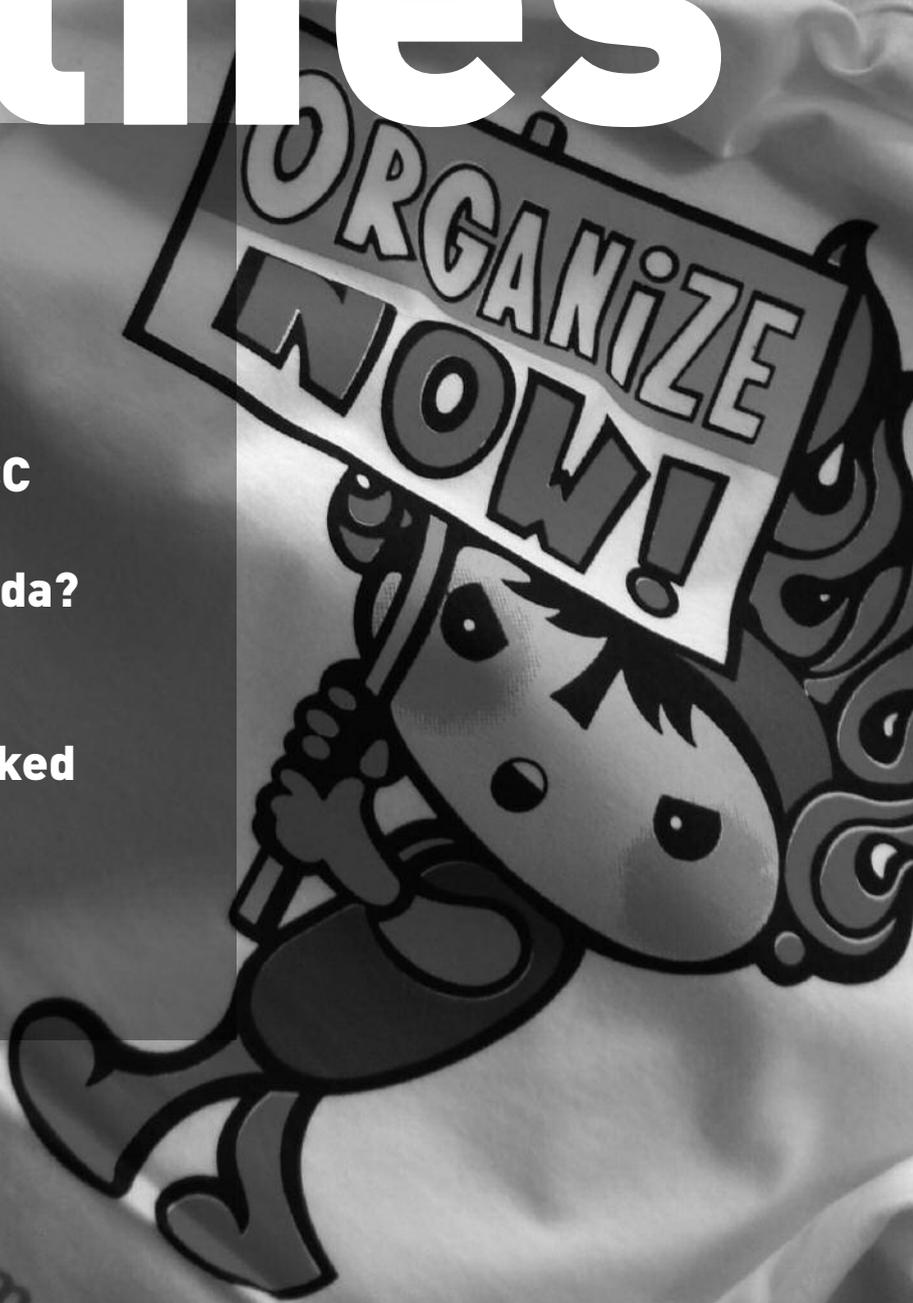


Clean Clothes

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International Campaign For
24-29 November 2007, Beijing



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Editorial

This edition of the CCC's international newsletter was going to press in the midst of the Play Fair 2008 campaign – a busy and inspiring time, as many CCC activists were working on a range of activities to mobilise the public behind the campaign's demands.

What are we hoping to accomplish with all these Play Fair online actions, in-store demos and research reports? Our aim is to pressure sportswear and athletic footwear companies, the International Olympics Committee (IOC) and its organising committees (OCOGs), the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), and national governments into taking concrete steps to eliminate violations of workers' rights in sportswear and Olympic supply chains.

In its research reports Play Fair 2008 has documented serious violations of basic labour standards by several Chinese factories supplying goods under license for the Beijing Olympics. Play Fair 2008 has also reported on the serious problems facing workers at factories supplying the world's largest sportswear

brands. While some positive steps have been taken by a few within the industry, working conditions remain deplorable for the majority of the workers in these sectors. Workers still lack a living wage and are living in poverty. Contempt for freedom of association means their voices are silenced when they speak out to demand improvements.

There is a lot of work to be done and Play Fair 2008 is spreading the word that the time for action is NOW! For those who aren't already involved – we urge you to visit the Play Fair website (www.playfair08.org) and join the latest online actions targeting the IOC and sportswear industry leaders.



As always, we encourage readers to share, reprint or distribute any information found within this newsletter. A digital version can be found at www.cleanclothes.org/news.htm.



Vera Lischka, a former European Swimming Championship winner speaking at a press conference in April to launch Play Fair's Catch the Flame action in Austria.

The Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) aims to improve working conditions in the garment industry worldwide and empower (women) garment workers. The CCC is made up of coalitions of consumer organisations, trade unions, researchers, solidarity groups, world shops, and other organisations. The CCC informs consumers about the conditions in which their garments and sports shoes are produced, pressures brands and retailers to take responsibility for these conditions, and demands that companies accept and implement a good code of labour standards that includes monitoring and independent verification of code compliance. The Clean Clothes Campaign cooperates with organisations all over the world, especially self-organised groups

of garment workers (including workers in factories of all sizes, homeworkers, and migrant workers without valid working papers).

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News from the CCCs

Participants of the ICF 2007 are ready for action.

CCC's Largest Campaign Consultation Ever

Over three days in late November 2007 a huge consultation, called the International Campaign Forum (ICF), took place. Working together, the CCC, the Thai Labour Campaign, and the Centre for Education and Communication (CEC) based in India gathered 115 people from 40 countries in Bangkok, Thailand. The purpose was to develop the plans and strategies for forthcoming international campaigns including Play Fair 2008. Many exciting ideas were shared and lessons learnt.

Play Fair 2008 (PF2008) is the follow up to the campaign during the 2004 Olympic Games. 2008 is the year of the Beijing Olympics and, once again, the aim is to put concerted pressure on sportswear companies, the international/national Olympic committees, and governments to take concrete measures to improve the situation of millions of sportswear workers worldwide. Again it involves the Global Unions, the CCC, and a wide range of organisations around the world.

There was good discussion of the lessons learned from PF2004. One was the need to assess better the real impact of such a campaign on strengthening union organising on the ground, as well as on helping to build confidence between unions and other types of workers' rights organisations. Participants were full of ideas for campaigning internationally and in their own countries.

IOC officials and others have said that the Beijing Olympic Games will be a catalyst for the improvement of human rights in China, and the conference looked at how to put the spotlight on Chinese workers' rights. Given the Chinese Government's sensitivity to labour rights issues at a time of maximum

international exposure, key to this will be the role of the Hong Kong-based groups coordinated by the International Hong Kong Liaison Office (IHLLO) of the Global Unions.

