

GoodElectronics is an international network on human rights and sustainability in electronics. GoodElectronics' objective is to contribute to the stringent implementation of labour and environmental standards throughout the overall production cycle of electronics, from extractives to e-waste and recycling. The member organisations of GoodElectronics - trade unions, human rights and environmental organisations, academics and other civil society stakeholders - have formulated a set of Common Demands, calling upon the electronics industry to improve its record. To learn more about us, visit www.goodelectronics.org, or contact us at info@goodelectronics.org.

The GoodElectronics newsletter is distributed regularly amongst a wide range of interested stakeholders. You are invited to share you news, publications or events with us.

GoodElectronics News

GoodElectronics releases publication on CSR in global electronics supply chain

October 2009. GoodElectronics and the Dutch CSR Platform



'Reset. Corporate social responsibility in the global electronics supply chain' provides an overview of CSR issues that are relevant for the global electronics sector. It is a joint initiative by the Dutch CSR Platform (MVO Platform) and GoodElectronics. The publication is based on the 2007 CSR Frame of Reference published by the CSR Platform which reflects the Platform's vision on corporate social responsibility. Several aspects (social, environmental and economic) in different phases of the supply chain (mining, manufacturing and disposal) are described from a corporate social responsibility perspective. 'Reset'

categorises the many problems that the sector still faces. Progressive initiatives that are relevant to business, government and civil society are presented, and concrete recommendations are formulated. [Read more.](#)

Hoya Glass Disk (Thailand): a long road to unionisation

November 2009. GoodElectronics

In December 2007, workers at Hoya Glass Disk (Thailand) formed a trade union to better promote the interests of the workers at this plant in Lamphun in the north of Thailand. Despite a promising start for a more mature social dialogue, the situation deteriorated with the management first ignoring and later actively campaigning against the union. The perseverance of the workers combined with external pressure by GoodElectronics brought about the involvement of some of the more progressive customers of Hoya Glass Disk (Thailand). This proved a turning point: dismissed workers were reinstated, and management and union accepted to participate in a series of talks and trainings focused on harmonious communication. A drafting committee was set up, with the task to elaborate a grievance procedure. Once agreement is reached over a final version, the grievance procedure is to be implemented throughout the company. At the moment, there is genuine hope Hoya Glass Disk will accept and work with the union. [Read more in the GoodElectronics 'On the Spot' Newsletter.](#)

GoodElectronics website

www.goodelectronics.org

Check the GoodElectronics website for regular news updates. [Subscribe to the GoodElectronics news feed.](#)



Civil Society News

Story of cap and climate

December 2009. The Story of Stuff project

A fast-paced, fact-filled look at the leading climate change solution on the table in Copenhagen and in the halls of Congress. The film reveals the "devils in the details" in current cap and trade proposals: free permits to big polluters, fake offsets and distraction from what's really required to tackle the climate crisis. If you've heard about cap and trade, but aren't sure how it works (or who benefits), this is the film is for you! [Link to film.](#)



Dell's Polish adventure

December 2009. Dell, Karat Coalition

Today, Dell announced the transfer of ownership of the Polish Dell factory in Lodz to one of the world's biggest electronics producers, Foxconn. Dell expects the European Commission to approve the transfer in the coming weeks and hopes that the transaction will close before the new year. About 3,000 people are employed at the Dell factory in Lodz. "From their point of view, nothing will change," assures Dell spokesperson, adding that Dell will simply become Foxconn's client and purchase electronics produced in the factory. Reportedly, however, some 1,600 Dell employees will be transferred to Foxconn. The situation of the other 1,400 workers, contract agency workers most likely, is not yet clear.

60 minutes on CBSNews: How gold pays for Congo's deadly war

December 2009.

