

# Social Accountability 8000 (SA8000<sup>R</sup>): Blessing in Disguised

Article authored in June, 2002

## Introduction

Like ISO<sup>1</sup> 9000 and ISO 14000, now the fever for SA-8000 certification is catching up corporate sector in Pakistan. The major brands<sup>2</sup> in the west and in the North America are exerting tremendous pressures on their southeastern suppliers to get their manufacturing facilities SA-8000 certification. Failing to comply with SA-8000 and to achieve this certification till the deadline given by these major brands would put restrictions to buy from these manufacturers. Although deadlines for SA-8000 certification varies from industry to industry and company to company, it is generally believed that it is June 2004. There are growing apprehensions on the part of corporate managers in the textile, surgical and sporting goods<sup>3</sup> industries generally in third-world countries and particularly in Pakistan that SA-8000 is a new weapon after the ISO 9000 (i.e. Quality Management Standards) and ISO 14000 (i.e. Environmental Management Standards) that the West has especially developed and is enforcing to make it extremely difficult for the manufacturers and exporters in the southeast region of the world to stay competitive in the globalized marketplace.

The reasons for these apprehensions are many. However, the major reason for this resistance is the increased 1) cost of labor and 2) increased fixed cost associated with the implementation of SA-8000. As the primary reason for the lower cost advantage which the south-eastern manufacturers and exporters have been enjoying over their western counterparts is due to the extensive use of child labor, forced labor, unjust labor practices, pathetic working conditions, and workplace safety and health hazards. This paper provides a “just” analysis of the situation.

## Unfair and Unjust Labor Practices – A Real Story<sup>4</sup>

Oregon based Nike, Inc., is the world's largest designer and marketer of athletic shoes. Co-founded formally in 1963 as Blue Ribbon Sports by Phil Knight and Coach Bill Bowerman with contribution of US \$ 500 by each of co-founders, Nike's total revenues were soaring at above US \$ 9.5 billion by year 2000. In the same year, it was employing around 20,000 people directly, and about half a million people indirectly in 565 contract factories in 46 countries around the world.

Two factors are credited for this great success. Firstly, the ability of Nike to conduct extensive research in biomechanics and physiology in its Sports Research Laboratory and then develop cutting-edge athletic shoes based on the finding of this research. Secondly, the manufacturing of shoes through a network of 565 contract factories in 46 countries mainly in southeast Asia to reap the benefits of lower wage rates and excess to raw material suppliers.

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<sup>1</sup> International Standard Organization (ISO) is an international organization based in Geneva, Switzerland responsible for the design, development and implementation of international standards in the workplace such as ISO 9000 for quality management, ISO 14000 for environmental management and ISO 17000 for health and safety management.

<sup>2</sup> It is worthwhile to mention that major global brands in apparel industry like Gap, Polo, Levis', Wrangler, Dockers, and in the sports industry like Nike and Adidas don't own their own manufacturing facilities but rather get it manufactured through third-party manufacturers mostly in third-world countries, where they could reap the advantages of cheap labor. Majority of these manufacturing facilities are legally bound to manufacture only for and supply solely to their business associates in North America and the West. In many manufacturing facilities, I personally visited in Pakistan, even the rejected items are burnt by the international buyer and is not allowed to be sold in the local markets. In one of a major denim manufacturers in Pakistan, producing and supplying 100 percent of its production to one major Jeans brands, the average purchase price for a denim jean was about US \$ 3.50, whereas the same was sold in the US market for about US \$ 39.95.

<sup>3</sup> These three primarily export-oriented industries are hard-hit by SA-8000 like earlier they were hit by ISO-9000 and ISO-14000 series of standards. In Pakistan, apparel manufacturing industry, which manufactures for and exports to major global brands is geographically spread all over Pakistan including Karachi, Lahore, Raiwind and Faisalabad. Whereas sporting goods industry which is primarily involved in the manufacturing and exporting of various sport equipments including soccer, cricket and volley balls, cricket bats, hockey sticks, etc. concentrates in the city of Sialkot. Also the city of Sialkot is known worldwide for exports of surgical instruments to major brands in the USA, Europe and Southeast.

