

October 3, 2016

Parliamentary questions by member Van Laar (Labour Party) to the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation on the exploitation of Indian workers by Dutch garment companies [no. 2016Z17949]

Question 1

Are you familiar with the conclusions of the research report '*Uitgekleed-Aangekleed: Nederlandse merken, hoge werkdruk en lage lonen in Indiase kledingfabrieken*'⁽¹⁾ of the [Dutch] Clean Clothes Campaign and the India Committee of the Netherlands? What is your reaction to the report? Can you confirm that the companies mentioned let produce are having garments produced for them during the research period in the region that has been investigated?

Question 2

How do you assess the reaction of the companies as included in the report, being very general and meaningless? How do they relate to the recently signed agreement on International Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) in the textile sector, in which it is agreed that companies will sell sustainable clothing? Do you distance yourself from companies which produce garment in factories where garment workers are exploited? If so, how?

Question 3

Are the findings of this research report about the violations of working conditions, conditions of employment and non-payment of minimum wages – in your opinion - reason for a complaint to the arbitration commission of the recently signed textile covenant? Are you aware that information about the precise location of the factories is often not shared with companies, in order to protect workers from retaliation and to ensure that companies exercise due diligence in all their production sites, not just those identified in a report? How can a balance be found between the publication of information about production locations etcetera to companies concerned or an arbitration committee and the protection of workers involved?

Question 4

How do you see the relationship between some of the companies concerned and the *Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI)* certification mark that they have and the findings of the report? Are you going to address the BSCI code of conduct on this?

Question 5

Can you explain what was the role of India during the Asian Regional Living Wage Conference in Pakistan (May 2016)⁽²⁾, co-organized by the Netherlands?

Question 6

Can you explain whether the International Labour Organization (ILO) is involved in the supervision by the Indian government on the payment of the minimum wage in South India? What opportunities do you see to strengthen the role of local or national authorities in India

in the pursuit of honest work in India? What responsibility do Dutch companies have if they have their garments produced in India?

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- (1) <http://www.indianet.nl/pb160927.html>; more elaborate version of this report in English: '*Doing Dutch - A research into the state of pay for workers in garment factories in India working for Dutch fashion brands*', see <http://www.indianet.nl/pb160927e.html>
- (2) Parliamentary document 32 735, no. 153

Translation by ICN; original document: <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/kv161003.pdf>