The price of gold set another all-time record this past week. There's demand for gold for investments, for circuits in cell phones and computers, and, in this holiday season, for jewellery. But there's another price being paid for gold that you probably haven't heard about. Gold and other minerals are funding the deadliest war since World War II. More than five million people have died in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Years ago, the jewellery industry banned the trafficking in so-called blood diamonds, but the same hasn't happened with gold. In the heart of central Africa, CBS News "60 Minutes" found a campaign of rape and murder being funded largely by gold that is exported to the world. [Link to programme.](#)

Silicon sweatshops

November 2009. A Global Post investigation by Jonathan Adams and Kathleen E. McLaughlin

Silicon Sweatshops is a five-part investigation of the supply chains that produce many of the world's most popular technology products, from Apple iPhones, to Nokia cell phones, Dell keyboards and more. The series examines the scope of the problem, including its effects on workers from the Philippines, Taiwan and China. It also looks at a novel factory program that may be a blueprint for solving this perennial industry problem. [Read reports.](#)



'Our bosses are deaf and blind'

November 2009. SACO, NAFITU and others

Since December 2008, Chinese and Taiwanese trade unions and labour groups are protesting ongoing labour issues at Wintek facilities in Taiwan, and in China. The complaints range from unlawful dismissals, forced unpaid leave, strike busting, low wages, forced overtime, insufficient overtime compensation, and the refusal to respect public holidays, to inferior food quality and lack of canteen hygiene. Despite repeated calls from labour groups, reported issues at Wintek's factories have not yet been adequately addressed. Wintek's customers score deplorably low on transparency and consolidated action towards improvement. [Read more.](#)

Migrant workers as precarious workers

November 2009. International Metalworkers' Federation

An IMF conference on 'Migrant Workers as Precarious Workers' held in Bangkok examined the situation of migrant workers in the metal industry with the aim of developing union strategies to improve their rights. Participants from three continents agreed with the broad findings of the IMF survey conducted earlier this year, that migrant workers are most



likely to end up in precarious employment, be paid less than local workers and face obstacles to accessing their rights, including the right to join a trade union. [Read more.](#)

Taiwan protests against industrial zone

November 2009. Taiwan Environmental Action Network (TEAN)



Despite appeals and protests of farmers, fishermen and environmentalist, Taiwan is pursuing the expansion of the Central Taiwan Science Park in Erlin. Park which is to accommodate AU Optronics, a TFT-LCD manufacturer. The Taiwan Environmental Action Network argues that IT corporations, thriving under the protective wings of the government, have failed to internalise the environmental costs of their production; in stead they have imposed pollution costs onto local environment and communities. Moreover, there is currently no written law that adequately regulates high-tech pollution in Taiwan. As

a result, IT corporations have easily slipped under the radar with their questionable environmental practices. The health and social impacts associated with the CTSP expansion far outweigh any possible benefit and will destroy the livelihood of the local farmers, oyster fishermen and dairy farms. [Sign the TEAN petition to protest the CTSP expansion.](#)

From mine to mobile phone: the conflict minerals supply chain

November 2009. Enough Project at the Centre for American Progress

The scramble for minerals did not spark the conflict in eastern Congo, but war profiteering has become the fuel that keeps the region aflame and lies beneath the surface of major regional tensions, notes a strategy paper by the Enough Project at the Centre for American Progress. John Prendergast, the paper's co-author and a co-founder of the Enough Project, adds: "Because companies do not currently have a system to trace, audit, and certify where their materials come from, all cell phones and laptops likely contain conflict minerals from Congo. By demanding conflict-free products, consumers have a critical role to play in ensuring that Congo's minerals to benefit its people rather than the armed groups that prey upon them." [Read the strategy paper.](#)

Need to improve India's e-waste legislation

November 2009. Greenpeace, Toxics Link

India's lack of safe electronic waste-disposal is growing to a crisis situation, needing strong laws to control the situation, say experts. The country's e-waste generation is expected to grow from a current annual 380,000 tonnes to a million tonnes by 2012. "These figures account for only televisions, mobile phones and computers; there is an entire spectrum of unaccounted-for e-waste that is going into the unorganized sector in India, causing health and environmental problems," says Ramapati Kumar, Greenpeace campaign manager for toxic wastes in India. On 26-27 October, Toxics Link organised an international conference on heavy metals and e-waste. The topics of discussion over this two-day session included health and environmental impacts of e-waste, illegal dumping of e-waste, e-governance, etc.