<sup>4</sup> This section of the article is based on a case study “*Nike's Dispute with the University of Oregon*”, by Rebecca J. Morris and Anne T. Lawrence. All rights reserved jointly to the authors and the North American Case Research Association. Copyright © 2001 by the *Case Research Journal* and Rebecca J. Morris and Anne T. Lawrence.

In 2000, Although Nike was the largest athletic footwear company in the world; it never manufactured shoes in significant numbers besides manufacturing prototypes. As there was no such thing like a typical Nike Plant, therefore it was difficult to access the work practices adopted in these factories. However, a factory operated by a Korean subcontractor in Vietnam provided the following glimpses about the work practices and the work conditions within Nike's subcontracted factories.

- ❑ Ninety percent of the workers were women between the ages of 18 to 24.
- ❑ These women were paid a wage of 14 cents per hour.
- ❑ One worker described the work as being dirty, dangerous and difficult.
- ❑ In the chemical section, use of various hazardous chemicals and hot ovens and the resulting chemical fumes caused eye, skin, and throat irritations, damage to liver and kidneys, nausea, anorexia, and reproductive health hazards through inhalation.
- ❑ In the stitching section, over a thousand women stitchers worked on a single floor sewing various parts of the shoes under extremely difficult conditions. Workers who did not meet the production targets were denied of bonus and not meeting the production targets for three times resulted in termination of the worker. Workers were forced to work overtime to meet the production targets without the overtime pay. Supervisors were strict and frequently blamed the workers for excessive talking and spending too much time in toilets. Hitting and slapping of slow workers by supervisors were common practices. Workers guilty of discipline violations were forced to stand outside the factory for long periods in burning heat.
- ❑ In an assembly section, women worked side by side to assemble various parts of the shoes. A strong smell of solvent was prominent in the assembly area. Ceiling fans were ineffective.

Although the criticism against Nike's global inhumane work practices had started by early 1990s with various reports and campaigns by *Harper's* magazine, The Made in the USA Foundation backed by American unions, CBS News, *Washington Post*, etc., it was 1996 when a story in *Life* magazine documenting the use of child labor producing soccer balls for Nike and Adidas in one of the subcontractor's factories in Pakistan (in the city of Sialkot) and showing the photographs of small children sitting in dirt and carefully stitching the pieces of soccer balls followed by the CBS News program *48 Hours* featuring low wage rate, extensive overtime, inhumane work conditions and physical abuse of workers in Nike's factories in Vietnam jeopardized the public and brand image of Nike that its founders worked so hard to build.

Throughout the early years of this campaign, Nike's management had been maintaining that the labor practices of its foreign subcontractors were not their responsibility. However, as the campaign gathered momentum, Nike's top management realized that they had to take some actions to avoid further damage to its reputation. In response, they drafted their company's first code of conduct in 1992 making it mandatory for all of its subcontractors to honor all of their legal, labor and environmental obligations, otherwise Nike would cancel its contract with them. In 1994, Nike appointed independent auditors to monitor the compliance of the code of conduct by its subcontractors. In 1996, Nike established a new Labor Practices Department. Over the next few years, Nike continued working with its subcontractors to improve their labor practices and working conditions. In 1998, Nike established its Corporate Responsibility Division and announced publicly to increase the minimum age in its shoe factories to 18 and its apparel factories to 16. It also promised to achieve OSHA standards for indoor air quality in all its factories.

Besides all these initiatives in the area of fair labor practices that Nike introduced, the public awareness on the issue of social accountability that was resulted due to the earlier campaigns, which started in early 1990s, could not put to a halt. This mass campaign against imperialism won the global attention and support of various human rights activist and labor union associations. Only in the USA, Apparel Industry Partnership (AIP), Fair Labor Association (FLA) and Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) are just a few examples of various statewide initiatives to promote fair labor practices and social accountability.

Globally, Social Accountability International (SAI) assembled an international multi-disciplinary task force to develop Social Accountability 8000 (SA-8000<sup>R</sup>) in 1996. SA-8000<sup>R</sup> is a voluntary standard for workplaces based on International Labor Organization (ILO) and other human rights conventions. Its independent third-party verification and assessment method uses many key elements from the globally accepted ISO-9000 series of quality management standards.

