

Worker's Exchange Report

Play Fair at the Olympics

Bangkok, August 8-11, 2004



Introduction

Play Fair at the Olympics (PFOC) was a global campaign initiated by Oxfam, the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) and Global Unions, especially the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF). The campaign was coordinated by a global steering committee that included Thai Labour Campaign (TLC) and Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC). The Campaign aimed to push multinational manufacturers to improve working conditions and recognize the right to freedom of association, in the backdrop of the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics¹. The campaign targeted 'B-Brands' such as Fila, Puma, Umbro, Asics, Mizuno and others sportswear corporations. The PFOC included participation of hundreds of organizations from 35 countries in Europe, Asia and Australia. Preparations for the PFOC began in late 2002, and the six month campaign culminated with the August 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.

This report focuses on the participation of Asian trade unions, workers and NGOs in the PFOC, particularly the Workers' Exchange held in Bangkok, Thailand on August 9-10. The purpose of documenting the Workers Exchange and the information that was shared is to provide access to the feedback from workers and organizations directly involved in Asia during the PFOC. To provide an accurate review of the Workers' Exchange in Bangkok, where workers came together not just to talk but also to play sports and have fun, it's firstly necessary to understand the global context of the campaign, its' goals and objectives, and how workers, trade unionists and activists from Asia participated within this framework. The other purpose of this report is to build an understanding of how the campaign worked in Asia and how organizations and workers participated, both as a regional movement and as a collection of activities on the local/national levels.

¹ South India Coalition for the Rights of Garment Workers (2004)

Background

The PFOC was designed as a series of events, actions, research and solidarity which brought together workers, trade unionists, activists and consumers to urge the sportswear industry to change the way it works². Events took place in over 35 countries to push the International Olympic Committee and the industry to work with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and trade unions, at local level and with their international organizations such as the ITGLWF to embrace "ethical sourcing" and make their promises for improvements via codes of conduct a reality. The primary method was through media-related stunts to pressure the targeted brands to enter dialogue with the campaign organizers. To this extent the campaign could be considered effective³.

The PFOC was initiated on the premise that the entire sportswear industry must work together to change its sourcing practices to begin making a difference. A unifying element of the PFOC is that the industry must emphasize to every supplier that the rights to join and form trade unions and the right to collective bargaining are fundamental to implementing international labour standards⁴.

Using new research PFOC exposes the ruthless tactics used by the global sportswear industry to produce the latest fashions, made cheaper and faster and to ever more punishing deadlines. The report states that in order to deliver, suppliers are forcing their employees to work longer and harder, denying them their fundamental workers' rights. Play Fair draws on the testimony of workers and factory managers in Bulgaria, Cambodia, Thailand, China, Indonesia and Turkey. The report findings show that:

Companies' promises to behave responsibly are often superficial and lacking in credibility, and are ignored by company buying teams who use cut-throat tactics to reach their targets;

Factory managers are failing to meet the high-pressure demands from companies and comply with rules on respecting labour standards at the same time;

The industry is therefore undermining the very labour standards it daims to uphold; some factories falsify records routinely in order to pass inspection

² Oxfam GB, 2004

³ Merck, 2005

⁴ <http://www.fairolympics.com>

and there is plentiful evidence of workers enduring abusive and exploitative working conditions or being sacked for joining a union.

As for the Olympics, "The sportswear industry is spending heavily on marketing in the run up to this year's [2004] Olympic Games which is supposed to be a showcase for fairness and human achievement. But the exploitation and abuse of workers' right endemic in the industry is violating that Olympic spirit," said Global Unions spokesperson Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the 151 million-member International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

"If hypocrisy and exploitation were an Olympic sport, the sportswear industry would win a medal," said Junya Yimprasert from the Thai Labour Campaign and member of the Clean Clothes Campaign network. "The industry is sacrificing human rights in the search for profits. Should the race to outfit athletes mean a race of the bottom for these workers?"

"It is not only the big brands which are responsible," said Guy Ryder. "Governments must also work together and resist pressure to sacrifice labor standards and local factory owners need to accept their responsibility to respect workers' rights and to pay a living wage."⁵

For about 15 years international public campaigning has led some leading sportswear companies, or brands such as Nike, Adidas and Reebok to take steps to address the appalling working conditions in the industry. But it's not enough to make a real impact, given the insufficient response from those brands who have been targeted heavily⁶. More importantly, the fact remains that a majority of workers producing garments and sportswear do not produce for these 'A-Brands'. The PFOC is unique in that it is a campaign which aims to change the purchasing practices of the sportswear industry through the campaign and its follow-up activities, by focusing on several Brands at once, rather than individual Brands or a factory producing for that Brand. Past campaigns involving workers in the sportswear industry and consumers and activists in the North have generally focused on conditions at the individual factory level, and/or the 'A-Brands'. PFOC is something new in that it brought together trade unions, workers, NGOs, and activists together in what is probably the largest ever anti-sweatshop campaign, targeting the brands which are usually overlooked.

Reasons why past company initiatives have been inadequate⁷:

⁵ Oxfam GB, 2004

⁶ Merck, 2005

⁷ *Report on the meeting on campaigning in Asia*

Right to organize has not been prioritized. Workers not central to monitoring
Purchasing practices – rush orders etc – interferes with labour rights
Need for sector wide approach

Asia regional PFOC activities

Chronology of events directly involving or relevant to Asian organizations:

Late 2002, beginning of preparations for the PFOC begin among the CCC, Global Unions and Oxfam, including consultations with key partners in Asia
November 2003 Oxfam organizes a meeting in Bogor, Indonesia. PFOC was one of several issues discussed among a number of trade unions and activists in Asia.

4 March 2004, launch of the PFOC

Global Season of Action – starting 4 March and finishing 1 May 2004

25-27 March 2004, meeting in Cambodia among Asian trade unions and NGOs, coordinated by CCC and Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC).

May 2004, Olympic Torch Relay, which took place in Asian cities Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing and Delhi

8 August 2004, 'Workers Solidarity Olympics Day' in Bangkok

9-10 August 2004, 'Workers Exchange', Bangkok Thailand

13 August 2004, culmination of the PFOC in Athens.

27-29, August 2004 'A National Gathering of Garments and Sportswear Workers to Highlight Working Conditions in the Sector and Discuss Organising Strategies', Bangalore, India.

In terms of participation of Asian organizations in the PFOC, it is perhaps best understood as the CCC, Global Unions and Oxfam creating an umbrella under which trade unions and NGOs can participate. Suggested initiatives by the organizers included⁸:

Organizations in individual countries would be able to identify the priorities in their countries and think about what concrete demands could be made of companies that did agree to be part of the work-plan...

Local groups could use this structure to get as concrete as possible with their demands to companies.

⁸ Report on the meeting on campaigning in Asia

As is shown in later sections of this paper, a number of workers and organizations in Asia initiated activities on the local and national level as a part of the PFOC.

In late 2003 AMRC and TLC became members of the Steering Group of the Olympics Campaign, in an effort for increased coordination among Asian organizations. Shortly afterwards a meeting initially scheduled for autumn 2003 was eventually hosted by CCC and AMRC. It was a three-day meeting on the PFOC activities in Asia, held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from March 25-27, 2004. In attendance were trade unionists and activists from Asian countries who discussed campaigning strategies for the PFOC and after. Also, the meeting was agreed upon by the organizers as an opportunity to discuss triangle solidarity, and how this campaigning model may be adopted within the framework of the PFOC. Accordingly, the agenda of the program was within this 'triangle solidarity' framework.

