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Wal-Mart 10/2005

Response to Wal-Mart's Announcement to Toughen Standards in Supplier Factories

SweatFree Communities has endorsed the following statement written by United Students Against Sweatshops.

October 21, 2005

Wal-Mart has received a considerable amount of press since its announcement yesterday to toughen its standards with regards to overseas suppliers. Unfortunately, Wal-Mart CEO Lee Scott appears to have made no reference to concrete measures the company will take in order to improve labor standards and uphold worker rights.

In order for Wal-Mart to improve conditions in its supplier factories it must first fundamentally alter its business practice of demanding a continuously lower price from supplier factories – a price which renders those factories unable to pay workers a living wage. Further, Wal-Mart must commit to supplying from those factories in which workers have democratic representation and the right to bargain collectively with their employer. Additionally, Wal-Mart must open its supply chain to independent monitoring so that independent, unannounced, factory assessments may take place.

These three actions are just the beginning if Wal-Mart is to truly live up to yesterday's statement that "you can do well by going good." We will not be placated by vague statements that lack concrete action. We continue to demand that all retailers uphold their responsibility for the rights of workers producing their goods and that they recognize the right of those workers to have a voice in their workplace.

Organizations that have endorsed the statement as of October 26, 2005:

Campaign for Labor Rights
 Internationa Labor Rights Fund
 Jobs with Justice
 Maquila Solidarity Network
 National Labor Committee
 STITCH
 SweatFree Communities
 Sweatshop Watch
 United Students Against Sweatshops
 US/LEAP

