

# Right corporate wrongs

The final push: September/October 2006



**Lobby your MP  
for new laws  
for trade justice**

# Introduction:

## We need your help to right corporate wrongs

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Two-thirds of world trade is carried out by multinational corporations. Today, many corporations have become richer and more powerful than some national governments.

Multinational corporations can be a force for good – providing jobs, boosting the economy and helping to protect the environment. But some do more harm than good. There are too many instances where irresponsible behaviour by UK companies has caused harm to poor communities, abused workers' rights and caused environmental damage.

We have a unique opportunity to address these problems and make UK companies more accountable as Parliament finally decides on new laws this autumn. Since January 2006 Parliament has been debating the Company Law Reform Bill (now called The Companies Bill), the biggest shake-up of rules for companies for a generation.

Following on from an amazing year of campaigning in 2005, this is a specific opportunity for the UK Government to take concrete action on its promises to make poverty history and help deliver trade justice.

**You can help by asking your MP to amend the Bill to help stop UK companies profiting at the expense of people and the environment.**

**Thanks to the many letters, emails and visits to MPs that people have made, we have already secured some important improvements to the Bill and there is widespread support in Parliament for even more improvements. Now we need your help to ensure that MPs follow through on their commitments and support our proposed amendments when they finally get to vote on the Bill in October.**

**You'll be joining thousands of people across the UK for this exciting nationwide campaign. This guide includes tips on how to contact your MP and what to say when you get there. If you want to take it to the next level and need more help and tailored advice on how to lobby your MP on the Company Law Reform Bill go to the Trade Justice Movement website at: [www.tjm.org.uk](http://www.tjm.org.uk).**

The Trade Justice Movement is a coalition of over 80 UK organisations including campaign groups, trade unions, student groups, faith groups and environmental organisations.

[www.tjm.org.uk](http://www.tjm.org.uk)

The Corporate Responsibility (CORE) coalition represents over 130 charities, trade unions, faith groups and campaigning organisations.

[www.corporate-responsibility.org](http://www.corporate-responsibility.org)

## Background to the Company Law Reform Bill (The Companies Bill)

**Why do we need to  
right corporate wrongs  
to achieve trade justice?**

Above all, because it is companies who trade! We can't achieve trade justice without making sure that companies behave responsibly.

Trade has the potential to lift millions of people out of poverty by providing families with a livelihood and enabling them to be self-reliant.

But unfair trade rules and the poor behaviour of some multinational corporations can harm poor communities, workers and the environment.

When multinational companies are not held accountable for their social and environmental impacts, their business operations can keep people in poverty, as well as lead to human rights abuses and environmental damage (see examples below).

Global businesses also wield great political influence and play a role in shaping government policies at the national, regional and international level. These policies have a big impact on poor people and their environment. For example, it is often multinational corporations who are pushing for, and benefiting from, international trade agreements. These companies and their powerful lobby groups have often pushed for free trade policies to get access to new markets and cheap labour.

**We need new laws to help UK companies act as a positive force and to ensure they are held accountable for their impact not only in the UK but also overseas.**

**Give me some examples  
of problems associated  
with UK companies**

### **Tesco and workers' rights in South Africa**

ActionAid's 2005 research in South Africa shows that as Tesco has pushed down prices paid to farmers and demanded tougher supply conditions, the rights of thousands of casual women fruit pickers have been violated. Women working on farms supplying Tesco reported dangerous exposure to pesticides, lack of protective equipment, poverty wages, long hours, and increasingly insecure employment. Although Tesco has started to work with local organisations to address the problem, it has taken more than two years of campaigning to achieve this.

*More at: [www.actionaid.org.uk/doc\\_lib/14\\_1\\_rotten\\_fruit.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org.uk/doc_lib/14_1_rotten_fruit.pdf)*

### **Supermarket use of palm oil and environmental degradation**

Friends of the Earth's research in South East Asia shows that the increasing establishment of palm oil plantations has resulted in deforestation, destroying the habitat of orang-utans and also leading to human rights abuses and violent conflict. Palm oil is used in one in ten supermarket products. But most British supermarkets have been reluctant to take action to ensure that their palm oil comes from sustainable, non-destructive sources and they have only started to address these problems after vigorous campaigning by Friends of the Earth.

