EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From June to October 2013, during periods of peak seed production activity, the FLA conducted unannounced independent external monitoring (IEM) visits to assess working conditions at Syngenta's seed supplier farms in Europe and the Middle East. Two assessments took place in Hungary (covering farms in the provinces of Tizafoldvar, Fabiansebestyen, Murany, and Bekes), two in Romania (in Braila and Galati provinces) and one in Turkey (in Konya) where Syngenta is sourcing corn and sunflower seeds. The detailed reports can be found at: http://www.fairlabor.org/affiliate/syngenta

Teams consisting of a mix of FLA staff and external assessors visited 14 medium to large farms in Hungary and Romania and 20 small farms in Turkey. They interviewed 118 workers who were involved in detasseling and harvesting activities. In those countries, Syngenta often works with seed organizers who act as intermediaries between the growers and the company. Seasonal workers hired during peak activities are recruited through labor contractors, who themselves may be contracted by Syngenta, by local growers, or by seed organizers.

Independent External Monitoring Findings

1. Code Awareness and Grievance System – Growers' and workers' had a good awareness of the company code of conduct at the visited farms in Romania. However in Turkey and in Hungary, growers and workers had very limited knowledge of the company code of conduct and workplace standards, despite Syngenta's use of posters, trainings, and distribution of leaflets about these topics. In the three countries, Syngenta has developed a grievance channel to allow workers to reach directly the company, but workers' awareness of this channel is very low.
2. **Employment Relationship** – In Hungary, workers do not receive contracts, and their employment terms regarding hours of work and wages are not clearly communicated. In Romania, the workers’ registration system accounts for only one worker per family, who is paid on behalf of the group, making it unclear how many workers are involved, what their hours are, and whether they are of working age. In Turkey, wages are not paid according to a regular and documented procedure, making workers unsure when they will receive their wages.

3. **Child Labor** – Child labor was identified in all three countries. Children were observed working on detasseling and harvesting activities together with their parents, who bring them to the field. When workers are hired directly by the growers, they do not implement any age verification system and do not maintain proof of age documentation on the farms. No parental consents were observed for the recruitment of young workers below 18. Finally, there is no child labor removal and rehabilitation system implemented by the company.

4. **Health and Safety** – A number of health and safety issues were identified in the three countries. In Hungary and Romania, assessments showed that health and safety management systems were lacking at farm level. Assessors found that workers had not been provided with access to safety equipment, and that at no point in the supply chain had any particular actor (growers, seed organizers, or Syngenta) taken responsibility for communicating health and safety policies to workers. Most of the visited farms lacked chemical management and training procedures. Additionally in Turkey, growers lacked a system for tracking whether they employed any pregnant workers, and therefore were unable to provide special protective measures for them. In some cases, drinking water was insufficient for workers in the field.

5. **Hours of Work and Compensation** – In the three countries, assessors identified problems with the recording and tracking of hours of work and wages on the farms. This non-compliance affected the verification of other requirements such as overtime work, rest days, and timely payment of wages. In Turkey, assessors found that labor contractors were deducting commissions from workers’ wages, which is not allowed according to the legal regulations.

**Corrective Action Plans**

In response to FLA’s monitoring visits, Syngenta developed and submitted corrective action plans that are included in the FLA monitoring reports. The highlights of these plans include:

1. **Code Awareness and Grievance System** – In Hungary and Turkey, Syngenta committed to increase growers’ and workers’ awareness of workplace standards. In the corn production in Hungary, Syngenta will place more communication materials on farms and on the workers’ shuttle bus to make sure all workers have a chance to
review the code of conduct. Short training sessions will also be given to the workers at the beginning of each working day. In sunflower production, Syngenta will strengthen the awareness program with the seed organizer to ensure a better implementation at farm level. In Turkey, Syngenta organized a “training of trainers,” for a few selected staff to be able to train growers on workplace standards before each season. Syngenta will develop communications materials for growers’ training, and in all the three countries, Syngenta will work to increase workers’ awareness of the company grievance channel through communication material and training.

2. **Employment Relationship** – In Hungary, at the corn-producing farms where Syngenta hires seasonal workers directly, a seasonal contract system will be implemented, and employment terms will be clearly described. In the other farms, contract templates will be shared with the seed organizers, and Syngenta will strengthen its monitoring of the issue. In Romania, Syngenta will train local growers on the requirement to register all workers, and will confirm through monitoring that growers adhere to this policy in the future. In Turkey, Syngenta will work with a legal consultant to include payment terms and other legal clauses in the workers’ contracts. Labor contractors will also be required to submit workers’ salary payment forms to Syngenta.

3. **Child Labor** – In the three countries, Syngenta will take measures to improve compliance with child labor requirements. Through communication material and training efforts, Syngenta will emphasize that age verification systems must be followed in each country, and that the employment of young workers requires parental consent. Finally, Syngenta staff in all three countries will develop procedures for removal and rehabilitation of child workers relevant to the local situation.

4. **Health and Safety** – In Hungary and Romania, health and safety management systems will be strengthened through communication of policies and procedures and enhanced training for growers, emphasizing good chemical management and storage. To improve communication to workers, Syngenta will organize short daily training sessions to remind workers of the most important health and safety measures. Syngenta will also provide basic personal protective equipment (PPE) for seasonal workers and will remind its partners of their obligation to provide PPE to their workers. In Turkey, Syngenta will organize trainings for workers before the season starts, and will provide PPE and an information booklet on health and safety. Growers’ training will also be strengthened on health and safety aspects and a clause on pesticide application will be added to their contracts. Issues regarding reproductive health will be clarified with legal assistance and added to the contracts. Syngenta will develop a water distribution plan before the season begins and will establish a monitoring system for the water supply at the farms.
5. **Hours of Work and Compensation** – In the three countries, Syngenta will implement measures to: (1) clarify employment terms with workers, and (2) better track and record hours of work and wage payments. Payment or payroll templates will be shared and explained to growers or seed organizers. Once the system is established, Syngenta will closely monitor the implementation of hours of work and compensation benchmarks, including overtime work, the provision of rest days, and timely payment of wages. In Turkey, legal aspects with regard to labor contractors’ commissions will be clarified and added to the workers’ contracts. Labor contractors will be required to register with the tax system by contract.