Triangle solidarity is, essentially, a means for workers to empower themselves through monitoring of their workplace in cooperation with local, regional and international support⁹. Triangle solidarity is a reflection of triangle manufacturing which is unique in Asia. Essentially triangle manufacturing entails US or European buyers placing orders with East Asian manufacturers (in Japan, Taiwan, Korea, or Hong Kong) who they used to source from directly, but have since the 1980s to the present shifted some or all of their production to offshore factories throughout the world, including Southeast Asia, South Asia, China, Central America and Africa¹⁰. The triangle is complete when the finished products are sent to distribution centres or suppliers in the US or EU.

The call for a different form of international solidarity from Asia-based organizations¹¹ was discussed in detail at the March meeting in Cambodia, and the August Workers Exchange in Bangkok is one of the outcomes of that discussion. The principle behind the reasoning is that workers from Asia should participate in the campaign as a collective force in cooperation with consumers and activists in the North, and organizations in East Asian capital exporting countries, rather than individualized members of a campaign coordinated from the global level. They stated that the international campaign

⁹ For further information see "Asian Transnational Corporation Outlook 2004: Asian TNCs, workers and the Movement of Capital", Hong Kong: Asia Monitor Resource Centre.

¹⁰ It is worth noting that Asian TNCs such as Li & Fung and Yue Yuen were identified by the PFOC organizers as possible targets of the campaign due to their huge stake in the garment sector (Merck, 2005), but it was decided that they would not be included on the list of targets for public campaigning in Europe.

¹¹ It is important to note that AMRC and TLC represent their views, not necessarily those of the organizations who participated in the workshop in Cambodia, and the Worker Exchange in Bangkok.

plan is good enough to publicize the issues of labour rights abuse in sportswear industries, particularly in the major consumer markets. However, although it has merit as a consumer campaign, it is far from comprehensive as a campaign strategy, not to mention that it will not give participants the opportunity to develop further the south-north/workers-consumers solidarity movement¹².

The meeting in Cambodia was significant in that it brought together trade unions and NGOs from the region to discuss not only the PFOC, but also coordination beyond August 2004. The participants concluded that, ...”More important is to get agreement on how we [consumers, NGOs and trade unions] can continue to work together in order to improve working conditions in garment and sportswear industries. One of the means leading to this is through working together on coordination in working toward organizing workers, in working together on specific campaigns like the Olympics campaign [PFOC]”.¹³

As agreed in Phnom Penh, the proposed long-term strategy is for:

Cooperation and coordination between Unions and labour NGOs towards organizing workers

Cooperation and coordination between consumer organizations and labour organizations in empowering and organizing workers

Sustainable solidarity framework for the cooperation

The meeting arrived at specific actions to be carried out during the PFOC, under five categories: May Day Celebrations, Press Releases, Fashion Shows, Website and Worker Exchange¹⁴. Updates of the activities agreed upon, in addition to other activities carried out at the national level, are presented in the following section.

Activities in Bangkok

In the six month run up to the Olympic Games, March-August 2004, the PFOC organizers estimate that at the sub-national level, 500 local events had taken place (such as demonstrations, protest-actions, picket-lines etc). Additionally, over 500,000 people signed a petition in support of the

¹² AMRC and TLC (2004)

¹³ Report on the meeting on campaigning in Asia (2004)

¹⁴ South India Coalition for the Rights of Garment Workers (2004)

campaign¹⁵ a majority from among the public in the major consumer markets. As discussed by Merck's report published by the PFOC organizers, *The Play Fair at the Olympics Campaign: An assessment of the company response*, these activities that were aimed at gaining public support for improved work conditions were helpful in placing pressure on the targeted companies. The impact that the PFOC has had in Asia in terms of promoting the right to freedom of association and worker participatory monitoring is, however, difficult to quantify. Furthermore, as the PFOC primary objective is changing the sourcing practices of the industry, it is best understood as a part of a much longer term process (see Appendix 1). What follows is a review of the activities which took place in Bangkok between August 8-11, including reports from the participants of PFOC actions on the local and national level.

Workers Solidarity Olympics Day

As a part of the worker exchange and activities for the PFOC, on August 8 about 50 workers, activists and trade unionists from seven Asian countries, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka joined hands



with about 1,000 Thai trade unionists for the Workers Solidarity Olympics Day. This is the first "Workers' Olympics" since World War II and the first ever in Asia. The event was organized by the Thai Labour Working Group for the PFOC, and is an example of national level initiatives within the campaign. The event attracted significant media attention, both in Thailand-based media, and by international wire agencies which was covered by local media in many of the participants' home countries.

¹⁵ Merck, 2005

Held at the stadium of the Port Authority of Thailand, the Worker Solidarity Olympics Day aims for protection of workers who manufacture clothing and equipment for companies linked to the Olympic Games which opened a few days later. In addition to a protest over the low wages and long working hours it takes to make apparel for the Athens Olympics, it was a day for workers to gather to have fun and enjoy the true spirit of international solidarity which the Olympics represents. There were three competitions:

Sports competition, including football, running, jumping, shot put and javelin

Question and Answers on Labour Rights and Laws

Audience awards for best displays, actions etc

Quotes from Thai participants in the Workers Olympics

Ms. Waewdown Kaewkasem, former garment worker. She is now working with the network of home based workers in Bangkok:

“The activities were good. It was the first time that most of the workers met labour fiends from other countries. Usually, the workers play sports with their colleagues in a factory but this event gave them a chance to join in an international activity. It was so fun and excited to see the lively cheering crowd and dancing cheerleaders in colourful dressed up. It showed the creative ideas of the workers. I think this kind of event should be organized again. If it is organized continuously, the workers’ relationship will be tightened. Also they have a chance to learn, share and open their conception of the world. On the other hand, I think that members of the textile, garment and leather workers federation should see importance of this activity and join more which means the event would get more achievement. For the working team on organizing the event, they should have better preparation.”

Ms. Sunee Narmso, a garment worker of the Solidarity Group; workers based enterprise: “I’m glad that I had opportunity to join the ‘Workers Solidarity Olympics Day’. I feel impressed when I saw different organizations aware of the importance of workers.”

Mr. Tara Sawangtam, a railway worker. Railway is one of the state-owned enterprises in Thailand: “On the ‘Workers Solidarity Olympics Day’, I also joined in the activities and I was impressed by the workers solidarity, no matter they are Thai or foreign. They all came to meet and join in the sports

activities for the unity. The worker is the one who creates the world. The Olympics Games have made people involved and athletes being rich from big contracts and brand name sportswear. The workers are not rich though they produce the products. Thus, from now on I would like fair practice occur to the workers. And as a rail worker, I would like to cheer them up for keeping on struggle.”

Ms. Wilaiwan Saetia, the president of the Thai Labour Solidarity Committee of Thailand: “The activity has built solidarity among Thai workers, also between Thai and foreign workers. And the campaign has made awareness that garment workers earn very little compared to big corporate profits. This is an injustice in sportswear industry. Though this time, activities organizing were in a hitch, activities did not run smoothly. I think that it should have more participants; anyway I would like this kind of activities to be organized in the next four years. I guess that it was the first time and the publication was not done well enough. I really hope that in the next four years, the Workers Solidarity Olympics day would be organized again and I think that there would be more people come to join...”

Although the Workers Solidarity Olympics Day had some logistics problems, particularly in ensuring participation of the international guests, it was an opportunity for an alternative gathering for workers. Generally when workers, trade unionists and workers come together in a regional forum it is for a conference or protest. The Workers Olympics created spirit of comradery for the workers through sport.