For more on PF2008, see pages 15-17 and go to: www.playfair2008.org

The consultation was very useful for pointers to a better overall strategy too. For example, participants want to see more central emphasis on workers' involvement, such as prioritising cases that clearly support organising efforts on the ground. The conference itself went some way to addressing another on-going request, for the priorities of groups in the South to be built in at an early stage.

Sweden: CCC on Facebook

More and more CCCs have begun using social networking websites to build their campaigns. The Swedish CCC Rena Kläder has created a group on Facebook to reach out to young people. It has been a great success, with now over 500 members who share information, photos, action tools, and even poems with each other. Anyone with a Facebook address can join, but it's best if you understand Swedish. Other CCCs using social networking websites include the Netherlands and the UK.

*Sweden: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=4337894780
Netherlands: www.myspace.com/fairfashion
UK: www.fashioninganethicalindustry.org/facebook*



UK CCC calls on the fashion industry to pay a living wage.

UK Cleans Up Fashion

"We all know that fashion executives and supermodels live in excess on seven-figure salaries, while garment workers remain - systematically, across the world - mired in a poverty trap. This winter, LBL is calling on the fashion industry - and four companies in particular - to finally live up to its promise to pay workers a living wage."

In late 2007 in the UK, the "Let's Clean Up Fashion" campaign run by the CCC UK, Labour Behind the Label (LBL), gathered momentum. LBL is highlighting the vast sums paid out to retail Chief Executives and supermodels compared with the poverty of garment workers' wages. For example, supermodel Kate Moss was reportedly paid the equivalent of 4.2 million euros for putting her name to a Topshop line of clothing; a Mauritian garment worker in that supply chain would have to work for almost 4,000 years to earn that much.

December 6, 2008 was a national day of action to "Redress Fashion". Students from People & Planet, part of the campaign coalition, took action in 16 British cities against Topshop. Washing lines of shame were strung up outside stores. A banner attached to helium balloons was set off in the Reading store. In Edinburgh, P&P invited shoppers to enquire about the company's slavery policy. The actions gained national press coverage.

LBL member organisations (see CCC Newsletter No. 24) have been joined by other well-known UK-based groups in the campaign, and over Christmas thousands of supporters were encouraged to send action cards and emails to Topshop, M&S, Primark, and Tesco. The pressure produced responses. Arcadia Group (for Topshop) telephoned People & Planet the very next day. M&S staff seemed shocked at the quantity of cards received. The company owning Primark, ABF, sent out a letter in reply, which is commented on in the Let's Clean Up Fashion website blog.

www.cleanupfashion.co.uk



Hvor:
Clean Clothes Campaign er et netværk af organisationer i Europa. Hver afdeling af CCC beskæftiger sig med de virksomheder, der hæner til det pågældende land. Således bliver Nikes produktion af sportstøj fulgt af CCC i Tyskland, fordi hovedsædet ligger her. Der er 15 afdelinger, og de mødes ca. tre gange årligt for at koordinere kampagner og informere om verserende sager.

At være mange organisationer danner et stærkt netværk, som har mulighed for rent faktisk at få gennemført forandringer. De gode historier kommer ofte ikke ud til offentligheden fordi sverensstemmelserne netop bliver løst uden der er behov for at gå til medierne.



Hvordan kan jeg være med?

CCC Danmark består af organisationer, så hvis du er medlem af en sådan, som har interesse for tekstilarbejderes rettigheder, kan I ansøge om at blive medlem. Det koster årligt mellem 200 og 1000 kr. alt afhængig af størrelsen på organisationen.

Det kan også være, at du allerede er en del af en af medlemsorganisationerne, der danner CCC Danmark (eller ønsker at blive det).
Se www.cleanclothes.dk for en opdateret liste.
Støttebidrag til CCC Danmark kan indbetales til Andelskassen Oikos på konto nr.: 8929704615 via reg. nr. 9860 Folkespøkkassen.

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CCC Denmark introduces itself.

Denmark Joins the CCC

Denmark is the latest country to set up a Clean Clothes Campaign. Called the 'Clean Clothes DK', it has been formed by a coalition of seven organisations – among them several trade unions, a consumer group, and a fair trade organisation.

Their website is up and running and they have produced a publicity leaflet. One of their first activities was on December 17, 2007, when they held a demonstration in Copenhagen in support of the FFI case (see page 20).

Another early area of work has been public procurement, led by one of the member organisations, Active Consumers of Denmark. They already have had a positive reply from the Municipality of Copenhagen with whom they hope to collaborate on a buying policy. This will then be used as a model, aiming to convince other municipalities to follow suit.

On March 28, 2008, they took part in an "Ethical Fashion Day" held at Copenhagen Business School organised by two student organisations, Well and Develop. See www.wellweb.org/fashion-about.asp.

Clean Clothes DK is also developing its collaboration with CCCs in neighbouring countries. They have been working together with Rena Kläder, the CCC in Sweden, on a case at a textile factory in Thailand where the union president was recently laid off. As well as Sweden, they are also cooperating with groups in Finland and Norway on plans for the PlayFair 2008 campaign for the Olympic Games.

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News from the CCCs

Germany Targets Retail Chains

In Germany, the campaign focus (aside from Play Fair 2008) is currently on the three big discount retail chains there: KiK, Lidl and Aldi. Research in Bangladesh by a partner organisation AMRF revealed serious workers' rights violations at six suppliers producing for Lidl and KiK. These are set out in a report by the CCC Germany (Kampagne für Saubere Kleidung) launched in January 2008, which also covers workers' rights violations at the German stores of Lidl and the Austrian stores of KiK, and the difficulties faced by the German union ver.di to organise workers there.

Both Lidl and KiK reacted to the report and on March 4, 2008 meetings were held with each in Berlin, Germany. Also present were representatives of ver.di, the Belgian trade union LBC (for Lidl), the Austrian union GPA (for KiK) and the Austrian CCC. Neither company was able to deny the workers' rights violations described in the report. KiK has since held a meeting with AMRF in Bangladesh, and Lidl is organising training for managers and workers there. The CCC will be keeping a close eye on developments.

Meanwhile, the Suedwind Institute's report on Aldi, published in mid-2007, gained huge media coverage, with over 100 articles plus radio and TV coverage. In response, at the beginning of 2008, Aldi joined the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI). Then, on March 8, 2008 - International Women's Day - CCC actions took place outside Aldi stores in Cologne, Düren, Dortmund, Hamburg, Berlin and Lübeck. A few days prior, the company circulated to the actions' organisers a four-page fax referring to its membership of BSCI, and thousands of leaflets to all its stores entitled "Aldi Takes Responsibility". The CCC regards these steps as symbolic and insufficient, albeit progress in a company that for over a decade kept silent about its business practices.

"Wer bezahlt unsere Kleidung bei Lidl und KiK? Arbeitskraft zum Discountpreis - Schnäppchen für alle?" ("Who pays for the clothes at Lidl and KiK? Working power at discount price - bargains for everyone?") [in German; English version planned when funding available]. Available at: www.sauberekleidung.de/2008/ccc_08-01-30_pu_discounter_lidl-kik.html

"Aldi's Clothing Bargains - Discount buys discounting standards? Working conditions in Aldi's suppliers in China and Indonesia: Suggestions for consumer and trade union action". Available at: www.suedwind-institut.de/downloads/ALDI-publ_engl_2007-08.pdf

www.sauberekleidung.de
www.suedwind-institut.de



Aldi's clothing bargains - discount buys discounting standards?

