

August 29, 2017

Parliamentary Questions by the members Sazias and Van Brenk (both 50PLUS) to the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, the Minister of Economic Affairs, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment on the research “The Dark Sites of Granites” [no. 2017Z11155]

Question 1

Have you taken notice of the report *The Dark Sites of Granite - Modern slavery, child labour and unsafe work in Indian Granite Quarries* (August 2017)⁽¹⁾?

Question 2

Is it true that the extraction of natural stone has been regarded for many years as an activity with an enhanced risk of unsafe and unhealthy working conditions? Is it correct that you already discussed in 2015 with the trade organisations to examine what support the government could offer to sectors in order to reach an agreement on the prevention of slavery and child labour in their production chains (especially for natural stone) and on the improvement of working conditions? What has been the result of this all? Could it be concluded that «working on fair work» is still in its infancy and that there has been relatively little progress in the Indian granite quarries? If so, how do you explain this?⁽²⁾

Question 3

Are you willing to raise the problems of debt slavery, child labour and poor labour conditions again with your Indian colleagues, and to take joint action to further combat these commonly recognised injustices?

Question 4

How have the government and the importing companies taken their responsibility in the past years to improve corporate social responsibility, especially with regard to the natural stone quarries, and to make into a reality? To what extent is it secured that the guidelines for multinational enterprises (OECD Guidelines) indeed help to prevent company activities having negative effects on mankind and the environment, such as reproducing unfair employment and exploitation?

Question 5

What are you going to do in concrete terms with regard to the Dutch companies mentioned in the report, which do imports granite from the quarries with very poor labour conditions?

Question 6

How do you, apart from your commitment to “fair labour”⁽³⁾, actually pursue and improve sustainable procurement policies by companies in general?

Question 7

Are you willing to oblige companies to be fully transparent about their supply chain (policies) in terms of their due diligence to promote human rights?

Question 8

How are you going to ensure that the government and other authorities, who use granite or natural stone from India (or elsewhere) for buildings, monuments and pavement, prevent and combat the violation of human and labour rights as described in the report? How will you address other authorities like municipalities, provinces and water boards on this subject?

Explanation: *These questions are a supplement to previous questions about this subject by the members Voordewind (ChristianUnion), Van den Hul (Labour Party) and Diks (GreenLeft), submitted on August 25, 2017: <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/kv170825e.pdf>*

[translation by India Committee of the Netherlands; original document: <http://www.inbdianet.nl/pdf/kv170829.pdf>]

Notes

1. *The Dark Sites of Granite*, India Committee of the Netherlands, Stop Child Labour and Kerk in Actie, August 2017. See: <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/TheDarkSitesOfGranite-abstract.pdf>
2. Policy Document 2014-2015, no. 2465: <http://www.indianet.nl/pdfkv150604e.pdf>
And *Rock Bottom - Modern Slavery and Child Labour in South Indian Granite Quarries*, May 2015, <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/RockBottom.pdf>
And newspaper *Trouw*, July 17, 2007: *Voor een dubbeltje op de eerste rang* on labour conditions in garniet quarries in India: <https://www.trouw.nl/home/voor-een-dubbeltje-op-de-eerste-rang~a016628c/>
3. Letter by the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation to the Parliament on *Werken aan eerlijk Werk* ("Working towards fair labour"), August 23, 2017: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2017/08/23/kamerbrief-over-werken-aan-eerlijk-werk>

