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Date of publication: May 4, 2000

Source: ILRF

Philip Knight

Nike Inc.

Nike World Headquarters

One Bowerman Drive

Beaverton, Oregon 97005-6453

May 4, 2000

Dear Mr. Knight,

We write to convey our profound concern about a series of recent actions taken by Nike and you relating to universities, and to voice our distress about how Nike officials have described differences between the Fair Labor Association (FLA) and the Workers Rights Consortium (WRC). The terminations of athletic department relationships or philanthropic giving at three schools - Brown University, the University of Michigan and the University of Oregon - have been widely viewed as punitive and seem designed to send a warning to others for their participation in the WRC, a new and still evolving anti-sweatshop initiative.

As you know, we have been closely involved in the creation and implementation of the Fair Labor Association for more than three years and now serve on its Board of Directors. We support the FLA because we see it as an essential vehicle for monitoring labor conditions in apparel and footwear factories, and for creating a remedial system that will protect the rights of workers around the world. At the same time, we support experimental efforts by allies to develop complementary approaches.

We have been disturbed to read statements by senior officials at Brown and Michigan, asserting that their decisions to affiliate with the WRC were among the primary reasons that Nike ended its contractual relationship with them. Nike's own statements have also reinforced the point of view that this was an important element in terminating these relationships. In the case of the University of Oregon, it does seem clear that the school's affiliation with the WRC, and the way in which it reached and communicated that decision, precipitated your action in withdrawing a substantial personal contribution to the university.

During these well publicized exchanges, we have also been troubled by the way in which some Nike spokespeople have characterized differences between the FLA and WRC - suggesting for example, that the WRC will allow unannounced factory visits, while the FLA will not. One of the strengths of the FLA system is that it will require both announced and unannounced factory visits; it will also combine internal company monitoring with independent external monitoring and set up a third-party complaints mechanism. According to an Associated Press article by John Kelly (4.28.00), "Nike...has vowed not to permit surprise

inspections..." If this is a correct account of Nike's view, it is at odds with the FLA Principles of Monitoring, which oblige companies and independent external monitors to "conduct periodic announced and unannounced visits." These monitoring principles are the product of many hours of negotiation and as such, it is incumbent on all of us to convey them accurately.

As we move to finalize the FLA's monitoring model and begin systematic factory monitoring around the world, we look to work with those in the university community to find common ground in the effort to protect the basic rights of workers. The university is a place where new ideas can and should be tested and explored, and we urge Nike and other companies affiliated with the FLA to work together to do the same. No company should use a financial relationship or pressure to undermine or prevent this exploration.

Sincerely,

Linda Golodner

President

National Consumers League

Pharis J. Harvey

Executive Director

International Labor Rights Fund

Michael Posner

Executive Director

Lawyers Committee for Human Rights

James Silk

Executive Director

Orville H. Schell, Jr. Center for

International Human Rights

Yale Law School

CC: Maria Eitel, Nike Inc., Brad Figel, Nike Inc.

Source URL: <http://www.laborrights.org/creating-a-sweatfree-world/news/11030>