Working conditions in Aldi's suppliers in China and Indonesia

Suggestions for consumer and trade union action

Frequently Asked Questions



CCC mobilises in support of workers at the Gina Form Bra Factory in Thailand.

Do you call for boycotts?

No. The Clean Clothes Campaign does not want workers to lose their jobs because of public campaigning that is intended to support their struggles. In our view, one of the worst things that can happen as a result of public pressure is that a company decides to cut its business in a factory or a country and move somewhere else.

Instead, we ask consumers to demand that garment/sportswear brands and retailers take responsibility for the conditions in the factories that they buy from. We encourage buyers to work with their suppliers in a way that doesn't put intolerable pressure on workers to deliver clothes faster, cheaper, and under poor working conditions.

We want to see long-term, stable business relationships between buyers and suppliers. This will improve the ability of factory managers to improve working conditions, and it will give garment workers more job security and decent work, including the opportunity to organise and negotiate for better conditions.

In very specific situations, and only after exhausting all other possibilities, we may ask a sourcing company to

inform a factory that it will not buy there any more if labour conditions do not immediately improve. We expect such a withdrawal to be done in a responsible manner that minimises the impact on workers at the factory. For example, we would ask buyers to divert orders to a nearby factory that is willing to provide decent work and to give priority hiring to workers from the problem factory.

If there is a widely supported call from a particular country for a boycott to promote human and labour rights there, the Clean Clothes Campaign will respect this. For example, in 2001 the exiled Burmese trade union federation, the Federation of Trade Unions - Burma (FTUB), together with a significant segment of Burmese society called for support in their campaign to demand that Triumph International, a Swiss-based retailer of lingerie, pull out of Burma. The campaign was successful and in 2002 Triumph announced its withdrawal from the country.



*For more FAQs about the CCC, please visit:
www.cleanclothes.org/faq/index.htm*

Inside a National CCC: The Netherlands

The Clean Clothes Campaign is an international campaign, consisting of a loose, informal international partner network of NGOs, unions, individuals and institutions in most countries where garments are produced; organisations in "consumer" countries where these garments are sold; an international secretariat (based in Amsterdam); and Clean Clothes Campaigns (CCCs) in twelve European countries. These CCCs are autonomous coalitions consisting of NGOs (consumer, research, women's, fair trade and youth organisations, solidarity groups, churches, etc.) and trade unions, each with a coordinator and a secretariat. CCC coalitions can be found in Austria, Belgium (North and South), Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Although the European CCCs share a common aim and cooperate on joint projects, they each have their own flavour – due to their composition, history, cultural context and style. We'd like to share with you the workings of the different campaigns. Sixth in this series is the CCC in the Netherlands: Schone Kleren Kampagne (SKK).

The Schone Kleren Kampagne team during the public procurement bus tour, April 2007.



The Birthplace of the International Clean Clothes Campaign

It was actually in the Netherlands that the Clean Clothes Campaign began. In 1989, factory workers in the Philippines making clothes for the Dutch retailer C&A were being prevented from setting up a union. In an action that was the first of its kind, organisations that usually work on different themes – country-based solidarity groups, women's organisations, research groups, etc. – came together to demonstrate in front of a C&A store in Amsterdam. The action served as a working model for future collaboration. So the Philippines Group Netherlands, SOMO (Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations) and Konsumenten Kontakt (an alternative consumers' organisation) took it from there. In 1990 they founded the first national CCC: Schone Kleren Kampagne.

In the early years, the focus stayed on C&A. At the same time, a CCC Model Code of Conduct was developed, to become the basis of the SKK's activities and demands. Big events such as football world championships were used to raise awareness of bad working conditions in the garment and sportswear industry. The focus was not only on brands and retailers. SKK also targeted local governments, persuading towns and cities to become Clean Clothes Communities – pledging to try to procure ethically the workwear they buy for staff in hospitals, the police, and fire brigade, etc.



Schone Kleren Kampagne demonstration in 2006 in response to Bangladesh factory fires passes the country's most popular retailer HEMA.

One of the most important activities in the first years was the building of an international network. The demands and priorities of workers' organisations in producer countries formed the basis of SKK's work, so it developed close and frequent contact with them. Trips were made and meetings organized to stimulate this.

Contact was also made with organisations working in similar fields in other European countries, including the UK, Belgium, Germany and France. SKK organised a tour through these countries in 1996, resulting in the launch of more national CCCs. The international and national coordination became too much work for one secretariat, however, and in 2003 the organisation split into the Dutch SKK Secretariat and the International Secretariat of the CCC.

SKK's Structure

The SKK is supported by a platform of about 20 organisations which meet twice a year to exchange information and get updated on SKK's activities. Three of them – the Philippines Group Netherlands, the India Committee of the Netherlands, and the research organisation SOMO – form the SKO, an advisory group that meets six times a year to guide the content

of the SKK Secretariat's work. The SKK also has an advisory board that guides the Secretariat on personnel and financial issues. The SKK is in the process of restructuring, with the aim of strengthening the engagement of member organisations in the campaign.

The SKK helped found the Amsterdam-based Fair Wear Foundation (FWF), a multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to improve the labour conditions of its member companies, in collaboration with trade unions, NGOs and trade associations. The CCC has a seat on the FWF Board.

The SKK is also part of the Dutch CSR Platform, which is a coalition of NGOs which lobby the Dutch Government for good CSR policy. The SKK received a lot of support from this coalition during the recent FFI court case in India (see page 19 of this newsletter).

The SKK receives funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oxfam Novib, and the European Union, as well as donations from organisations and individuals.

SKK's Focus

While others, such as the Dutch NGO Solidaridad, have developed ethical or 'fair trade' garment brands, the focus of the SKK is on getting the conventional garment and sportswear industry to change its production practices. This means persuading a wide spectrum of consumers to put pressure on the big brands. The SKK therefore continues to work on sportswear issues, taking part in the Olympic campaigns, and successfully targeting big retailers such as the nation's most popular store, HEMA. A relatively new activity is geared towards getting fashion colleges to integrate SKK's issues into their curriculum (Fair Fashion – see www.fairfashion.org). The SKK also intends to start work with NGOs about the sourcing of their promotional clothing such as T-shirts.



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CCC Model Code of Conduct:
www.cleanclothes.org/codes/index.htm

Challenging the Excessive Power of European Retailers

EU Competition Law exists to stop large producers establishing monopolies. The massive expansion of supermarkets and hypermarkets over the last two decades is a relatively new phenomenon and no legislation exists to limit the control a few giant retailers have over access to consumers and the market distortion this can cause.

Therefore, the CCC is part of an initiative to raise more awareness about the excessive power of retailers in Europe, and to stir the European Parliament and Commission into action to curb it.

The alliance involves thirteen organisations apart from ourselves, including Agribusiness Accountability Initiative (AAI), the Responsible Purchasing Initiative, Traidcraft, Oxfam Germany, ActionAid, Banana Link, Attac and SOMO.

Throughout the EU, retailing is increasingly dominated by a small number of supermarket chains. While there is anti-monopoly legislation to stop major producers abusing market dominance, there is no EU legislation specifically designed to tackle abuses of supermarket buyer power.

