

Levi Strauss & Co. and the Kenan Institute: Policy Innovation in the Fields of Corporate Citizenship and International Trade

In early 2003, the Kenan Institute developed a study group on the role of U.S. policy in corporate citizenship. Levi Strauss & Co. and Oxfam America co-chaired the study group, which consisted of approximately 50 participating members with representation from industry (General Motors, General Electric, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, Starbucks, Toys R' Us); NGOs (Human Rights Watch, ICCR, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Oxfam, and Sierra Club); academia (U.C. Berkeley, Fordham Law, and UNC); and trade associations (Fair Labor Association, National Foreign Trade Council, SA8000, and U.S. Council for International Business).

The Kenan Institute study group developed a set of "first time" recommendations that addressed how public policy can advance corporate citizenship. The recommendations requested that the U.S. government:

- Promote transparency and disclosure practices;
- Encourage adherence to internationally accepted social and environmental standards;
- Offer resources to improve governance institutions worldwide;
- Strengthen U.S. Government coordination and capacity to promote global corporate citizenship;
- Convene multi-stakeholder dialogues to encourage and strengthen global corporate citizenship practices; and
- Provide incentives and use government procurement policies as a tool to promote global corporate citizenship.

LS&CO.'s leadership in co-chairing the study group attributed to the successful development of these recommendations, which were endorsed by a wide range of interest groups; leaders from business, labor, non-governmental organizations and academia; former U.S. government officials and Congressional staff. Acting on one of the recommendations, the U.S. government commissioned a GAO report on corporate social responsibility which was released in late 2005.

The Kenan Institute is currently engaged in another project, partly funded by the Levi Strauss Foundation, which aims to help policymakers develop innovative approaches to achieving both international trade and human rights objectives. The current project examines what policymakers in the U.S. and other countries can do to promote human rights as they seek to expand trade.