



Eliminating forced labour in South India

Statement in support of joint international efforts to eliminate Sumangali practices and other forms of forced labour in the South India garment and textile industries

Since 2007, FWF has been aware of Sumangali and other forms of forced labour in South India, and has supported the efforts of local partner organisations to eliminate these practices. (See the [2007 update on Tirupur](#) and the [2010 short paper on Sumangali practices](#).)

Most instances of Sumangali and other forms of forced labour take place in the textile mills rather than at the cut-make-trim stage, where FWF has its primary focus. In 2010, FWF received signals that the prevalence of the Sumangali scheme was growing. FWF and its member companies sourcing from Tamil Nadu have since taken a more active position, laying out a [strategy to combat the Sumangali scheme](#) in their entire supply chains, if and when it is found.

FWF is working on this topic with international organisations, including SOMO (Dutch foundation for research on international enterprises), India Committee of The Netherlands (ICN), Anti-Slavery International (ASI) and Ethical Trade Initiative, (ETI), as well as with local organisations in India, including SAVE (Social Awareness and Voluntary Education), Center for Education and Communication (CEC) and trade unions like HMS (Hind Mazdoor Sabha).

On 20 May 2011, SOMO and ICN are publishing a report on the incidence of the Sumangali scheme in the Tamil Nadu garment and textile industries. In reaction to the report, many organisations and brands are working on an appropriate and coherent course of action to eliminate such practices.

Through this statement of support, FWF stresses that it will continue its efforts to eliminate forced labour practices in the South India garment and textile industries. FWF is joined in this statement by and all of its affiliates sourcing from the areas where the Sumangali scheme is prevalent. FWF and its cosignatories will continue to actively seek cooperation with all stakeholders involved.

18 May 2011

Fair Wear Foundation (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

Continental Clothing Company (London, UK)

Jack Wolfskin (Idstein, Germany)

McGregor Fashion Group (Driebergen, The Netherlands)

Nudie Jeans (Göteborg, Sweden)

Switcher (Lausanne, Switzerland)