



FAIR LABOR ASSOCIATION™

UPDATE

April 13, 2003



SPECIAL PROJECTS PROGRESS REPORTS Planning Meetings Held in Hong Kong

Planning meetings relating to the Sustainable Compliance and Hours of Work in China projects were recently held in Hong Kong, where Auret van Heerden met with the compliance field staff members of various participating companies to discuss the implementation of both projects in coming months.

The Sustainable Compliance Project, previously called the Strategic Monitoring Project, focuses on the development of a monitoring and remediation methodology that addresses the root causes of noncompliance issues, and provides workers and management with the tools to address these issues directly. The Hours of Work in China Project was designed to uncover the reasons behind persistent hours of work violations in Chinese factories, and to find innovative solutions to the problem.

At a meeting on March 15, FLA President Auret van Heerden and Monitoring Coordinator Margaret Hawley showed PC compliance staff a draft version of the monitoring tool that would be used for “strategic monitoring” and discussed this new approach to compliance. Further planning was also done regarding the Hours of Work project and the business case that needs to be made for reducing hours of work.

For more information about Special Projects, contact Salem Shubash at shubash@fairlabor.org.



FLA DEVELOPS NEW MONITORING TOOLS; Promise to Improve Quality of Monitoring Results

As reported in previous UPDATES, the FLA has worked to revise the monitoring instrument employed by FLA-accredited monitors during FLA independent external monitoring (IEM) visits. The new monitoring instrument is currently in draft form and promises to streamline and improve the monitoring process and provide information about factory conditions that can help in diagnosing systematic noncompliance issues.

From March 8 to 18, the FLA conducted five IEM visits in Bangkok and Shenzhen using the new monitoring instrument in order to test its usability and effectiveness. The staff also conducted workshops in both locations to present the new tool to FLA-accredited monitors and local participating company field staff. Based on the results of these activities, the FLA staff is currently revising the tool and will present it to the Monitoring Committee meeting later in April.

For more information about improvements to FLA monitoring, contact Margaret Hawley at margarethawley@fairlabor.org.



Auret van Heerden and Margaret Hawley lead discussions about the FLA’s new monitoring instrument at the workshop hosted by the FLA in Shenzhen, China.



**FLA MAKES MOVES TO INCREASE
REGIONAL PRESENCE AROUND THE WORLD**

In an effort to improve the FLA's contact with workers and their communities, the Monitoring Program is transitioning to a new organizational model whereby its members will be based in different regions of the world. Under this new arrangement, Richa Mittal will be based in India, focusing on South Asia; Si Meng, the new Monitoring Program Officer, will be based in China, focusing on China; and a specialist will be hired in the near future to focus on Southeast Asia. Genevieve Taft will be based in Washington DC, and will focus on the Americas.

Margaret Hawley will coordinate the program. For more information, contact Margaret Hawley at margarethawley@fairlabor.org.



**STUDENTS CALL FOR DISCLOSURE OF WAGES
AT FACTORIES PRODUCING
UNIVERSITY-LICENSED GOODS**

The "Labor Behind the Label" Conference held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, March 24-25, focused on the disclosure of wages paid to workers who are employed at factories that produce university-licensed goods. The University's Licensing Policy Committee had called on the Chancellor to require licensees to provide wage information about the factories from which they source. The Committee considered that full wage disclosure would push licensee companies to engage with their factories and ensure that minimum wages are paid.

Kathy Stevens, University Liaison, participated in the conference, along with representatives from other universities, licensees, and labor organizations. Discussions focused on the challenges posed to the reliable and consistent collection of wage information, as well as the ways to overcome them.

Other universities are currently considering a wage disclosure policy similar to the one passed at Wisconsin. In coordination with the FLA, they are investigating the costs and benefits of executing such a policy throughout licensees' supply chains.

For more information about the University Program, please contact Kathy Stevens at kstevens@fairlabor.org.



**FLA IN MOTION
Recent Trips and Staff Presentations**

Auret van Heerden, the President of the FLA, recently traveled to two meetings in London that focused on the phase-out of the Multi-Fiber Arrangement (MFA). At the two meetings, one sponsored by Nike and the other by the non-governmental organization, WIEGO, he joined various stakeholders in discussions about the impact of the elimination of quotas in January 2005 on global apparel sourcing and workers' jobs.



Former workers from the Bed & Bath factory in Thailand at work in the cooperative factory they started last year. Staff visited the new factory this March.

Rut Tufts, Executive Director of the FLA, represented the FLA at the Intertek Conference in New York City, March 10-12. He also met with representatives of the Economist magazine, US State Department, and other groups interested in the FLA's work during the month of March.

In March, **Margaret Hawley**, Monitoring Program Coordinator, traveled to Bangkok and Shenzhen, where she organized monitor workshops and participated in pilot monitoring visits using the new FLA monitoring instrument. She also met with members of the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee and other stakeholders in China.