In at least eight countries of the EU, the top five supermarkets control at least 70% of all grocery sales. They are increasingly moving into other sectors too, such as clothes, home entertainment, pharmaceuticals and banking. We are also seeing the growth of European buying groups, where individual retailers in different countries join forces to purchase supplies.

This concentration means the big retailers are becoming 'gatekeepers' who control farmers' and other suppliers' only real access to EU consumers. Their market dominance means they can put the squeeze on their suppliers in terms of price and speed. This in turn puts extreme pressure on the workers in the supply chain, whether in Europe or in supplier countries across the world.

There have been steps taken to investigate and reform competition legislation within some EU member countries such as France and Germany. However, many of the big retail companies operate or co-operate across borders, and there is potential for anti-competitive collusion too. So an EU-wide perspective is needed.

The initiative wants to see in particular the European Commission's Directorate-General for Competition investigate the impacts that this concentration of buyer power is having on suppliers, workers and consumers, and what steps should be taken to address it. The question being asked is how the EU intends to modernise its policies and close the current regulation gap relating to retailers.

First Success: A "Written Declaration"

First, we had to get European politicians and officials to accept there is a problem to deal with. Research commissioned by AAI indicated that getting a Written Declaration (WD) tabled in the European Parliament would be a strategic start.

In mid-2007 a draft text for the WD was prepared, along with a briefing for MEPs "The EU Retail Sector: When is a market not a market?" Then we needed to find MEPs to sponsor the WD and table it in Parliament. Outreach and meetings with MEPs followed, also involving several national CCCs. The MEPs who became sponsors were Caroline Lucas (UK), Gyula Hegyi (Hungary), Janusz Wojciechowski (Poland), Harlem Désir (France), and H el ene Flautre (France).

The "Written Declaration 88/2007 on investigating and remedying the abuse of power by large supermarkets operating in the European Union" was tabled on October 10, 2007 and, at the Parliament's sitting on January 31, 2008, it was signed by 439 MEPs, a majority of the Chamber. This made it an officially accepted document of the European Parliament, declared as such at a plenary session on February 18, 2008. Through it, the European Parliament:

1. *Calls upon DG Competition to investigate the impacts that concentration of the EU supermarket sector is having on small businesses, suppliers, workers and consumers and, in particular, to assess any abuses of buying power which may follow from such concentration;*
2. *Requests the Commission to propose appropriate measures, including regulation, to protect consumers, workers and producers from any abuse of dominant position or negative impacts identified in the course of this investigation.*





Workers that were injured by the Spectrum factory collapse in Bangladesh visit buyer Carrefour in February 2006 as part of European speakers' tour (see <http://www.cleanclothes.org/urgent/07-04-10-spectrum.htm>).

As a next step in the Parliament, one of the WD's sponsors, MEP Gyula Hegyi, is tabling an oral question on the same theme, and the Socialist group of MEPs has agreed to support this move.

Now the Follow-up

Now there is a need to stimulate the debate among officials in the European Commission. Alliance partners will be taking the issue up with the Directorates- General (DGs), particularly those responsible for competition, enterprise, employment, development in the Global South, the environment and consumer protection.

For example, NGOs working on environmental issues are likely to raise awareness about waste and other environmental problems created by supermarket buying practices. International development NGOs may well highlight the harmful effects of supermarket buying practices on developing country economies.

Experts and national competition authorities are also being approached. The alliance would like to see more of them state publicly that supermarket buyer power needs tackling at an EU level. We will also need their help in developing remedies. These might include, for example, an EU cap on market share for supermarkets, or a new EU ombudsman to regulate the supplier/supermarket relationship. These are still only suggestions, however.

In the immediate future, MEPs, Commission officials and competition experts are invited to a seminar at the European Parliament on May 14, 2008, to pursue these ideas and get their responses.



"The EU Retail Sector: When is a market not a market?", Briefing for MEPs, October 2007.

Available at: www.cleanclothes.org/news/08-03-08/htm

The Next Generation of CSR Reporting

The Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN), based in Canada, has reviewed the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reports of four major apparel and sportswear companies, and is offering its recommendations for the next generation of CSR reporting. Below are extracts from the MSN report.

Although public reporting on corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives is becoming increasingly common amongst major apparel and footwear brands, is it providing stakeholders with sufficient information to evaluate whether progress is actually being made in their supplier factories around the world?

Big brand CSR reports [vary widely] from passing reference to broad social and environmental commitments; rosy talk of increased factory auditing; anecdotal reports on selected management training programmes; disclosure and updating of hard data on factory audit findings; and frank and detailed discussions of the shortcomings in current labour standards compliance programmes coupled with promises to revamp those programmes in order to address roots causes of persistent violations.

As a general rule the increase in public CSR reporting is a positive response to consumer and investor demands for more information on companies' adherence to labour and environmental standards. However, good reporting is measured by quality not quantity.

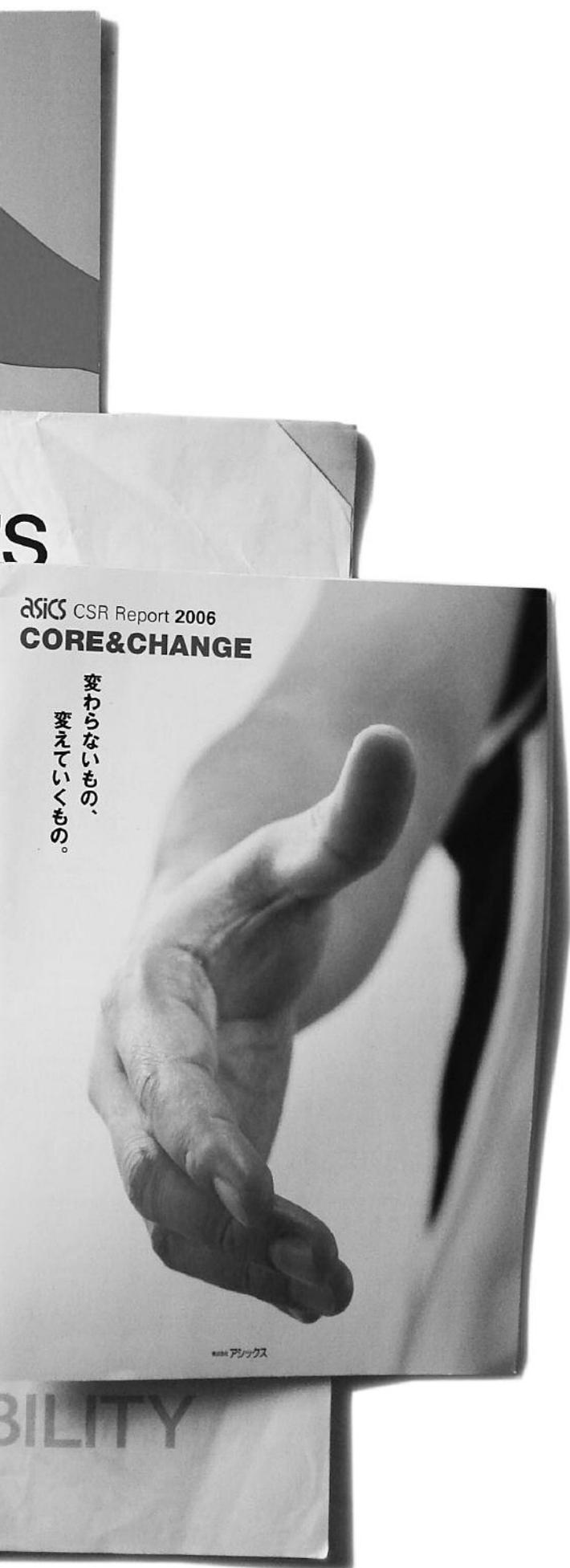
Next Generation Reporting

Even while there has been some emerging consensus on what should be reported by apparel and sports shoe companies on labour standards issues in their global supply chains, new challenges in the industry have given rise to a need for additional reporting measure. The next generation of reporting will have to include reliable measures of how a company is actually addressing the root causes and broader structural factors that are now recognised as impacting on individual factory compliance with labour standards.