Declaration from the Asia Workers Solidarity Olympics Day

We, women and men workers from 7 different countries in Asia, have joined hands today in Thailand to make an appeal to the International Olympics Committee (IOC) and sportswear brands regarding working conditions. We are making the sportswear and garments promoted at the Olympic Games.

We are proud of our jobs in the sportswear and garment sector, as we make a big contribution to our families and the national economies.

Today in Bangkok we join thousands of Thai workers in our own Olympic sports day, a chance to enjoy ourselves, but also to demand recognition and our rights. The Olympic Games are a symbol for justice and fair play world-wide. Clearly its fundamental ethical principles are far away for us, the women and men who make the shirts, shorts and shoes that athletes and fans will wear in the coming weeks in Athens. We want the world to look 'behind the shirt'.

Our basic rights as workers are not recognised. We get extremely low wages and no social security. We often have no contract or letter of appointment. We are frequently paid by piece-rate and employed under a sub-contract system. We get no opportunities for training and promotion.

We are forced to work over time to comply with unbearable production targets, and are hardly paid for it.

Our work places are frequently unsafe, dirty and damp. We usually get no pregnancy & maternity leave, nor child-care facilities.

Many of us work in Export Processing Zones and have no legal right to organise unions, and even if we legally have that right we usually face dismissal when we want to organise ourselves in unions.

We face physical harassment without any space to complain.

When the factory closes, we are laid off without compensation.

We demand that the sportswear sector as a whole change their purchasing practices. Together with the manufacturers, they must take responsibility for the situation at the work floor. We demand they make sure that in every factory, workers are allowed to defend themselves through trade unions, are paid a living wage and are provided with safe and decent working conditions, all this according to ILO standards.

We demand that the International Olympics Committee speaks-out against this violation of the Olympics Charter. We want the IOC to take its responsibility as a sportswear licensing, sponsoring and marketing agency. We want the IOC to put respect for basic workers' rights in its contracts with the major companies for the next Olympic Games in Turin and Beijing. The IOC should make respect for workers' rights parts of its Charter. Fair Play for all!

We will continue our struggle for decent living standards, respect and rights. With the Athens Games starting this week, it is time for the IOC to take a stand on this issue and for the sportswear brands worked together with unions and human rights groups to bring an end to exploitation in the sportswear industry.

ASIAN WORKERS EXCHANGE

9-10 AUGUST 2004

As a part of the regional activities agreed upon by participants in the March meeting in Phnom Penh, a Worker Exchange took place on August 9-10 following the Workers Solidarity Olympics Day. Participants include workers, trade union and activist delegations from Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea. PFOC committee representatives from Australia, Belgium and the Netherlands also took part in the two day worker exchange.

The Worker Exchange is unique in that the workers who took part, to varying degrees, in PFOC activities on the national level were present to share their experiences. As the PFOC was finishing shortly after the Workers Exchange it was, of course, not a venue for strategic planning. However, as is returned to later, the PFOC is considered a first step for many in building a regional solidarity base from which to launch or participate in future campaigns and actions to improve work conditions from the bottom up, in cooperation with consumer-driven campaigns.

Following is a chronological recap of the two day exchange, with a summary and views of some of the participants.

Focuses of discussion in the two-day meeting

The program for the next two days was introduced

9 August, 2004

Introduction

Ineke Zeldenrust of the CCC presented a slide show with pictures of the campaign worldwide. She informed participants of a multitude of activities which took place in Australia, Belgium, France, Bangladesh, Athens, Hong Kong, Germany, Amsterdam, Canada, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Spain, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, UK and other places. In some places there was participation of famous people, while half a million petition signatures were collected worldwide via the internet and other more traditional means. Lastly, she gave a summary of the response from the brands and the IOC¹⁶.

A video produced by the Thai Labour Campaign for the PFOC-Thailand was shown to the participants¹⁷.

Questions and Answers session:

Q: What is the media response to the campaign?

A: At the start we had good coverage by international newspapers in many countries, but it differs for every country. In Europe the actions generated a lot of coverage, as they were visual and attractive for the press. Holland had additional smaller media outlets to attract a different audience.

Q: Is a press conference scheduled for today or tomorrow?

A: Nothing is planned for today, it was focused on yesterday [the Workers Olympics].

A PFOC committee member added that in Athens they will read the declaration circulated at this conference, and hopefully it will be picked up by the international media.

Q: What is the reason the IOC didn't accept the demands [as Ineke pointed out in her presentation]?

¹⁶ For details see Merck, 2005.

¹⁷ The video is available from Thai Labour Campaign, contact lek@thailabour.org, or dennis@thailabour.org

A; So far the response has not been good. The Athens press conference tomorrow is yet another attempt to put pressure on IOC. We will go into more detail on their response in campaign, and discuss it as a potential follow up activity.

Afternoon Session:

A film about India's garment workers' actions was shown.

How did we fight for our rights? Sharing of PFOC activities at the national level and workers experiences

May Day

Thailand: This year was the biggest march in recent history, with over 50,000 people, not because of Olympics, but because of the proposed privatization of the Electricity Generating Authority. For PFOC we produced tshirts and posters demanding that the Olympics respect the rights of workers.

Indonesia: We gathered 1,000 signatures from workers at sportswear companies. About 7,000 workers marched in the May Day rally.

Philippines: A street play depicting conditions of workers took place in the morning, in the afternoon there was the largest rally in the province – 1,500 workers total. We organized a signature campaign, but unfortunately lost some of the sheets, so we don't know exact number collected.

Bangladesh: The government workers federation and two other organizations organized separate demonstrations on this campaign. More than 2,000 workers participated.

India: 1) We had over a 1,000 workers participate, both formal and informal workers, and collected signatures which will be given to the prime minister. 2) MLF Union held a demonstration with public rallies in the 8 main garment producing areas in India.

Petitions

India – collected 1,000 signatures through public meetings relating to the campaign, and also collected petitions.

Philippines – yes, but not sure how many.

Leaflets

Sri Lanka – distributed about 10,000 leaflets under the name of ALARM (alliance of NGOs and trade unions). In the leaflet it requested that they include this issue [PFOC] in their campaigns.

India – printed leaflets in every regional language. Whenever we had public meetings, they were published in each local language.

Indonesia – 10,000 posters claiming for a proper wage, plus 1000 postcards which will be sent to government and Athens.



Press Conference

Pakistan: Before May 1, we had press conference on the main demands for May Day, and also to notify people about the PFOC. But the media thinks these campaigns are against the country, employers, etc. We tried to emphasize that is not the case, that it is just a general campaign against TNCs, and not AGAINST anyone but for worker's rights. But it wasn't covered in the media, but they said they will try to publish something if we write articles. For Women Workers Organization (WVO), our posters were in the newspaper, but we didn't write about Olympics Campaign.

India: On June 9 we had a press conference and on June 10 we had an action when the Olympic Torch passed through India. There was a peaceful protest in front of the venue and some people were arrested, this was covered in the media!

A peaceful demonstration for Play Fair at the Olympics at the Indian torch relay event, organised by Indian trade unions and NGOs, was disrupted by pre-emptive arrests made by the New Delhi Police. The procession consisting of 150 people working in the garment industry was on its way to Al Humayan's Tomb, when police cars blocked the venue and made 50 arrests. Also some activists gave the police the slip and made it to the Tomb, the arrested workers and trade union leaders were kept into custody the whole day, until the official torch relay event was finished.