Resolution calls on US Congress to choose e-steward recyclers

November 2009. Electronics TakeBack Coalition

A resolution has been introduced calling on the US Congress to craft a plan to deal with its own e-waste, only using recyclers certified to the new e-Stewards Standard – the highest in the industry. The resolution (H.Res. 938) calls for Congress to establish and implement "a coordinated program for the reuse, recycling, and appropriate disposal of obsolete computers and other electronic equipment used by offices of the legislative branch using only those companies independently certified as meeting the e-Stewards Standard for Responsible Recycling and Reuse of Electronic Equipment, which forbids the export of e-waste to developing countries and use of prison labour." [Read full resolution.](#)

How Motorola, Samsung and other giants break China's pollution rules

November 2009. Greenpeace China

Eighteen top multinational and Chinese corporations, including Motorola and Samsung violated a new Chinese environmental regulation in its first year of enforcement, a Greenpeace report has shown. The report, entitled 'Silent Giants. An investigation into corporate environmental information disclosure in China' describes how companies, either part of the 2008 Fortune Global 500 or 2008 Fortune China 100 lists, have violated the Measures on Environmental



Information Disclosure (for Trial Implementation). Read [‘Silent Giants. An investigation into corporate environmental information disclosure in China’](#).

Financial crisis hits workers employment and rights in Mexico’s electronics sector

November 2009. CEREAL



A new report by the Mexican Centre for Reflection and Action on Labour Issues (CEREAL) uncovers a litany of labour rights violations in the supply chains of HP, Lenovo, Nokia, Microsoft, Philips, IBM, Panasonic, Sanmina, Jabil and Flextronics. CEREAL has interviewed 4,000 workers in Mexico where these multi-million dollar companies have their products manufactured. The Mexican electronics sector has been hit with 6,000 jobs lost, massive dismissals, a 10 per cent reduction in wages and an increase in temporary three-month and monthly contracts from 40 to 60 per cent of all workers since 2008. Electronics companies need to stop abusing short-term contracts and let workers join genuine unions. Labour rights are fundamental human rights - not an optional extra. [Read full report](#).

Create transparency model by mapping the tin, tantalum, and cobalt supply chain

November 2009. Resolve

Earlier this year, the US NGO Resolve was commissioned by the EICC and GeSI Extractives Workgroup to create a transparency model by mapping the supply chain for tin, tantalum, and cobalt. Resolve has prepared an initial interim report and accompanying supply chain graphics. The purpose of issuing this status update is to encourage broader stakeholder review, dialogue, and input on initial findings. Stakeholders can provide input by identifying key suppliers that have not been reached through tracing, tracking, or other research; and by providing alternate contacts for companies that have not responded to Resolve’s survey requests. [More information](#).

Fair phones in demand

November 2009. makeITfair

Thousands of signatories joined makeITfair in its call towards mobile phone companies to pay greater attention to social standards in their supply chains. The majority of the signatures were directed to Nokia, the largest mobile phone producer of the world. The Finnish makeITfair campaign calls upon Nokia to take the lead in improving conditions in its supply chain. Nokia should, in conjunction with other manufacturers, trace the minerals in its products to individual mines; use its influence to contribute towards bringing peace to the Democratic Republic of Congo; adopt an ethical code based on multi-stakeholder participation and external auditing throughout the supply chain; provide full public disclosure of its supply chain; and, last but not least, cooperate with the international free trade union movement and start negotiations for a global framework agreement. [Read more](#).



