



## Arisa Newsletter 2, June 2019

### TruStone Initiative signed by Arisa

On Monday 13 May, Arisa signed the *IRBC TruStone Initiative* together with the Dutch Minister Kaag of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, companies, branche associations and trade unions. The Initiative was signed by the Flemish parties in Brussels on Friday 10 May. It is the first time that two countries have reached joint agreements. The natural stone sector in the Netherlands and Flanders has made agreements with both the governments, NGOs and trade unions for more responsible production and procurement of natural stone. The intention is that the sector will immediately start mapping the risks in the production chain and cooperating with all parties to tackle problems such as child labour, forced labour and safety and health problems in the chain.



Read more in the press release of May 13: <https://arisa.nl/pressrelease-190513/?lang=en>.

### Historic step by adopting child labour due diligence law

On May 14, the Dutch Senate voted to adopt the Child Labour Due Diligence Bill. In doing so, the Netherlands demonstrates that it is serious about combating child labour in global supply chains. When the law enters into force, Dutch companies will have to declare that they have addressed the issue of child labour in their supply chains. By legislating minimum requirements for responsible business conduct, the Netherlands stands out as a frontrunner in the international trend towards mandatory human rights legislation.



Businesses, research institutions and civil society organisations all agree that child labour is a grave problem and that various policy measures are necessary to combat it. Until now, Dutch government policy consisted of encouraging companies to address supply chain problems voluntarily, including the issue of child labour. Unfortunately, this voluntary approach has thus far proved to be far from effective.

Read also the press release of MVO Platform (May 14, 2019):

<https://www.mvoplatform.nl/en/the-netherlands-takes-a-historic-step-by-adopting-child-labour-due-diligence-law/>.

## **New programme *Work, No Child's Business* to help eliminate child labour**

During the symposium on May 23 to celebrate 15 years Stop Child Labour, the campaign launched together with UNICEF and Save the Children their new *Work, No Child's Business* program. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it would financially support the program. Together with the Dutch government and parliament, the alliance partners have the the aim to make a strong and lasting contribution to the elimination of child labour.



The project will start in July and last for five years. The aim is an area-based approach and supply chain approach to tackle the root causes of child labour. In particular, the focus is on sectors with a high incidence of child labour, such as gold/mining, textiles and shoes, natural stone, cocoa, and informal and domestic work.

Read more about the programme: <https://stopchildlabour.org/new-program-work-no-childs-business-launched-to-help-eliminate-child-labor/>.

## **New report on female migrant labourers in the Tamil Nadu garment industry**

There is a lot to be done to improve both the living and working conditions of interstate female migrant workers in the Tirupur apparel cluster. A study on migrants from Odisha by READ and Partners in Change (May 2019) reveals among others long working hours, low earnings, less bonuses than promised, verbal abuse, low awareness of grievance redressal committees and exposure to occupational hazards (like dust and particle pollution). The study concluded that textile companies had a 'business interest' for preferring migrant workers to local workers as the former are less demanding, less organised and could be kept 'captive'.

You can download the report *Business 'Reinvent' Servitude – Understanding the status of female migrant labour from Odisha in the Tamil Nadu garment industry* here: <https://arisa.nl/wp-content/uploads/BusinessReinventServitude.pdf>.

