Minutes of the Labor Standards and Human Rights Meeting
February 9, 2001

Members Present: Kristen Ablauf, Alan Deardorff, Louis Green, Sioban Harlow, Rob Howse, Kevin Kolben, Larry Root, Stevan Rosenberg.

Present via Speaker Phone: Veronica Johnson

Members Absent: Scott Trudeau

Kevin Kolben reported on the meeting at Notre Dame of the Living Wage Association. The meeting was attended by a number of universities and representatives of some other groups interested in the living wage/basic needs discussion (such as the FLA, SA8000, and CREA). Kevin mentioned that an e-mail message, written by Rutledge Tufts, a representative from the University of North Carolina, and circulated to the Committee provided a good summary. An organizing committee was formed and will make recommendations concerning future directions for the group.

The Committee will be informed when further information is received. It was noted that the involvement of the University would depend upon the extent of interest among the faculty and student body, as well as any further actions undertaken by the University to address this issue.

The Committee set meeting dates for the remainder of the semester, with the understanding that more meetings may have to be added if needed. The meetings will continue to be held on Friday mornings, from 8:30-10:00:

February 23
March 16 and 23
April 6 and 20

Sioban Harlow reported on her assessment of the SA8000 code in relation to the UM code of conduct recommended by the Committee. She noted that in some areas SA8000 was stronger based on the further specification of the standards. She recommended that the wording used for compliance with the CLC and FLA codes (and relevant provisions, as noted) could be also be applied to SA8000, noting that the SA8000 language on forced labor does not specifically prohibit prison labor. Sioban indicated that she will suggest some language via e-mail for Committee consideration.

The Committee then discussed approaches to monitoring and the request from the FLA to inform licensees that they are to implement an internal and external monitoring. Concern was expressed that this request is coming before we have had a chance to look more closely at alternative approaches to monitoring. Bruce Siegel, general counsel and vice-president of the CLC, joined the discussion by phone. It was noted that the Committee did not want to commit to an approach that would preclude us from developing and implementing supplemental or alternative monitoring approaches. The Committee was assured that requiring participation in the FLA monitoring did not limit our options for alternatives. Bruce Siegel was asked to provide the Committee with language making this clear in notification letters that stated this. Once this language was received, the Committee would seek to make a recommendation on the FLA approach. A tentative deadline of noon on Monday was suggested for such a recommendation.

Next meeting February 23, 2001. 8:30-10:00

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Root