

October 5, 2016

Parliamentary questions by the members Voordewind (ChristianUnion) and Grashoff (GreenLeft) to the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation on starvation wages and extremely poor working conditions at Indian suppliers to Dutch clothing brands [no. 2016Z18173]

Question 1

Are you familiar with the report '*Uitgekleed-Aangekleed: Nederlandse merken, hoge werkdruk en lage lonen in Indiase kledingfabrieken*'⁽¹⁾ of the Clean Clothes Campaign and the India Committee of the Netherlands and the report '*Eliminating violence against women at work: Making sexual harassment laws real for Karnataka's women garment workers*'⁽²⁾ of the organizations Sisters for Change and Munnade?

Question 2

Do you share the analysis of these reports, which show that a wide range of labour rights is violated, of which in particular approximately 80% of the female employees strongly suffer greatly?

Question 3

What will you do - given the fact that Indian garment companies that supply to Dutch brands usually do not pay more than a third of a living wage - to make sure that moving towards a living wage is picked up urgently by both companies participating in the Covenant Sustainable Clothing and Textile as well as by other clothing companies that are active on the Dutch market?

Question 4

Do you have the intention to urge the Dutch garment companies to come up with a concrete and measurable plan of action as quickly as possible to work towards a living wage in India and elsewhere, as well as to address other serious violations in the sector expeditiously?

Question 5

Are you prepared to take specific action and / or to support organizations that address the extensive sexual, physical and other violence against women in the workplace – as is painfully described in '*Eliminating violence against women at work*' - and make efforts to reduce those?

Question 6

Are you willing to discuss these and other major structural problems in the relationship between the Indian garment suppliers and the Dutch clothing brands with the Indian government, both yourself and via the Dutch Embassy in India, the European Commission and the [EU] Delegation to India, and to insist on working towards joint solutions?

Question 7

Can the OECD, also because of its almost completed *Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Clothing and Footwear Sector*⁽³⁾, also play an active role in finding structural solutions? Are you willing to explore that possibility?

Explanation:

These questions are in addition to previous questions by parliamentary member Van Laar (PvdA), submitted October 3, 2016 (question number 2016Z17949): <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/kv161003e.pdf>

- (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) <http://sistersforchange.org.uk/india-eliminating-violence-against-women-at-work/>
- (3) <https://www.oecd.org/daf/inv/mne/Due-Diligence-Guidance-Responsible-Supply-Chains-Textiles-Footwear.pdf>

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