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» http://www.cleanclothes.org/betterbargain/images/docs/cashing_in.pdf ^[1]

INTERNATIONAL LABOR RIGHTS FORUM | CLEAN CLOTHES CAMPAIGN

Immediate Release

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Giant retailers cashing in on poverty wages

Wal-Mart, Carrefour, Tesco, Aldi, Lidl profit while workers

face rights violations

In a time of global economic crisis, major global retailers Wal-Mart, Carrefour, Tesco, Aldi and Lidl are aggressively expanding their profits in the garment sector by taking advantage of massive workers' rights violations in their supply chains, according to a new report released today by the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC). These retailers are some of the only companies currently increasing their profits by selling cheap goods to cash-strapped consumers, but their profits come at a high cost for workers globally.

“Workers at factories supplying these retailers told us about working weeks as high as 90 hours, overtime that’s often unpaid, wages so low families are malnourished and strong resistance to any attempts at worker organizing,” said Nina Ascoly, of the CCC’s International Secretariat. “By using their huge retail market shares and forcing suppliers to accept low prices for their products, the Giants are leaders in the global race to the bottom on working conditions. To support real economic recovery the Giants should take steps to ensure that the workers stitching their clothes have decent jobs.”

According to the new report, titled “Cashing In: Giant retailers, purchasing practices, and working conditions in the garment industry,” evidence shows that major retailers implement purchasing policies that include offering suppliers very low prices for their goods and requiring suppliers to deliver products on very short timelines. In order to fulfill these orders, suppliers are forced to avoid implementing international labor rights standards. Investigations of factories producing for these five major retailers in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Thailand revealed worker rights abuses including: failure to pay a living wage, increased use of temporary contracts, repression of union rights, excessive hours and gender discrimination.

While all the retailers featured in the report have codes of conduct requiring labor protections and have

participated in some projects related to worker rights, the Giants must do more to improve these conditions.

Through the Better Bargain campaign, the CCC will push retailers to take more responsibility for supply chain working conditions as well as promote policy proposals to support respect for workers' rights. For a full list of CCC's recommendations, please visit: www.cleanclothes.org/betterbargain [4]

FOR MORE INFORMATION READ "CASHING IN":

- Download the executive summary: www.cleanclothes.org/betterbargain/images/docs/summary.pdf [5]
- Download the full report: www.cleanclothes.org/betterbargain/images/docs/cashing_in.pdf [1]

The Clean Clothes Campaign(cleanclothes.org) is an international network of trade unions and NGOs that aims to improve conditions and empower workers in the global garment industry.

*** Notes to editors ***

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Source URL: <http://www.laborrights.org/creating-a-sweatfree-world/wal-mart-campaign/news/11817>

Links:

- [1] http://www.cleanclothes.org/betterbargain/images/docs/cashing_in.pdf
- [2] <mailto:trina.tocco@ilrf.org>
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