

May 28, 2014

Parliamentary Questions by members Voordewind (ChristianUnion), Gesthuizen (Socialist Party), Van der Staaij (Reformed Political Party) and Van Ojik (GreenLeft) to the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation on garment companies who provide no insight into their approach to bonded (child) labour in India.

1. Do you know the paper '*Small steps - Big Challenges*'¹ by FNV Mondiaal and the India Committee of the Netherlands showing that most of the Dutch (or in the Netherlands active) garment companies provide little or no insight into their approach to bonded (child) labour in South India, while approximately 100,000 children are victims of that kind of labour?
2. Are you familiar with the report '*Behind The Showroom - The hidden reality of India's garment workers*' (May 2014)² of the French human rights organization FIDH in which 'home countries' of garments companies are asked for mandatory chain transparency, for measures to provide adequate compensation to victims as well as to raise the issue of the Sumangali system and other violations of labour rights in the garment industry in the bilateral relations with India? Are you planning to discuss these proposals with your French colleague and jointly propose them to other OECD countries during the High Level meeting in June 2014?
3. Are you willing to ask the companies, mentioned in '*Small Steps - Big Challenges*' - in particular the Dutch garment companies - how they will implement their due diligence while purchasing garment from South India, especially their approach to possible forms of exploitation and bonded (child) labour? Are you willing to ask them to report about that publicly?
4. Are you also prepared to urge companies active in The Netherlands to participate in the working group "bonded labour" in the framework of the Plan of Action of the Dutch textile and garment sector?
5. Are there any Dutch garment companies mentioned in the report that are using funding and other forms of support from the government? If so, what are the consequences of lack of transparency and due diligence - in this serious issue regarding the non-compliance with the OECD Guidelines - for this government support?
6. Are you willing to raise (the issue of) this large-scale and serious violation of children's and human rights with the relevant Indian authorities, if possible to do this in the European and OECD context, as well as in cooperation with the ILO, and to contribute substantially to the solution of this structural human rights issue in which Dutch companies are involved?

(translation by ICN)

¹ See: <http://www.indianet.nl/pb140404e.html>

² See: <http://www.fidh.org/en/asia/india/15273-behind-the-showroom-the-hidden-reality-of-india-s-garment-workers>