

WORLD CUP 2006 – BACKGROUND PAPER

World cup 2006 is round the corner, there is excitement, anticipation and joy, with these comes to the forefront definite and irrefutable worry and concern over the issue of child labour. Children have been engaged in football making for a long time, Pakistan is the largest producer of footballs, with India in the second place. Research and reports reveal leading names like Nike, Adidas, Puma, Reebok and Decathlon were known to employ children. In 1996, ITGLWF, FIET, ICFTU and FIFA agreed to a set of code on labour practice, this included the following:

- There shall be no use of forced or bonded labour
- Equality of opportunity and treatment regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, nationality, social origin and other distinguishing characteristic shall be provided
- There shall be no use of child labour. Only workers above age of 15 years shall be engaged
- The right of workers to form and join trade unions and to bargain collectively shall be recognized
- Wages and benefits paid shall meet at least legal or industrial minimum standards and should be sufficient to meet basic needs and provide some discretionary income
- Hours of work shall comply with applicable laws and industrial standards. Workers shall not on a regular basis be required to work excess of 48 hours per week nor more than 12 hours overtime, and shall be provided with at least one day off for every 7 day period.
- A safe and hygienic working environment shall be provided, the best occupational health and safety practice shall be promoted, bearing in mind the prevailing knowledge of the industry and of any specific hazard.

The Situation, then: It was agreed that each licensee licensed by FIFA under the FIFA Denominations Programme, and each contractor and subcontractor engaged by the Licensee would follow this code of conduct. World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI) has also played a key role in this issue.

This led to the Atlanta Agreement to Eliminate Child Labor in the Soccer Ball Industry in Pakistan in February 1997, with ILO supporting well trained inspectors to visit villages where stitching was done, creating a protocol of surprise inspections.

The European Parliament session document (1994-2004) stated that the use of child labour in the football industry is still common practice world-wide, despite the fact that FIFA and the sporting goods companies are bound by a contract prohibiting the use of child labour in its licensed products. In 2000 FIFA confided that there was no way of making sure that the 'premium balls' featuring the company's brand name and the name of the event (in this case the 2002 World Cup) were only sourced from official FIFA-licensees. By refusing to show any evidence of its monitoring system FIFA is denying the public the right to know what kind of progress is truly being made.

In 1996, there were approximately 7,000 children engaged in stitching footballs in the Sialkot district of Pakistan.

In 1997, ILO, UNICEF and the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed the Partners' Agreement on a joint project to prevent and eliminate child labour under the age of 14 in the football manufacturing industry. Sialkot is the centre of Pakistan's football-producing industry, a major hard currency earner. Almost 20 per cent of the workforce was made up of children at the time of the Agreement's signing.

The April 2002 report on working conditions of soccer and football workers in Mainland China by the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee reveals the violation of labour rights by large multinational sporting goods manufacturers. The list of labour violations cited in the report includes wages below the legal minimum, long working hours and restrictions on personal freedom of the workers

In 2002 some 170 child workers have been found by the 15 IPEC monitors at participating manufacturer sites.¹

However, as of 2003 ILO-IPEC is no longer monitoring the registered football stitching sites of participating manufacturers in Sialkot. An independent agency called Independent Monitoring Association for Child Labour (IMAC) based in Sialkot is now at full capacity and is responsible for monitoring compliance at the stitching centres.

All this resulted in the the Red Card to Child Labor, initiated by the ILO which collaborated with the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI) and the FIFA facilitated the adoption of the Code of Conducts by the WFSGI and specifically the monitoring of the elimination of child labor in India and Pakistan's soccer ball industry.

FIFA 2002 campaign by Global March: Children in Pakistan were found stitching Adidas footballs, a major sponsor for the 2002 FIFA World Cup. Even after the implementation of the ILO-IPEC project in Sialkot district, Thus, Global March Against Child Labour initiated a huge mass mobilization campaign called "Kick Child Labour Out Of The World" in 2002. With support from Senator Tom Harkins and George Miller, Member of Congress letters were exchanged between the FIFA executive committee, Mr. Zen-Ruffinen, then General Secretary, Federation of International Football Associations and the Global March demanding to end child labour in the soccer industry and to urge FIFA to monitor the manufacture of sports goods and products. Unfortunately, FIFA, Adidas, or other companies and organisations responsible for ensuring fair play in football stitching demonstrated no transparency at all in their monitoring system.