Other work

Bangladesh – 14 March

We had a demonstration as a starting point for the campaign with 1,000 government workers. At the same time, we had another demo in the 2nd largest government area. There were also workers meetings in 10 other branches to explain the campaign. Officially we sent a notice to the national Olympics Committee, who unofficially agreed with us, but did not attend.

Pakistan

WWO convinced All Pakistan Trade Unions to organize a meeting with different federations, and requested them to write a letter to the IOC, and we have copies of these letters. We mobilized and educated workers about the campaign, since it is about their rights. WWO supported all the above work, and did a 2-day awareness-raising workshop which introduced the international campaign and how it can help protect workers rights. Workers agreed with this campaign, but they asked if they lose their job, what can they do? Replied that we are not targeting one brand or factory, so it is ok.

Thailand

The Thai media does not cover this kind of issue, so we invited a Thai former-Olympics champion and politicians to meet with the workers who make their clothes. It was an open space for workers to feel ownership of this issue. We tried to create activities to allow workers to feel pride and share their stories. We are going to publish the workers short stories about their lives into a book, which was a part of the Workers Olympics Day. In fact, the workers are

the ones that suggested the Workers Olympics organized yesterday. We are seeing links of the international level to grassroots level with this.

Future work

India

We will have an exchange program on August 27-29 (see references), under the banner of coalition of garment workers, from different regions in India. It will be a public meeting and exchange.

Hong Kong

Tomorrow (Aug 10), Trade unions and NGOs will say 'goodbye' to the Hong Kong athletes at the airport leaving for Athens, if police don't stop them. Demands are the same, solidarity for sportswear workers, rights for workers.

Pakistan

WWO will publish this information in our newsletter, and what is the worker's point of view.

Cambodia

We organized activities for May Day, but workers were forced to work overtime and no activities took place. On May Day all rallies were banned due to the ongoing political deadlock. We are planning to have a poster competition for the campaign. Unfortunately, it will not happen during the Olympics. Until now, not many workers know about the Campaign, so my three colleagues here will go back and educate others. We will hold a competition for people to submit paintings, drawings, logos, and other ways to explain how they are exploited by the brands producing for the Olympics, and the winner will get an award.

Summary of other activities in Asia

India

The workers rally where they carried a torch from city to city finished in August 2004 in Delhi (after the Worker Exchange). It was successful in mobilizing all the major trade unions and in raising public consciousness.

At another event in India campaigners held a conference day for university athletes to raise awareness about the Campaign.

10 August, 2004



Morning session:

Presentation of the results of the Olympics Campaign on international level followed by a question and answer section:

Q: What has been the response from Nike?

A: Fair Labour Association (FLA) responded by saying that all FLA members will respond separately. Many did, but Nike did not.

Q: As the IOC did not respond well, what does the campaign committee, on behalf of the workers, plan/suggest to get to more commitment from them?

A: CCC and ICFTU committed to continue on this agenda and to put pressure on the IOC. The upcoming winter Olympics is to be the next major opportunity and we are already preparing for that. We would like to know whether this is a priority for you.

Q: Nike is a major concern to us as an original equipment manufacturing company, because of their importance in the region, the shifting ownership, etc. What can be done?

A: Perhaps we should seek commitment through the FLA. They need to seek engagement from Nike. It was promised that they would send an official

response before the end of the campaign. They still have time. We also need to track down all the other companies involved in the Nike business.

Q: We also need to put pressure on the athletes to engage in a boycott, only then it will be successful.

A: Indeed, but this is difficult to get at. They are not likely to take a strong stand as they are tied to contracts and depend on their sponsorships. An idea is to have a network of athletes that can take collective action rather than individual action.

Comment from Thailand

Our leverage on the Thai Olympics Committee is limited. We detect two categories of athletes. There are the ones that are really bought in by the brands by contract and will not move. But there are others that are not bought in and have more flexibility. Unfortunately they are less popular and serve our goals less.

We also have to keep in mind that in Asia National Olympic Committees are often connected to the military. In Thailand so far they denied that there is any relation in between workers' problems and the Olympics. There has been no change in their position since the last two years. Besides, the National Olympic Committees have little influence on the athletes. Athletes are more connected to brands than to the national Olympic Committee. So we need to look into the potential of all this.

It was added that it helps if we ask athletes to dedicate their medal to a worker, rather than to take a stand on the brand.

Q: The PFOC has brought us quantitative changes, but the qualitative changes remain to be seen. The rights violations in the factory have not yet been addressed. So what is next?

A: We do not claim to have solved the problem, but that we set in motion a process that can lead to effective change. There is still a long way to go. We need to keep up the pressure both on national and on the international level.

Comment: We have to rely upon our own strengths to organise and engage in this campaign. It served us to mobilize other groups on this agenda, including alliances. We cannot do much more; we should not have too high expectations. The campaign is but a tool for us.

Comment: The boycott by the athletes of the sportswear industry is a last stage. First we need to bring together workers, trade unions and athletes to

raise awareness amongst the athletes on workers' conditions, after that they might engage more actively.

Q: How can pressure on our own governments to be integrated into this international campaign?

A: The international level cannot legitimately pressurize national governments; this is for the national groups to do. But we can create more political space for you to do so and to negotiate with your governments. How to do that should be further explored.

Comment: The international campaign gives us seeds that we need to plant. How are we going to make them grow, this is what needs further discussion. Most of the campaign work is on the national level. We start from a rights based approach, rather than a charity approach in which we depend on the international level to do the work for us. Bed& Bath [a well-known case in Thailand] is a good example of how the seed grew. The [Thai] government failed to take up responsibility, but the brands – via our actions on the local and national level,- pressured the government by threatening to withdraw their orders.

Summary of issues discussed:

Nike's role in the region is not sufficiently addressed.

What is the relevance of continued pressure on the IOC for national campaigns?

What is the actual leverage potential of lobbying the national Olympic Committees?

Mobilization of trade unions, workers and NGOs is essential.

How to make good tactical use of athletes?

How to build further upon the small "wins" of this campaign on national level?

How to integrate pressure on national governments into the context of the international campaign?

The campaign is a tool to strengthen national struggle: how to optimise this?

Evaluation of the national campaigns: Group discussions on the following questions:

What were the campaign focuses and demands?

What demands were best addressed and what was not?

How successful was the mobilization of workers?

What were the responses of workers, Trade Unions and NGOS?

What were the responses of governments, national Olympic Committees and companies?

Results of groups discussions:

GROUP 1: Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Sri Lanka

Q1. Focus should be on:

Bringing companies attention to labour conditions

ILO conventions, especially freedom of association

Living wages

Ethical purchasing practices

Better coordination among ourselves

Q2. Issues addressed: (promises)

Monitoring of the supply chain

Stop discrimination

Asian meeting

Ethical buying practices have not (yet) been addressed:

No dialogue with locals

Most rank and file workers not involved

Q3. No mobilization took place

Q4. Weak responses from local NGOs and movements; local groups are involved in elections and focus on politics

Q5. Poor response from governments, brands etc...

GROUP 2: Indonesia, Bangladesh

Q1. Improvement of working conditions

Both countries: right to organise, living wage, OSH, implementation of national laws and ILO standards

Indonesia: no contract workers, no dismissal

Q2. Best addressed: right to organise, living wages (Indonesia), OSH

Q3. Reasonable success in Indonesia (signatures, postcards action for May Day rally)

Bangladesh: involvement of two federations, but no big action was planned. Nevertheless success with over 2,000 workers mobilized in the rally. Had four big meetings to socialize workers with the issues and mobilize them.

Q4. Indonesia got very little response from others. People did not keep their promises. But two groups were involved.

