Minutes of the Committee Meeting on Labor Standards and Human Rights
April 6, 2001

Members Present: Louis Green, Sioban Harlow, Rob Howse, Larry Root, Stevan Rosenberg, and Scott Trudeau

Members Present Via Speakerphone: Kevin Kolben,

Members Absent: Kristen Ablauf, Alan Deardorff, and Veronica Johnson

Peter Romer-Friedman, UM Senior and member of the Board of Directors of the WRC, presented a summary of the WRC Board meeting, held in Washington, DC on March 24. (Larry Root also attended this meeting as an observer.) The presentation included discussion of developments in staffing, budgeting, the recent KukDung investigation, and the development of investigative protocols, as well as a discussion of planned activities for the coming year.

This is the third meeting of the Board since its formation and the first since the hiring of Scott Nova as executive director. The WRC is projecting an income of over $400,000 this year from dues, grants, and other funding. Under the current plan/projections, this will result in a surplus of about $170,000 for this year. WRC outlines of the WRC monitoring protocols were approved and final wording is expected to be approved soon. Once they are approached, they will be available on the WRC’s website. WRC board also discussed education programs, the WRC code of conduct and expectations that member schools have codes that address the key areas outlined in that code. The Board also discussed ways of working with NGOs and their role in future investigations.

It was noted that a meeting of the University Caucus of the WRC will be held on Friday, April 27 in Chicago. Larry Root plans on attending. Because of space constraints, no school is expected to send more that 2 members. If there are other faculty or staff members of the Standing Committee who would like to attend, they should e-mail Larry Root.

Following this presentation and discussion, two motions were raised and passed affirming the University's use of both a complaint-based approach to monitoring (through the WRC) and a system of internal and external monitoring (through the FLA). The motions were as follows:

Motion #1. The University of Michigan monitoring program should include a complaint-based component and the Labor Standards Human Rights Committee recommends that an efficient approach for the University to implement that component is by working with the WRC as it is developing a complaint based program. Given that the WRC’s complaint-based system is in its early developmental stages, the Committee recommends reviewing it in the course of the upcoming year.

This motion was passed by a vote of 7 for and 0 against.

Motion #2. The University of Michigan monitoring program should include an internal/external monitoring component and the Labor Standards Human Rights Committee recommends that one efficient approach for the University to implement that component is by working with the FLA as it is developing an internal/external monitoring component. Given that the FLA's monitoring program is in its early developmental stages, the Committee recommends reviewing it in the course of the year.

This motion was passed by a vote of 6 for, 0 against, 1 abstention.

Rob Howse directed the Committee to an article, "Stepping Up Labor Standards," in the Boston Review which is available online.

Because of scheduling difficulties, the next meeting has been re-scheduled to Friday, April 13 at 8:30 AM. This meeting will be held in Room 3704 (Warner Room) in the School of Social Work.