



**Issue 2: Quarterly Bulletin on Business & Children
June 2012**

Welcome to the second issue of the *Quarterly Bulletin on Business & Children*, produced by [Business & Human Rights Resource Centre](http://www.business-humanrights.org).

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. To sign up or to contribute an entry, contact: Annabel Short [short \(at\) business-humanrights.org](mailto:short@business-humanrights.org) (Programme Director, based in New York) with a cc to Marta Kasztelan (Project Researcher, based in London) [kasztelan \(at\) business-humanrights.org](mailto:kasztelan@business-humanrights.org).

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1. Announcements: Forthcoming activities, recent projects

i. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Update on the forthcoming General Comment on Child Rights and the Business Sector

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child ('the Committee') is producing a "General Comment on Child Rights and the Business Sector". The General Comment will be a pronouncement of the Committee's interpretation of the framework required by States Parties for implementation of the Convention as a whole with regard to the business sector. It will include guidance to States on the measures of implementation that are required to: prevent and remedy violations of child rights by business actors and ensure business enterprises carry out their responsibilities in the realisation of the rights of the child, and encourage business to positively contribute to the realisation of these rights.

The Committee issued a call for submissions on an annotated outline of the General Comment in March 2012 and is currently considering submissions received by it. The draft of the General

Comment will form the basis for a second call for submissions that will be issued on 25 June 2012. Submissions on this from all stakeholders are welcomed and the deadline for submissions will be 10 August 2012.

The Committee has conducted two multi-stakeholder consultations in Argentina (with MERCOSUR States and civil society) and India in March and April of 2012 respectively. Further consultations will be taking place in Nairobi, Kenya, on 24 August 2012, and at the International Symposium on Child Rights from 14 to 17 October 2012 in Sion, Switzerland.

Further information on this is available via email at [CRC-Child-Rights-Business \(at\) ohchr.org](mailto:CRC-Child-Rights-Business@ohchr.org), and [at the Committee's website](#).

→ *Contributed by the Secretariat for the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, [CRC-Child-Rights-Business \(at\) ohchr.org](mailto:CRC-Child-Rights-Business@ohchr.org)*

ii. UNICEF

New UNICEF pilot Workbook: “Children are Everyone’s Business: A practical handbook to help companies understand and address their impact on children’s rights”

Corporate actions to safeguard any aspect of children’s rights must be undertaken in a holistic way where companies address material issues in the workplace, marketplace and the community. This is the key message that accompanies UNICEF’s release on 12 June 2012 of a [new pilot Workbook for businesses](#) that sets out a comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing corporate impacts on children’s rights.

The UNICEF pilot Workbook helps business to take action to demonstrate their respect and support for children’s rights. Each chapter of the workbook provides guidance to companies on how to minimise or prevent harmful impacts on children as well as methods to enhance their positive impacts in the workplace, marketplace and community. Each chapter also includes short case studies and links to additional resources that provide deeper insight into core areas of interest depending on the company’s specific operating context.

The Workbook builds upon the UN [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#), which established the global standards for company practices regarding their duty to respect the human rights of every person. It is also aligned with the [Children’s Rights and Business Principles](#), which were released in March by UNICEF, the UN Global Compact, and Save the Children.

The Workbook fills a significant gap in existing literature related to impact of business on children’s rights. The Workbook is currently being released as a pilot publication as part of ongoing efforts to collect and integrate user input.

UNICEF welcomes recommendations and feedback from users and invites companies to share case studies demonstrating their commitment to the business and children’s rights agenda.

With the Workbook in hand, companies now have a practical framework for understanding and assessing their footprint on children’s rights as well as recommendations for making substantive changes in their behaviour as it relates to children.

With this release, UNICEF encourages companies and relevant stakeholders, including civil society and governments, to use the Workbook to deliver real and lasting changes to children around the world.

The complete workbook can be downloaded from UNICEF’s website at: www.unicef.org/csr.

→ *For more information on the Workbook, contact UNICEF at [csr \(at\) unicef.org](mailto:csr@unicef.org)*

iii. UN Global Compact, UNICEF and Save the Children

On 17 June, the UN Global Compact, UNICEF and Save the Children will host *Children and Business: Making the Connection for Sustainability* at the [United Nations Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum in Rio de Janeiro](#).

