Delegation from International Bar Association
Represented by the University of Colorado

Position Paper for the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The issues before the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are the following: the Rights of Workers; Realizing the Right to Education; the Right to Decent Standard of Living.

I. The Rights of Workers

The International Bar Association recognizes that globalization has influenced the livelihood of billions of people around the world and that with this immense growth comes immense responsibility on the behalf of member states to respect the rights of workers. In stressing the importance of ensuring that workers rights are not forgotten during this time of economic growth, the International Bar Association has committed itself to supporting actions that promote the rights of workers especially the rights of women, children, migrant, and minority workers and ensuring that their rights are given the highest place on the human rights agenda.

The International Bar Association stresses the importance of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights which recognizes the right to sustainable livelihood through freely chosen work. The International Bar Association urges all states to promote Article seven of ICESCR to give all workers just and favorable conditions of work which ensure fair and equal remuneration; safe and healthy working conditions; equal opportunity for promotion; leisure; and reasonable limitation of working hours. The International Bar Association believes that these rights should be given to all citizens regardless of race, creed, or sex. Further more the International Bar Association urges all states give their support to resolution 1999/03 of August 26, 1999 endorsing human rights in the World Trade Organization, and the active progress of the International Labor Organization in settings standards like the Tripartite Declaration of Principals Concerning Multinational Enterprises, the Declaration on Fundamental Principals of Rights at Work and establishing the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization to examine the effects of globalization and develop ways of ensuring the rights of workers.

The International Bar Association recognizes its role as a Non-governmental Organization to provide non-bias information and legal advice in working with states to ensure the rights of workers are upheld. As one of the world’s largest international legal consulting associations, the International Bar Association has worked aggressively to ensure the rights of all workers are given a voice in the international community. The International Bar Association has worked with the United Nations to create a manual to assist in teaching human rights issues to member states. At conferences held in 13 different
countries around the world, the International Bar Association has encouraged and trained lawyers to participate in defending human rights. The International Bar Association has also actively worked to conduct and compile comparative surveys and publish news on human rights issues, including workers' rights, while maintaining close links with United Nations bodies and other international and regional organizations concerned with the protection and promotion of human rights.

II. Realizing the Right to Education

The International Bar Association realizes the growing importance of education in the new millennium. The International Bar Association believes that investment in education, as an empowerment right, will eliminate the problems of discrimination and poverty. However, the International Bar Association recognizes that gaps exist in the availability and quality of education in some states. Yet given the difficulties ahead, the International Bar Association believes that progress can be made to improve education around the world and improve the quality of life of the citizens of member states.

In pursuing the advancement of education, the International Bar Association recognizes that education is a fundamental right granted in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. The International Bar Association urges all states to continue to promote education for their young in supporting Articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights which makes primary education available free to all. The International Bar Association also supports the work of the Dakar Framework in outlining seven Education for All 2000 assessment recommendations, which member states may follow to obtain the goal of universal education.

As a leading supporter of improving the legal systems of countries around the world, the International Bar Association supports actions that will enhance the legal systems of member states. Working with the other member states the International Bar Association has played a major role training trial lawyers, judges, and prosecutors in such countries as Iraq, Bosnia, and other states with developing legal systems. The International Bar Association worked with the United Nations to create a manual consisting of a code of ethics and procedural matters for the International Criminal Court. The International Bar Association is dedicated to improving legal systems around the world by enhancing the education of those practicing law.

III. The Right to a Decent Standard of Living

The International Bar Association realizes that the issues of hunger, health, and shelter have been one of the many problems affecting developing countries. While the International Bar Association does not provide services to citizens of these countries it does support the efforts of governments to help those in need. The International Bar Association also commits its resources to enforcing laws regarding the right to a decent
standard of living and giving this issue the international attention it deserves.

The International Bar Association fully supports programs developed to enhance the standard of living for people around the world, including programs that satisfy the United Nations Millennium Development Goals which ensure that sustainable development works. The International Bar Association fully supports the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its goals of improving the lives of citizens of member states around the world. Along with supporting this covenant, the International Bar Association actively encourages all member states to implement its recommendations for improving the standard of living through the World Trade Organization, and the 2002 Johannesburg Summit.

With its emphasis on the legal profession, the International Bar Association works to enhance the standard of living by assisting the creation of laws that protect the people’s right to food, health, and protection from forced eviction. In its work to promote the rights of legal professionals around the world, who are essential in ensuring that the previously mentioned rights are upheld, the International Bar Association actively works to protect those professionals and ensure that they are protected from discrimination and illegal restraints. The International Bar Association points to its current role of supporting lawyers who cross borders to represent clients on issues of rights abuses. The International Bar Association also points to its role in calling to attention infractions against international business law and violations of business ethics and actively working to prosecute violators of international commerce law. Finally the International Bar Association emphasizes its ability to mobilize rapid response teams that can provide information to member states and other bodies of the United Nations on the matters of legal infractions that impede on the right to a decent standard of living.