*More at: [www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/oil\\_for\\_ape\\_summary.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/oil_for_ape_summary.pdf)*

### **Gas flaring and pollution by Shell in Nigeria**

Despite the legal prohibition of gas flaring in Nigeria since 1984, Shell has continued with this method of disposing of by-products of its oil-drilling activities, causing severe environmental and health problems for the people of the Niger Delta. Whilst Shell has committed to eliminating gas flaring in the Delta by 2008, it is not making progress with this. In fact, this harmful activity has actually increased since 2003, and the company continues to ignore and challenge orders issued by the Nigerian

Government for it to stop flaring by April 2007 and pay compensation for the extensive environmental damage caused.

*More at: [www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/lessons\\_not\\_learned.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/lessons_not_learned.pdf)*

#### **Tobacco farmers suffer pesticide exposure supplying British American Tobacco**

Many farmers growing tobacco in Brazil and Kenya have suffered health problems in recent years, which they link to their use of harmful pesticides sold to them by British American Tobacco (BAT). Farmers have experienced skin rashes, chest pains and breathing difficulties due to the pesticides. Although BAT recommended farmers use protective clothing, many could not afford it. Raising in public the issues faced by BAT-contracted farmers has led to some change. But without legislation, improving the lives of many farmers will be a hit-and-miss process.

*More at: [http://www.pressureworks.org/tradejustice/features/casestudy\\_bat.html](http://www.pressureworks.org/tradejustice/features/casestudy_bat.html)*

These examples show that even UK companies who promote their ethical codes of conduct continue to be implicated in irresponsible behaviour in the UK and overseas. In spite of this, the UK Government argues that this voluntary approach is working.

We are calling on the UK Government to introduce new laws to ensure all UK companies act as a positive force and ensure they do not harm the rights of workers, communities or the environment.

#### **Why now? The Company Law Reform Bill (now called The Companies Bill) in brief**

Since January 2006, Parliament has been debating the Company Law Reform Bill (now called The Companies Bill) – the biggest shake-up of laws on companies for 150 years. Over 100,000 voters have called on MPs to amend the Bill to ensure UK companies are held responsible for their impact on people and the environment.

At present, the Bill goes some way to addressing concerns that have been raised, but the Government must do more to ensure the Bill will make a difference to the way business acts. The Bill tells company directors that their first priority should be to deliver profits to shareholders. In doing this, it requires them to “have regard” to the interests of employees, the community and the environment, but it places them under no obligation to act on this information and take steps to minimise negative impacts.

The Bill also requires companies to publish an annual Business Review, setting out how they impact on the environment and local communities – but crucially, there is no standard set for the quality of these reports, and only companies listed on the stock exchange are covered, missing out big companies like Asda Wal-Mart and Virgin.

## What are we calling for?

We want to see the Company Law Reform Bill amended so that:

- **Companies are legally required to report on their social and environmental impacts.** All companies are required by law to produce annual financial reports. We believe companies should also have to report on how their activities have affected employees, communities and their environment, both in the UK and overseas. It will then be easier to make sure all companies act responsibly.
- **Directors are legally obliged to minimise any damage their company does to local communities and the environment.** The current company law requires directors to put profits first, and communities and the environment second. Directors should be required by law to take steps to consider and minimise their company's negative social and environmental impacts.
- **People overseas who are harmed by the activities of a UK company are able to take action against them in a UK court.** Citizens and communities abroad who are harmed by the activities of UK companies or their foreign partners, should have the right to seek compensation in a UK court, if they are denied access to justice at home. We want to make sure there are provisions for this under UK law.

### What can I do?

Please meet with your MP before 17 October 2006. Ask him or her to support our campaign to right corporate wrongs by taking the actions below.

If you can't meet with your MP, please do write to him or her. Use the information in this pack to help you.

To join up with other local supporters to lobby your MP go to [www.tjm.org.uk/lobbies](http://www.tjm.org.uk/lobbies), or phone an organisation listed at the back of this pack. To advertise details of your lobby email [lobbies@tjm.org.uk](mailto:lobbies@tjm.org.uk).

### What should I ask my MP to do?

Please ask your MP to:

- 1) Write to Rt. Hon. Margaret Hodge MP, the Minister responsible for the Bill, about your concerns
- 2) Sign Early Day Motion\* 697 'Modernising Company Law' if your MP has not already done so
- 3) Support the Trade Justice Movement and CORE's amendments to the Company Law Reform Bill (The Companies Bill).

