[ActionAid’s response to Mattel’s right to reply – 4 December 2020]

We welcome Mattel's commitment to finally conduct a thorough investigation into sexual harassment in its factories. To fulfill this commitment, we ask Mattel to conduct an investigation of sexual harassment and the risks that may cause it in all its factories and throughout its supply chain, and to publish the methodology of this investigation, its results and the corrective measures taken.

The Code of Conduct put forward by Mattel as evidence of the brand's commitment to ensuring a harassment-free workplace is well documented in our report, and we explain why it is of no practical use. Without a definition of prohibited behaviors, a dedicated complaints procedure, disciplinary actions and protective measures, this code is insufficient and remains wishful thinking.

Regarding the existence of anti-harassment training mentioned by Mattel, we have noted that it is not given at all to workers, which it should be, to allow the prevention of sexual harassment. The investigator who worked in the Changan Mattel factory did not receive any training related to sexual harassment. A genuine policy to combat sexual harassment and gender-based violence should be accompanied, at a minimum, by training at all levels, adapted to the different national contexts and the specific risks of each position.

Our report mentions that there is a hotline for workers to report issues at the factory, but we explain why it is ineffective. Workers apparently need to go to the office during working hours to be able to call the hotline. The anonymity of those who complain is not guaranteed and workers are afraid to use it.

Finally, with regard to certification by the International Council of Toy Industries (ICTI), we show in the report that the standard used by ICTI is poor with regards to sexual harassment. ICTI does not make it mandatory for factories to have specific rules or procedures to address sexual harassment in order to receive the certification. Similarly, ICTI's auditors are not, to our knowledge, trained to detect cases of sexual harassment.

Mattel can and should address sexual harassment. Our new investigation shows that sexual harassment is indeed present in this factory. In 2019, we found sexual harassment cases in another Mattel-owned factory, and we communicated the issue with the company.

We call on the company to adopt as soon as possible a genuine policy against sexual harassment. The policy should be applicable throughout its supply chain, with a clear definition of sexual harassment, an easy-to-understand complaints procedure, disciplinary actions against perpetrators and protection and reparation measures for victims.