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**“ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING” IN APEC MUST INCLUDE
HUMAN RIGHTS**

VANCOUVER: APEC leaders must protect what they call the “greatest asset” of the community -- the people -- by improving human rights, says Amnesty International.

Responding to the final statement of the “economic leaders”, the international human rights organization said that “being accountable for safeguarding and improving their economic and social well-being” has to include concrete action on human rights.

“These rights are universal and indivisible,” says Bob Goodfellow, Secretary General of the Canadian Section of Amnesty International. “Development is not sustainable if the human rights of people are violated.”

The current financial crisis underlines the need for the rule of law, government accountability and transparency. These are the same factors that guarantee human rights.

Jailing, torturing and sometimes killing those people who are standing up and denouncing corruption or illegal activities or working to defend the rule of law and human rights has to stop.

The rights of workers to organize has to be respected and migrant workers have to be protected. And business leaders have to practice economics where people really matter, with codes of conduct and investment strategies that promote human rights and ban child labour.

Although economic policies may be strengthened, the foundation of the APEC community will be weak if the rights of people are not protected.

“The two tracks of economic development and human rights have to be blended into one,” says Goodfellow. “The so-called economic miracle will become a mirage if APEC leaders fail to protect human rights, which are the core of economic and social well-being.”

**For further information
please contact
277-0367**

**John Tackaberry,
Cell 1613**

Hotel 604 687-0511

Landmark