



Communiqué by the Centre d'Études et de Recherches sur le Droit de l'Environnement (CERDE) and the African Coalition for Corporate Accountability (ACCA) on the recent position taken by the Burkinabe Minister of Commerce on the Swiss Responsible Business Initiative

During his visit to Bern last week, the Burkinabe Minister of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts, Mr Harouna Kaboré has marked his disagreement with the “Popular Initiative for Responsible Multinationals” that will be submitted to a vote in Switzerland on November 29th. According to Minister Harouna Kaboré, the adoption of this Initiative would cause "serious socio-economic problems" in Burkina.

In a detailed Statement ([available here](#)), CERDE and ACCA condemn the stance of the Burkinabe Minister that contradicts the official positions of Burkina Faso regarding the respect by multinational companies of human rights and the environment. The position made by Mr Harouna Kaboré calls into question Burkina Faso's international commitments regarding environmental protection and human rights and affects the image and international respectability of the country.

The CERDE and ACCA would like to highlight the real negative impact that the conduct of certain multinational corporations and other business enterprises have on human and people's rights and the environment. In the context of the mining boom in Burkina Faso, extractive activities have given rise to several environmental and human rights issues affecting the life and livelihood of local communities as well as workers' rights. In recent years, this has caused tensions and unfortunate incidents between local communities and mining companies. These problems have been pointed out by civil society organisations on numerous occasions, including during the universal periodic review within the United Nations.

The CERDE and ACCA welcome the commitment of the government of Burkina Faso to protect the rights of its citizens and want this commitment to be strongly translated into facts. We assume that the unfortunate take of Minister Harouna Kaboré in no way constitutes Burkina Faso's official position on this issue. Our two organisations encourage the government to reassure civil society and the people of Burkina in their struggle for more social justice and progress and a responsible way of doing business.



The Centre d'Etudes et de recherches en droit de l'environnement (CERDE) is a Burkinabe based association that focuses on environmental issues. The CERDE collaborates with ACCA, contact@cerde-bf.com Tel. 00226 25654227.

The African Coalition for Corporate Accountability is the largest coalition of African civil society (over 140 organisations) working on business and human rights issues. ACCA sits at the Center for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. To contact the ACCA Secretariat: projects@accahumanrights.org