FLA IN MOTION, Continued...

On March 26, **Anne Lally**, Coordinator of Outreach and Transparency, participated as a speaker in “Covering Globalization,” a four-day seminar at Columbia University for journalists, sponsored by Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz. She introduced participants to the FLA and reviewed its strengths and challenges. On March 29, she also presented on the FLA at Columbia University’s “Covering Labor Issues.” Anne also represented the FLA at the Intertek Conference, along with Rut Tufts.

Kathy Stevens, University Liaison, participated in the Arizona State University Anti Sweatshop Advisory Committee’s meeting. Kathy was also a panelist at an American University luncheon talk, “Students and Sweatshops: Is There a Gap?” on March 2, and presented at a roundtable session at the International Collegiate Licensing Association’s Winter Symposium on February 27. See more above about Kathy’s participation in the “Labor Behind the Labor” Conference at University of Wisconsin-Madison about wage disclosure.

.....

**MSI COOPERATION PROJECT MAKES
PROGRESS IN PROJECT MANAGER SEARCH**

The Steering Group of the Multi-stakeholder Initiative Cooperation Project, which will run a pilot project in Turkey to identify opportunities for cooperation between leading multi-stakeholder groups, has agreed upon a short-list of candidates for the Project Manager position advertised in the last UPDATE. The steering committee will meet again in London this May to roll the project out further and interview short-listed candidates.

Please contact Anne Lally (annelally@fairlabor.org) for more information about the FLA’s involvement in this initiative.

.....

THIRD PARTY COMPLAINTS UPDATE

The FLA third party complaints process is the mechanism by which third parties can report serious noncompliance issues taking place in FLA applicable facilities to the FLA. As reported in the previous UPDATE, the FLA has developed guidelines to ensure the integrity of the third party complaint process, while providing adequate information to complainants and other involved parties about FLA follow-up to complaints.

Because public statements and speculation can interfere with progress in third party complaints, the FLA limits its reporting on complaints until investigations are completed. Nevertheless, the FLA provides basic information about the status of ongoing third party complaints in the UPDATE in the spirit of transparency and accountability.

- *Complaint filed 5/2003 re. facility in El Salvador where Lands End produces:* The FLA has conducted an IEM assessment of the facility and the complaint is currently at step four of the Third Party Complaint process, meaning that a tracking chart including findings and remediation is accessible on the FLA website. An April 5, 2004 letter from Executive Director Rut Tufts to universities providing additional details about this case is also available on www.fairlabor.org.
- *Complaint filed 12/2003 re. facility in Honduras where Gildan produces:* The FLA has conducted an independent assessment of the facility. The complaint is at step four. Findings from the assessment and remediation will be reported publicly within 60 days.

For more information about ongoing third party complaints, please contact Rut Tufts at tufts@fairlabor.org.

.....



FLA WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBERS

Si Meng, Monitoring Program Officer

Si Meng joined the FLA as Monitoring Program Officer in March 2004, and will represent the FLA in China after several months of training at FLA headquarters in Washington DC. Si Meng has worked in special economic zones throughout China since 1993. Specializing in investment services and human resources management, she has worked for various multinational companies, including Nabisco and Emerson. In 2003, Si Meng received her dual B.A. in Global Studies and East Asian Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. During her studies in the US, she coordinated student initiatives in China pertaining to home-stays and spearheaded community service and teaching programs in her home village.

Ama Ampadu, Administrative Assistant

Ama Ampadu joined the FLA as an Administrative Assistant/Receptionist at the start of April. Ama received a B.A. in International Studies from the University of Chicago. While at Chicago, she also worked as an office assistant in the Social Sciences Division of the Local Business Center and at the University of Chicago Hospital. Ama enjoys learning foreign languages and traveling around the world. She recently returned to her hometown of Baltimore, after spending part of the year in Pisa, Italy in an intensive language program.

.....

Please visit our website www.fairlabor.org to learn more about the FLA and our recent activities.

.....

**FLA BIDS FAREWELL TO
REMEDIOS ARGUELLO**

In March 2004, **Remedios Arguello** of the Monitoring Program staff left the FLA to join the Social and Environmental Affairs team at adidas-Salomon based in Portland, OR. In her new position she will be focusing on adidas' compliance work in the Americas. Over the course of more than three years, Remy brought a strong knowledge of the FLA system and Central American labor conditions to her work. Her dedication and good humor will truly be missed, and we wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors.

**Announcement from Cornell ILR School:
Intensive Training Seminar on
Freedom of Association**

Cornell University's Industrial and Labor Relations School announces the first project of its new International Programs initiative: an intensive training seminar on freedom of association in the labor standards monitoring field.

Researchers and practitioners agree that freedom of association is the most difficult subject of labor standards monitoring. This seminar aims to meet the need for specialized training on freedom of association.

A full description of the seminar and registration information are at:

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/international/Programs/seminars/default.html>

Please visit that link for more details.