



**Issue 4: Quarterly Bulletin on Business & Children
March 2013**

Welcome to the fourth issue of the *Quarterly Bulletin on Business & Children*, produced by [Business & Human Rights Resource Centre](#) for its [Business & Children Portal](#). The purpose of this e-bulletin is to help keep everyone working in this field informed about recent key developments and forthcoming initiatives. Please encourage others to consider signing up. And if you would like to contribute to future issues, let us know.

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1. Announcements: Forthcoming activities and recent projects

i. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child adopts General Comment No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights

In February 2013, the [Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) adopted a [General Comment](#) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights. It is the first UN human rights treaty body to address this issue directly in a General Comment.

The General Comment provides States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child with guidance on the nature and scope of their obligations under the Convention to respect, protect and fulfil child rights in the context of the impact of business activities. It provides States with a framework for implementing the Convention with regard to the business sector in key areas, including on how States should ensure that the activities and operations of business enterprises do not adversely impact on children's rights; how to create an enabling and supportive environment for business enterprises to respect children's rights including across any business relationships linked to their operations, products or services and across their global operations; and, how to ensure access to effective remedy for children whose rights have been infringed by a business enterprise.

The General Comment considers the relationship between State obligations regarding business activities and the Convention, it examines the scope of obligations in contexts where the impact of business operations on children's rights is most significant, and it outlines a framework for implementation, addressing specifically the media and communications industry where relevant.

In developing the General Comment, the Committee consulted and discussed widely over the course of two years, including through public calls for online submissions, multi-stakeholder consultations, consultations with children in several countries, and an International Symposium in Sion, Switzerland in October 2012.

→ *Contributed by Jorge Cardona, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, [jorge.cardona \(at\) uv.es](mailto:jorge.cardona@uv.es). General email address for the Committee: [crc \(at\) ohchr.org](mailto:crc@ohchr.org)*

ii. NGO Group for the Committee on the Rights of the Child

The [NGO Group for the CRC](#) works closely with the Committee on the Rights of the Child for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols in their entirety. We consistently link the UN human rights system to national-level advocacy. Celebrating 30 years this year, we have followed the development of all general comments adopted by the Committee to date and given input on each.

The General Comment on child rights and the business sector demonstrates the Convention's applicability to evolving areas of international human rights law. It provides a useful framework for States Parties to the CRC and its optional protocols to meet their obligations by regulating the activities of the business sector so as to prevent violations of child rights and to provide remedy where they occur. Civil society organizations can bring the General Comment to the attention of their States and encourage them to adapt it to create a comprehensive legal framework, supported by coordinated government institutions, policies and redress processes for its enforcement at national level.

The official UN document of the General Comment is expected to be posted on the website of the Committee in March 2013. [Note: [Now available \[DOC\]](#)]

→ *Contributed by Roisín Fegan, Child Rights Officer, NGO Group for the CRC, [fegan \(at\) childrightsnet.org](mailto:fegan@childrightsnet.org)*

iii. World Child & Youth Forum

The World Child & Youth Forum (a registered charitable trust) was established in Stockholm, Sweden in 2009. Its aim is to be an independent multi-stakeholder platform that inspires to realise the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The third annual Forum will take place on March 22 (by invitation only) at the Royal Palace in Stockholm, Sweden with the theme "Children's Rights – Any of Your Business?". 300 participants from every sector in society will attend, over 60% of which represent business.

The World Child & Youth Forum is a catalyst to facilitate cross sector dialogue and partnerships for the protection and fulfillment of children's rights. The [Children's Rights and Business Principles](#) were launched in March 2012 and the forum will include a stock taking event on global achievements and challenges so far. The program also covers the recently-adopted [General Comment](#) by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights. Business' role in youth employment and access to clean water and sanitation will be discussed in the afternoon.

Speakers include Lord Michael Hastings, International Director of Corporate Citizenship, KPMG; Georg Kell, Executive Director, UN Global Compact; Jasmine Whitbread, CEO, Save the Children; Nigel Chapman, CEO, Plan International; Bob Collymore, CEO, Safaricom; Mikael Ohlsson, CEO, IKEA Group; Chris Avery, Director, Business & Human Rights Resource Centre; Marta Maurás, Former vice chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child; and Laura Turner Seydel, Director, Turner Foundation.

See www.wcyf.se for more information.

