

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: ACT 79/005/2003 (Public)  
News Service No: 017  
27 January 2003

## **World Social Forum: All human rights for all, to make another world possible**

*Porto Alegre* -- As international civil society is debating the challenges of an increasingly globalised economy at the World Social Forum, Amnesty International stressed the need to truly globalise justice, human rights and accountability to counter inequality and the poverty, insecurity and repression in which millions of people worldwide are forced to live.

"Greater attention to human rights in processes of global integration would provide a much-needed ethical foundation," said Paul Hoffman, Chair of Amnesty International's International Executive Committee. "Above all else it would remind us that every individual -- whatever their country -- deserves a life in dignity and freedom. Globalisation must be judged a failure unless it brings benefits to the most vulnerable and poor on the planet."

Greater global economic integration, including through foreign investment and an increase in trade, is a powerful force -- leading to migration, the loss of traditional livelihoods, and social and cultural upheaval as employment, patterns of consumption, and cultural preferences change. For human rights, the negative effects of globalization are visible in relation to all rights, but particularly for those people who are already marginalised.

To cite but a few examples, women who go to work in Mexican export assembly plants may do so to get better wages than they could in their villages, but many cases show the move exposes them to new forms of gender-based violence and abuse; street children in Africa, Asia and Latin America are exposed to a high risk of police abuse; the poor and marginalised are over represented in criminal statistics and see their fundamental rights routinely violated. Land activists in countries like Brazil are threatened and killed while indigenous people are expelled from their lands, often then sold to multinational businesses; demands for adequate working rights and conditions are often violently stifled, as was the case in Nigeria in August, when police and soldiers brutally repressed a peaceful demonstration of women at the gates of Shell Petroleum Development and Chevron Nigeria.

"A key to combat these negative trends can be to match the removal of barriers to trade with an equal removal of the barriers that prevent the vast majority of the world's population from fully enjoying the entirety of their rights, and to actively promote all human rights for all," said Paul Hoffman.

"All human rights for all means challenging the notion that some rights can be enjoyed in isolation, that the right to life can be separated from the right to food, water, work and medical care, or the right to freedom of expression from that to receive an education. It also means countering the argument that the

rights of certain groups, individuals, or states can be sacrificed in the name of the security, rights or interests of others."

At the same time, the growing power wielded by private economic actors - including multinational companies - requires stronger legal mechanisms to ensure they can be held accountable for their direct or indirect participation in human rights abuses.

"Existing international human rights standards place governments under an obligation to respect and protect human rights. As economic actors can have an impact on human rights, they too must be under an obligation to respect these rights," Paul Hoffman said, stressing that this was one of the main messages Amnesty International was taking to the World Economic Forum.

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

**Simona Beltrami in Porto Alegre on + 55 51 81 14 72 84; Amnesty International delegates are available for interviews in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Italian.**

**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)**

Public Document

\*\*\*\*\*

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

For latest human rights news view <http://news.amnesty.org>