Bangladesh could not mobilize non-union members as they do not see the benefit. The other unions came to a first meeting but then did not commit to the planning, NGOs were also not involved.

Q5. NOC could not be engaged in Indonesia, but they are working on it. Bangladesh could only get informal commitment.

GROUP 3: India and Thailand

Q1. India: Major demand is freedom of association should be protected by law, but also the need of a mechanism to impose corporate social responsibility, such as a garment workers welfare fund.

Thailand: demands were developed by the working group: freedom of association, equal rights for migrant workers, improve labour laws and acts to give more space to trade unions.

Q2. India: no major results on demands yet, participants will continue the pressure

Thailand: violation of trade union rights were best addressed, also some progress on the migrant worker issue. Getting support of athletes was not a success

Q3. India: due to involvement of many trade unions many workers could be mobilized, this is in spite of different political views. We had mobilization throughout the regions. The trade unions did the work while the campaign committee just acted as a secretariat to provide support. Highlight was the June 10 conference (with presence of workers and ministry representatives) and the torch relay in the 8 garment production areas of India. Demands were to be given to the athletes, but failed due to police interference. People got arrested.

Thailand: The Workers Olympics on 8 August was the highlight. A new alliance of trade unions across sectors worked very well to mobilize the workers.

Q4. India got good support from NGOs everywhere, Thailand also had NGO support.

India did not approach companies. They also did not have any response from NOC, while various ministries responded reasonably well. Thailand did not approach companies. Also the labour ministry was not approached as they are too weak to make any change. NOC did not respond well. Thailand also engaged with certain politicians, however the press coverage was poor.

GROUP 4: Pakistan and Cambodia

Q1. Common demands:

Implementation of the law

Living wage / fair wage

Living conditions

Social security

Gender discrimination

Fixed working hours

Violence against women

Right to organise

Pakistan only implements 9 ILO conventions including Convention No. 87-98 and 100, Cambodia only 10. Socially women are undervalued.

Q2. Pakistan #1 and 8 [from the above list] are the most important issues to be addressed, while #2 and 6 are not well covered.

Cambodia: #2 and 10 are most important, while #7 and 8 are not addressed.

Q3. Difficult to say how successful, it is relative. But OK with regard to mobilization, awareness raising, and getting attention.

Q4. In Pakistan the campaign is supported by the unions, but there is concern about the possible negative impact from the international campaign. There was no or little response from the NOC, media and governments. It is difficult to mobilize women's NGOs.

Afternoon Session:

How to improve the campaign?

Group discussion on 2 questions:

How can the development of the campaign on garment and sportswear industries within the next coming years contribute to your work, such as organizing women workers.

How can campaign work on garment and sportswear industries at the international and regional level come together more actively with national and local level activities (local to international / international to local)?



Women's day at Bangkok

THAILAND

Three areas of work:

1. Support and strengthen alliance unions
2. Expand organizing (industries, informal and migrants)
3. Education (participatory method)

Details:

Topics: Gender and trade, union rights, WTO / FTAs, subcontract workers, and supporting the solidarity group (a cooperative owned and operated by workers).

Change laws to guarantee freedom of association and to be more union friendly, recruit migrant workers into Thai unions, workers involvement/take leadership

Labour Focus (bi-monthly bulletin from TLC), stickers, poster, training, video to highlight the industry, all of this of use for unions

How to do the above?

Link local, national, regional and international

Need to start from centre which is organizing and right to freedom of association at the local level.

national level influence to change laws and adopt international standards

regional level: We need regional standards so investors cannot play one nation off another. Somehow organize and build an alliance for workers producing for the same brands across the region.

International: change purchasing practices. Global agreements of TNCs with unions to protect all workers are necessary. Just in time production needs to be changed, this relates to purchasing practices.

Summary:

We need improved communication etc... Have to talk about informal sector as well....we can change the industry if we're united on all levels (national, regional and international).

INDIA

How can international campaigns contribute to local campaigns?

Want national seminar focusing on women workers, on the micro level to build up national level works. Talk of forming national level federation for garment workers.

Like to have training for garment workers on rights. We are developing coordination and communication among unions in cooperation with the Center for Education and Communication and other organizations.

Publications in regional languages.

What they expect from international campaign is information about other activities in the world, or mutual sharing with the international level.

Garment production centres in India are suppliers and we need research on what scale and to whom they're supplying. Cooperation with international campaigns is needed.

Request support for international campaign support to pressure from inside and outside.

Review of international standards and India's participation/ratification.

Demands of other countries similar on freedom of association and other issues. We should formulate a common demand charter with the international level so we can go forward more affectively.

International level should facilitate talks with athletes. Talk to athletes in advance so they're aware of situation and are able to respond.

International campaign committee who can help coordinate easy access to other countries (a person to be contacted in each country rather than rely on CCC etc for communication).

CAMBODIA

We find the question difficult for this discussion.

Ongoing organizing important as many workers are unorganized. In each activity we need to get high levels of worker involvement to raise awareness at regional and local level.

Need support form other groups and the government, who plays an important role in implementing laws.

ILO monitoring already exists but doesn't reflect reality in Cambodia as visits are prearranged. Need cooperation with NGOs etc in this process and talk to workers outside of the factory to get more concrete information.

International campaign which puts pressure on local company: TNCs have to tell local manufacturers to implement as they're a subcontractor. But this model is not effective if the factory has limited resources and low profit margins.

Good to get workers involved in regional and international campaign so they're aware of the process.

Monitoring logos: for example Adidas doesn't have to inform the employer of visits, but this is not the case for others, so it would be good to get others to follow this model.

Hong Kong/Taiwan/CHINA

Divided into 3 areas

About to do action against Pou Chen and their production in Southeast Asia and China. It's the biggest shoe supplier for Nike and other major brands.

Thai-Taiwan information exchange on Taiwanese investment in Thailand is planned. We also plan to have a research and workers exchange in 2004-5

General appeals for solidarity support in Hong Kong and Taiwan with factory workers to build greater solidarity. Get into information sharing with countries that have Hong Kong and Taiwanese invested/owned factories.

PAKISTAN

Q1:

Provide information regarding brand and purchasing practices and conduct research on the local level

Push ILO to take stand against violation of conventions

Develop local material regarding brands and workers rights

Help to find financial support for activities of local groups

Support to national campaign

Training programs for organizers and workers

Push brands to involve good local unions and NGOs in monitoring system

Q2:

Joint activities (May Day, International Women's Day)

Support each others' campaign

Working on the same issues will strengthen relations between national and international campaign

Information sharing regarding workers struggle.

INDONESIA

Q1:

Priority activity must be 'how to get worker participation'. If campaign can make a contribution we first need workers who are involved in the campaign. Encourage workers initiative to do their own campaigns.

We had one experience in building teamwork on local and international level to take on a campaign: it was hard to set up a team but important to increase involvement by getting participants from different organizations to be active. Team undertake investigation of local violation at factory or general situation of work conditions

Find support from as many actors interested in labour issues as possible (athlete, government etc)

Q2.

Make more effective campaign on national and international level for real improvement in working conditions.

PHILIPPINES

Q1.

International campaign can be used as a strategy to approach and organize workers

Increase awareness of the workers on their right to organize.

Can increase pressure on companies /big brands to implement their codes of conduct in Philippines, but take agenda of unions and all workers into consideration, to do so meetings need to be conducted.

Q2.

Committee to coordinate campaign from international and regional level to national and local level.

National and local level participation in the campaign should have initiative to report and provide updates to the international and regional committees.

SRI LANKA

Q1.