→ *Contributed by Elin Wallberg, Program Manager, World Child and Youth Forum, [elin.wallberg \(at\) wcyf.se](mailto:elin.wallberg@wcyf.se)*

iv. UN Global Compact

The [Children's Rights and Business Principles](#)' (the Principles) first annual stock-taking event will take place in the context of the World Child and Youth Forum on 22 March.

In the afternoon, the Principles' sponsoring partners, UNICEF, Save the Children and UN Global Compact, will co-host a session taking stock of how the Principles have been operationalised to advance company efforts to respect and support children's rights in the workplace, marketplace, community and environment and to identify areas for improvement. Lord Hastings, International Director of Corporate Citizenship at KPMG (and moderator of the Forum), will explore how companies such as Millicom, Lego, Kuoni, Rosy Blue and Clas Ohlson have taken action to implement the Principles and will lead a multistakeholder discussion with the panellists and participants in the room.

The event is by invitation only.

→ *Contributed by Anita Househam, Policy and Legal Advisor, UN Global Compact, [househam \(at\) un.org](mailto:househam@un.org)*

v. UNICEF

Platform on Business and Children's Rights in Sweden

Following the release of the [Children's Rights and Business Principles](#) in March 2012, the Swedish Committee for UNICEF launched a two-year corporate platform to engage Swedish companies on the implementation of the Principles using the draft due diligence tools developed by UNICEF. The platform is comprised of a series of ten workshops focused on helping companies better

understand how to fulfill their responsibility to respect and support children's rights. The workshops are comprised of trainings and group exercises focused on: 1) the business and human rights landscape; 2) each of the ten Principles and the implications for business; and 3) piloting UNICEF's due diligence tools, which will be finalised later this year.

More than 20 companies are participating in the platform, each of them representing more than \$1 billion in annual turnover. The workshops provide an interactive learning environment through which participants share information and lessons learned on good and worst practices related to implementing the Principles. Already, some of the participants have started to incorporate a child rights perspective into their human rights due diligence processes by initiating child rights impact assessments and reviewing existing company policies to integrate relevant child rights components.

More information is available at <http://www.unicef.org/csr/>

→ *Contributed by Ida Margarita Hyllested, Corporate Social Responsibility Specialist, UNICEF, [ihyllested \(at\) unicef.org](mailto:ihyllested@unicef.org)*

vi. Free the Slaves

[Free the Slaves \(FTS\)](#) will soon be educating government agencies and civil society groups in Ghana about child slavery at informal gold mines, which supply gold jewelers through Ghana's national gold marketing system. The organization worked with [Participatory Development Associates](#) and [Social Support Foundation](#) to document deeply moving stories of children losing their childhoods to hard labour, violence and sexual exploitation. Boys as young as 12 are working with dangerous chemicals to extract gold dust from ore. Girls as young as 10 are pushed into relationships with older men in exchange for money to cover their basic needs like food and school fees. Research teams interviewed over 150 children, men and women through focus group discussions and individual interviews in 10 informal mining communities in 2012. Gold from small, informal mines accounts for a large percentage (some sources estimating one-fifth) of Ghana's gold exports into the world market, including into the jewelry and electronics industries.

→ *Contributed by Christy Gilmore, Free the Slaves, [christy.gillmore \(at\) freetheslaves.net](mailto:christy.gillmore@freetheslaves.net)*

vii. DotKids Foundation

A recent Internet regulation from [ICANN](#) has enabled a new kids-dedicated cyberspace with the top-level domain ".kids" e.g. "www.abc.kids". This may pose high risks to children online if proper care is not exercised. It is therefore important to ensure adequate consideration of children's rights when administering this top-level domain.

[DotKids Foundation](#) is a non-profit organization formed as a membership consortium of children's rights organizations worldwide aiming to create a kid-friendly internet where children can acquire information easily and safely. In pursuit of this aim, the Foundation is currently bidding to register the .kids top-level domain name. Profits from registration will be channeled back to member organizations and used to organise conferences and initiatives on children's rights. DotKids will help provide a focal point and a platform for the children's rights community to advocate for the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#). In addition, we will seek to ensure that this online platform will emphasise contributions from kids, as we highly value children's right to participation.

Now is the critical moment to determine the nature of this platform as ICANN is evaluating different applicants in the upcoming months. We call upon children's rights organizations around the world to support us in upholding these principles and join the discussion of the governance of DotKids. If you have any questions, please contact us at [team \(at\) dotkids.asia](mailto:team@dotkids.asia).