Don't forget to give your MP the 'Request to MP' sheet on page 15.

It is crucial that we get MPs to act in support of our demands. The Government will then face real pressure to change the Bill. You will not be on your own. Thousands of people have already contacted their MP about the Bill and many will be taking part in this final push in September and October to ask them to support our proposed amendments.

*\*An Early Day Motion (EDM) is like a petition that MPs can sign to show support for something. The greater the number of MPs who sign an EDM, the greater pressure on Government to act.*

## Lobbying your MP

Don't be intimidated by lobbying your MP. All you need to do is meet with your MP face-to-face and ask him or her to represent your concerns to make companies work for people and planet. They won't expect you to be an expert!

### Who's my MP?

It's easy to find your MP – call the House of Commons information line on 020 7219 4272, or visit [www.locata.co.uk/commons](http://www.locata.co.uk/commons) and type in your postcode.

### How can I contact my MP?

Simply phone, email or write to your MP's office to arrange a meeting. After all, they are there to represent you! Many MPs hold weekend surgeries in their constituency, so you could arrange an appointment during one of these.

If you really cannot meet your MP, please do put your concerns in a letter instead. Anything you can do will help make a difference. You can write to them at: House of Commons, Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA.

### When should I meet my MP?

Please arrange to meet your MP before 17 October – the date when the first big votes on the Bill will take place.

### What does my MP already think about the Company Law Reform Bill (The Companies Bill)?

To find out more information about what your MP thinks about the Company Law Reform Bill (The Companies Bill) and get tips on how to approach them and what to say, go to the Trade Justice Movement website: [www.tjm.org.uk](http://www.tjm.org.uk)

You can check whether they have already signed the parliamentary Early Day Motion we are calling on MPs to support, EDM 697 'Modernising Company Law'. Go to <http://edmi.parliament.uk/edmi>.

### What do I say?

The first thing to emphasise is that you really don't have to be an expert. MPs have to keep up to date on many issues and cannot be an expert on everything. You may know more than him or her!

You don't need to be intimidated by your MP – they meet with constituents all the time and they're keen to meet with you. After all, they want to make sure you'll vote for them at the next election.

It's worth thinking through the key things you want to say in advance. You can read the questions and answers on pages 9-12 for more information.

**Above all, make sure you are clear about exactly what you would like your MP to do as result of the meeting.** (See box on page 5 and the 'Request to MP' sheet)

You could mention:

- The support for trade justice amongst any local group, church, trade union or school that you are connected with
- Why you are concerned about righting corporate wrongs (see examples of corporate wrongs on pages 3-4)

- You're doing this as part of the Trade Justice Movement's campaign. Thousands of people are also lobbying their MP across the UK
- That the Company Law Reform Bill (The Companies Bill) is a unique opportunity for your MP to take action.

#### Other tips for a successful meeting:

- Keep it simple – make some notes in advance and stick to your main points
- If your MP asks a question you can't answer, offer to find out more and get back to them (see the back page for a list of organisations you can contact)
- Take notes if you can
- Give your MP the 'Request to MP' sheet and make sure he or she commits to take at least one of the actions.

#### What do I do after the meeting?

Thank your MP for the meeting and tell them you will be in touch to follow-up any action that was agreed. Please tell us how it went by completing a feedback form at: [www.tjm.org.uk](http://www.tjm.org.uk) or contacting any of the organisations listed on the back page.

#### Join up with other local supporters and groups to lobby your MP

Look out for local groups of the organisations listed on the back page in case you can link up with other campaigners in your area. It will make a bigger impact, and show the diversity of people who care about this issue if you join together to lobby your MP.

To join with local groups or supporters near you visit [www.tjm.org.uk/lobbies](http://www.tjm.org.uk/lobbies) or phone any of the organisations listed at the back of this pack.

To advertise your contact details or the details of your lobby send a short email to [lobbies@tjm.org.uk](mailto:lobbies@tjm.org.uk).

#### Will our lobbying really make a difference?

Yes, definitely! To maintain their seat in Parliament, MPs need their constituents' support so they have a big incentive to listen to you and respond to your concerns.