Restructuring and Consolidation

One of the areas where there has been inadequate reporting has been on the impacts of restructuring of global supply chains. Factories around the world are closing leaving workers without jobs and often without severance pay, back wages and other unpaid benefits...Within this new trade environment, some companies have expressed publicly their commitment to





restructure in a manner that respects and/or enhances labour rights and what they call “responsible competitiveness”.

The most prominent of these declarations is the MFA Forum’s “Collaborative Framework” which outlines a set of agreed principles for action by companies, trade unions, governments and NGOs in light of industry restructuring. Some of the Framework’s principles for buyers include:

- Maintain current country supply base and contain consolidation in-country;
- Seek to source from suppliers and countries that respect core labour standards; and
- Disclose supply chain information that facilitates accountability to external stakeholders.

Are these principles, like earlier codes of conduct, merely broad aspirational statements that are not being met or even attempted in practice? Comprehensive information on where apparel brands source their products from and why is, for the most part, unavailable.

Factory Disclosure

Factory disclosure lists are a useful check on a company’s claims and add credibility to a company’s efforts to achieve labour standards compliance, since they open up company supply chains to scrutiny by local and international NGOs and trade unions and encourage cooperation on compliance issues among buyers in shared factories... Although the number of brands that are disclosing factory locations has increased, it has yet to become a widespread phenomenon.

Production shifts

Production shifts – or at least the threat thereof – impact on the ability of workers and national governments to press for improved working conditions, greater respect for workers’ rights, and better enforcement of labour laws... Apparel companies should be disclosing additional information to not only make it possible to measure the impact of restructuring and consolidation on workers in the countries that are losing jobs, but also whether and to what degree labour standards compliance factors into their regional and global sourcing decisions.

For instance, they should be providing sufficient information to determine whether and to what degree they are adhering to the principles of the MFA Forum Collaborative Framework by consolidating production in-country, whenever possible, and giving preference to factories and countries that provide decent work.

One simple measure of whether companies are giving preference to factories that provide decent work...[and] respect for freedom of association...would be if they included in their CSR reports updates on union density in their supply chains. The GRI [Global Reporting Initiative] “Draft Apparel and Footwear Sector Supplement” suggests measuring the percentage of factories in the supply chain in which there is one

or more trade union, broken down by country. In addition, the draft supplement asks companies to report on the presence of collective bargaining agreements.

Closures and Exit Policies

Since the end of quotas, the issue of factory closures and factory exits has been at the forefront of worker rights efforts. Since workers' legal rights and entitlements are often at great risk during a factory closure, it is critical that brand buyers develop and report on policies and practices that ensure that their factory exit and/or factory closure do not lead to worker rights violations.

Demonstrating a clear understanding of the potential impacts of factory exits as well as defining responsible policies and practices to address those impacts has become imperative in an industry rocked by closures and restructuring.

The Buying Relationship

Longer-term and more stable business relationships make it more likely that an employer can address workplace issues that require either more training, more capital investment, or quite simply more time to address the root causes of the problems. There is currently very little information available in company reports about the length of buyer relationships with supply factories or the stability of its contracting system, although there are some indications that this kind of information may become more available in future CSR reporting... Brands could also disclose whether they enter into longer term supply contracts with factories committing to a certain volume of production over a specific time frame (as opposed to just order-by-order buying).

Uncovering the Roots?

Central to the next generation of reporting is the question of root causes of persistent labour rights abuses. Labour rights activists should take note of what kinds of issues, "root causes" and proposed actions are given prominence in company CSR reports and which are not. For example, while some process-based purchasing practices like lead times and design changes are now cited in many CSR reports, a frank discussion of lower prices paid by buyers to suppliers and their impact on wages is harder to find.

It's also notable that the majority of the "root causes" elaborated in company reports tend to focus on supplier and factory level causes (and sometimes market or government causes) while less attention is given to "root causes" that are more [directly] within the brand's control.

Pricing and Wages

Another fundamental purchasing practice issue that is seldom discussed in CSR reports is the matter of prices paid to suppliers and how they impact on the wages paid by suppliers to workers.

While actual price data is considered competitive information and therefore confidential, companies should report on what safeguards are in place to ensure that prices are sufficient to allow compliance with code of conduct provisions, including wages that meet workers' basic needs. Further, brands should report on the kinds of price incentives being offered for compliance or for improvements in compliance on key standards, such as wages, overtime pay and other monetary benefits.

A brand's approach to pricing and incentives should be considered an indicator of the brand's commitment to establishing business practices that facilitate compliance with international labour standards... Brands should be reporting on how they intend to achieve living wages that meet basic needs by local standards within their supply chains, with measurable targets.

Training and Engagement

Since the discussion of root causes in company CSR reports has tended to focus on persistent factory-level problems, it is not surprising that the solutions proposed by brand buyers have emphasised training for and engagement with factory management to improve HR practices, materials management, and productivity...

Most companies report only a select few pilot projects or successful training projects, which may give readers a sense of a company's most advanced initiatives, but do not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the breadth and quality of all its training and engagement activities.

More open reporting on results rather than events, as well as clear information on how training results are being measured, should be encouraged. It's also in keeping with the GRI Draft Supplement, which asks that for each training programme companies "summarise the goals, content, implementation, and participants" and "assess each programme's effects".

Moving Forward

A critical question concerning the next generation of company CSR reporting is whether it will provide the kind of information needed to assess whether companies are making progress on labour practices and working conditions in their global supply chains...

A series of new measurements will be necessary to track changes in labour practices and working conditions and provide assurance to consumers, investors and workers that real progress is being made on labour standards compliance in global supply chains.



*'The Next Generation of CSR Reporting: Will better reporting result in better working conditions?' Maquila Solidarity Network, Codes Memo 22, December 2007.
Available at: en.maquilasolidarity.org/en/node/749*

Play Fair 2008 Catch the Flame!



Play Fair's alternative Olympic flame has been traveling from country to country to put pressure on the IOC to make a commitment to move forward on workers' rights.

As the Olympic Games in August 2008 draw ever closer, the campaign seeking respect for workers' rights in the production of Olympics-licensed goods has grown in momentum. Over 150 organisations around the world have signed up as supporters. And, in March 2008, an 'alternative Olympic torch' was set on its way, encouraging thousands of individuals to help carry a 'virtual' message to Beijing.

Play Fair 2008 is run by a campaign coalition of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the International Textile, Leather and Garment Workers' Federation (ITGLWF) and the Clean Clothes Campaign.

To see a country-by-country list of the 150-plus supporting organisations, visit the campaign website at: www.playfair2008.org. At the time of writing, they include trade unions and other types of workers' rights groups from 34 countries.

The campaign strategy and activities have also benefited from input from the 115 people from 40 countries attending the International Campaign Forum (ICF) in Bangkok in November 2007 (see page 4).