Moderated by Jo Confino, Executive Editor of the *Guardian*, this session will provide an opportunity for business leaders and other stakeholders to explore how their decisions can maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts on children. The session will provide the child rights and business perspective into the broader sustainability agenda. The [agenda for the session is here](#).

In addition, a number of regional/national launches have been planned to help raise awareness and encourage implementation of the Children's Rights and Business Principles at the local level. The next confirmed event will take place in Panama, 19 July.

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

iv. CRIN (Child Rights Information Network)

CRIN has recently published two key editorials: 1) "[Children and the pharmaceutical industry](#)", which reviews concerns about the testing of drugs on children, as well as administering untested or unnecessary drugs on children, and 2) "[Children's rights and the other type of drug use](#)", which looks at the problem of children being put on drugs unnecessarily, with a particular focus on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

We also attended and [reported](#) on the launch of the Children's Rights and Business Principles Initiative, and continue to monitor cases involving corporations through our "[Children in Court CRINMAIL](#)". You can sign up to these CRINMAILs [here](#). Read our latest coverage of the oil sector [here](#).

→ *Contributed by Ed Renshaw, Child Rights Officer, CRIN, [ed \(at\) crin.org](mailto:ed@crin.org)*

v. Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work

On 12 June the campaign "Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work" published an updated version of its [Action Plan for Companies to Combat Child Labour](#). The plan is compatible with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the recently revised OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Comments on the plan and examples of steps companies have taken are welcome.

On the same day Stop Child Labour launched a new campaign "[We want childfriendly shoes](#)". In the campaign, consumers are encouraged to tell shoe companies that they do not want shoes produced by children.

→ *Contributed by Gerard Oonk, Director, India Committee of the Netherlands and Senior Advisor to the Stop Child Labour campaign, [g.oonk \(at\) indianet.nl](mailto:g.oonk@indianet.nl)*

vi. ECPAT-USA

This June ECPAT-USA will launch its first official corporate training on the issue of child protection in tourism. ECPAT-USA's Child-Safe Tourism Code Training is a customisable training on the issue of the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The training consists of an overview of the

issue as it affects the industry, the signs staff can look out for (including position-specific signs), and a step-by-step response staff should take if they suspect a case.

In order to create the most effective training, ECPAT-USA consults with companies to assess their training needs and requirements in order to adapt the current module to the individual corporate training structure. Training can take many forms including an e-learning toolkit or “train the trainer”. In addition, ECPAT-USA is available to consult with companies on supplementary material, including back-of-the-room posters or training videos. For more information about the training including engaging your company on this issue, contact Private Sector Project Coordinator, Michelle Guelbart at [michelle \(at\) ecpatusa.org](mailto:michelle@ecpatusa.org)

→ *Contributed by Michelle Guelbart, Private Sector Project Coordinator, ECPAT-USA, [michelle \(at\) ecpatusa.org](mailto:michelle@ecpatusa.org)*

vii. World Childhood Foundation

A solid partnership: Atlantica International Hotels and Childhood Brasil

In order to develop an effective corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy, two key-words are very important: engagement and leadership. Since 2005, the alliance between Childhood Brasil and Atlantica Hotels International embodies those pillars and brings effective results within the prevention of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and the promotion of sustainable tourism.

Besides several actions involving employees, guests, investors, suppliers and partners of Atlantica to engage them in the cause and mobilize resources for projects supported by Childhood Brasil, the hotel's chain CEO, Paul J. Sistare, truly believes in the cause and carefully maintains a working group within the corporation to keep the employees motivated and engaged. Since the beginning, the hotel chain raised over 1.4 million USD for Childhood's projects.

In 2012, Atlantica Hotels received an important prize from the Brazilian Human Rights Ministry – the Neide Castanha Award – in the social responsibility category. The prize represents a governmental recognition of initiatives that defend the rights of children and adolescents, with dedicated attention to sexual rights. Moreover, Atlantica is currently supporting – through Childhood Brasil – three new organizations in the northern region of the country, in the states of Amazonas and Pará, which reinforces their commitment to the protection of children and adolescents against sexual abuse and exploitation.

