

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **World Social and Economic Fora: All human rights for all, everyone's responsibility**

*Davos/Porto Alegre -- As representatives of the world's civil society gather in Porto Alegre and political and business leaders meet in Davos, Amnesty International delivered today its own, alternative, globalisation message: **Globalise respect for human rights, globalise justice and globalise accountability for those who abuse rights.***

While Paul Hoffman, Chair of the Organization's International Executive Committee, will be joining social movements at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre to bring human rights into the globalization debate, in Davos the organization's Secretary General, Irene Khan, will be debating how to strengthen corporate responsibility for human rights.

"Civil society and its organizations have a great stake in the process of globalization and its effects on the lives, livelihood's and human rights of hundreds of millions of people the world over," Paul Hoffman said.

"Their voice -- the voice of all the women, men and children reclaiming their fundamental rights -- must be heard if we are to build a global society based on justice and human rights, rather than the self-interest of states or companies."

Speaking from Davos where Amnesty International will be addressing political and economic leaders, Irene Khan said: "Human rights are not a luxury in good times -- they are fundamental for stable, open societies that businesses need to operate."

Human rights standards can provide a much-needed instrument to ensure that those in power -- be it political or economic -- be held legally accountable for the impact of their actions on human rights.

"With power comes responsibility, and as companies play increasingly important roles, binding legal mechanisms should be strengthened to ensure they can be brought to book for their direct or indirect participation in human rights abuses," added Amnesty International's Secretary General.

"It is time to go beyond voluntary codes of conduct with regard to companies' responsibility for human rights -- just as states have legal obligations to respect these rights, so should

businesses."

While attending the World Economic Forum, Amnesty International's Secretary General will take part in civil society events including the "Public Eye on Davos".

"This gathering acts as a reminder that international civil society is watching. We want real actions, not empty words; progress, not pronouncements; deeds, not assertions," Irene Khan said.

"Human rights can be a powerful tool to empower those left at the margins of economic globalization," added Irene Khan, stressing the universal character of these rights, based on the notion of our common humanity.

"Porto Alegre and Davos may be miles apart and on a different continent, but they share a common world, a world in which people aspire to live with the freedom from fear and the freedom from want," Paul Hoffman concluded.

**For more information, to arrange an interview with a member of the Amnesty International delegations, please contact:**

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**For regular information updates and other media materials from the World Economic and Social Fora please visit**

<http://www.web.amnesty.org/mavp/av.nsf/pages/WESF>

**Further information about Amnesty International's programme at the World Economic and Social Fora and previous attendance at the European and Asia Social Fora is available at:**

[http://web.amnesty.org/web/web.nsf/pages/ec\\_briefings\\_fora](http://web.amnesty.org/web/web.nsf/pages/ec_briefings_fora)

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