1 March 2007
Ref: B630

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

Subject: **Amnesty International's call for moving forward into action in the European CSR process**

Report on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): a new partnership – Plenary session 12 March 2007

The upcoming plenary session of the European Parliament on 12 March will vote on the report on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) presented by the Rapporteur Mr. Richard Howitt. This report comes as a response to the latest Commission Communication on CSR (COM 0249 of March 2006).

Amnesty International is concerned that the 2006 Commission communication reflects a one-sided approach, in that it failed to address the political question of how to ensure proper accountability and what that should mean for the role of public authority. Respecting and protecting human rights is a responsibility of all, from governments to non-state actors such as companies referred to as "organs of society" in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The European Parliament is in a position to take the lead by approving a meaningful report that breaks through the semantics of CSR as "voluntary effort only". It has the opportunity to voice citizens' concerns that negative impacts by companies should be reduced and incentives offered to those acting responsibly. Ensuring a level playing field for responsible companies remains critical if human rights, social and environmental concerns are to be respected. Public interest requires public authority to take its own responsibility in developing policies, setting standards and when necessary, enforcing them.

Amnesty International considers the report before you as a constructive effort to bridge seemingly opposed positions. It brings an opportunity to move towards an inclusive and transparent debate through offering grounds for a proper mix of voluntary and mandatory approaches.

Yours sincerely,

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