

November 23, 2015

Parliamentary questions by the members Voordewind (ChristianUnion) and Van Laar (Labour Party) to the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and the Minister of Foreign Affairs on child labour in gold mining for the electronics sector [no. 2015Z22184]

Question 1

Are you familiar with the report *Gold from Children's Hands - Use of child-mined gold by the electronics industry* by SOMO made on behalf of the coalition Stop Child Labour?

Question 2

What is your reaction to the fact that according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), at least one million children worldwide are working in mining, that in Mali there are approximately 200,000 children working in the gold mining industry and that the number of child workers in the gold mining industry in Mali and other countries is growing significantly? What are you planning to do against these abuses?

Question 3

Do you agree with the recommendation of the report to expand the responsibility to combat child labour of the electronics sector to countries that are exporting gold used in the manufacture of products such as mobile phones, laptops and computers, in addition to "conflict-affected areas"? How do you intend to promote this?

Question 4

Do you also agree with the recommendation that efforts for due diligence by companies in case of conflict minerals should be strengthened, that smelters should play an active role, that child labour and other labour rights should be included in the "conflict-free smelters program" and that the OECD *Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas* should be applied for this? How do you intend to promote this?

Question 5

Are you planning to talk to companies both individually and collectively about the need to combat child labour in the gold mining industry, to be more open about the source of the gold and other commodities and to cooperate on local solutions to help children to school?

Question 6

Are you willing to play an active role in involving other EU countries in combating child labour in the context of the [Dutch] EU presidency? Are you going to raise this subject at the conference *EU and Global Value Chains* organised by your ministry, both plenary and in the relevant panel and to call the European Commission and the member states for joint action?

Question 7

Are you prepared to discuss with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation in Europe (OECD) whether they can play a stronger role in combating child labour through their available resources, programs and contacts?

Question 8

Are you - in the framework of the development cooperation with partner country Mali - willing to contribute to programs of civil society organizations and/or the government to reduce child labour in gold mining areas and to improve education?

Question 9

Are you planning to discuss child labour and working conditions in the (artisanal) gold mining also in dialogue with the governments of other countries where many children work in the gold mining industry such as Burkina Faso, Ghana, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Peru, and seek to make agreements, if possible, on solutions and supporting programs?

Question 10

Are you going to make efforts to make this issue also part of a possible Agreement [Covenant] regarding International Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) in the gold mining industry and the electronics industry?

Question 11

Are you willing to require an active approach to deal with child labour and poor working conditions in the production of gold and other raw materials in the electronics industry in the new policy for sustainable procurement?

Question 12

Are you prepared to answer these questions ahead of the Parliamentary Consultation on December 3, 2015?