

October 31, 2014

Parliamentary questions by the member Voordewind (ChristianUnion) to the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development and the Minister of Foreign Affairs about the report *Flawed Fabrics* on modern slavery and child labour in the production chain of clothing brands

1. Are you familiar with the report *Flawed Fabrics* report by SOMO and the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN)¹ showing that (especially outcaste) Dalit girls and women are the victims of 'modern slavery' and child labour in the Indian textile sector, many of which work in the supply chains of garment brands such as Primark, C&A and Mothercare?
2. Do you agree with the conclusion of the report *Flawed Fabrics* that voluntarism does not work in addressing these abuses and that a mandatory approach is needed to combat slavery and child labour?
3. How do you consider the remark in the article in the *Volkscrant* of October 28, 2014 ("Abuses in the spinning mills of H&M")² that "in this issue H&M is paying the price for its own good behaviour" because "the Swedish fashion group since last year publishes which factories are making their clothing"? Would you agree with me that frontrunners in this area must be in should in fact be supported by making chain transparency mandatory?
4. Are you willing to take the initiative to work on mandatory chain transparency and due diligence in industries with high human rights risks? Are you willing to take an important new step in addition to the Dutch efforts that you already formulate in your answer on parliamentary questions of 24 June last³?
5. Do you also agree that the expectation in your answers on June 24 to questions 3 and 4 by the members Voordewind, Gesthuizen, Van der Staaij and Van Ojik⁴ about the functioning of the working groups under the Plan of Action of the [textile and garment] trade associations, particularly the working group on bonded labour, has not materialized given the fact that only one company is a member of the working group on bonded labour? Are you still willing to urgently address the Dutch companies that import garments from South India on their due diligence when purchasing clothing from South India, especially on the serious violations of human rights as described in *Flawed Fabrics*?
6. Are you prepared to raise this issue during your upcoming trade mission to India with your Indian colleagues, including the new Minister of Labour you mentioned earlier, Narendra Singh Tomar, and to voice your willingness to look with them for solutions?
7. Are there any results of your collaboration with the ILO, the EU and the OECD on the issue of child labour and 'modern slavery' in the Indian textile industry? If so, what results? If not, why not? Do you agree with me that this enormous and serious problem requires a greater commitment of these organizations and are you willing to commit yourself to encourage them to do so?

(translation by ICN)

¹ http://www.somo.nl/publications-nl/Publication_4110-nl?set_language=nl

² <http://www.volkscrant.nl/economie/misstanden-bij-spinnerijen-hm~a3777120/>

³ See answers to parliamentary questions by members Voordewind, Gesthuizen, Van der Staaij and Van Ojik (2014Z09698): <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/kv140624e.pdf>

⁴ See answers to parliamentary questions by members Voordewind, Gesthuizen, Van der Staaij and Van Ojik (2014Z09698): <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/kv140624e.pdf>