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A female worker Relative Blames Suicide in Mattel's supplier factory

Thursday, June 2, 2011

June 1, 2011

Mr Robert Eckert

CEO of Mattel Inc.

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USA

Email : corporate.communications@mattel.com

Dear Mr Eckert,

It is very troubling and upsetting that I have to relay you this story about the apparent suicide of a worker at Taiqiang manufacturing plant in Shenzhen. The factory manufacturing plastic toys for mattel. This tragic death again emphasizes the need for Mattel to take a more active and serious role towards improving the working conditions of those factories in China it continues to do business with.

A female factory worker at the Taiqiang manufacturing plant in Shenzhen's Baoan district jumped to her death in an apparent suicide after getting into an argument with her manager about taking time off from work. Hu Nianzhen (胡年珍) had been working on the assembly line at Taiqiang manufacturing plant for two years. She was mother to one son and two daughters. A lack of workers had led Nianzhen to be reassigned to the injection department. Her family has said because of her age, 45, she was unable to perform well in the injection department and was often criticized and abused by her manager as a result. Afraid to face her manager at the factory, she did not return to work until after the weekend. The following Monday, May 16, she requested a leave of absence from work, but was refused by her manager. They supposedly both got into a heated argument over the matter. Shortly afterwards, around 12:40pm, Hu Nianzhen jumped from the sixth floor of the factory to her death. The factory only notified her family 4 hours later. Upon arriving at the factory, family members were not given permission to see Hu Nianzhen's body, because of security concerns. Her family returned to the factory on the afternoon of May 20 to lit incense and pay respects to recently deceased, however, they were roughhoused and beaten so severely by factory security that they were later admitted to the local hospital.

The tumultuous and problematic relationship between factory management and factory workers was central in leading to the death of He Nianzhen and, thus, requires your immediate and effective attention.

It is my request and hope that Mattel will take effective measures to address this problem, as well as secure fair compensation for Hu Nianzhen's family and continue to work in earnest to improve conditions at the factories they do business with in family. Only through a concerted effort to improve working conditions and safeguard the rights of Chinese factory workers can we prevent further suicides.

Li Qiang

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