

Human Rights

Through their direct operations, and their relationships with their suppliers and governments, corporations have a powerful influence on human rights around the world. How well individual corporations respect universal human rights can serve as a crucial yardstick by which to measure their responsibility across different cultures and different countries. Key issues include sweatshop labor; the use of private security forces; relationships with repressive regimes; respect for universal human rights, including labor rights; and the integrity of the environment.

How We Screen on Human Rights

Trillium Asset Management Corporation (“Trillium”) avoids investing in companies that are involved in egregious abuses of human rights. We seek profitable investments in corporations that have strong human rights records, and strong human rights policies and vendor standards policies that cover their worldwide operations.

Researching a company’s human rights record is a standard part of our due diligence prior to making an investment. Should allegations surface about a company we hold in our clients’ portfolios, we will investigate with further research, including engagement with the corporation.

Activism on Human Rights

If allegations of human rights abuse surface after a company has been added to client portfolios, we will engage with the company and may press for further action on its part. We employ divestment as a last resort if our efforts to encourage progress are ineffective.

Trillium has a long record of expertise and engagement on human rights issues, dating back to the anti-apartheid struggles in the 1980s, when we provided our clients with South Africa-free portfolios and actively lobbied pension funds to divest from South Africa.

More recently, we have been active in shareholder activism and public policy advocacy in support of human and labor rights in countries including Sudan, Afghanistan, Burma, China, Tibet and the United States (farmworker rights). We have worked in partnership with Amnesty International, the Genocide Intervention Network, and the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. Some examples include:

- In 2008, our engagement with Morgan Stanley prompted the company to develop a human rights statement. Morgan Stanley also reached out to its investment banking clients with interests in Sudan, whose business in that country helps to fund the government’s genocidal war in Darfur.
- In 2003-2005, we co-filed shareholder proposals at Yum! Brands in support of the Immokalee farmworkers’ Taco Bell boycott.
- In 2001, we co-filed a shareholder resolution pressing the oil giant BP to divest its stake in PetroChina.
- In 1997-98, we pressed Unocal to abandon discussion with the Taliban on the prospect of laying a pipeline through Afghanistan that would put millions of dollars in royalties into the regime’s hands. We confronted the company’s board of directors at its 1998 annual stockholder meeting to demand a complete account of their relationship with the Taliban.
- In 1995, we filed the first shareholder resolutions at oil companies that do business in Nigeria, days after the killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa. Since then, through a combination of dialogue and shareholder resolutions, we have continued to press oil companies on environmental and security matters that exacerbate poverty and strife in the Niger Delta.
- In 1992, Trillium was the first social investment firm to take action in support of the democracy movement in Burma. Throughout the 1990s, we supported shareholder resolution campaigns aimed at companies in Burma, and played a leading role in the effort to enact local, state and federal laws on Burma.
- In 1992, we also filed the first shareholder resolution by a social investment firm addressing sweatshop labor. Since then, the issue of sweatshops has been central to our dialogue with retailers and brand name goods companies.

For more information, visit our web site at www.trilliuminvest.com