



The Fund for Peace Media Release Human Rights & Corporate Accountability

Washington, D.C., 20 February 2003: Former President of Ireland Mary Robinson in an address yesterday to government, civil society and business leaders, stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships as a means of furthering human rights. Robinson noted that, through effective partnering between multinational corporations, government and civil society, globalization can be harnessed for the benefit of all people.

Robinson, who recently completed her term as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (1997-2002), stated that the past five years have demonstrated progress in the field of corporate responsibility, but that “business leaders are unsure about where their responsibilities for human rights begin and end.” Robinson said that, while there is no one-size-fits-all equation for corporate responsibility, a clear regulatory framework would be helpful in defining companies’ responsibilities. Robinson stated that, in order for businesses to make necessary changes, “we must provide incentives so that doing the right thing also makes good business sense.”

Robinson challenged civil society organizations to “do more to reward those companies that are taking leadership on human rights issues rather than targeting them and allowing the vast majority of companies to slip past public scrutiny.” She also stressed the need for companies to employ third party auditing and reporting systems.

Her speech, “Human Rights and Corporate Accountability,” was delivered at The Fund for Peace Human Rights and Business Roundtable’s Annual Luncheon held in Washington, DC. Robinson credited the Roundtable for being an important vehicle for “civil society and business to work together to foster greater respect for the rights of people around the world.”

This year’s luncheon was made possible by the generous sponsorship of the international Center for Corporate Accountability, a newly formed not-for-profit organization operating under the umbrella of the Zicklin School of Business of Baruch College at City University of New York.

For the prepared text of Mary Robinson’s speech please visit: <http://www.fundforpeace.org/media/speeches/robinson.pdf>
To purchase the tape from C-Span, visit: <http://inside.c-spanarchives.org:8080/cspan/cspan.csp?command=dprogram&record=161842794>

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The Fund For Peace is a Washington-based NGO whose mission is to prevent war and alleviate the conditions that cause war. It promotes education and research for practical solutions and is a consistent advocate of promoting social justice and respect for the principles of constitutional democracy. For more information, please visit: www.fundforpeace.org.

Launched in 1997, The Fund for Peace Human Rights and Business Roundtable is the first forum designed for multinational businesses and human rights organizations to discuss issues of common concern in an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and confidentiality. Please visit our website at: <http://www.fundforpeace.org/programs/hrbrt/hrbrt.php>.

The International Center for Corporate Accountability (ICCA) is an academically affiliated organization that will undertake independent field research on different aspects of corporate governance and accountability. For more information on ICCA, please contact its Director, S. Prakash Sethi, at (646) 312-3103 or prakash_sethi@baruch.cuny.edu or its Director of Communications, Professor Charles Riley, at (646) 312-4021 or charles_riley@baruch.cuny.edu.

The Ethical Globalization Initiative is directed by Mary Robinson and seeks to integrate human rights norms and standards into a more ethical globalization process and to support local and national human rights capacity building efforts using the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) as a case study. <http://www.eginitiative.org>