

Monthly Update – July 2006

Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability/ Civil Society Focal Point

July was a busy month for those involved in the preparation of the fall CSR roundtables. This report provides a summary of the activities undertaken and key concerns raised by civil society participants in the Advisory Group. In addition, it offers information on the upcoming roundtable in Toronto and CNCA activities.

1. Toronto Roundtable

Dates: September 12-14, 2006

Location: Hotel Radisson Admiral - Harbourfront

Open Sessions:

September 12 – Evening session: 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

September 13 - Morning Session: 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.

To make a public presentation (max. 7 min) you **need to register in advance**.

On line registration is available at http://international.gc.ca/cip-pic/current_discussions/csr-roundtables-en.asp.

Deadline for registration for the Toronto roundtable is **August 29, 2006**.

Speakers at the Open Session will be contacted by the Government after the registration period ends on August 29th.

Join the Civil Society organizing team that is preparing for the Toronto roundtable.

There are many ways in which you can participate- helping to outreach partners and allies, organizing public education events, helping with the CNCA petition campaign that will be soon launched, etc. For more details contact: Ian Thomson at ithomson@kairos.ca.

2. Vancouver Roundtable and Follow-Up

The preparation for the Vancouver Roundtable was a demanding and, sometimes, frustrating process for civil society participants in the Advisory Group. Transparency and process-related concerns were raised throughout that period, particularly with respect to the government's Discussion Paper and the participation of southern voices in the roundtable process. Advisory Group members raised these concerns, together with others issues related to the Vancouver roundtable itself, at a joint Steering Committee (SC) and Advisory Group (AG) meeting called by the Government to assess the first roundtable in Vancouver.

In response, DFAIT proposed two new processes to enhance transparency and efficiency in the process throughout the summer – “fast talk teams”, and working groups on specific procedural and substantive issues.

The issues for discussion in these groups are: a) selection of experts for the closed session discussions, b) communications issues, particularly the need to ensure media at the open sessions; c) scope of closed session agendas and experts break-up groups and d) standards and best practices (to move forward the Vancouver discussion). Each group includes members both from the Steering Committee (SC) and the Advisory Group

(AG). Once agreement is reached within the small group, the outcomes are shared with the larger group for their input.

3. Vancouver Report

The first and second drafts of the report from the Vancouver Roundtable were circulated to all SC/AG and focal points for comments during July. It is expected that the final version will be posted on the Government website in time to inform the discussion at the Toronto roundtable.

The first version of the draft was a poor reflection of what was discussed in Vancouver. Problems identified by civil society participants included among others:

- a) Inaccuracies when reporting the discussion. Many topics were stated as receiving broad consensus when that was not the case. Solution proposed: the need to use qualifiers such as “several”, “one”, “many” etc.
- b) Many points were unclear and required further work. Some statements were unnecessarily vague and/or taken out of context, not reflecting the point that the speaker was making. Civil society input provided a list of them and in some cases suggested new language.
- c) Parts of the discussion were omitted or inadequately reported. Civil society participants provided a list of those areas/issues to be included in the second version.

The final version of the Vancouver report will be completed over the course of three drafts. The second version circulated in July was greatly improved.

4. Participants for focus sessions

The CNCA provided a list of nominees, including southern voices, for both the Toronto and the Calgary roundtables. Based on a master list (with input from all stakeholders) members of the AG/SC collectively agreed on a participant short-list.

For the Toronto roundtable, the following participants have already confirmed their participation at the time of preparing this report: Fraser Reilly-King (Halifax Initiative), Deborah McCombe (Ontario Securities Commission), Michael Jantzi (Jantzi Research), John Terry (Torys LLP), Francis Manns (Toronto Stock Exchange), Aaron Dhir (Law Professor), Cesar Padilla (Latin America Observatory for Environment Conflicts), Sandra Odendhal (CIBC) and Ross Gallinger (Iamgold), Daniel Gagnier (Alcan).

5. Government website

Written presentations submitted to the Government for the Open roundtable sessions are now posted on the government’s CSR website: http://international.gc.ca/cip-pic/current_discussions/csr-roundtables-en.asp.

We encourage people who made a public presentation at the Open Session in Vancouver to send their submission to Sabrina Ramzi (Government Focal Point) at Sabrina.ramzi@international.gc.ca. Sabrina will then post all submissions on the website.

6. CNCA meeting.

In early July, members of the CNCA held a meeting in Ottawa to reflect on lessons learned from the First Roundtable and to discuss substantive and logistical issues for the upcoming Toronto roundtable.

In terms of research, the network agreed to commission two pieces of research- one on legal issues and the other one on public support to mining companies.

A sign-on “Position Statement” including four key recommendations for Government action is now available on the CNCA website. We encourage organizations that would like to endorse it to contact Andrea Botto, CNCA coordinator, tel. (613) 789-9368 or send an e-mail to cnca@halifaxinitiative.org together with a contact name.

A list of CNCA members and organizations that already endorsed the policy statement is available at the CNCA website:

http://www.halifaxinitiative.org/index.php/Issues_CNCA

Ottawa, July 31, 2006