## **SA-8000<sup>R</sup> and Islam**

When I was requested to comment on SA-8000<sup>R</sup> and its implications on the local industry, being a practicing Muslim, the only test available to me to check the integrity of SA-8000<sup>R</sup> was to see as to how it related with the Divine Truth. In the following section, I am relating each clause of the SA-8000<sup>R</sup> with the relevant teachings of the Islam as I am a strong believer that nothing could be true, good and final unless it comes through or relates with the divine truth.

<b>Social Accountability (SA-8000) Requirements<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>What Islam<sup>6</sup> Says about it?</b>
<b>1. Child Labour</b>	
<p><b>1.1</b> The company shall not engage in or support the use of child labour as defined.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>And (remember) what hath been rehearsed unto you in the Book, concerning the orphans (4: 127)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Do not ask me to be a witness to injustice. Your children have the right of receiving equal treatment, as you have the right that they should honour you. (Abu-Da'ud)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said: O' Muslims, Allah desires that you should do justice in dealing with your children. (Tabarani)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Allah's Apostle kissed Al-Hasan bin `Ali while Al-Aqra' bin H`Abis at-Tamim was sitting beside him. Al-Aqra' said, "I have ten children and I have never kissed anyone of them," Allah's Apostle cast a look at him and said, "Whoever is not merciful to others will not be treated mercifully." (Sahih Bukhari)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Anybody who called a child saying that he would give him a certain thing, and did not give it, then it is a lie. (Ahmed)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>1.2</b> The company shall establish, document, maintain, and effectively communicate to personnel and other interested parties policies and procedures for remediation of children found to be working in situations which fit the definition of child labour above, and shall provide adequate support to enable such children to attend and remain in school until no longer a child as defined above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Therefore, treat not the orphan with harshness, Nor repulse the petitioner (unheard) (93: 9-10)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>I said, "O Allah's Apostle! Shall I get a reward (in the Hereafter) if I spend on the children of Abu Salama and do not leave them like this and like this (i.e., poor) but treat them like my children?" The Prophet said, "Yes, you will be rewarded for that which you will spend on them." (Sahih Bukhari)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Education at an early age is like a mark on the stone, but education at the old age is like a print over water. (Gilani)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>A father gives his son nothing better than a good education. (Mishkat)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Help each other in acquiring knowledge. (Ahmed, Tirmidhi, Ibn Maja, Abu-Da'ud)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>After I depart from this world, whenever you see some students, pay them reverence and welcome them. (Tirmidhi, Ibn Maja)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>1.3</b> The company shall establish, document, maintain, and effectively communicate to personnel and other interested parties policies and procedures for promotion of education for children covered under ILO Recommendation 146 and young workers who are subject to local compulsory education laws or are attending school, including means to ensure that no such child or young worker is employed during school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>To seek knowledge is the duty of every Muslim woman and man. (Ibn Maja, Darmi)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>No present or gift of a parent, out of all the gifts and presents to a child, is superior to a good liberal education. (Tirmidhi, Bayhaqi)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Seek knowledge from birth unto death. (Mishkat, Ahmed)</i></li> </ul>

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<sup>6</sup> Including Holy Qur'an – the divine book of Muslims as well as the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad<sup>PBUH</sup>, which forms the integral part of Islamic teachings as revealed by Allah Himself in the Holy Qur'an: "And obey God and the Apostle; that ye may obtain mercy" (3: 132) and "Obey God and His Apostle: But if they turn back, God loveth not those who reject Faith." (3: 32). The references in parenthesis with numbers inside are from the Holy Qur'an's translation by Abdullah Yusufali. The digits before the colon are the Sura or the chapter number and the digits after the colon represents the verse number. All other references are sayings of the Prophet Muhammad<sup>PBUH</sup>, taken from different editions of authentic *Hadith* sources as mentioned in parenthesis.

