

**Editor's Note:** Today The Coca-Cola Company presented the following statement to the University of Michigan's Board of Regents as part of our ongoing program in engaging with the University of Michigan and other third parties to understand and resolve questions raised about our business in Colombia and India.

## **Statement of The Coca-Cola Company to the University of Michigan Board of Regents**

**January 19, 2006**

As the University of Michigan recognized in its December 29, 2005 letter to The Coca-Cola Company, "Coca-Cola is sincere in its desire to ensure fair labor practices and a safe working environment in Colombia and sustainable environmental practices in India." The purpose of this communication is to clearly state the concrete steps The Coca-Cola Company is taking to address these specific situations and to take a leadership position in workers' rights and environmental stewardship around the world.

The Coca-Cola Company is facilitating the design and development of a credible, objective and impartial independent third party assessment in Colombia during the first quarter of 2006. The assessment will involve international labor organizations, non-governmental organizations and our most vocal critics. It will be conducted with the cooperation of our Colombian bottling partners.

In conjunction with the external Colombia assessment, The Coca-Cola Company will be conducting a comprehensive audit of its labor relations and environmental practices. This audit includes the company's Code of Conduct, Citizenship@Coca-Cola and the Supplier Guiding Principles. This work will be under the auspices of the Chairman.

There is a real opportunity to make a difference in both Colombia and India. As a leading, world renowned university, we again invite the University of Michigan to join us in a constructive engagement process to address environmental challenges in the developing world and the unfavorable environment for labor in Colombia. Combining our resources and capabilities, we can work together to address the root causes of these important issues. This partnership should establish international forums that bring together experts from around the world to discuss the issues at hand and present potential solutions. The partnership also should include the creation of academic programs and internships for students interested in labor relations and environmental management, as well as field visits and projects in Colombia and India. Moving beyond accusations to constructive collaboration will result in tangible results and more progress for the people of Colombia and India.

A partnership between the University of Michigan and The Coca-Cola Company could do much more to protect human rights and raise environmental standards than a continued focus on the past. We hope that the University of Michigan will share The Coca-Cola Company's enthusiasm for the potential of this collaboration.