We need to contact as many MPs as possible. Some MPs are already sympathetic but many more don't know much about the Bill at present. You can help to give them the information they need to take action. That's why your letters and lobbies will make a big difference.

*"There is no more effective way to get an MP's attention than personal contact from constituents. The more MPs are educated and lobbied by our constituents about global poverty and justice, the more we will press the Government to take action."*  
John Battle, MP for Leeds West

#### What can we help you with? Information and resources available

More information and support is available to help you lobby your MP, including details of what your MP thinks about the Bill and suggested letters to MPs from the different political parties. Go to the Trade Justice Movement website to find out more: [www.tjm.org.uk](http://www.tjm.org.uk).

### A quick guide to the three main parties' policies on the Company Law Reform Bill (The Companies Bill)

**Labour** – The Government is saying they are sympathetic to our campaign and that they want to improve the social and environmental impacts of UK companies, but that they have gone as far as they can and they don't think the Bill is the right place to achieve our objectives. However, many of the Labour backbenchers are very supportive of our campaign and have been working hard to highlight the need for stronger rules on company reporting and directors' duties.

**Conservatives** – The Conservative leader David Cameron has been talking a lot recently about his party's commitment to 'Corporate Social Responsibility' and how they don't want to bow down to 'Big Business'. Yet in Parliament Conservative MPs and Peers have argued that we can't use laws or 'regulation' to make companies behave more responsibly, and have been pushing for a weakening of the environmental and social provisions in the Bill. At the moment only a handful of Conservatives MPs have been supportive of our campaign so we need to work hard to persuade them to change their minds.

**Liberal Democrats** – The Liberal Democrats have been much better. They have led the way in arguing for a strengthening of the social and environmental reporting requirements on companies, and have also raised concerns about rights of redress for affected communities and about how we need to address some of the barriers which exist in UK law.

Don't be put off by these official policy lines. Many MPs hold a different view to the party line and can be persuaded by constituents like you.

### Top facts

- Out of the 61,000 multinational corporations, only 1,500 – 2,000 produce annual reports on their social and environmental impacts
- Two thirds of global trade is carried out by multinational corporations
- More than 750,000 people in the UK have signed a 'Vote for Trade Justice' action card. One of the demands of the vote calls on the UK Government to make laws to stop business profiting at the expense of people and the planet
- An ICM opinion poll for the Trade Justice Movement and CORE revealed that 89% of voters think businesses should be required to report on their impact on the wider community. Two-thirds want directors to be obliged to place the interests of issues like the environment alongside making a profit
- More than 100,000 people have contacted their MP to lobby them on this issue already.

*The information below will equip you to talk to your MP about righting corporate wrongs. Please contact any of the organisations listed on the back page for further information.*

### **Is the Trade Justice Movement anti-business?**

No. We believe that if properly managed, the investments brought by multinational companies to communities in both rich and poor countries can help reduce poverty, promote people's rights, protect the environment and generate growth.

### **Aren't the current laws adequate?**

Far from it. At present, companies have a huge amount of power over the rights of employees and over communities and the environment where they work. They often enjoy significant privileges such as tax breaks which make it easier for them to operate. We need laws to ensure these rights are balanced with appropriate responsibilities.

### **Won't more regulations make British companies less competitive?**

All serious companies recognise that some legal standards are essential. Regulation can be useful in developing and maintaining a fair, level playing field for businesses to operate within. Furthermore, some companies already take consideration of their social and environmental impacts. Raising the bar so that *all* UK companies have to report on and minimise any negative impacts on employees, communities and the environment would mean that responsible companies would not lose a competitive advantage to less scrupulous companies.

### **Won't this mean more 'red tape' for company directors?**

The Bill would not explicitly tell company directors how they should go about minimising any negative environmental and social impacts, providing plenty of flexibility for directors to choose a system that would work most effectively for their company. Our proposed amendment to directors' duties would also help protect directors who do act responsibly from being sued by shareholders who are only concerned with the short-term profits and are happy for these to be made at the expense of people and the environment.

Internationally, several countries have introduced tougher regulation on companies and have not lost their competitive edge. For example, Sweden, Finland and Denmark have high levels of business regulation and were ranked in the top five in a national competitive index in 2003-2004.

