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Company involvement

In Brazilian society, it has already been proven that it is not enough to address the problem of child and adolescent sexual exploitation from the standpoint of law enforcement alone. This problem reaches far beyond this scope, having serious economic, political and social implications. Therefore, the initiatives to fight it demand joint actions that should be accomplished as mid- and long-term public policies and practices by the private sector.

Following the unprecedented example in the history of child and teen rights set by the president of Brazil — who established the fight against child and adolescent abuse and sexual exploitation as a priority for his administration and rallied society to join in on this endeavor — corporations now have the opportunity to effectively engage in social responsibility.

The number of businessmen who are aware of the need to undertake action in the social sector has grown rapidly in recent years. By defending the type of society we want for our children, we will be contributing to build a better world. The greatest battle won in this field came forth as Brazilian society banded together to establish a set of organized initiatives to allow technical, political and financial intervention in confronting this issue. In 2000, this victory was embodied by the enactment of the National Plan for Fighting Child and Adolescent Sexual Violence, an event that drew more than one hundred governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The plan was ratified by the *Conselho Nacional dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente* (Conanda) [National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents], which legitimized it as the guidelines for public policies at the federal, state, and municipal levels. The actions set forth in the Plan, in conjunction with other initiatives by the federal government, have the *Programa Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger Project) as their flagship. They



offer a concrete possibility for creating a strong protection network capable of reducing inequalities and of extending citizenship to all so as to generate the well-being of children and adolescents.

Companies that are conscientious of their social responsibility may develop several different actions in connection with the six different axes of the National Plan. They may, for example, enter into partnerships with municipalities to establish and strengthen the Guardianship Council or to fund programs for the care, professional training, learning, and internships for at-risk children and adolescents.

Now, with the creation of the Corporate Pact Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents along Brazilian roadways, companies may decisively help ban this problem in our society.

In this regard, it will be of utmost importance to consider monitoring the chain of production, making sure that none of its links to the business network is directly or indirectly involved in this delinquency. Thus, the productive sector will be able to help slash many of the financing sources from criminal organizations that control child and adolescent sexual exploitation. Truck drivers will therefore become key figures in this process, as they will both serve as safeguards and multipliers of these initiatives.

Child and adolescent sexual exploitation is a social phenomenon mediated by matters related to gender, race/ethnicity, age and social class. The moment has come for businessmen, governments and civil society to join together and wipe it out, so that our children and adolescents may live with dignity, according to the precepts of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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