**Unilever re Oxfam’s Behind the Brands ranking of food companies on social & environmental issues**

13 April 2015

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre invited Unilever to respond to the following items:

* “How do your favourite foods rank now? Latest Behind the Brands scores revealed”, Oxfam, 31 Mar 2015, <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/blog/2015/03/how-do-your-favourite-foods-rank-now>
* “Unilever takes top spot on Oxfam’s Behind the Brands Scorecard Big food companies improve policies but need implementation”, Oxfam, 31 Mar 2015, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressreleases/2015-03-31/unilever-takes-top-spot-oxfams-behind-brands-scorecard>
* “Walking the Talk: Food and beverage companies slowly start turning policy into practice in Oxfam’s Behind the Brands campaign”, Oxfam, 31 Mar 2015, <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/walking-the-talk-food-and-beverage-companies-slowly-start-turning-policy-into-p-347104>

In addition, we also invited the company to provide information on steps they are taking to help vulnerable people in their supply chains adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Unilever sent us the following response:

“Pier Luigi Sigismondi, Chief Supply Chain Officer, Unilever said: “We are committed to promoting human rights across our supply chain. Our employees are focussed on delivering this as part of the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan and work with many partners to push standards and boundaries where necessary. I am delighted this has been recognised by Oxfam. However, we are under no illusion about the scale of the challenge that remains and recognise where improvements can be made. One area of focus this year will be on empowering women in our supply chain. We will continue to drive change across our business and industry and call on others to do the same."

Also, regarding vulnerable people in their supply chains adapt to the impacts of climate change.

* Smallholder farmers and climate resilience:

One of the elements in our work with smallholder farmers is to protect small-scale producers from climate vulnerability. The way that we do this is by training farmers so they better understand the choices they make on their farm. For example, whether to pay for more fertiliser, how to reduce the risks of wasting fertiliser by splitting applications and taking account of weather forecasts, and taking advantage of savings schemes when times are good.

Additionally, our ‘Partner to Win’ programme supports long term commitments (via Joint Business Development Plans or JBDPs) with suppliers who source from smallholders.

We also have commitments to support farmers by helping them manage scarce resources, for example with irrigation to use water more efficiently. For example, Solidaridad and the Hindustan Unilever Foundation have jointly launched one of the largest water linked sustainable supply chain interventions in India. This is expected to cumulatively and collectively save 0.4 to 1 trillion litres of water through sustainable agriculture. The programme aims to create large-scale water saving mechanisms that touch 779,000 workers and farmers engaged in the sugar cane, cotton, soy and tea sub-sectors.

The project will develop an accurate water measurement mechanism through a footprinting exercise. It seeks to build the capacity of smallholder workers as well as communities for reducing water application on the crops and aims to involve smallholder workers and businesses to join water platforms and enable them to engage on policy dialogues around water management in agriculture for selected crops.

* You can also read more about how we are helping farmers implement drip irrigation here: <http://www.unilever.com/sustainable-living-2014/enhancing-livelihoods/inclusive-business/livelihoods-for-smallholder-farmers/>
* And you can read about our Sustainable Agriculture Code here: <http://www.unilever.com/images/sd_Unilever_Sustainable_Agriculture_Code_2010_tcm13-216557.pdf>”