Fair Labor Association Awarded $4.87 Million Project Grant to Address Child Labor in Hazelnut-Growing Communities in Turkey

December 2, 2015

Washington, DC – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) today announced a grant of $4.87 million to the Fair Labor Association (FLA) to pilot test the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s “Guidelines for Eliminating Child and Forced Labor in Agricultural Supply Chains” over the next 28 months. The FLA will partner with three companies affiliated with the FLA – Nestlé, Olam-Prodiga and Balsu – in applying the guidelines to their hazelnut supply chain in Turkey.

“We are excited to build on the FLA’s work in the agricultural sector,” said Sharon Waxman, President and CEO of the Fair Labor Association. “Our team intends to develop a comprehensive program that can be sustained beyond the duration of the funding from the Bureau of International Labor Affairs, and can be replicated by other companies and organizations working to eliminate child labor elsewhere in the world.”

Since 2004, the FLA has applied its multi-stakeholder methodology to the agriculture sector, bringing together brands, suppliers, international trade unions, labor and human rights organizations, and others to find sustainable solutions to systemic issues. The FLA has worked in several countries to identify the underlying causes of child labor in the agriculture sector; conduct awareness-building activities for farmers and workers; and promote a systems-level approach to monitoring and preventing child labor.

The new project will take place in the prominent hazelnut growing regions of Ordu and Sakarya, near the Black Sea. Additional project activities will take place in Urfa, to the south, a point of origin for many seasonal migrant workers who travel to Ordu and Sakarya with their families. A representative from each company will work with a dedicated FLA project team, supported by local community organizations, service providers, and partners.

ILAB leads the U.S. government’s efforts to ensure that workers around the world are treated fairly and are able to share in the benefits of the global economy. To these ends, ILAB has provided funding for more than 290 projects in more than 90 countries to combat the worst forms of child labor by assisting vulnerable children and their families. More information is available at www.dol.gov/ilab/.

The Fair Labor Association is a 15-year old organization with the mission to combine the efforts of business, civil society organizations, and colleges and universities to promote and protect workers’ rights and improve working conditions globally through adherence to international standards. While initially focused on apparel and footwear factories, the FLA has also added major programs in agriculture and electronics.