UK business should be leading by example – doing business in a sustainable and profitable way. Businesses also have a lot to gain in the long-term from responsible business behaviour including better productivity, a more committed workforce, and the continued availability of the environmental resources on which we all depend. Regulation to help protect people and the environment from negative impacts will also bring major benefits to companies in the long-term.

### **What about small businesses? Won't they be over-burdened by increased regulation?**

We are most concerned with the medium-sized and large UK companies with an international reach. Furthermore, we recognise that many small companies already find it difficult to understand and comply with the different regulations that affect them. For this reason, we believe that small companies should be exempt from the strengthened social and environmental reporting requirements that we are calling for. We are also urging the Government to publish guidance on the interpretation of directors' duties to help small companies understand clearly exactly what they have to do to comply with the law.

**What do UK companies think about the Company Law Reform Bill (The Companies Bill)?**

We've been in discussions with some large UK companies about corporate responsibility and the Company Law Reform Bill. Although the Confederation of British Industry or CBI (the main UK business lobby group) publicly states its opposition to new rules on companies, many enlightened businesses have privately stated that they see a benefit in ensuring there is a level playing field that requires all companies to meet minimum social and environmental standards.

**Will this mean lots of legal cases will be brought against UK companies?**

The changes we are seeking to the Company Law Reform Bill are only likely to result in the worst case abuses being brought before a UK court through shareholder actions. In the same way, only the most blatant cases of financial mismanagement currently land directors in court. Legal processes are extremely time-consuming and expensive, so there is unlikely to be a big increase in cases being brought for more minor issues.

Stronger obligations on companies to report on and take steps to minimise their negative impact will bring benefits to both companies and communities by raising the benchmark against which companies are expected to perform. This will mean that directors of UK companies will have to take a precautionary approach and be aware of their impact on communities and the environment in their planning and decision-making.

**My MP says the Bill is based on 'Enlightened Shareholder Value' (ESV). What does that mean?**

Enlightened Shareholder Value (ESV) asserts that the primary duty of a company director is to manage the company in the collective best interests of its shareholders, but with consideration of wider interests, such as communities, employees and environmental concerns. We believe that this approach is unlikely to stop cases of irresponsible behaviour, because it tells directors that profits should always come before people and the environment.

For the Bill to help ensure that UK companies do not harm the rights of communities, workers and the environment, there must be clear and stronger obligations on directors to not only consider but also to take steps to minimise any negative impacts. We don't just want directors to think about these issues – we want them to act on them!

**My MP says I am misunderstanding company law**

The Government has responded to our concerns saying that we are confusing the purpose of the Company Law Reform Bill. They say we are confusing legislation about a vehicle (the company) with legislation about the journey (where you want the company to go). They are arguing that we are trying to put too many specific requirements on companies within the Bill and that other forms of regulation, such as environmental laws or labour laws should deal with our concerns.

We disagree with this. UK company law is the only framework that sets the overarching terms of reference for UK companies, including the role and priorities of directors. The Government has already demonstrated that the Bill is the correct vehicle by including limited provisions on social and environmental reporting and limited duties on directors in relation to employees, communities and the environment.

But the Bill does not go far enough. We need to ensure that the rights of UK companies to operate around the world are balanced with clear responsibilities to the people and the environment, wherever they operate.

**Don't companies already have to produce social and environmental reports? What's the OFR?**

In March 2005 the Government introduced new regulations requiring the largest companies listed on the UK stock market to produce a report detailing their social and environmental impacts, alongside their annual financial reports. However, this Operating and Financial Review (OFR) was ditched by Chancellor Gordon Brown in November 2005 in an attempt to placate the CBI. In doing so, he baffled many companies, investors and civil society groups as many companies were midway through producing their reports. Now the Government is proposing that companies produce a 'business review', but the rules would only apply to the 1,500 or so companies listed on the UK stock market, and the Government does not want to set any standards on how these companies should report on environmental and social issues. We need to ensure that the rules on environmental and social reporting are extended to all 36,000 medium-sized and large public and private companies, and that the Government sets standards on the content of these reports.

**What about companies who aren't based or listed in the UK?**

Ultimately, we need international solutions to ensure good corporate behaviour. But 25% of the world's largest companies are listed on the London Stock Exchange. So changes to UK Company Law would be a first step towards ensuring our own companies and those listed in the UK act responsibly. This would also set a precedent internationally.