Eventually, after many appeals and demands the achievements were phenomenal, not the least being the massive and high profile awareness of people, officials and organizations to the plight of children working in the soccer industry. Increased implementation of better labour practice in the sports good industry, especially soccer ball stitching, Improved working conditions and wages for adult workers in the industry, refocusing on the elimination of all forms of child labour, not only the worst forms, Increased number of countries ratifying the ILO Convention 182, more established data on multinational sporting companies exploiting child labour.

¹ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/about/factsheet/facts02.htm#03>

The impact of which was felt in every corner of the globe with celebrities and heroes some of them being Brandi Chastain - US Women's National Team, Pope John Paul II, José Saramago - Nobel Prize Recipient, Senator Tom Harkin and U.S. Representative George Miller, Argentinean National Team, River Plate Club, Craig Ziadie - DC United, Tiffany Roberts - Carolina Courage Club, Eduardo Galeano - South American writer and Eddie Firmani - Ex-coach of New York Cosmos pledging to join the support against child labour.

The campaign also resulted in a strong European Parliament resolution prohibiting the use of abusive and exploitative child labour in all supply chains in the sporting goods industry. The success of the World Cup Campaign in engaging governments, FIFA and the public on child labour issues has further shaped corporate social responsibility and ethical trade practices in the world.

The petition campaign lasted until the end of the World Cup, when the collected signatures were presented to FIFA. This was followed by various activities that took place in Japan, Korea and around the world.

FIFA has been playing an active role since, providing financial support for child labour initiatives amounted to USD 1,100,000 in the first two phases. For the third phase, FIFA has already committed additional USD 540,000

Post FIFA 2002 campaign: In Jan 2006, FIFA officials visited Sialkot, Pakistan as part of the 'Elimination of Child Labour in the Soccer Ball Industry' program.

In spite of these developments little was done to ensure application and poor monitoring and evaluation processes where millions of children continued to work for contractors producing footballs outside the main stitching centres in most inhuman and abusive conditions.

In 2005, the Fair Labour Association accredited monitors uncovered 24 instances of noncompliance with the FLA Child Labor Code provision or 1.5 percent of total non compliances, with 49% in South Asia, 26% in South East Asia and East Asia 21 % in East Asia (Fair Labour Association, 2005). The nonconformity was more related with incomplete or false age documentation, factories not addressing legal provisions applicable to juvenile workers who have reached the minimum legal working age as defined by local law, but due to their age are limited in the kind of work that they are allowed to do.

A report by the Fair Trade this January 2006 states that though NGO's and the media have addressed the issue, but use of child labour and unfair labour practice in the sporting goods industry continues to be a major issue as thousands of people stitching in developing countries are producing the balls for the matches. Vision has 162 workers in the main factory, and 1,100 people who stitch spread across 19 IMAC -registered stitching centers. At present, the factory only sells small volumes to the fair market. It produces about 0.7 million balls per year, out of which fair-trade product amounts to 20,000 balls. Thus still only 0.3 % of the volume is fair-traded (Fair Trade-News bulletin, 2006)

The 34th Progress Report of the IMAC, 2006 states that monitoring was conducted in 2,236 centers and 2,060 stitches were monitored from different districts including

Gujranwala, Gujarat, Narowal, Hafiz Abad and Sheikhpura. IMAC has also monitored the working conditions where only 424 centers were recorded. Which leaves at least 806 centers non-monitored because 375 of them were village based centers and their conditions are not monitored because they are almost always the same; 290 centers were found closed either due to non availability of material or harvesting season or sub-contractors' personal reasons; 120 centers were found permanently closed either because their sub-contractor had left this work or the manufacturer had closed the center and 19 centers were in the process of being established.

This brings us to the debatable issue of accuracy in the monitoring mechanisms initiated by the IMAC, ILO and FIFA.

Focus beyond football stitching: Though there is considerable awareness where football stitching is concerned many areas remain unexplored. There are numerous children still involved with producing football equipments and accessories including shoes, clothes, caps, goal nets and lots of other products. Children continue to be exploited by all forms of slavery including trafficking. There have even been reports and articles highlighting the trafficking of children and women into Germany to work as prostitutes for the world cup 2006. According to a report by ILO in 2004, nearly 8.4 million children are being forced into slavery, trafficking and prostitution.