→ *Contributed by Yannis Li, Coordinator of .Kids Initiative, DotKids Foundation, [yannis \(at\) dotkids.asia](mailto:yannis@dotkids.asia)*

viii. Save the Children UK

Save the Children's new report, [Superfood for Babies](#), says that if babies receive Colostrum – the mother's first milk – within an hour of birth, it will kick start the child's immune system, making them three times more likely to survive. And, if the mother continues feeding for the next six months, then a child growing up in the developing world is up to 15 times less likely to die from killer diseases like pneumonia and diarrhoea.

The report says the enormous progress already made in reducing child mortality could be accelerated if more mums were encouraged to breastfeed. Despite the startling statistics, global breastfeeding rates are stalling and actually declining across East Asia and in some of Africa's most populous countries like Ethiopia and Nigeria. The prevalence of traditional practices as well as a severe shortage of health workers and examples of inappropriate marketing techniques by some baby milk substitute companies, have contributed to this.

Also available at the above link are responses by companies referenced in the report.

→ *Contributed by Francis West, Senior Private Sector Adviser, Save the Children UK, [f.west \(at\) savethechildren.org.uk](mailto:f.west@savethechildren.org.uk)*

ix. CRY – Child Rights and You

The Companies Bill 2012 that mandates corporate entities to spend 2 per cent of their average net profits on corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a welcome move; indeed, any act that mandates companies to be more socially conscious is much needed in a country where basic survival is a way of life for a majority of the population.

However, this move towards ensuring corporate responsibility in the very society in which they operate should not lead to a decrease in government's role in the public domain. The government cannot seek refuge in increased CSR spending by corporates to shift its focus from public responsibility. It will have to increase its role in ensuring greater accountability for corporate spend on CSR activities even as it continues to play a more proactive role in ensuring that the right labour laws are in place, child labour is not employed, damage to environment is contained and there is greater transparency and reduced corruption.

It is only the government who has the reach, the mandate and the long term resources to ensure that every child goes to school, every citizen has access to healthcare, and that our environment is protected in the long run.

CRY - Child Rights and You is an Indian NGO that believes in every child's right to a childhood - to live, learn, grow and play. For more information please visit us at <http://www.cry.org/>
For further information, please contact: inka.dama@crymail.org

→ *Contributed by Puja Marwaha, CEO of CRY-Child Rights and You*

x. Global March Against Child Labour

[Global March Against Child Labour](#) is concerned about the limited international attention given to the causes and consequences of child labour and trafficking of children for forced labour in supply chains, and the impact businesses have on child rights. Rigorous child rights due diligence (particularly on child labour) coupled with transparent and accountable frameworks would encourage businesses to protect children from economic exploitation, respect the rights of children and remedy any violations. For more information, see <http://globalmarch.org/issues/Ethical-Trade>

→ Contributed by Abha Duggal, Global March Against Child Labour, info (at) globalmarch.org

xi. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre

The Resource Centre will continue to update its "[Business & Children Portal](#)" with the aim to highlight allegations of abuses, positive initiatives by business, and guidance material. We will be drawing attention to any commentaries and news in relation to the recently adopted General Comment.

The Resource Centre has also recently launched two new portals on the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) and the [UN Working Group on business & human rights](#). These portals also include items relevant to business & children and contain materials in seven languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

We welcome suggested additions from all regions to any of these portals

→ Contributed by Annabel Short, Programme Director, Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, short (at) business-humanrights.org

2. Other news and developments

Below are some recent news stories and developments. For more, see the Resource Centre's [full archive of news](#) on business and children.