Picking up Speed

As reported in the last edition of this newsletter, PF08 began in June 2007 with a very successful launch of the Play Fair research report 'No Medal for the Olympics on Labour Rights', which investigated working conditions in four Chinese factories making Olympic goods. Actions by activists in Hong Kong and the Netherlands drew worldwide press and media coverage.

By December 2007, this had led to more discussions with the International Olympics Committee (IOC), the latest in a series of meetings that began in 2003. ITUC General Secretary Guy

During a Play Fair 2008 event in Ghent on February 6th, the Olympic "fuwas" made an appearance and were joined by Belgian athletes Cedric van Branteghem (who hopes to compete on behalf of Belgium in the 400 meter sprint at the Beijing Games) and Annick de Decker (who is seeking a spot on Belgium's Olympic rowing team).

"Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles."

- Article One of the Olympic Charter 2004





Paris street action connected with the launch of the Play Fair campaign in France: "Jouez le jeu pour les JO".

"It is now time for the IOC to recognise that as the owner of a global brand, it has a duty to ensure that a uniform and robust approach is taken by host cities to ensure that those goods that they procure bearing the Olympics logo have been made in work-places that meet the highest employment standards."
 - Neil Kearney, General Secretary, International Textile, Leather and Garment Workers' Federation (ITGLWF)

Ryder called the meeting "constructive", making campaigners "hopeful that the world's peak sporting body is prepared to take concrete action to put an end to maltreatment of workers who make the products which bring important revenue to the Olympics". However, he added, "There has been little if any actual progress". So, as the year turned, the campaign picked up speed. [For updates on action taken by the IOC, if any, since March, please see the Play Fair website: www.playfair2008.org]

Alternative Torch Set Alight

On 20 March 2008, just days before the official Olympic torch was lit in Greece and sent on its way to Beijing, an alternative Play Fair flame got going. "Catch the Flame" is an electronic relay of labour rights messages via Bluetooth, sms and e-mail to the IOC.

"By joining this alternative torch relay, people around the world can send a clear message that for the Olympics to really be fair, working conditions for those who produce Olympic goods have to be fair as well," said the CCC's Esther de Haan.

Play Fair started its electronic flame relay in the Netherlands, where the flame for the modern Olympic Games was first lit in 1928. As this newsletter went to press the Play Fair flame was on its own epic journey around the world. The relay is due to end in May. The final number of torchbearers will be communicated to the IOC, along with their personal messages and the overall campaign demands.

To see where the electronic torch has been, who carried it, and activities along the route go to: www.catchtheflame.org.

'Fuwas' Turn up in Europe

Meanwhile, in early 2008 national-level Play Fair campaign activities began in full force. In Finland, activists got extensive major media coverage when they baked their own Chinese-style fortune cookies – with a Play Fair message inside – and sent them to members of the Finnish Olympic Committee and team. The athletes and committee members also received copies of a research report published by FinnWatch on Finnish retailers' and sports brands' social responsibilities.



Spanish activists use their phones to catch the virtual flame for labour rights.

German CCC action at an adidas shop in Berlin.

"Once I rented my cooking gas cylinder to arrange some money for a health emergency suffered by my wife. The situation is similar for all of us. One of my friends even sold his blood to get some extra money to meet an emergency." - 50-year-old worker who stitches soccer balls in India

The two CCC organisations in Belgium launched their PF08 campaigns on February 6. At an event in Ghent organised by the Schone Kleren Campagne (Belgium-North CCC), the Olympic 'fuwas' were joined by Belgian athletes Cedric van Branteghem, who is aiming to compete in the 400 meter sprint at the Beijing Games, and rowing team hopeful Annick de Decker.

Meanwhile in Brussels, the decathlete François Gourmet and Bea Diallo, coach of the Belgian national boxing team, participated in the launch of the campaign in French-speaking Belgium. The campaign there is supported by a coalition of 29 organisations, see www.jopropros.be.

With the launch of a Play Fair research report on the sportswear industry in late April the campaign's activities will be broadening their focus to push the key players in the sector to do more to act upon their responsibility to ensure decent conditions for sportswear workers.

For more news of country-based activities, see www.playfair2008.org/news



The Labour Rights 'Fuwas'

The Beijing Olympic Games have a set of five official 'fuwas' or mascots. Each one is linked to one of the five Olympic rings, and to Chinese symbolism relating to elements of nature, personality, athletic prowess and so on.

Play Fair has linked several of the fuwas to key rights that workers in Olympic and sportswear supply chains are demanding including a living wage, freedom of association and the right to a safe and healthy workplace.



One of the Play Fair campaign's "labour rights fuwas"; this one supports workers' right to organize.



The Play Fair campaign is calling upon the sportswear industry to pay workers a living wage.

Campaign Resources

Websites:

www.playfair2008.org: in English, Chinese and Japanese

www.catchtheflame.org: in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and Chinese

Reports:

'No Medal for the Olympics on Labour Rights', Play Fair 2008, June 2007, www.playfair2008.org/reports

'Clearing the hurdles: Steps to improving wages and working conditions in the global sportswear industry', see www.playfair2008.org/reports

Campaigning materials:

PF08 brochure (8 pages) and two A2 posters, all available in English, French, Spanish, German and Chinese: www.playfair2008.org/downloads

Action!!!

Please take part in the various e-actions that Play Fair is running via the campaign website. See www.playfair2008.org for the latest action requests.

Urgent Appeals

Bangladesh: One Freed but Repression Continues

Thanks to concerted pressure from human and labour rights activists around the world, the Bangladeshi authorities released Mehedi Hasan from custody on February 3, 2008. The outcome is an enormous relief, but Hasan's arrest is a reminder that worker rights advocates in Bangladesh are under serious threat.

Hasan, a field investigator for the Worker Rights Consortium based in Washington DC (USA), was arrested by Bangladeshi security forces on January 24, 2008. Within days the CCC had joined human rights and labour rights groups across the globe to demand his immediate release. National-level CCCs called on brands and retailers who source from Bangladesh to intervene on Hasan's behalf, and embassies to appeal to the Bangladeshi Government for his release.

Since January 2007, the military-backed 'caretaker' government in Bangladesh has banned political and trade union activities and given itself "state of emergency" powers which profoundly limit civil rights. And the crackdown appears to be intensifying. As well as targeting local labour activists, Bangladesh police has confirmed monitoring of several international organisations and staff members for allegedly engineering or inciting "subversive" activities.

The following message was received from CCC contacts in Bangladesh just after Hasan's release:

"Mr. Hassan's case is no isolated incident. According to information provided by the media more than a dozen persons so far have been indicted in cases filed in the past months. Electronic communication (cell phone, e-mail) of several concerned persons is also under surveillance. Media reports indicate that anyone considered a potential troublemaker irrespective of her/his profession or occupation would

be indicted. Nobody is safe at this moment. Many trade union leaders are staying away from their known places as precaution.

The measures taken by the present regime are creating a repressive environment. The concerns of the workers or the root causes of the turbulence have not been considered in the least. Unruly workers, 'outsiders', unionists and rights activist all have been blamed to the extent that an 'international conspiracy' has been 'discovered' as the cause of the prolonged unrest. Even the deaths of workers on duty get lost in this deliberate construction of reasoning...

Against this backdrop, the arrest of Mr. Hassan and the implication of others have the potential to escalate a situation that would seriously damage the operation of the garment industry. The [burden] of this fall-out would be borne by over two million workers, most of whom are women."