<p>hours and that combined hours of daily transportation (to and from work and school), school, and work time does not exceed 10 hours a day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>The best charity is to teach your Muslim brother who then teaches another one. (Mishkat)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>The best gain and fine gift are words of wisdom which you remember and teach to your Muslim brother; you will get a reward of one year's worship. (Tibrani, Mishkat)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>1.4</b> The company shall not expose children or young workers to situations in or outside of the workplace that are hazardous, unsafe, or unhealthy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>And they feed, for the love of God, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive, (76: 8)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Take care! Each one of you is a governor, and each of you shall be asked concerning his subjects... (Agreed Upon)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>You should treat your slaves (servants) just as your own children; whoever maltreats his slave will not enter Paradise. (Tirmidhi, Ibn Maja)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Treating those under one's authority will produce prosperity, but an evil nature produces evil fortune. (Abu-Da'ud)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Be afraid, from the curse of the oppressed as there is no screen between his invocation and Allah. (Sahih Bukhari)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Forced Labour</b></p>	
<p><b>2.1</b> The company shall not engage in or support the use of forced labour, nor shall personnel be required to lodge 'deposits' or identity papers upon commencing employment with the company.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Unbelievers are protectors, one of another: Unless ye do this, (protect each other), there would be tumult and oppression on earth, and great mischief. (8: 73)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>And do not eat up your property among yourselves for vanities, nor use it as bait for the judges, with intent that ye may eat up wrongfully and knowingly a little of (other) people's property. (2: 188)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Allah's Apostle said, "A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever screened a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection. " (Sahih Bukhari)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Allah grants respite to the oppressor, but when He finally seizes him, He will not let him escape. (Mishkat)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Of all the things, which Allah has created on this earth, the best thing I love is to set a slave free. (Tirmidhi, Abu-Da'ud)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Health And Safety</b></p>	
<p><b>3.1</b> The company, bearing in mind the prevailing knowledge of the industry and of any specific hazards, shall provide a safe and healthy working environment and shall take adequate steps to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, associated with or occurring in the course of work, by minimizing, so far as is reasonably practicable, the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>They ask thee what they should spend (In charity). Say: Whatever ye spend that is good, is for parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and for wayfarers. And whatever ye do that is good, -God knoweth it well. (2: 215)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>But it is righteousness- to believe in God and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the</i></li> </ul>

	<p><i>needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; (2: 177)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>By Him in whoso stands my life! no servant (of God really) believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself. (Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Never should a believer kill a believer; but (If it so happens) by mistake, (Compensation is due): If one (so) kills a believer, it is ordained that he should free a believing slave, and pay compensation to the deceased's family, unless they remit it freely. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you, and he was a believer, the freeing of a believing slave (Is enough). If he belonged to a people with whom ye have treaty of Mutual alliance, compensation should be paid to his family, and a believing slave be freed. For those who find this beyond their means, (is prescribed) a fast for two months running: by way of repentance to God: for God hath all knowledge and all wisdom. (4: 92-93)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>3.2</b> The company shall appoint a senior management representative responsible for the health and safety of all personnel, and accountable for the implementation of the Health and Safety elements of this standard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Anyone who is asked by Allah to take charge of subjects and does not protect them with good counsel will not smell the fragrance of Paradise. (Mishkat)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>There is no governor who rules (his) Muslim subjects and dies, having also played false with them, but God will forbid him Paradise. (Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>The believer is he whom men trust with their lives and their properties. (Mishkat)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>The best of your leaders are those whom ye love and who love you, for whom ye pray, and who pray for you; and the worst of your leaders are, those whom ye hate, and who hate you, whom ye curse, and who curse you. (Sahih Muslim)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>I swear by Allah that I will not put in charge of this work anyone who asks for it, or anyone who is eager for it...(Mishkat)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>3.3</b> The company shall ensure that all personnel receive regular and recorded health and safety training, and that such training is repeated for new and reassigned personnel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Learn your duties and teach men their duties. (Darimiy)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Help each other in acquiring knowledge. (Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Maja, Abu-Da'ud)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Impart knowledge to others, be kind, make them take interest, do not tire them off; if you get angry, remain quiet. (Mishkat)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>When a man dies, his actions cease too, except the knowledge which he imparted to others; this action is rewarded ever after. (Sahih Muslim)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>.....And after me most beneficent among them (children of man) is the man who acquires knowledge and spread it..... (Bayhaqiy)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>The best gain and fine gift are words of wisdom which you remember and teach to your Muslim brother; you will get a reward of one year's</i></li> </ul>