Global

- In [its submission to the UN Working Group](#) on business and human rights, Global March Against Child Labour said that business polices on child and human rights should [address abuses in the lowest levels of supply chains](#).
- The first Belgian [Children's Rights and Business Principles Forum](#) discussed best practices and challenges in the implementation of the Principles.
- Governments agreed the text of a [new treaty to prevent toxic mercury emissions](#) especially harmful to children's health. Human Rights Watch welcomed the agreement, but criticised it for [not addressing child labour or setting an end-date for phasing out mercury in small-scale gold mining](#).
- Guardian Sustainable Business hosted an [online discussion](#) on assessing business impacts on children's rights. Participants were from UNICEF, Danish Institute for Human Rights, Imperial College London, Ethical Trading Initiative, TwentyFifty, Kuoni, and Millicom/Tigo. See [here](#) for a summary of the discussion.
- A [report by UN Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown](#) analysed the interlocked nature of child labour, poverty and universal education. "*Unless we defeat the scourge of child labour, the commitment to get all children into school by 2015 will count for nothing,*" said Brown at the launch of the report.
- "Children: The next business agenda", an information hub hosted by Guardian Sustainable Business and supported by UNICEF, featured its five "[most read articles from 2012](#)". They were "India: food, marketing and children's health"; "How Ikea's partnership with the UN is helping child refugees"; "Family friendly enterprise: Slovenia leads the way"; "Why responsible advertising to children should be top of the agenda"; and "Building community investment into business strategy," on Aviva's global initiative to support street children.
- [Children constitute a quarter of victims of contemporary slavery](#), said the UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. It added that both government and business action is needed to eradicate these exploitative practices.

- ECPAT International [won an award](#) for its campaign with the Body Shop, “STOP Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People”.
- [Barclays worked to tackle global youth unemployment](#) in partnership with UNICEF and other charities: “*We recognise that we can make a bigger impact by aligning our support [for children] to what we do as a business.*”
- Sanofi Espoir Foundation renewed its partnership with the Union for International Cancer Control to [fight childhood cancer by improving access to care and affordable treatment](#) for three more years. (also in French / disponible en français)

Africa

- **Benin:** An apprenticeship programme seeks to combat what an ILO expert calls a “*worrying trend*” of “[an increase in numbers of child labourers.](#)”
- **Côte d’Ivoire:** Nestlé completed a stakeholder consultation on child labour in its Côte d’Ivoire cocoa supply chain and will use the results to select performance indicators for its programme to eliminate child labour (see Fair Labor Association report in [English](#) and [French](#)). It has also promised to [build 30 more primary schools](#) in addition to the 12 it has already set up in the country.
- **Dem. Rep. of Congo:** Children continue to work in unsafe conditions in mines, supplying the electronics industry with “conflict minerals” – Danish filmmaker said [transparency is “crucial” to rid electronics industry supply chain of child labour.](#)
- **Ghana:** Unions embarked on a [programme to raise awareness about the hazards of child labour in cocoa production.](#)
- **Kenya:** Plantation and Agriculture Workers Union demanded [strict enforcement of law on compulsory education to curb rise in child labour](#) in mines, quarries, and fishing, among other industries.
- **Kenya:** Chinese telecommunication company [Huawei made a Sh1 million \(~10,000 USD\) donation to cover medical bills for needy pediatric patients.](#) “*As a member of the UN [G]lobal [Compact], Huawei is committed to partnerships that will enhance the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals on health and child mortality,*” said Huawei’s Kenya CEO.
- **Madagascar:** [20,000 children work in the production of vanilla](#), according to the ILO. Some say vanilla production forms part of culture and families seek to pass on traditions to children. (also in French / disponible en français)
- **Nigeria:** [Children are especially vulnerable to toxic electronic waste](#) shipped from developed countries, which may lead to long-term illnesses including cancer. The International Institute of Risk and Safety Management called for stricter control of e-waste entry-points.
- **Rwanda:** Experts at a child labour conference warned [tougher measures are needed on child labour](#) to meet Millennium Development Goal on education.
- [Tulane University will continue to monitor child labour](#) in West Africa’s cocoa production, after receiving a \$1.5 million grant from the US Government.

Americas

- **Argentina:** A survey completed by 464 companies revealed [low levels of awareness about children’s rights in their firms and supply chains.](#) UNICEF, Fundación Arcor and Save the Children released a [report](#) outlining the opportunities and challenges of the private sector regarding children’s rights. (only in Spanish / en español)