Five year old EICC Code of Conduct severely criticised

October. CEREAL and the Coalition of Mexican Electronics Workers

In a strong-worded statement, Mexican labour rights activists express their frustration and anger with the failing implementation of the EICC Code of conduct. Five years ago, the Electronics Industry Citizenship Coalition launched its code of conduct, but the same labour rights violation have been reported ever since, write CEREAL and the Coalition of Mexican Electronics Workers. Freedom of association is not respected. The statement strongly denounces the precarious position of workers hired through labour agencies.

Buy IT Fair

October 2009. SOMO and Procure IT Fair

SOMO, the Dutch partner of Procure IT Fair, has published the Dutch version of the buyers’ guide today. The guide, which was already published in German and English, is now also available for public buyers in the Netherlands. [Read more](#).



Pilot project with HP in China showing the way to new worker-based CSR model

October 2009. SACOM and Bread for All

SACOM, with the support of Bread for All, has released two reports on in-factory labour rights training programmes at two China-based suppliers of technology company HP. SACOM and Bread for All consider these pilot programmes to be a step towards a new worker-based CSR model. "These two pilot cases show that workers' feedback is significant in helping senior managers understanding the demands and grievances of the workers. While moving towards worker-based CSR is a very long process that required much deeper commitments from all parties, we believe this initial experiment is a good starting point for more innovative and pro-labour training programs to come, in China and other countries", says SACOM's Jenny Chan. Clearly, worker's training and workers' committees can not replace trade unions. But, in the specific situation of China, where freedom of association is curbed, the role of NGOs in providing labour rights trainings seems crucial. [Read more.](#)

Moving away from bromine and chlorine – Greening consumer electronics

October 2009. SOMO

The report: "Greening Consumer Electronics: Moving Away from Bromine and Chlorine" features seven companies who have engineered environmental solutions that negate the need for most -- or in some cases all -- uses of brominated and chlorinated chemicals. This includes eliminating brominated flame retardants and polyvinyl chloride (PVC), which can create dioxin, a human carcinogen, during the burning of e-waste. [Read full report.](#)

Modern devices, outdated practices

October 2009. SOMO



'Modern devices, outdated practices', a new SOMO paper on gender perspectives on trade & CSR in the electronics supply chain highlights possible inroads into a gender perspective by focusing on specific examples from the simplified supply chain of electronic products. The proposed perspectives and methods are intended as practical suggestions for further practical research and the integration of gender into corporate campaigns and strategies. [Read the full paper.](#)

Embedding gender in sustainability reporting A practitioner's guide

October 2009. Global Reporting Initiative

Research on companies' reporting on gender equality found that companies rarely report much gender disaggregated data despite the inclusion of gender-related indicators in the GRI framework, and global recognition of the importance of gender equality. This educational resource has been produced by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and IFC to help organisations using the GRI Sustainability Reporting Framework embed material gender issues in sustainability reports. [Download the full document.](#)

Gender and labour column

October 2009. Asia Monitor Resource Centre – Asian Labour Update

In the last few decades, increasing attention has been paid to gender in the labour movement. The approach to gender has moved from reminding people that women should be part of the labour unions and that reproduction needed to be recognized as much as production, to a more progressive approach of addressing how social constructions of gender and power relations lead to imbalance and inequalities. Asian labour Update has launched a gender column to open a space to dig deeper into the complexity of gender and labour. Apart from equal pay for equal work and value, and equal opportunities for women and men, what does equality mean to different genders in different contexts? [Link to column.](#)

NGO position paper on eco-design regulations for PCs and monitors

October 2009. Ecostandard

A large group of NGOs have presented their critical views of the recent European Commission's eco design regulations for personal computers and monitors. The NGOs express their discontent over the neglect of non-energy aspects, like design-for recycling, chemical content, reparability, resource use, etc. The NGOs call for [a more ambitious approach.](#)



