



July 11, 2013

Business & Human Rights Resource Center to receive the 2013 Dodd Prize in Human Rights

Storrs, Conn — Business & Human Rights Resource Center, a nonprofit organization which encourages companies to respect human rights by bringing information about their conduct – both positive and negative – to a global audience, will receive the sixth Thomas J. Dodd Prize in International Justice and Human Rights on November 13, 2013.

Awarded biennially since 2003 by the University of Connecticut, the Dodd Prize recognizes individuals or groups who have made significant efforts to advance the cause of international justice and global human rights. Previous recipients have included the Center for Justice & International Law, The Committee to Protect Journalists, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, T.D., former Prime Minister of Ireland, and The Right Honorable Tony Blair, M.P., former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

With offices in New York and London, the Center, which began operations in 2002, provides information on the practices of more than 5,100 companies, operating in over 190 countries, and seeks responses from them regarding allegations of misconduct. Its website is relied on by advocates, businesspeople, governments, investors and the U.N. According to the Center, “We expose reality in a field too often dominated by rhetoric, and help protect vulnerable people and communities against abuses.” The organization also provides guidance materials and examples of good practice.

Starting with international human rights standards, topics covered include discrimination, environment, poverty and development, labor, access to medicines, health and safety, security, trade.

“The Resource Center provides the most comprehensive and balanced information on business and human rights, and their efforts have raised the awareness of the role of businesses in safeguarding human rights to a whole new level,” said Dr. Daniel Weiner, Vice Provost for Global Affairs at the University of Connecticut.

When civil society raises concerns about a company’s conduct, the Center seeks a response from the company. To date it has invited over 1,500 company responses, with a response rate of over 70%. In all instances this leads to increased transparency and in some it leads to positive change on the ground. For example, when NGOs raised concerns in 2009 about a Bangladesh garment factory where an 18-year-old woman was worked to death and workers were abused and fired if they became pregnant, the Center pressed the German company buying from the factory to respond. Soon after, labor rights advocates told the Center that they had never before seen such a rapid and serious turnaround in any Bangladeshi factory.

In 2012, the Center pressed companies to respond to concerns that two U.S. business associations they belonged to were lobbying against the Dodd-Frank Act requirement that companies take steps to prevent sourcing conflict minerals from Democratic Republic of Congo – three U.S. firms then took a public stand against their business associations on this issue.

The Center’s researchers are based in Brazil, Colombia, Hong Kong, India, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom and the United States. They establish close

contacts with grassroots NGOs, local businesspeople and others including the Center's International Advisory Network of 70 experts and their 23 Academic Partners. The Center's priorities include helping victims & civil society (particularly in the global South) get their concerns heard, and increasing access to information in languages other than English.

The Dodd Prize commemorates the distinguished career in public service of Thomas J. Dodd, who served as Executive Trial Counsel at the Nuremberg Trials, U.S. Representative from 1953 to 1957, and Connecticut Senator from 1959 to 1971. Thomas Dodd dedicated his entire public life to fighting against infringement and suppression of human rights in the United States and abroad.

For more information, please contact Lisa Laplante at lisa.laplante@uconn.edu

###