Serious unrest in Bangladesh's garment industry has been commonplace over the last few years, in part due to the inability of workers to express their grievances through union representation. The appalling conditions in the Bangladesh industry include poverty wages, dire health and safety conditions, and long working hours. It is estimated that 90% of garment workers are women.

Mehedi Hasan, factory investigator for the Worker Rights Consortium in Bangladesh, was released from jail in response to pressure from the CCC and labor rights advocates across the globe.





The office of the DGZ Migrant Worker Centre in Shenzhen after it was ransacked. The Centre re-opened in February.

China: Migrant Worker Activist Brutally Attacked

On November 20, 2007, Huang Qingnan of the Dagongzhe (DGZ) Migrant Worker Centre in Shenzhen, China was seriously injured after being stabbed by two unidentified men. The assault followed on the heels of two other violent attacks on the DGZ Centre in which other unidentified groups destroyed the office. The Centre provides a free library, labour law education, and free legal consultation to migrant workers in Shenzhen.

Qingnan believes the Centre is being targeted for its efforts to raise awareness about China's new Labour Contract Law. [See page 20.] The law has the potential to improve employment conditions in China - including the regulation of labour contracts and the standardisation of severance pay and compensation to aggrieved workers - but only if workers are aware of their rights and can demand that it is enforced. This makes the educational outreach of the DGZ Centre vitally important. The migrant labour force comprises more than 70% of Shenzhen's population. It is estimated that as much as 90% of the total labor force in the Shenzhen garment industry are women under 25 years of age classified as migrant workers.

Huang Qingnan was discharged from the hospital on 10 January, 2008. He will need rehabilitation in order to maximise his ability to walk. The DGZ Centre re-opened following Chinese New Year, but the threat of violent attacks has prevented it from resuming its outreach labour law education.

The CCC has called on local and national authorities in China, including the official

All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), to condemn the attacks publicly, conduct a thorough investigation and support the Centre in fully resuming its work.

To send a letter to Chinese officials and the ACFTU in support of the DGZ Centre, see www.cleanclothes.org/urgent/07-12-13.htm

The repressive measures taken by the Bangladeshi Government fail to address the legitimate concerns of workers and the underlying causes of the turmoil. All stakeholders, including factory owners, brands and public agencies, must take up their responsibilities to help halt the repression and ensure that the garment industry develops a constructive approach to dealing with worker rights violations. The CCC asks supporters to urge Bangladesh's Chief Advisor to end the repression and restore the fundamental freedoms of workers and workers' rights activists.

To take action in support of Bangladeshi labour rights activists and workers, see: www.cleanclothes.org/urgent/08-02-05.htm

Update on Fibre and Fabrics International

Thanks to all of you for supporting the CCC and the India Committee of the Netherlands in our case involving Fibre and Fabrics International (FFI) and its subsidiary Jeans Knit Private Limited (FFI/JKPL) in India.

For a current and detailed update regarding the case, please visit our website at www.cleanclothes.org/urgent/ffi.htm. We expect to give a fuller picture of the status of the case in a future edition of this newsletter.



CCC network members called on the jeans brand G-Star to stop being a "Gag Star" at the International Campaign Forum in Bangkok. At the time, G-Star was the major buyer at FFI.

In Brief

New 'Labour Contract Law' in China

The Labour Contract Law came into force in China on January 1, 2008. The new law – on paper at least – makes it harder for companies to fire workers at will and outlines specific compensation terms. It also imposes penalties for hiring workers without a contract, a significant problem in the new industries of the country.

In the run up, the country saw unprecedented levels of labour unrest and mass lay-offs. The new law requires employers to guarantee the jobs of workers with more than ten years of experience until their official retirement age. In response, there have been reports of widespread factory closures and shedding of long-term employees.



China's new Labour Contract Law came into force on January 1, 2008.

Significantly, the new law gives the official All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) opportunities to negotiate collective labour agreements. The question is whether the ACFTU can use this to reform itself into a genuine trade union. At the same time, the law provides a campaign focus for worker activists and their supporters. The Beijing Olympics provides such an opportunity for international solidarity, see Play Fair 2008 pages 15-17.

"The new contract law of China – opportunities and threats", IHLO, Hong Kong, December 2007. Available at: www.ihlo.org/LRC/W/101207.html

See also Urgent Appeals (page 18) concerning violence against Huang Qingnan of the Dagongzhe (DGZ) Migrant Worker Centre in Shenzhen.

Jo-In: Turkey Project Concludes

The Joint Initiative on Corporate Accountability and Workers' Rights (Jo-In), ended its four-year pilot project in December 2007. It was founded by the CCC, together with a number of multi-stakeholder initiatives (the Ethical Trading Initiative, Fair Labor Association, Fair Wear Foundation, Worker Rights Consortium, and Social Accountability International). The aim of the project was to find ways of replacing the duplication of effort that goes on between MSIs and to identify what is good practice in code implementation in particular regarding freedom of association, living wages and hours of work. The pilot project took place in Turkey.

A well-attended concluding conference was held at Istanbul's Bosphorus University on December 11, 2007. The end of project report is due out in mid-May, 2008.

Positive developments from the project include a draft common code. There is better understanding between the participating organizations of both the limits and areas of possible collaboration. Plus there is very valuable documentation on best practice in monitoring and assessment, and on brand purchasing practices.

Above all, there has been much more discussion with brands and suppliers about the need for – and benefits to all from – real freedom of association for the workers.

As for the downside, the competitive global market continues to depress wages and conditions. The sector in Turkey is 80% reliant on non-registered and therefore unprotected workers in a multi-sub-contract system, including outsourcing to home-based workers, and to other countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Bulgaria and Moldova. A separate study on subcontracting was undertaken as part of the project and will be published shortly. Many more of the lessons learned will be outlined in the project report, forthcoming from Jo-In.

For the next stage, a Jo-In Forum has been formed to continue with some areas of cooperation, such as developing the Jo-In Code further, and perhaps freedom of association training.

www.jo-in.org (in English and Turkish)

See also: "Jo-In: Trying to make codes work", CCC Newsletter No. 22, October 2006

Sector-Wide Solutions for Indonesia

For over a decade, the CCC and Oxfam Australia have taken action on countless cases of labour violations in Indonesia's garment and sports shoe industry. While workers in Indonesia have witnessed relative gains in labour standards, systemic violations have also become obvious. The sportswear/garments sector in Indonesia is characterised by short-term labour contracts, irresponsible and illegal treatment of workers during factory closures, and widespread infringement of workers' rights to organise and bargain collectively.

This continuing abuse inspired this detailed set of "sector-wide solutions" for Indonesia. In effect, it is a reminder to buyers of their duties to ensure that laws and international standards are adhered to by their suppliers – and by themselves. For example, the abuse of short-term contracts seems conveniently to fall between the cracks of company codes and monitoring. Employers use such contracts to side-step responsibilities, such as prohibitions against discrimination for union activities or pregnancy, which are laid down in codes and Indonesian employment law but are not stringently implemented. One solution is for brands to ensure that suppliers provide permanent contracts to employees who have completed two short-term contracts.

The document is being circulated to brands sourcing in Indonesia, as well as multi-stakeholder initiatives and other interested parties.

*"Sector-Wide Solutions for the Sports Shoe and Apparel Industry in Indonesia", CCC and Oxfam Australia, 2008.
Available at: http://www.cleanclothes.org/ftp/080320_Sector-Wide_Solutions_in_Indonesia.pdf*



Parkati, a former employee of FILA's sport shoe supplier PT Tae Hwa in Indonesia, fought to get workers' back-pay and severance pay after the factory suddenly closed.