→ *Contributed by Anna Flora Werneck, Childhood Brasil, [awerneck \(at\) childhood.org.br](mailto:awerneck@childhood.org.br)*

viii. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre

The Resource Centre will continue to add new items each week to its “[Business & Children Portal](#)”, launched in 2011. The aim is to highlight positive initiatives by business, allegations of abuses, and guidance material. We welcome suggested additions from all regions.

→ *Contributed by Annabel Short, Programme Director, Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, [short \(at\) business-humanrights.org](mailto:short@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:** UNICEF, Save the Children and UN Global Compact launched the Children's Rights and Business Principles on 12 March 2012. The full text of the Principles in the six

UN languages and news about them [is available here](#). As the preamble states, the Principles “*call on business everywhere to respect and support children’s rights throughout their activities and business relationships, including in the workplace, the marketplace, the community and the environment. The Principles identify a comprehensive range of actions that all business should take to prevent and address any adverse impact on children’s human rights, as well as measures all business is encouraged to take to help advance children’s rights.*”

- **Global:** The *Guardian* newspaper and UNICEF launched an information hub “[Children: The next Business Agenda](#)”. Recent contributions to the hub include “[The hidden impacts of large infrastructure projects on children](#),” by Margaret Wachenfeld of the Institute for Human Rights and Business, “[GSK Medicine Bank: creating shared value in Thailand](#)” by Mia Overall of CSR Asia Center at AIT (Bangkok), “[Why responsible advertising to children should be top of the agenda](#),” an interview with Keith Weed, Chief Marketing Officer at Unilever and “[Children’s rights should matter more to business](#),” by Annabel Short of Business & Human Rights Resource Centre.
- **Global:** Some of the submissions sent to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the annotated outline of its “General Comment on Child Rights and the Business Sector” [are available here](#). (The submissions available currently are by: Day Associates; IBFAN / FIAN; International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights; Institute for Human Rights and Business; TwentyFifty). See item 1(i) above for next steps on this initiative.
- **Dominican Republic:** In April a delegation from the US Department of Labor [looked into allegations](#) that sugar growers in Dominican Republic use child labour and keep workers in slave-like conditions, in violation of a free trade agreement. Many are Haitian migrant workers or of Haitian descent. The delegation has a period of 180 days from its visit to report on the findings.
- **India:** An [NGO survey found](#) that there are around 2000 illegal placement agencies for domestic workers in Delhi. One in every five domestic workers rescued reports sexual abuse, either by their employer or the placement agency. Most of the rescued workers are juveniles. As the NGO Shakti Vahini said [in a statement](#), “*the Placement agencies have mushroomed across the NCR Region [National Capital Region] and most of them are involved in illegal trafficking of minor children and women from Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.*”
- **Jordan:** BBC Arabic [uncovered](#) serious physical abuse at care homes for disabled children (most of them privately operated). The King ordered a thorough and rapid investigation that has so far led to the [closure of one home](#), the Ibn Khaldoun Centre for Special Education.
- **Jordan:** At a workshop held by Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) International Jordan, organisers [launched](#) a “Journalists to Combat Child Labour” network. The network comprises representatives from different media outlets, to encourage reporting on child labour in the country.
- **India:** IKEA and Save the Children [expanded their joint efforts](#) to fight child labour in the cotton industry, with new programmes in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.
- **Nigeria:** Following advocacy by Médecins Sans Frontières and Human Rights Watch, Nigeria’s President [released US\\$4 million](#) for environmental remediation and safer mining practices in Zamfara state, where children are suffering from lead poisoning. Human Rights Watch has described the situation in Zamfara as “the worst lead poisoning epidemic in modern history.”

- **USA:** MGIC Investment [settled a lawsuit](#) alleging it refused to sell mortgage policies to women who are on maternity leave.
- **USA:** A [report](#) by the US Justice Department reported sexual abuse of juveniles at Walnut Grove Youth Correctional Facility in south Mississippi, run by the private company GEO Group. It said the misconduct "*was among the worst that we have seen in any facility anywhere in the nation.*" Southern Poverty Law Center and American Civil Liberties Union had sued the state over conditions at the facility. A [settlement was reached](#) in the lawsuit in March, which stipulated that children and teenagers will no longer be housed in that prison or subjected to solitary confinement.