One way forward would be to have international rules on human rights to be applied to business through the United Nations. We are also pushing for World Trade Organisation agreements to conform to International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions that enshrine basic rights for all workers.

**Won't the costs of regulation be passed on to suppliers, producers and consumers?**

Most costs are likely to come in the changes companies may have to make to their reporting and auditing systems. These costs are likely to involve short-term costs whilst monitoring and screening systems are put in place. But since all UK companies will be expected to make such adjustments, no one company will lose its competitive advantage and companies should be able to take on board new costs without passing them on to consumers or producers. Ultimately, the changes we want to see will benefit shareholders by ensuring they have better information about their companies' operations and that the company has a long-term, sustainable future.

**My MP says the Bill doesn't deny justice to people overseas who are affected by irresponsible UK companies**

At present, the Bill will not protect poor communities, workers and the environment from irresponsible behaviour by UK companies. We believe company directors should be considering and taking steps to ensure their companies' operations, subsidiaries and suppliers not only comply with local labour and environmental laws but also respect the rights of workers, communities and their local environment wherever they work.

At the moment, the Bill will fail to ensure directors do this, and offers no means for people whose rights have been violated to get justice.

**Aren't voluntary measures and consumer pressure making companies act responsibly?**

Some companies have put a lot of time and energy into drawing up 'corporate social responsibility' procedures and policies. But unfortunately there are some companies that hide bad behaviour behind glossy brochures and fine-sounding promises. That's why we need laws that will require directors to take steps to minimise negative

impacts on workers, communities, and the environment.

Pressure from customers, through schemes such as fairtrade has definitely helped change the behaviour of some companies, but only 2% of products and services can be deemed ethical and only a tiny percentage of the public consistently shop ethically. Most UK consumers continue to choose the contents of their shopping baskets according to considerations of price and quality alone. Harmful behaviour by multinational companies is too serious to leave to voluntary initiatives and only through changing the rules for all companies will we be able to bring about real change across the board.

**What about the subsidiaries and supply chains of TNCs – isn't it unfeasible to hold UK companies responsible for the wrongdoings of their suppliers?**

Many UK companies set very high standards for their overseas suppliers and subsidiaries overseas when it comes to quality, price and specifications of their produce, and compliance with these standards is carefully monitored.

If companies can pay this much attention to quality, then they should be able to take similar care in ensuring that these suppliers and subsidiaries respect the environment and the rights of their workers and the local communities where they operate.

**Will the changes you're suggesting to the Bill mean that UK law will be applied overseas?**

Multinational corporations should respect the laws of the countries within which they are operating. The changes which we are seeking do not challenge national laws in other countries. The UK Government must make it clear to directors that they cannot hide behind their subsidiaries and suppliers overseas and must do all they can to ensure their companies behave in a responsible manner.

**Why should affected communities be able to bring legal action against a company in the UK?**

Communities harmed by irresponsible business practices should seek justice in their own local or national legal systems first of all. But sometimes this is not possible.

For example, 20,000 people died and tens of thousands were critically injured by a devastating gas leak from a Union Carbide factory (a US company) in Bhopal, India in 1984. Twenty years on, there are still reports of groundwater contamination. The chief executive of Union Carbide and the company itself have both been charged with manslaughter and 'culpable homicide' in India, but the charges have not been carried out as both have refused to appear before the Indian court. To date, few of the victims or their families have received adequate compensation.

Examples like this demonstrate why communities affected by corporate irresponsibility should be able to get justice in the home courts of the company responsible if they are denied access to justice in their own country.

**What about the world trade talks?**

The current round of World Trade Organisation negotiations were suspended in July as trade ministers from the US, EU, Japan, Brazil, India and Australia could not come to an agreement. The talks were launched in 2001 with the intention to put the interests of developing countries at the heart of global trade.

The main sticking points for the talks have been around domestic farm subsidies and manufactured goods (including fisheries, textiles, machinery and electronic goods), with the blame lying squarely with rich nations such as the US and EU for demanding

too much and offering too little. Developing nations want the EU and the US to lower their farm subsidies and tariffs, while rich countries want greater access to developing countries' markets for their manufactured goods and services.