Best practices in workers' rights training

September 2009. Fair Wear Foundation

The Fair Wear Foundation has released a report with the findings of a seminar focused on identifying and discussing best practices in factory training in China. The challenge is to link verification with training, with the ultimate objective to enable workers to monitor their own working conditions in a setting that allows for effective workplace dialogue. Momentum towards better workplace dialogue can only be gained with companies committing to mix factory training into their business practices in China. This requires a new discourse for doing business: engaging with suppliers which are willing to build long term relationships, and being prepared to invest in workplace dialogue wherever needed. In this respect, worker training has a vast potential to contribute to processes of improving working conditions. Like other tools for improving working conditions, however, worker training is not a magic trick that offsets the negative consequences of how business is generally done. To ensure that worker training is effective, critical reviewing of sourcing policies remains a necessity. [Link to seminar report.](#)

Fair phones. It's your call

September 2009. makeITfair

This new makeITfair report shows that the efforts of European mobile network operators, such as Vodafone and T-Mobile, to improve the social and environmental conditions in the mobile phone supply chain still leave a lot to desire. By offering mobile phones for "free", mobile phone operators push more and more mobile phones on the market. As collection rates of old mobile phones for recycling remain low, this marketing practice results in more and more e-waste. [Read more.](#)

Strike at Philips Respironics over implementation of EICC Code of Conduct

September 2009. The Epoch Times, FNV

In the first week of September, about 1,000 workers went on strike at Philips Respironics in Shenzhen, China. The workers were expressing their grievances with the company for changing their work hours, effecting wage deflation through various tactics, and providing inferior quality meals. Under the new working hour policy, workers would lose half an hour of overtime pay, but would still be required to finish the same workload for each working days, [according to the local newspaper Epoch Times](#). Reportedly, the police terminated the strike using force, injuring two strikers. Philips confirmed that the factory management intended to align the working hour regime with the EICC Code of conduct which stipulates a maximum of 60 working hours a week, including overtime. Philips also confirmed that three workers were fired for their role in organising the strike. The incident gives rise to questioning the logic of unilaterally putting through such changes without consulting the workers concerned. Implementation of a code conduct should be accompanied by the freedom to organise and the right to collective bargaining, [according to the Dutch trade union FNV](#). FNV considers the follow-up given by Philips to the strike as the litmus test for Philips' corporate social responsibility policy in China.

Company monitor

September 2009. Procure IT Fair

The Procure IT Fair campaign has launched its IT Company Monitor. This online tool publishes news items available online that deal with the environment, working conditions and human rights throughout the supply chains of the large computer brands. [Read more.](#)



Campaign for living wages in the garment production supply chains

September 2009. Asia Floor Wage Campaign and Clean Clothes Campaign



Most of the world's garments are made in Asia. Yet Asian workers are paid the least. All garment workers in Asia need a wage increase. But often, when workers struggle to improve their wages and conditions in one country, companies relocate to another country, where wages and conditions are lower. So workers are afraid to fight for better wages, because they might lose their jobs. The Asia Floor Wage Campaign is a response to this problem. We

propose a floor wage for garment workers in Asia. The Asia Floor Wage, is different in each country's national currency, but has the power to buy the same set of goods and services in all countries. An Asia Floor Wage for the garment



industry will help us fight poverty, develop economically with decent labour standards, and improve the lives of workers who are mostly women. [Read more.](#)

Shan zai production of mobile phones in China

August 2009. Edward Tse, Kevin Ma, and Yu Huang on www.strategy-business.com

Once associated with pirated goods, China's shan zhai companies have become competitive players, even in mature industries. The term shan zhai has today become shorthand in China for fake or pirated products. From mobile phones to digital cameras, wine to medicine, Chinese consumers encounter shan zhai in almost every corner of their daily lives. Nokir and Samsing Anycat phones and Pahetohic TVs are just a few examples. Shan zhai companies take full advantage of China's imposing manufacturing capacity and capabilities. Most shan zhai mobile phones are developed in Shenzhen, where more than 30,000 companies now collaborate across the entire mobile phone value chain: designing products, sourcing, assembly, production, testing, packaging, distribution, and after-sales services. One of the problematic aspects of shan zai companies is that they are even less transparent than contract manufacturing, which is already near-anonymous. Monitoring compliance to labour standards gets even more complicated. [Read full article.](#)

Complaint about working conditions in software industry India. Tip of the iceberg?