Pressure government to implement ILO Conventions and labour laws. Pressure companies through codes of conduct and labour laws. Raise

awareness among workers on legal rights, codes of conduct and ILO conventions. And organize international campaign around these issues. Information from the PFOC is important for activities, as this is info from other participating organizations. Building solidarity is important for a campaign.

As workers know this support [PFOC] exists their strength is increased. This is used to negotiate with companies.

Network of activities help to work with other organizations, not just trade unions and NGOs.

Q2.

Some companies have agreed to improve, so brand representatives should meet unions and talk to them.

Should be a list provided of who subcontracts for them.

Brands should inform locals of the process, translate it and distribute it to unions.

Trade unions should be able to be involved in the monitoring process

Training program by trade unions with the workers should take place regarding above points.

BANGLADESH

Q1.

Workers meetings to inform workers to ensure participation in campaign and struggle:

Workers meetings

Organizers meetings

Local demonstrations/rally

National

Leaflets

Posters

Training

Other trade unions and NGOs:

Meetings

Follow up, including: research, conditions, brands and pressure on owners and brands.

International level: continuous and more pressure on the brands for:

Concrete commitment

Participation of local trade unions and NGOs in monitoring

JAPAN

Comment: workers movement on campaigns is very weak. We mainly have consumer groups interested in ecology, fair trade movements etc. Through them it's possible to broaden and pressure Japan based companies such as Asics.

Round-up of the meeting

Two principles or themes guided much of the discussion and sharing of experiences at the Workers Exchange: local organizing and building alliances. As elucidated in the *Evaluation of the national campaigns* group discussion from page 14, the level of local organizing within the PFOC varied considerably from 'most rank and file workers not involved' to 'due to involvement of many trade unions many workers could be mobilized' (in India). In the case of the latter, this was possible primarily due to the quite high level of alliance building which occurred on the national level around the PFOC, and the higher level of value added the PFOC provided to national level campaigning.

Inherent in a campaign on a global scale such as PFOC, the expectations for the campaign on the national and regional levels vary considerably, as do the levels of experience participating in international campaigns. Some participants noted that it was difficult to galvanize support on the local level due to 'concern about the possible negative impact from the international campaign,' and that 'most rank and file workers were not involved'. During the course of the Workers Exchange it wasn't discussed why this is the case, but it could be due to a number of factors including: some governments harsh reaction to either national or international campaigning for fear it will discourage investment or contribute to social disorder, bad experiences from workers and unions in past international campaigns, or lack of capacity in participating in international campaigns. What this highlights is the difficulty of initiating and sustaining a global campaign which is based on local organizing and national level demands, despite the fact that it is the key to a successful campaign which could lead to positive qualitative changes for workers. Essentially, the Worker Exchange was a step forward in attempts to build regional solidarity and alliances, with a perhaps unstated focus of reducing organizations disparity in expectations and experience with international campaigning in the sportswear sector, or textile and garments in general, by sharing information with one another.

This discussion leads directly into building a common campaign agenda, or how experience with the PFOC can contribute to that in Asia. Participants generally agreed that the basis is workers involvement, whether formal, informal or migrant workers. Representatives from several countries stated that the information generated on the international level can be important for workers, whether when bargaining with management, or in attempts to organize workers. And importantly, improving channels of communication on the regional and international levels are necessary to meet this. Building a common campaign agenda is certainly a challenge (see concluding remarks from Chang below), yet several participants agreed that it's important to formulate at the international level so that work on the regional level can move forward more effectively. Regional level work is important for a number of reasons, one being the necessity of regional standards so that investors cannot play on nation off of another.

Finally, participants consistently raised the following targets of campaigning, though it wasn't discussed as a common charter or agreed upon goals, including:

We should be able to put forth following demands to target:

Brands:

Purchasing practices

Disclosure of supplier list

Involve stakeholders in monitoring

Make freedom of association commitment on national level

More pressure on brands to sign global agreements with Trade Unions

Focus on big TNCs from Asia region (from Taiwan, Korea, HK)

Pressure national governments to improve/implement labour laws

Pressure ILO in existing monitoring and better implementation of standards

Concluding Remarks

Dae-oup Chang's closing remarks from AMRC

Focus on regional coordination in the PFOC

This is second regional meeting since the campaign started. Promises were made at first meeting [in Phnom Penh] which weren't just words since a lot of activities came through on the national and international level. Many countries put the 'Play Fair' slogan into the context of local movements. A good example of new possibilities came from the coordination of NGOs and trade unions, such as in India.

Some new things include pioneering methods in campaigning as discussed in day 2. It is hard to quantify but we have some results of the campaign in Asia. But, regional coordination has its limits and problems in coordinating a campaign with a regional impact. National campaigns took place on a very uneven manner and we still don't know how activities in India help activities in Hong Kong, for example. So success lies in mixing actions together in a pot but not as a region wide campaign. How to develop local mobilizing attempts and international campaign work, and what is the role of regional coordination in developing that are questions left unanswered. Maybe this is not a fair evaluation as it's the first time this sort of region wide attempt has been made in this type of campaign. Considering the variety of methods which are possible means we are still in the beginning stages.

But look at the bright side, we tried what we can try and the focus of the attempts was solidarity among different national movements.

Positive outcomes

After the Phnom Penh meeting, a number of organisations did take actions according to the regional, national and international action plan. Although most of activities were small-scale, the voice was made clear.

In Indonesia, Hong Kong, Philippines, India, Pakistan, Taiwan Thailand and Bangladesh, campaign organisations hit the streets on May Day to deliver their message to the workers and public.

In many countries in Asia, we succeeded in putting the slogan 'Play Fair at the Olympics' together with other slogans of the national labour movement.

Indeed, there were a few well-coordinated nation wide actions, with workers' participation. India is a good example, where a national forum and protest torch rally was organised by NGOs, trade union federations and workers in sportswear industries, getting nation-wide media focus.

Other small scale but pioneering activities were also reported, such as anti-sweatshop exhibitions organised by Taiwanese labour groups together with student activists. I think we are doing what we did not usually consider in the past. And I believe that these actions will create more spaces for workers and activists to spell out what should be done.



Limits

However, in spite of our attempts to keep up with the international campaign, many problems have come up, including limits in developing a regional campaign with a region-wide impact. Activities were taken unevenly from one country to another, lacking a region-wide impact. This reflects that the PFOC in Asia was a sum of national campaigns, rather than a regionally coordinated campaign. Since there has been no coordinated financial support, individual organisations had to find funding support by themselves; this is another obstacle which is difficult to overcome.

In sum, we could not manage to develop a regional campaign over the national boundaries and regional coordination through email exchange, reflecting where we are in terms of regional action and international cooperation.

Also, it is still not clear how we can develop concrete and mutually beneficial relations between local mobilisation of workers and an international campaign; and defining the role of regional coordination in the development

of this campaign objective. But perhaps it is not a fair evaluation, because we are still at the beginning stages. We all know that PFOC is and will be a platform to develop longer-term strategy for the labour movement in the region. And having seen all the effort we made in the region, certainly I believe we made an important start. A truly global and regional campaign and long term strategy for that can only be built upon the active solidarity and transparent discussion among us, rather than solidarity as a mere slogan. And I hope that this campaign could be a point when we start more active solidarity building.

Lek Yimprasert from Thai Labour Campaign gave closing remarks as a representative of the local host organization. She discussed the importance of sharing strategy on how to fight and win and lose over the past three days.