Although the UK Government has shifted its rhetoric to agree with the Trade Justice Movement that poor countries should not be forced to open their markets, we now need to see it influencing its European allies and ensure these words are put into action in all international trade agreements, including the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) being negotiated between African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and the EU.

# Lobby checklist

## What can I do?

Please meet with your MP before 17 October 2006. Ask him or her to support our demands to right corporate wrongs. We want to see the Company Law Reform Bill (The Companies Bill) amended so that:

- Companies are legally required to report on their social and environmental impacts
- Directors are legally obliged to minimise any damage their company does to local communities and the environment
- People overseas who are harmed by the activities of a UK company are able to take action against them in a UK court.

## Please ask your MP to:

- 1) Support the Trade Justice Movement and CORE's amendments to the Bill
- 2) Write to Rt Hon. Margaret Hodge MP
- 3) Sign Early Day Motion 697 'Modernising Company Law'.

For more information, tips, and advice, and to find out who else is lobbying in your area, go to the Trade Justice Movement website: [www.tjm.org.uk](http://www.tjm.org.uk). To advertise details of your lobby email: [lobbies@tjm.org.uk](mailto:lobbies@tjm.org.uk).

After the event: once you've lobbied your MP please tell us how it went by completing a feedback form at [www.tjm.org.uk](http://www.tjm.org.uk) or contacting an organisation listed below. Follow up with your MP on any actions they agreed to take.

### For more information

Contact any of the organisations for further information:

<b>ActionAid</b>	<a href="mailto:campaigners@actionaid.org">campaigners@actionaid.org</a>	01460 238047
<b>CAFOD</b>	<a href="mailto:campaign@cafod.org.uk">campaign@cafod.org.uk</a>	020 7326 5692
<b>Christian Aid</b>	<a href="mailto:campaigns@christian-aid.org">campaigns@christian-aid.org</a>	020 7523 2225
<b>Friends of the Earth</b>	<a href="mailto:stephg@foe.co.uk">stephg@foe.co.uk</a>	020 7566 1679
<b>Oxfam</b>	<a href="mailto:active@oxfam.org.uk">active@oxfam.org.uk</a>	01865 473123
<b>SCIAF</b>	<a href="mailto:campaigns@sciaf.org.uk">campaigns@sciaf.org.uk</a>	0141 354 5555
<b>SPEAK</b>	<a href="mailto:speak@speak.org.uk">speak@speak.org.uk</a>	020 7249 4309
<b>Tearfund</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@tearfund.org">enquiries@tearfund.org</a>	0845 355 8355
<b>Traidcraft</b>	<a href="mailto:policy@traidcraft.co.uk">policy@traidcraft.co.uk</a>	020 7242 3955
<b>War on Want</b>	<a href="mailto:mmcgregor@waronwant.org">mmcgregor@waronwant.org</a>	020 7549 0583
<b>World Development Movement</b>	<a href="mailto:tamsyn@wdm.org.uk">tamsyn@wdm.org.uk</a>	020 7274 7630

Visit [www.tjm.org.uk](http://www.tjm.org.uk) and [www.corporate-responsibility.org](http://www.corporate-responsibility.org).

# Request to MP to right corporate wrongs

## Company Law Reform Bill (The Companies Bill)

We want new laws to ensure UK companies don't profit at the expense of poor communities, workers and the environment.

We have a unique opportunity to do this as the UK Parliament debates and votes on the Company Law Reform Bill (The Companies Bill) this autumn.

## What are we calling for?

We would like to see amendments made to the Bill so that:

- Companies are legally required to report on their social and environmental impacts
- Directors are legally obliged to minimise any damage their company does to local communities and the environment
- People overseas who are harmed by the activities of a UK company are able to take action against them in a UK court.

### As my MP please:

- 1) Write to Rt. Hon. Margaret Hodge MP, the Minister responsible for the Bill, about my concerns
- 2) Sign Early Day Motion 697 'Modernising Company Law'
- 3) Support the Trade Justice Movement and CORE's amendments to the Company Law Reform Bill (The Companies Bill).

The Trade Justice Movement is a coalition of over 80 UK organisations including campaign groups, trade unions, student groups, faith groups and environmental organisations.

The Corporate Responsibility (CORE) coalition represents over 130 charities, trade unions, faith groups and campaigning organisations.