August 2009. Silicon India news bureau

An ex-employee of Wipro has filed an harassment case against officials of his former employer. The complainant alleged that he had been confined to a room, harassed, forced to sign on blank papers, and finally forced to quit. Wipro stated that the company has robust processes in place to deal with employee grievances. A local NGO source alleges that this case is the typical tip of the iceberg, with several uncovered cases of human rights violations in the sector. [Read article.](#)

Configuring labour rights

July 2009. SOMO. makeITfair

makeITfair researchers interviewed workers and managers at six suppliers of big name computer brands in the Philippines in 2006 and again in 2008. Alarmed by violations of international labour standards uncovered in 2006, some computer brands decided to audit their suppliers' labour conditions themselves. Suppliers subsequently made efforts to comply with the companies' codes of conduct. However, makeITfair's 2008 research reveals that workers have not seen any real improvements in working conditions. Codes of conduct and audits are not solving the problem. makeITfair concludes that computer brands fail to address the root causes of labour rights violations with their suppliers, such as low wages and lack of workers' right to organise. Computer brands are auditing their suppliers without working with local NGOs or trade unions and are not transparent about the outcomes of their audits. Computer brands are continuously bargaining for low prices with their suppliers and yet demand that they maintain good labour conditions. Computer brands do not reward suppliers for improved labour conditions. Workers have no knowledge of the computer brands' codes of conduct and are not aware of their rights. For more details, [read full report.](#)

"Faced with a gun what can you do?"

July 2009. "Global Witness

A new report by Global Witness, entitled 'Faced with a gun, what can you do?' details how companies are buying from suppliers who trade in minerals from the warring parties. Many mining areas in eastern DRC are controlled by rebels and the national army, who violently exploit civilians to retain access to valuable minerals, including cassiterite (tin ore), coltan and gold. Cassiterite and coltan are used to make mobile phones, computers and other electronics, among other things. [Link to report.](#)

(Re-)Instating Decent Work through Mature Systems of Industrial Relations

July 2009. Catia Gregoratti and Doug Miller (Northumbria University)

Mature Systems of Industrial Relations (MSIR) is seen by the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF) as a means for mitigating the conflicts and exploitation arising from the globalisation of production; to move beyond ineffective mechanisms of social compliance (i.e. auditing, verification and reporting); and to empower local actors and local labour institutions in countries where existing systems of industrial relations are weak or absent. Central to this approach is an understanding that progress in the advancement of core labour standards in producing countries needs to surpass the limited impact (and businesses would argue costs) of self-regulatory mechanisms and be rooted in freedom of association, dialogue and collective bargaining. [Real full article.](#)



Legal and illegal blurred

June 2009. FinnWatch - makeITfair

The Finnwatch report looks into the social and environmental conditions on Indonesia's tin islands, Bangka and Belitung. Miners work under harsh conditions, for a minimal income. Most environmental damage is caused by uncontrolled small scale mining operations. However, big tin companies add to the problems. In addition they buy concentrate from informal miners. There is considerable tension and unclear division of responsibilities among the local government, mining companies, small scale miners and independent smelters. The legal and illegal have become blurred: a plurality of regulations have been promulgated, while at the same time all categories of customers, including even the Indonesian navy, keep on buying tin sand of small scale miners. The plummeting of the international tin price has devastating effects for the informal miners in particular. [Link to full report.](#)

E-waste facts and figures

2009. Electronics TakeBack Coalition



Electronics
TakeBack
Coalition

The Electronics TakeBack Coalition publishes a regularly updated summary of available statistics that quantify the problems of electronic waste and e-waste recycling efforts in the US. [Read more.](#)



FUNDING: This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of SOMO and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