[From “Still Seeking Fair Play in the Sportswear Industry: Olympics Ongoing Rallying Point for Rights Activists” (a report from the PFOC Steering Committee meeting in Brussels in December 2004^[0])]

Although not fully global, participation in Europe and Asia was widespread. It was noted that one of the major gains in producing countries were the innovative alliance-building efforts. The worker exchange initiatives carried out amongst garment workers in India and the (regional) exchange organized in Bangkok were seen as particularly successful.

On the other side, the campaigning period was quite short and in such a short period, it is hard to immediately identify meaningful change in workers’ lives—participants acknowledged that such changes take place over a longer period of time. While the campaign provided plenty of scope for participation in consumer countries, as can be seen in the events section of the website (<http://www.fairolympics.org/en/events/default.htm>), campaigns in producing countries often felt they had fewer ways to get involved. In cases where they did get active, particularly South and East Asia, regional coordination was weak. Not enough thought had been given so far to strategizing at the level in producing countries and how to use possible outcomes of the campaign (in particular the advances made in dialogue with sportswear sourcing firms) to bring about change in working and living conditions for/by workers themselves.

Workers Comments

Although the discussion topics of the two day worker exchange were quite serious, the meeting was also a unique experience for workers, activists and trade unionists to come together, get to know one another and have fun. The Workers Olympics is one example, but others include informal time together including the Solidarity Night on December 10 when all of the participants went to Bangkok’s Suan Lum Night Bazaar together. Everyone had a chance to relax and explore a new country outside of the convention room, and some took their first ride on an escalator in Bangkok’s new subway system.

Following are conclusions on the experience from Cambodian worker participant:

I was happy that I could join the activities as part of the campaign and also to join the workshop. What I learned from the exchange was the difference between the workers livelihoods in Asia. It helped me better understand that the situations workers are facing are not just happening to the workers in Cambodia, but it showed the reality that the workers face the same problem and the same situation [in other countries].

We are so glad to join this campaign in order to share and learn from the workers in different countries. We see the situation of them, the struggle, solidarity...etc. It's similar and sometimes different to us and so we can use those strong strategies in our country. After sharing we feel close, we joined the sport together happily. We want that solidarity to happen in every country. We also learned more about sport and that though we're workers and we don't have the opportunity to play sports, but on that day we could. We really support this workers exchange program because we can show and hear the real situation of the workers from themselves, and we can build cross-country solidarity to protect the workers benefits.



Appendix 1

Still Seeking Fair Play in the Sportswear Industry: Olympics Ongoing Rallying Point for Rights Activists

Summary Report of PFOC steering group meeting



After six months of relentless campaigning the organisations taking part in the Play Fair at the Olympics Campaign (PFOC) took stock of the campaign's achievements. On December 16-17, 2004 an evaluation meeting was organised by the PFOC steering group, which is made up of representatives from Asia Monitor Resource Center (AMRC), the CCC, Global Unions, Oxfam and the Thai Labour Campaign. Other organisations were invited to the meeting, of which several attended, including the India-based Centre for Education and Development and Cividep.

The assessment of the campaign so far was that it heralded unprecedented levels of collaboration between NGOs and

trade union organisations in many countries, north and south, and that it produced a “roadmap” serving as the basis for dialogue with campaign targets in discussions on a sectoral agreement, as well as unilateral steps companies can take.

On the positive side the campaign was viewed as strong on the dialogue with sportswear companies, which in some cases resulted in direct relations between target companies and local trade unions. Five out of the seven targeted companies reviewed their codes/labour practice policies and were in varying degrees moved to take action (for more on what was achieved in the campaign, please see the documented posted on the PFOC website <http://www.fairolympics.org/en/gains.htm>). In the evaluation it was recognized and stressed that gains at the policy level are not the same as concrete improvements for workers at plant level. Linking with global sports event was seen as strong in that it brought together the targeted brands. The website served a strong role as a focal point for the campaign (events section in particular), and as a repository for information. It was noted that highlighting certain targets on the website placed a lot of pressure on the company targets to take action. The level of public attention was strong, in terms of media attention, the pre-games stunt in Athens, and the extent of participation (from over 35 countries, with ½ million signatures). Although not fully global, participation in Europe and Asia was widespread. It was noted that one of the major gains in producing countries were the innovative alliance-building efforts. The worker exchange initiatives carried out amongst garment workers in India and the (regional) exchange organized in Bangkok were seen as particularly successful.

On the other side, the campaigning period was quite short and in such a short period, it is hard to immediately identify meaningful change in workers' lives- participants acknowledged that such changes take place over a longer period of time. While the campaign provided plenty of scope for participation in consumer countries, as can be seen in the events section of the website (<http://www.fairolympics.org/en/events/default.htm>), campaigns in producing countries often felt they had fewer ways to get involved. In cases where they did get active, particularly South and East Asia, regional coordination was weak. Not enough thought had been given so far to strategizing at the level in producing countries and how to use possible outcomes of the campaign (in particular the advances made in dialogue with sportswear sourcing firms) to bring about change in working and living conditions for/by workers themselves.

Particularly disappointing in the campaign was the reaction of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which moved very little during the campaign, though some of the national Olympic committees and games organising committees were often open to the campaign.

A major conclusion of the first part of the campaign is that it is essential that the producer countries are placed at the centre of any future work. In order to capitalise on the progress which has been made, efforts need to be intensified in the sector in a number of different ways. A centrepiece of this programme of work focuses on measures to facilitate freedom of association.

The ITGLWF has embarked on a program with its affiliates in Asia to develop their knowledge of the supply chains of the major multinational sportswear companies sourcing from their countries and to work on the range of instruments which can be used to assist in organising along such chains. Part of this program includes a July 2005 regional workshop in Vietnam organised by the ITGLWF together with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation where affiliates will share information on the sportswear industry in their region.

In the different countries NGOs who have been involved in the sportswear related activities will also take part in the preparation for this meeting, which also provides a space to increase union-NGO cooperation. This is also part of a longer trajectory of other follow-up sportswear activities, including a larger meeting for NGOs as well as unions later in the year. This meeting is likely to take place in India and will address other global campaigning issues as well.

Other follow up

The Turin 2006 Winter Olympic Committee (TOROC) has, in an effort not connected to the Play Fair at the Olympics campaign, adopted a "Charter of Intents" which may however contribute to the defining of ethical standards for global sporting events. On this basis, TOROC has expressed an interest in discussing with the campaign ways to improve social and ethical values in sport.

On a national level the different campaign organisations are following up with their national Olympic committees. The British Olympics Association for example has moved from its original position of refusing to meet with the campaign to agreeing to engage with the campaign partners and with campaign lobbyists in order to "look at contracts and at what needs to be changed to improve the conditions (of workers)". In the Netherlands the commitments made by the Dutch Olympic Committee (NOC*NSF) during the campaign, including adding a clause on labour standards in their contracts with Asics, will be followed up. In several European countries campaigning

efforts in the next period will focus on sportswear retailers such as Decathlon, Intersport and Go Sport.

The London Bid, the organisation set up to promote Britain's goal of hosting the Olympic Games in 2012, has met with the TUC, Oxfam and Labour Behind the Label (the UK CCC), and committed to including workers' rights issues in its contracts with suppliers.

Companies

The sportswear brands were urged through the Play Fair at the Olympics campaign to cooperate on a "program of work" aimed at bringing labour abuses in the industry to an end. In particular seven companies were highlighted by the Play Fair campaign, Puma, Umbro, Lotto, Fila, Asics, Mizuno and Kappa.

