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Statement to Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC): Oxfam report on labour conditions in Assam tea supply chains

As an international company with global supply chains, the ALDI North Group is aware of its responsibility to respect human rights. We are certain that long-term business success can only be ensured if human rights are acknowledged and respected, protected and fulfilled.

We are aware of the particular human rights challenges in the production of tea, including in the Assam state, as identified in the recent Oxfam report. We source tea from the region of Assam exclusively from producers who have been certified by the Rainforest Alliance and Ethical Tea Partnership; the majority of these growers are also certified organic and Fairtrade. A significant proportion of our tea products from other regions have been either UTZ/Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade or Organic certified for many years. We are continually working to increase the proportion of certified teas and as such have laid down our goals in our Tea Purchasing Policy to ensure greater sustainability in the tea supply chain. Our Tea Purchasing Policy can be found here:

https://www.aldi-nord.de/content/dam/aldi/germany/bewusst-einkaufen/nachhaltigkeit/tee/International_Tea_Purchasing_Policy.pdf.res/1490796487762/International_Tea_Purchasing_Policy.pdf

We therefore commit to maintain dialogue with our suppliers, working together to share the responsibility to respect human rights in our supply chains. We will continue to adjust our buying practices to address adverse impacts on human rights. As our tea products are not sourced directly from producers, rather from suppliers who commission the manufacture or import of the products, collaborating with our suppliers is an essential factor in achieving our sustainability goals, resolving problems and driving continuous improvement along our entire supply chains.

As part of our human rights risk analysis, we have published our Human Rights Policy Statement and the results of our human rights risk assessment of our food and agriculture supply chains on our website. The aim of this assessment was to identify human rights risks and the greatest level of influence of the ALDI North Group. The analysis paid particular attention to the levels of raw material production and final production. Our Human Rights Policy and excerpts from the findings of our human rights risk analysis are available here:

https://www.aldi-nord.de/content/dam/aldi/germany/verantwortung/unsere-verst%C3%A4ndnis/menschenrechte/10949261_Human_Rights_Englisch.pdf

To underline the relevance of respecting human rights in our global supply chains, the ALDI North Group, together with the ALDI SOUTH Group, were the first discounters to join the United Nations Global Compact, the world's largest global initiative for responsible and sustainable corporate governance. We have thereby committed to making compliance with human rights a core principle of our corporate strategy.

In the near future, we will further address the challenges identified by undertaking a range of measures, including but not limited to revising existing policies and processes, ensuring greater supply chain traceability, increasing social audits and certifications, further integrating our CR criteria into the purchasing process and participating in multi-stakeholder initiatives.

Although we have been cooperating with our partners on our industry's key sustainability challenges for a long time, we know that the complexity of global supply chains means we must approach this process holistically: achieving sustainable solutions requires the collaboration of all relevant political, (civic)-societal and economic stakeholders.