Minutes

Attending: Marlowe Coolican, Tim Fort, Ona Hahs-Tenny, Sioban Harlow, Heather Johnson (ex-officio), Rosa Peralta, Larry Root, Lisa Stowe, Katherine Terrell, Veronica Wilkerson-Johnson

Absent: Kristen Ablauf

1. Review and approval of minutes 10/8/04, 10/29/04
   - The Committee approved minutes from 10/8 and 10/29 with one correction (change “Ona Hahs-Kenny” to “Ona Hahs-Tenny”)

2. Announcements
   - Several members of the Committee attended a SOLE meeting on 11/9/04. S. Harlow would like the group to think of possible joint projects with SOLE. Also recommendation was made that the Committee meet each September with SOLE to discuss issues on the horizon and potential programs for the upcoming year.

3. MFA – A letter from the committee was sent to licensees through CLC.

4. Academic programs
   - “Trade and Labor Rights: a mini-panel on the Multi-Fibre Arrangement and other regimes” is postponed
   - On11/30/04 4:30 pm Ona will give a talk on her internship in Kenya

5. Wage Transparency – Discussion of Strategies (60 minutes)
   - S Harlow reported that she had been contacted by Larry Mann, from U Illinois who is also on the advisory board of FLA and shared with him what Michigan has been discussing. He asked to see the pros and cons document which was forwarded to him.

   Rut Tufts and Roopa Nair of the FLA joined the meeting by speaker phone.

   Roopa Nair reported on FLA’s efforts, timeline and process for developing a process of monitoring for Category C companies. A major issue they are working on is to develop a better understanding as to what strategies will work with C companies.

   Category C companies have diverse types of products. Preliminary analysis of Category C companies indicates a wide range of capacity, some already have compliance systems in place others have none, some have their own programs others contract with NGO’s. Apparel has more capacity than other licensee types. Toy sector has their own set of industry standards.

   A survey (profiling tool) has gone out to companies requesting information on their current programs and what companies have available to them. The plan is to build a “compliance toolkit” with modules for different compliance areas (health & safety, wage, benefits, hours of work etc.) FLA will begin introducing these modules in 2005.

   Just having wage information doesn’t illuminate the non-compliance. FLA is pushing companies to tell workers what the wage and benefit laws are and how wages are calculated. Information on average worker wage will not reveal information on patterns of non compliance, as average wage can appear to be compliant but lead to underpayment of legal overtime payment.

   Data on wages is obtained from a variety of sources. Currently working on developing the wage module and looking at ways that monitoring efforts may be combined across companies within the same factory.

   We discussed the proposed timeframe for rolling out some of these issues. The first module on Safety & Health is to be presented at the board meeting in Feb and rolled out in March. Focus on Health and Safety was chosen as it creates a channel of communications, trust between workers and management. Point was raised by a committee member that these programs cost money and often committees are formed and then workers get responsibility, but not authority.

   The second module will be on wage/benefits, by April/May 2005

   Profiles of the companies will provide a better understanding of what the level of knowledge is across factories. As to what companies are paying. Profile will look at what leverages FLA may have with which factories (eg., do they buy 100% of a factory’s product, or just a part of their products, seasonal, year-round production). Profile of workforce (migrant, gender, education level?) The experience is that the information provided on wages is usually just a report of the legal minimum wage.
After the call, the committee began discussing further how to most effectively address concerns about compliance with the wage clause.

Action Item: S. Harlow asked the group to come with proposals about where to best spend university capital and bring pros/cons in to share of the issue to the next meeting.

6. Old Business (5 minutes)
   · Gildan
     We discussed recent communications regarding the Gildan situation and agreed that we should begin drafting a letter to companies. Ona Hahs agreed to draft and discussion of the draft letter will take place at the next meeting.

Next meetings: 12/3/04