One newspaper was quoted saying "Germany's sex industry gears up. The combination of nail-biting soccer matches and crowds of beer-swilling males could mean hefty profits for Germany's sex industry. It is deploying an army of prostitutes to satisfy the needs of libidinous fans during the month-long 2006 World Cup. Some 1 million foreign visitors are expected to flood into Germany from June 9 and many expect large numbers of male spectators to wind down after a match in the arms of a prostitute or in the red light districts of the 12 host cities."²

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), there are some 15,000 victims being trafficked to work in Germany at any given time. German media had reported in recent months that up to 40,000 women and children would be smuggled into the country for sex work.

This rising concern has forced MP's from all parties from Europe to launch "Red card to forced prostitution" to curb the thousands of innocent children being forced into prostitution and a life of misery. European parliamentarians are calling on the European Commission, the European Union (EU) executive, to exert pressure on European governments to take active measures to fight human trafficking and step up efforts to identify women and children being moved illegally through EU countries to Germany during this summer's football World Cup.

Keeping all this and more in mind Global March Against Child Labour appeals to FIFA and the national football associations to make the World Cup 2006 championship in Germany the first international event free of child labour and child trafficking including compliance with fair labour standards. Global March would also like to remind the European Union about its Convention no: 197, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings that draws focus

² http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006%5C03%5C10%5Cstory_10-3-2006_pg2_23

on the protection of victims of trafficking and to safeguard of their rights. It is also aimed at preventing trafficking as well as prosecuting traffickers. The Convention provides for the setting up of an independent monitoring mechanism guaranteeing parties' compliance with its provisions.

The Global March Against Child Labour thus demands that European Union and Governments:

- Ensures that the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the Palermo Protocol are enforced
- To step up efforts to identify children and women being moved illegally into Germany and take active measures to combat human trafficking, especially the trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation or otherwise.

The Global March Against Child Labour thus demands that FIFA:

- Ensures that no children are employed in the football industry and other FIFA-licensed goods production and that the labour rights in the contract between FIFA and sporting goods companies are fully implemented before the start of the 2006 FIFA World Cup;
- Improves the present contract between FIFA and the sporting goods companies up to the level of the original agreement between FIFA and the international trade unions, including the payment of 'living wages' to the workers;
- Strengthen the existing independent as well as the statutory inspection systems from which FIFA-licensed goods are sourced by sporting goods companies.

The Global March demands that all sporting goods companies:

- Fully implement their contractual agreement with FIFA on child labour and labour rights and pay a 'living wage' to the workers before the start of the 2006 FIFA World Cup;
- Disclose all the production sites of sporting goods and publish independently verified reports that their goods are produced in compliance with the FIFA Contract with the provision of living wages;
- Implement a Code of Labour Practice of which the quality is not less than the agreement reached in 1996 between FIFA and the international trade unions.

The Global March urges all national football associations and football clubs to:

- Include the original agreement between FIFA and the international trade unions in their contracts with sponsors and suppliers of sporting goods and to make sure that this agreement is independently monitored and verified;

- Request FIFA, WFSGI and sporting goods companies to make sure that no child labour is employed in the football industry, that former working children are properly rehabilitated and that the wages and working conditions of adults meet the standards set by the agreement between FIFA and the international trade unions.

The Global March urges the ILO to:

- Develop a credible and independent inspection system involving trade unions and NGOs in order to enforce and monitor the ILO labour standards in the sporting goods industry worldwide.
- Based on the above inspection system, develop ILO models of cooperation between public and private sectors to build effective methods of labour inspection, and assessment and accreditation mechanism of private auditing systems.

The Global March urges UNICEF to:

- Develop and support the implementation of a model programme to rehabilitate and to educate children who have been, or are to be prevented from, victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation and working in the sporting goods industry as well as for other industries worldwide.

The Global March urges people to:

- Refrain from soliciting children and women in prostitution.
- Help the authorities in identifying and reporting illegally trafficked children and child labourers.

Join us in making World Cup 2006 – a child friendly game