	<p>worship. (Tibrani, Mishkat)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> God is the Most Beneficent of all, and among sons of Adam I am the most beneficent; after me is the man who acquires knowledge and teaches to others; such a person will be raised like a king on the Day of Judgment. (Bayhaqi)</p>
<p><b>3.4</b> The company shall establish systems to detect, avoid or respond to potential threats to the health and safety of all personnel.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people... (5: 35)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The believers whose faith " None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself. (Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim).</p>
<p><b>3.5</b> The company shall provide, for use by all personnel, clean bathrooms, access to potable water, and, if appropriate, sanitary facilities for food storage.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Do not urinate at a place of bath because bathing and washing at such place will become doubtful. (Tirmidhi, Abu-Da'ud)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Allah is good and likes what is fragrant; clean and likes cleanliness; generous and likes generosity; munificent and likes munificence; so cleanse. (Mishkat)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Allah has put your brethren under your authority, so he who has his brother put under his authority by Allah must feed him from what he eats, clothe him for what he wears, and not impose on him work that is too much for him, but if he does so he must help him with it. (Sahih Muslim)</p>
<p><b>3.6</b> The company shall ensure that, if provided for personnel, dormitory facilities are clean, safe, and meet the basic needs of the personnel.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Cleanliness is half faith. (Sahih Muslim)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Treating those under one's authority will produce prosperity, but an evil nature produces evil fortune. (Abu-Da'ud)</p>
<p><b>4. Freedom Of Association &amp; Right To Collective Bargaining</b></p>	
<p><b>4.1</b> The company shall respect the right of all personnel to form and join trade unions of their choice and to bargain collectively.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> If any one disputes in this matter with thee, now after (full) knowledge hath come to thee, say: "Come! Let us gather together,- our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves: Then let us earnestly pray, and invoke the curse of God on those who lie!" (3:61)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for God can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily God is well-acquainted with all that ye do. (4: 135)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> And verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore fear Me (and no other). (23: 52)</p>
<p><b>4.2</b> The company shall, in those situations in which the right to freedom of association and collective</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> But no, by the Lord, they can have no (real) Faith, until they make thee judge in all disputes between</p>

<p>bargaining are restricted under law, facilitate parallel means of independent and free association and bargaining for all such personnel.</p>	<p><i>them, and find in their souls no resistance against Thy decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction. (4:65)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>And obey God and His Apostle; and fall into no disputes, lest ye lose heart and your power depart; and be patient and persevering: For God is with those who patiently persevere: (8:46)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>If ye fear a breach between them twain, appoint (two) arbiters, one from his family, and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, God will cause their reconciliation: For God hath full knowledge, and is acquainted with all things. (4:35)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>... But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you and ye love a thing which is bad for you.... (2: 26)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses. The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear God, that ye may receive Mercy. (49: 9-10)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear God, that ye may receive Mercy. (49: 10)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>The most virtuous of all the acts, after embracing the faith of Islam is to love all the human beings, to re-establish the friendship between two Muslims. (Tirmidhi, Abu-Da'ud)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>When two parties come to thee for decision, do not decide before thou hast heard the words of the other as thou hast heard the words of the one; for it most proper that the fact should be evident to thee. (Tirmidhi, Abu-Da'ud)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Both parties in the suit should sit before the judge. (Abu-Da'ud)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>4.3</b> The company shall ensure that representatives of such personnel are not the subject of discrimination and that such representatives have access to their members in the workplace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving Clear Signs: For them is a dreadful penalty. (3: 105)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Those who witness no falsehood, and, if they pass by futility, they pass by it with honourable (avoidance) God doth command you to render back your Trusts to those to whom they are due; And when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice: Verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you! For God is He Who heareth and seeth all things. (4: 58)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Ye that believe! betray not the trust of God and the Apostle, nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you. (8: 27)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead</i></li> </ul>