- **Brazil:** Itaú Bank Foundation launched a [game to protect children's rights on the internet](#) by educating children about risks including privacy, data protection & cyber bullying. (only in Spanish / en español).
- **Colombia:** A UNICEF campaign "La Muralla Soy Yo" [mobilises the tourism sector against child sexual exploitation](#).
- **Colombia:** [Fundación Telefónica smartphone application helps identify and track child labour](#) by sending pictures and GPS coordinates to the child welfare agency. *"It's a tool that puts the power to report child labor in the palm of anyone's hands,"* said Mauricio García from the Colombian Family Welfare Institute. According to the head of Fundación Telefónica, the application has helped more than 60 children return to school and could eventually be used globally.
- **Jamaica:** [A new handbook](#) provides practical guidance for professionals confronted with child labour in day-to-day work to help enforce child labour laws.
- **USA:** On 14 December 2012, Adam Lanza killed 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, using a gun reportedly manufactured by Bushmaster (owned by Freedom Group). After pressure from investors, including retirement funds, Cerberus Capital Management announced it would sell its stake in Freedom Group. See [here](#) for coverage of the related discussions on arms firms and sales, and investment in the arms industry in the USA.
- **USA:** The New York Times featured [parental leave policies at large US firms](#). The US is the only country with an advanced economy that does not provide some sort of paid leave for new mothers. As of the time of publication of this bulletin, the article provided details of policies at ConocoPhillips, Fannie Mae, Ford, General Electric, General Motors, Google, HP.
- **USA:** A workshop reviewed progress and future opportunities for action to address the [effect of food and beverage marketing on childhood obesity](#) – organised by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. The Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility is working with 20 food and beverage companies to address this issue – a video of its event "Update on Childhood Obesity: Progress and Prospects" [is here](#).
- Ten Latin American countries will receive funding from Caterpillar to [foster education and gender equity among disadvantaged and low-income students](#). (also in Spanish / disponible en español)

Asia & Pacific

- **India:** President Pranab Mukherjee [signed an amendment to include trafficking, forced & child labour](#) in the penal code. The Chairperson of the Global March Against Child Labour said the amendment is *"a landmark victory for all anti-trafficking, anti-slavery and anti-child labour campaigners across India and the world."* NGOs & the UN Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown called on the public to [sign petitions](#) urging Parliament to support the proposed amendment.
- **Laos:** The [first national child labour survey](#) found that two-thirds of child labourers are engaged in hazardous work and 90% work in agriculture, forestry or fishing.
- **New Zealand:** Former head of TelstraClear telecommunication company Alan Freeth says [business needs to take action](#) to address child poverty and neglect: *"Are we doing enough beyond the odd initiative and the work of some business-related foundations supporting the odd charity?"*
- **Philippines:** Department of Labour approved guidelines for [child labour-free certification](#) for businesses. Efforts to combat child labour also include stronger laws, as Northern Samar became the [first provincial government to enact anti-child labour regulation](#).
- CSR Asia is partnering with Aviva to work towards implementing the Children's Rights & Business Principles, focusing on [vulnerable & street children in Asia](#) – the project is to begin

with a “thought leadership paper on the role businesses can play when particularly vulnerable children are concerned”.

- Businesses should [focus on poverty eradication rather than supporting orphanages](#) to help protect children, says CSR Asia.

Europe & Central Asia

- **Spain:** 28 arrested for alleged connection with [child pornography business](#). The videos were made by exploiting boys from Germany, Romania, Ukraine – the Spanish Ministry of Interior said most victims were rescued. (also in Spanish / disponible en español).
- **Uzbekistan:** Reports continue to allege the use of child & forced labour in Uzbek cotton harvests. [Cotton Campaign urged H&M to strengthen its commitment to eliminate cotton produced with child labour from its supply chain](#) after calling attention to its ties with Daewoo International, a South Korean company that reportedly continues to purchase cotton from Uzbekistan. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre invited H&M, Daewoo Intl. (part of POSCO) and POSCO to respond. Responses available [here](#).

Middle East & North Africa

- **Iran:** A child rights advocate said the government is [failing to report the true number of child workers](#). According to Ali Akbar Esmailpour, *“the only information at hand is the statistics regarding street children, because they are very visible, but this does not give the complete picture.”*
- **Israel & Palestine:** [Prisons equipped by G4S allegedly hold Palestinian children in solitary confinement](#) according to Defence for Children International’s Palestine Section. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre invited G4S to respond. G4S referred to a previous statement [here](#).
- **Israel & Palestine:** Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs said it would help address the [flow of Palestinian child labour into Israel](#) in coordination with Israeli authorities.
- **Jordan:** The Labour Minister said [businesses employing more than 20 women must provide a day care facility](#), in compliance with the law.
- **Yemen:** The ILO reported that 1.3 million children in Yemen are [engaged in work-related activities](#). Moreover, the UN and local human rights organizations have raised the alarm about [the existence of slavery](#), including of children, in Yemen.