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# World Cup Soccer Balls Missed the Goal Set 13 Years Ago: Child Labor, Poverty Wages, Temporary Workers

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Source: International Labor Rights Forum Press Release

Washington, DC – As excitement grows for the upcoming FIFA World Cup beginning shortly in South Africa, there is a part of the World Cup that many sports fans will not see. The workers stitching soccer balls in Pakistan, India, China and Thailand continue to experience alarming labor rights violations even 13 years after the soccer ball industry signed the “Atlanta Agreement” committing to clean up the industry. The International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) released a new report titled “Missed the Goal for Workers: the Reality of Soccer Ball Stitchers in Pakistan, India, China and Thailand” today. The research found that the decade-long effort by governments, companies, and other stakeholders to eliminate child labor in this industry has seen only limited success. Child labor still exists in soccer ball production in India and Pakistan.

“Even after all of these years, low wages and a dangerous working environment in the industry remain almost entirely unaddressed,” reports Bama Athreya, Executive Director of the International Labor Rights Forum. “It’s time for buyers, factories and industry associations such as FIFA to take responsibility for continued labor rights violations in the production of soccer balls.”

The report highlights that:

- More than half of the 218 surveyed workers in Pakistan reported that they did not make the legal minimum wage per month.
- In one Pakistani manufacturer, ILRF researchers found that all interviewed stitching center or home based workers were temporarily employed resulting workers not having access to healthcare or social security.
- In the same Pakistani manufacturer’s supply chain, female home-based workers faced discrimination based on their gender. They were paid the least and faced the possibility of losing their jobs permanently due to pregnancy.
- In one Chinese factory, workers were found to work up to 21 hours a day during high seasons and without one day off in an entire month.
- Indian stitching centers were described as “pathetic.” Proper drinking water or medical care facilities, and even toilets were often absent.
- Child labor was identified by workers producing for three different factories in Pakistan.

ILRF is calling on the soccer ball industry to take immediate action to address the issues of extremely low wages and proliferation of temporary workers to improve conditions for the workers who produce the balls at the center of the 2010 World Cup.

The report will be available on June 7, 2010 at: <http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/foulball-campaign/resources/12331> [1].

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International Labor Rights Forum is an advocacy organization dedicated to achieving just and humane treatment for workers worldwide. ILRF works to stop child labor, promote and protect the rights of working women, end sweatshop labor, and to end violence against trade unions. ILRF has been working to stop labor rights abuses, particularly child labor, in the soccer ball industry since 1996. Learn more at [www.laborrights.org](http://www.laborrights.org) [2].

## Child Labor in the Soccer Ball Industry in India

1 of 17 (click image to advance)



• Panels of a Nivia ball

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Source URL: <http://laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/foulball-campaign/news/12335>

Links:

[1] <http://laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/foulball-campaign/resources/12331>

[2] <http://laborrights.org/>