	<p><i>brother? Nay, ye would abhor it...But fear God: For God is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful. (49:12)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>When a ruler seeks to make imputations against the people he corrupts them. (Mishkat)</i></p>
<p><b>5. Discrimination</b></p>	
<p><b>5.1</b> The company shall not engage in or support discrimination in hiring, remuneration, access to training, promotion, termination or retirement based on race, caste, national origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, union membership, political affiliation, or age.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (49:13)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, thou hast no part in them in the least: their affair is with God: He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did. (6: 159)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>When trusts are wasted, then wait thou for the judgment (of God to descent upon the earth).’ It was asked, ‘And how shall trusts be wasted?’ The Prophet said, ‘When affairs are committed to those who are not worthy (of them).’ (Sahih Bukhari)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>He who hires a person and knows that there is still one who is more qualified than him, has betrayed Allah and His prophet and the Muslims. (Prophet Muhammad PBUH)</i></p>
<p><b>5.2</b> The company shall not interfere with the exercise of the rights of personnel to observe tenets or practices, or to meet needs relating to race, caste, national origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, union membership, or political affiliation.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>God doth command you...And when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice: Verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you! ...(4: 58)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And God heareth and knoweth all things. (2:256)</i></p>
<p><b>5.3</b> The company shall not allow behaviour, including gestures, language and physical contact, that is sexually coercive, threatening, abusive or exploitative.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>O ye who believe! follow not Satan’s footsteps: if any will follow the footsteps of Satan, he will (but) command what is shameful and wrong. (24: 21)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Come not nigh to shameful deeds. Whether open or secret.. (6: 151)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Say: the things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to God, for which He hath given no authority; and saying things about God of which ye have no knowledge. (7: 33)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: And God is well acquainted with all that they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display</i></p>

	<p><i>their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O ye Believers! turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain Bliss. (24: 30-31)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Do not accuse or defame anyone and keep people away from your mischief. (Mishkat)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Ibn Mas'ud (Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The believer is neither a taunter, nor a curser, nor indecent, nor abuser." (Tirmidhi)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>I said, 'O Prophet of God! Teach me (something); The Prophet said, 'Abuse no one.' I never abused after this any freeman, or slave, or camel, or sheep. (Abu-Da'ud, Tirmidhi)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Of the two who abuse and curse each other, the blame lies upon him who begins first, unless the wronged man exceeds the bounds. (Sahih Muslim, Abu-Da'ud, Tirmidhi)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Mocked were (many) apostles before thee; but their scoffers were hemmed in by the thing that they mocked. (6: 10)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>And incline not to those who do wrong, or the Fire will seize you; and ye have no protectors other than God, nor shall ye be helped. (11: 113)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition. (16: 90)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Disciplinary Practices</b></p> <p><b>6.1</b> The company shall not engage in or support the use of corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, and verbal abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>...they should pardon and turn away. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you... (24: 22)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar: A man came to the Prophet (PBUH) and asked: Apostle of Allah! how often shall I forgive a servant? He gave no reply, so the man repeated what he had said, but he still kept silence. When he asked a third time, he replied: Forgive him seventy times daily. (Abu-Da'ud)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Be kind to your slaves and forgive their faults seventy times a day. (Tirmidhi)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Anas said: I served the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for ten years and he never said to me, "Shame!" or "Why you do such and such?" or "Why did you not do such and such." (Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Working Hours</b></p>	
<p><b>7.1</b> The company shall comply with applicable laws and industry standards on working hours. The</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>It is binding upon a master to give food and</i></li> </ul>

