

July 11, 2013

Questions from members of Parliament Voordewind (Christian Union), Thieme (Party for the Animals), Krol (50Plus) and Gesthuizen (Socialist Party) to the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation on child labour and low wages in Dutch seed companies in India.

1. Are you familiar with the article from the newspaper *Trouw* on June 29, "Younger than fourteen? Not on the field but in the classroom" and the report "A Tale of Two Companies"ⁱ, just published by the India Committee of the Netherlands and the campaign Stop Child Labour? What is your reaction?
2. Are you willing, in line with the plans in the policy paper "Corporate Social Responsibility pays off", to choose the Dutch seed sector or wider the companies abroad who are active with plant reproduction material, as one of the sectors on which a risk analysis according to the 'due diligence' principle of Ruggie will be applied? If not, why not?
3. Are you planning to bring the issue of child labour and low wages - including wage discrimination of women - in the seeds sector to the attention of your Indian counterparts during your mission to India in September, also in view of the jointly working on solutions? If not, why not?
4. Are you willing to address the trade association for companies in the plant reproduction sector, Plantum, on the implementation of the 'Plantum statement on the prevention of child labour'? Are you also prepared to make further arrangements for the implementation of the statement and the still missing public reporting on it?
5. Are you going to obtain further information from Bejo Zaden [Bejo Seeds], now they are faced with child labour in their production chain again in addition to detailed parliamentary questions about it in 2010, on their concrete plans to prevent this in the future?
6. Has Bejo Zaden's joint venture partner Bejo Sheetal indeed joined the Fair Labor Association, as reported in the answers to parliamentary questions of 13 September 2010ⁱⁱ, partly on the basis of which the Ministers of Economic Affairs and Foreign Affairs at that time concluded that they were confident that 'Bejo Zaden would come to an improvement trajectory in the foreseeable future'? If not, why not?
7. Do you intend to urge both Nunhems and Bejo Zaden to take action on the payment of at least the official minimum wage, but even better a living wage, by the farmers who supply to their joint venture partners? Are you also intending to raise the matter of wage discrimination against women? Are you willing to inform the Parliament about the results of your contacts with Nunhems and Bejo Zaden on these matters?
8. Which sanctions do you want to apply, in view of your new CSR policy, to more firmly urge companies that repeatedly demonstrated the absence of a 'due diligence' policy in relation to the OECD standards, to still fulfill their International Corporate Social Responsibility obligations?
9. Are you willing to answer these questions well before the [parliamentary] general consultation about Corporate Social Responsibility to be held on 19 September 2013?

ⁱ See: <http://www.indianet.nl/ATaleOfTwoCompanies.html>

ⁱⁱ Aanhangsel van de Handelingen, vergaderjaar 2010-2011, nrs 338 en 3312