Since September 2004 the lobbying activities of the campaign at the international level have been scaled down, and the team has concentrated on developing a report that provides a complete record of the interaction between the different companies and the Play Fair at the Olympics alliance. Each company has reviewed its own chapter, the full document is available on the Play Fair website and the website of the Clean Clothes Campaign.

The dialogue between Umbro and the UK *Play Fair* coalition continues, and parties are developing concrete plans for worker training and other activities as agreed by Umbro during the campaign. A meeting between Puma and Bulgarian unions and NGOs also took place at the end of last year, as well as with one of the Turkish trade unions.

There has been no progress from the side of Fila, Kappa and Lotto. Fila is being targeted by the Clean Clothes Campaign in relation to their failure to act responsibly at PT Tae-Hwa, a company where they were sourcing in Indonesia. A letter signed by the Play Fair at the Olympics campaign coalition partners to Fila regarding this ongoing dispute has not been answered by Fila; follow-up letters and phone calls have also failed to generate a response from the company.

Meanwhile, in Finland a campaign has been launched around the IAAF World Championships in Athletics this August which will focus on the Japan-based Mizuno, the main sponsor of the event. This will encourage Mizuno to further improve its labor policy and to take on the *Play Fair* demands. Asics,

another Japanese company that has been targeted in the campaign, has contacted Hong Kong labor rights groups regarding health and safety training in Chinese factories.

In Shanghai on March 16, 2005 the recently established World Federation of Sporting Goods Industries Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility (WFSGI-CSR) had its first meeting. The meeting was visited by representatives of major sportswear brands, suppliers, national sportswear manufacturing associations, the ILO and the Fair Labour Association. On this occasion the committee finally discussed the PFOC Programme of Work for the Sportswear Industry, that was presented to them and their members in May 2004 (some companies, notably Adidas, Reebok and Puma did respond individually, as has the FLA). PFOC representatives were not invited, although initial indications were given by the CSR committee that this was under consideration. The WFSGI did not answer the question of how they would take up the issues raised by the Play Fair campaign, to the great disappointment of the alliance. They made clear that in their view a sectoral “framework agreement” would not be feasible at the moment.

The Play Fair alliance will continue taking the achievements further, towards the Winter Olympics in Turin and the Summer Olympics in Beijing.

Appendix 2

“Workers Solidarity Olympics” highlights dark side of sportswear industry

08.08.04

Bangkok, Thailand - Sportswear and garment workers from 7 Asian countries (Cambodia, Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia) today joined hundreds of Thai workers in a sport stadium in Bangkok for their own Olympics. But these games also had a serious message - the

Olympic ideal of fair play should be extended to workers who make the sportswear so heavily promoted in Athens.

Asia is the world's centre for sportswear production, with hundreds of thousands of workers, mostly women, employed under highly exploitative conditions. Junya Yimprasert of the Thai Labour Campaign said: "Sportswear firms spend millions of dollars on sponsoring athletes but they squeeze their suppliers so hard it results in impossible pressure on workers."

Thai sportswear worker Sunee said: "Every day sportswear workers work as hard as any athlete in training. But instead of medals there are poverty wages, long working hours and constant pressure to work faster. Today we are competing for fun, but we are also saying that we object to our working lives being dominated by competition. Asian workers want to support each other, not compete."

The event is part of Play Fair At the Olympics, a campaign initiative of Oxfams, Global Unions and the Clean Clothes Campaign which has become one of the biggest ever mobilisations against exploitative work. Hundreds of organisations, including



the Thai Labour Campaign, have participated in over 35 countries, more than half a million signatures have been collected and there have been more than 500 local events. Supporters include athletes like Spanish cyclist Miguel Indurain and French World Cup soccer star Didier Deschamps.

The campaign is calling on sportswear brands to change their buying practices to reduce pressures on suppliers and workers and on governments to enforce global labour standards. Tim Connor of Oxfam said "The campaign has at least succeeded in bringing some major brands in the sportswear industry, including Nike, adidas, Reebok and Puma around the table to discuss how to bring an end to labour abuses. Unfortunately the IOC is refusing either to take any moral leadership on the issue or to take responsibility for workers' rights in Olympic sponsorship and licensing programs".

Medals were presented by Marjorie Larney from the 1952 and 1956 US Olympic teams who has helped coach the Thai Olympic team. Marjorie said "I agree with the goals of the Day 110%."

This is the first "Workers' Olympics" since World War II and the first ever in Asia. The garment and sportswear workers will spend the next two days

sharing their stories of factory life and planning further campaign activity for decent wages and conditions.

Sportswear and garment workers from 7 Asian countries today joined hundreds of Thai workers in a sport stadium in Bangkok for the Workers' Olympics - 8th august 2004

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Ms. Malaiwan Chadawipoo, a unionized worker of the bottle lid factory: "I've met many people. I've got new friends. It was fun. I've seen solidarity and unity of my labour union, also of others. If this event is organized again, I would like to see more factory workers come to join."

Mr. Johan Utang, a garment worker of the Solidarity Group: "I was impressed because it is rare to have joint activities with other Labour friends. And usually, I've seen sports games on television, which show conflict, fighting or quarrel. But on the day of workers solidarity Olympics, there was no fighting and this is very impressive. I would like these activities to be organized again as I would like to meet friends who are workers like me."

Ms. Waewdown Kaewkasem, former garment worker. She is now working with the network of home based workers in Bangkok:

“The activities were good. It was the first time that most of the workers met labour friends from other countries. Usually, the workers play sports with their colleagues in a factory but this event gave them a chance to join in an international activity. It was so fun and excited to see the lively cheering crowd and dancing cheerleaders in colourful dressed up. It showed the creative ideas of the workers. I think this kind of event should be organized again. If it is organized continuously, the workers’ relationship will be tightened. Also they have a chance to learn, share and open their conception of the world. On the other hand, I think that members of the textile, garment and leather workers federation should see importance of this activity and join more which means the event would get more achievement. For the working team on organizing the event, they should have better preparation.”

Ms. Sunee Narmso, a garment worker of the Solidarity Group; workers based enterprise: “I’m glad that I had opportunity to join the ‘Workers Solidarity Olympics Day’. I feel impressed when I saw different organizations aware of the importance of workers.”

Mr. Tara Sawangtam, a railway worker. Railway is one of the state-owned enterprises in Thailand:

“On the ‘Workers Solidarity Olympics Day’, I also joined in the activities and I was impressed by the workers solidarity, no matter they are Thai or foreign. They all came to meet and join in the sports activities for the unity. The worker is the one who creates the world. The Olympics Games have made people involved and athletes being rich from big contracts and brand name sportswear. The workers are not rich though they produce the products. Thus, from now on I would like fair practice occur to the workers. And as a rail worker, I would like to cheer them up for keeping on struggle.”

Ms. Wilaiwan Saetia, the president of the Thai Labour Solidarity Committee of Thailand: “The activity has built solidarity among Thai workers, also between Thai and foreign workers. And the campaign has made awareness that garment workers earn very little compared to big corporate profits. This is an injustice in sportswear industry. Though this time, activities organizing were in a hitch, activities did not run smoothly. I think that it should have more participants; anyway I would like this kind of activities to be organized in the next four years. I guess that it was the first time and the publication was not done well enough. I really hope that in the next four years, the Workers Solidarity Olympics day would be organized again and I think that there would be more people come to join. My colleagues and I will

join more in the sports activities if we are told in advance and have enough time of practicing. For the next time, I would not like the activities to be a race for being the first or second winner or for the award money. For example, in my opinion awards for 'short story competition' could be like free trip with seminar, forum to share and express ideas about their short stories or training.“

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