<p>normal workweek shall be as defined by law but shall not on a regular basis exceed 48 hours. Personnel shall be provided with at least one day off in every seven-day period. All overtime work shall be reimbursed at a premium rate and under no circumstances shall exceed 12 hours per employee per week.</p>	<p><i>clothes to his slave and make him work only that much which is within his power; if you ask him to do something exceeding his power, you shall yourself help him. (Sahih Muslim)</i></p>
<p><b>7.2</b> Other than as permitted in Section 7.3 (below), overtime work shall be voluntary.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>On no soul doth God Place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray: ) "Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; our Lord! Lay not on us a burden Like that which Thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out our sins, and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. Thou art our Protector; Help us against those who stand against faith." (2: 286)</i></p>
<p><b>7.3</b> Where the company is party to a collective bargaining agreement freely negotiated with worker organizations (as defined by the ILO) representing a significant portion of its workforce, it may require overtime work in accordance with such agreement to meet short-term business demand. Any such agreement must comply with the requirements of Section 7.1 (above).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Come not nigh to the orphan's property except to improve it, until he attains the age of full strength; and fulfil (every) engagement, for (every) engagement will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning). (17: 34)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Be afraid, from the curse of the oppressed as there is no screen between his invocation and Allah. (Sahih Bukhari)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Beware of the plea of the oppressed, for he asks God most high only for his due, and God does not keep one who has a right from receiving what is due. (Baihaqi)</i></p>
<p><b>8. Remuneration</b></p>	
<p><b>8.1</b> The company shall ensure that wages paid for a standard working week shall always meet at least legal or industry minimum standards and shall be sufficient to meet basic needs of personnel and to provide some discretionary income.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>.....Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due; and do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order: that will be best for you, if ye have Faith. (7: 85)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>If you show kindness to your servant while employing him in some task, this will weight heavily in your favour on the Day of Judgment. That will be your reward. (Prophet Muhammad PBUH)</i></p>
<p><b>8.2</b> The company shall ensure that deductions from wages are not made for disciplinary purposes, and shall ensure that wage and benefits composition are detailed clearly and regularly for workers; the company shall also ensure that wages and benefits are rendered in full compliance with all applicable laws and that remuneration is rendered either in cash or check form, in a manner convenient to workers.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Prophet said, "Allah said, 'I will be an opponent to three types of people on the Day of Resurrection: 1. One who makes a covenant in My Name, but proves treacherous; 2. One who sells a free person and eats his price; and 3. One who employs a laborer and takes full work from him but does not pay him for his lab our.' " (Sahih Bukhari)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>A worker will appear before Allah and will complain to Allah about the injustice of his employer, Allah will be a solicitor on his behalf. (Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Delay in payment on the part of one who possesses the means makes it lawful to dishonor and punish him. (Mishkat)</i></p>
<p><b>8.3</b> The company shall ensure that labour-only contracting arrangements and false</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>...And break not your oaths after ye have</i></p>

<p>apprenticeship schemes are not undertaken in an effort to avoid fulfilling its obligations to personnel under applicable laws pertaining to labour and social security legislation and regulations.</p>	<p><i>confirmed them..... (16: 91)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pay the labourer his wages even before his sweat dries up. (Ibn Maja)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>And withhold not things justly due to men, nor do evil in the land, working mischief. And fear Him Who created you and (who created) the generations before (you) (26: 183-84)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>By Allah, we are not just if we benefit from a person in his youth but neglect him when he is old. (Ibn Maja, Mishkat)</i></li> </ul>
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## Conclusion

Well, by now you must have formed your own opinion about SA-8000<sup>R</sup>. In my case, when I first reviewed the Guidance document for SA-8000<sup>R</sup> in 1999, my immediate response was that why it has taken the world so long to acknowledge the basic dignity of man and to realize fundamental human values and rights in the workplace? Something that all the religions of the world share regardless of their other differences. Something that the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. To be honest, I could not understand the very basis of the criticism of SA-8000, except that those who criticize it are aloof of the teachings of their own religion or may be their vested interests have overshadowed their humanness. Or may be this criticism is mainly due to the fact that it is coming and enforced by the West and our false ego does not permit us to accept anything that comes from the West. For this type, I have few comments to make. Firstly, remember that even though that these factories were subcontractors to major global brands, these factories were owned and managed by local businessmen. Who had asked these entrepreneurs to exploit their own masses? Definitely, not Americans and Europeans. Even if it was true that Americans and European businessmen were exploiting our masses, then what were our businessmen doing? If they were not sincere to their own people, why to expect others to be sincere to your countrymen? And by the way, when American and western public as well as various human rights agencies and labor unions were protesting against the imperialism of their own business houses and boycotting their products for they could not see the exploitation of poors in south-eastern countries, what did the public, human right agencies and labor unions in these countries did? How could they bear what was unbearable for the outsiders?

At the end, I would like to request a just and unbiased self-analysis before you label me as a Western or American agent. Remember that our biases should not let us deviate from accepting and practicing the truth, no matter where it comes from, as it is one of the traits of a believer narrated by the Holy Prophet (PBUH):

*“The word of wisdom is the lost property of the believer, so wherever he finds it he has a better right to it.”*  
(Tirmidhi)