

**November 27, 2018**

**Parliamentary questions by the member Voordewind (ChristianUnion) to the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation on *child labour and non-payment of minimum wages by Dutch and in the Netherlands active seed companies operating in India* [no. 2018Z22261]**

**Question 1**

Are you familiar with the report "*Remedies for Indian seed workers in sight? - Monitoring report on tackling child labour and non-payment of minimum wages in hybrid cotton and vegetable seeds production in India*" by the India Committee of the Netherlands and the coalition Stop Child Labour? <sup>(1)</sup>

**Question 2**

What is your reaction to the findings of the report that the companies mentioned in the report indicate that on average there is less than 1% child labour in their supply chains, while previous reports by the India Committee of the Netherlands in 2015 and other more recent sources, including a report from the *Council on Ethics of the Norwegian Government Pension Fund*, indicate that this percentage is much higher? <sup>(2)</sup> What is your reaction to the finding that often minimum wages are not yet being paid by the suppliers of seed companies?

**Question 3**

What happened to the commitments made by the previous Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation in response to the parliamentary questions following the reports of the India Committee of the Netherlands in 2015. <sup>(3)</sup>

How do you assess the fact that nothing has been done or is being done to come to a "sector covenant with the seed sector and the involved stakeholders"? Are you prepared to take steps to promote that such a covenant is being developed or that the seed companies will participate in another covenant, such as the Agreement for the Agricultural Sector or the Agreement for the Food Products Sector?

**Question 4**

Can you indicate if the *Memorandum of Understanding* between the Netherlands and India refers to child labour and the payment of living wages by seed companies that are active in India and what are possibly the results of this?

**Question 5**

Are you prepared to support Indian organisations or new joint initiatives which have been proven or can be expected to contribute to the effective tackling of child labour in the vegetable and cotton seed production and to working on at least the official minimum wage, working towards a living wage?

**Question 6**

Are there companies and/or the branch organisation Plantum that have actually established effective complaints mechanisms in response to the 2015 reports of the India Committee of the Netherlands? If not, what are you going to do to have these established?

**Question 7**

Can you indicate to which activities the support to the recommendation <sup>(4)</sup> from the 2015 reports of the India Committee of the Netherlands on living wage has led? Are you prepared to address companies and Plantum in view of the only little progress observed in the new report?

**Question 8**

Do you support the recommendations of the report and what possibilities do you see to contribute to their implementation? Are you prepared to enter into consultation with the companies involved and to insist on the formation of a covenant or affiliation with a covenant, including a concrete roadmap?

[ Translation by India Committee of the Netherlands; original document: <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/kv181127.pdf> ]

**Notes**

- (1) <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/RemediesForIndianSeedWorkersInSight.pdf>
- (2) Council on Ethics for the Government Pension Fund Global to Norges Bank, 1 March 2018, Recommendation to place UPL Ltd. under observation. Available at: <https://etikkradet.no/files/2018/07/ENG-Rec-observation-UPL-2018.pdf>
- (3) <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/kv151218e.pdf>
- (4) Meaning that seed companies must organise their purchasing practices in such a way that their suppliers / producers are able to pay living wages to their employees