **Now 2000 individual company sections**
- **New section on “Business & the UN Millennium Development Goals”**

The website was engineered by **Jamkit** ([www.jamkit.com](http://www.jamkit.com)), specialists in web solutions for the non-profit sector. Speaking from London, Jamkit’s Seb Bacon said: “We are delighted that our Webfactory software, and our focus on accessible design and usability, have helped the Resource Centre raise international awareness about important human rights issues.” Technology journalists wishing to interview Jamkit should contact Seb Bacon or Miles Waller: [seb@jamkit.com](mailto:seb@jamkit.com); [miles@jamkit.com](mailto:miles@jamkit.com); +44 20 7549 0520.

**Notes for editors:**

First, what others have to say

**Rough Guide to Ethical Shopping 2004**: *“A truly amazing resource, this website...is an index of practically everything on the Web that relates to the effect of companies upon human rights (including environmental damage)...a fantastic free service.”*

**Sir Geoffrey Chandler, Founding Chair, Amnesty International UK Business Group, former senior manager at Royal Dutch/Shell**: *“The Resource Centre...is indispensable for anyone involved in business and human rights, whatever their standpoint.”*

**David Rice, BP Group Policy Advisor**: *“Your site is a terrific help. We’ll circulate it to our internal network of staff dealing with human rights issues.”*

**Lynne Muthoni Wanyeki, Executive Director, African Women’s Development & Communications Network (FEMNET)**: *“This website helps those interested in monitoring differences between what transnational companies have committed to and their actual practices.”*

**Alya Z. Kayal, Senior Social Research Analyst, Calvert Group**: *“As the human rights research analyst for Calvert Group, a mutual fund company involved in socially responsible investing, I find the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre to be an essential tool.”*

**Ian Spaulding, Director, Overseas Compliance, Sears**: *“As someone responsible for vendor compliance at Sears, I am very happy to have such a resource. I use it at least once each week.”*

**Asma Khader, human rights lawyer & women’s rights advocate, now Jordan’s Minister of State**: *“Your efforts...are fundamental in order to achieve progress in the human rights field.”*

Key points about the Resource Centre

The Business & Human Rights Resource Centre is an independent, non-profit, international organisation, in partnership with Amnesty International sections and leading academic institutions.

**Purpose:** To encourage companies to respect human rights, avoid harm to people, maximise their positive contribution.

**Sources:** The website links to news and reports by non-governmental organisations, community groups, companies, journalists, corporate responsibility organisations, governments, the United Nations.

**Funding:** The Resource Centre is funded by independent foundations & trusts, and individuals. To avoid any perception of conflict of interest, it does not accept donations from companies, corporate foundations, or serving senior executives at major corporations.

**International Network:** The Resource Centre's International Advisory Network (80 experts) and Academic Partners (20 internationally respected institutions) are listed on the website.

The Business & Human Rights Resource Centre is a registered charity in England & Wales (1096664) and a tax-exempt non-profit in USA.

**For additional information,** please see [www.business-humanrights.org](http://www.business-humanrights.org) or contact:

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