California's Garment Workers Get their Wages Back

Sweatshop Watch in the US has successfully eliminated administrative and governmental obstacles that have prevented garment workers in the US state of California from receiving compensation when they have been cheated out of their wages.

In California, workers can apply as a last resort for compensation from the state Garment Special Account. In the city of Los Angeles alone, according to Sweatshop Watch, nearly 70% of garment factories fail to pay federal minimum wages and overtime, totalling nearly US\$82 million in unpaid wages each year.

Even a successful wage claim via the Labour Commissioner may not force an employer to pay up. In such a situation, California's garment workers can apply to the Special Account. However, Sweatshop Watch received many reports of workers being told there were insufficient funds, or put through long bureaucratic delays.

So they lobbied the state Legislature, and won an increase in the annual funds available and a streamlining of the process. California's garment workers can now call on funds of up to US\$500,000 a year, and the backlog of claims is being processed.

www.sweatshopwatch.org



Adidas' parking spot at the closed Spotec factory in Indonesia, where workers were refused their full legal entitlements.





New Resources

A Full Package Approach to Codes of Conduct

Sweatshop abuses are a systemic problem. No company is totally clean or dirty, and there are no quick fixes. In this guide, the CCC offers guidelines on what companies can do to better assess, implement, and verify compliance with labour standards in their supply chains, and to eliminate abuses where and when they arise.

"Full Package Approach to Labour Codes of Conduct: Four major steps companies can take to ensure their products are made under humane conditions", CCC, 2008. Available from May 2008 on the CCC website, in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, and Turkish.

Useful Changes to the Law?

The UK is home to many global corporations. What legal reforms might help curb the negative environmental and social impact of British companies? This report, commissioned by the Corporate Responsibility (CORE) Coalition, considers options in such areas as British company law, criminal law, taxation, and freedom of information. It asks how better laws would have changed the outcomes of past cases and prevent future problems. Case studies include garment workers' rights in Bangladesh, Tesco's buying practices in South Africa, and the cut flowers industry.

"Corporate Abuse in 2007: A discussion paper on what changes in the law need to happen", by Jennifer A. Zerk, Corporate Responsibility (CORE) Coalition, UK, 22 November 2007. Available at: www.corporate-responsibility.org/C2B/PressOffice/display.asp?ID=89&Type=2

Improving Purchasing Practices

In late 2007, a meeting of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) in the UK discussed how purchasing practices tend to undermine working conditions in the supply chain, and what the solutions might be. Among the 100 participants, 60 were from ETI member companies. Real-life examples of the impact of buyers' practices were examined, and are set out in this report. The main aim is for company staff responsible for purchasing to use it, to understand better the impact of their own activities and find better ways of working so that they no longer undermine labour standards.

"Purchasing Practices: Case studies to address impacts of purchasing practices on working conditions", Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), UK, report from a members' meeting, 29 November 2007. Available at: www.ethicaltrade.org/Z/lib/2007/11/pp-forum/index.shtml

Organising Ethical Trade: A UK-US Comparison

This report summarises two years of academic research into the contrasting ways in which ethical trade has developed in the UK and US. It identifies many differences, including: the sectors involved - clothing and food in the UK, clothing only in the US; Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives - unified in the UK, fragmented in the US; and in the willingness of retailers to work with non-business groups - more in the UK, less in the US; and so on. On both sides of the Atlantic, however, the authors conclude there is increased willingness for greater collaboration and harmonisation of standards and approaches.

"Organising Ethical Trade: a UK-US Comparison", by Dr. Martin Buttle, Dr. Alex Hughes and Professor Neil Wrigley, Universities of Newcastle and Southampton, 2007. Available at the CCC website: www.cleanclothes.org/ftp/07-ESRCStakeholderReport.pdf





UN Expert Meeting on MSIs

On November 6-7, 2007, the CCC International Secretariat and Professor John Ruggie, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative on Business and Human Rights, organised a summit hosted by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. About 50 experts attended, from a wide variety of Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs), companies, governments and civil society. They examined what makes for effective MSI governance and credible implementation of supply chain codes. The results, written up by Professor Ruggie's team, will inform his final report to the UN Human Rights Council in 2008.

"Improving the Human Rights Performance of Business through Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives", summary of the United Nations SRSG Consultation, November 6-7, 2007, the Hague, Netherlands.

Available at:
www.cleanclothes.org/ftp/MSI_Consultation_Summary.pdf

Other reports in the series are available at: www.reports-and-materials.org/SRSG-Ruggie-documents-list-15-Jan-2008.pdf

The Plastic Killers

The Plastic Killers is a documentary about the murder of the Cambodian union leader Chea Vichea in 2004, and the imprisonment of two innocent men, Sok Samouen and Born Samnang, for the crime. Vichea was president of the Free Trade Union of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC). The film, by American Bradley Cox, is part of a larger project exploring the themes of impunity, corruption and the lack of independence of the courts in Cambodia. The Cambodian police confiscated the Plastic Killers and it is now impossible to find it there. Fortunately, it is available on-line in Khmer as well as English.

"The Plastic Killers", a film by Bradley Cox, 2007, 50 minutes, can be viewed online (www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYt1zTqKfas) in English and Khmer versions. Also available in DVD from the CCC International Secretariat. Full-length documentary "Who Killed Chea Vichea?", Loud Mouth Films, due out by end 2008. www.whokilledcheavichea.com

For more information on the case of Sok Samouen and Born Samnang, see the urgent appeal at:
www.cleanclothes.org/urgent/07-02-08.htm#action

Lean Manufacturing: Workers More at Risk

'Lean manufacturing' describes production by workers organised into small teams to complete an entire product from raw material processing through to final assembly and shipment. The system is replacing traditional assembly-lines in many places, including China. This study examines a Chinese sports shoe factory of 13,000 workers supplying one international buyer. The researchers found that lean manufacturing increases workers' exposure to health and safety hazards and the intensification of work leads to greater ergonomic and stress-related problems. Workers' training and participation in identifying and solving problems is critical for reducing risk, but the lack of independent, member-controlled unions in China hampers this.

"Lean Manufacturing Comes to China: A Case Study of Its Impact on Workplace Health and Safety", by Garrett Brown and Dara O'Rourke, International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health, Vol.13, No.3, July-September 2007.
Available at: mhssn.igc.org/IJOEH_1303_Brown.pdf

Information on "Alternative" or "Ethical" Clothes

Following campaigns by the international anti-sweatshop movement and increased consumer interest in fair trade and ethical shopping, a number of initiatives claiming to sell "ethical", "alternative" or "fairly produced" clothes have sprung up. The standards and processes of these initiatives vary greatly. For the concerned consumer, it is important to be able to assess and compare these different standards and to look critically at claims made by the new "ethical" market.

To help consumers make informed choices, the Clean Clothes Campaign has compiled an overview of these brands on its website. The focus is on small brands that are attempting to challenge current trading systems and to find a different way of doing business. They are: Dignity Returns/Solidarity Factory, No Sweat and Blackspot Shoes. These brands may have long-term partnership-based sourcing relationships and may manufacture through partner cooperatives or artisan groups. New and updated information about other brands that make ethical claims or are perceived to be ethical, such as Gap Red, Edun, Kuyichi and American Apparel is included in the regular companies section on the CCC website.

For more information please see
<http://www.cleanclothes.org/companies/ethical.htm>.



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