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From the Editors:

Safe & sustainable development!

In this issue of Consumers Union of Japan's English newsletter we share articles about our recent activities, with a focus on safety and sustainability.

This time, the theme is to highlight the need for those involved in production to better live up to consumers' high expectations. We have also participated in events for peace and democracy, and will step

up our efforts to reach out and raise awareness both abroad and at home.

We also share the story of how one small country, Bhutan, is aiming for 100% organic food production, truly a great idea and an inspiration.

We hope you will continue to stay updated with CUJ's activities and news on our English website, and support our campaigns!

CUJ co-signed Joint Open Letter calling on UNIQLO to guarantee labour rights in its supplier in Cambodia

Consumers Union of Japan has co-signed the open letter calling on Fast Retailing Co., Ltd., owner of the UNIQLO brand, to guarantee labour rights in its supplier in Cambodia. We are urging Fast Retailing to increase their leverage by cooperating with other brands, e.g. H&M and Lindex, sourcing from both Zhong Yin as well as from a number of suppliers belonging to the parent company, Beijing Joywin. We firmly call upon Fast Retailing to act swiftly and responsibly, to use all their leverage and ensure the fundamental rights of workers to freedom of association.

September 29, 2016

Open letter to Fast Retailing Co., Ltd.

Dear Chairman Yanai and Vice President Nitta,

As you are well aware, since September 2015 47 workers and 3 union leaders at Fast Retailing's supplier, Zhong Yin B (Cambodia) Textile Co., Ltd. have been jobless. They were dismissed as a consequence of their activities in the local union of Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers' Democratic Union (C.CAWDU). When their co-workers protested against this union-busting behaviour with a strike in February 2016 they too were fired, over 200 of them. As if this were not enough, the factory also filed a complaint to

terminate 55 workers participating in the February strikes accusing them of sabotage and inciting other workers to sabotage, which is what they labeled the legal strike.

We, signatories from Cambodia, USA, Canada, Europe, Hong Kong and Japan, have observed Fast Retailing's inaction in this conflict. With increasing concern we have repeatedly called upon you to send a clear message to the Zhong Yin management to abide the ruling of the Arbitration Council (AC Award 306/15) and its correct interpretation of Cambodia Labor Law to reinstate the workers fired in September 2015, and to respect the workers legal right to strike under Cambodian law to enforce the AC Award and reinstate the workers fired for the February 2016 strikes.

Instead you have done the opposite, saying you would ignore the AC Award's interpretation of Cambodia Labor Law for the first group and await the outcome of the court case which was initiated by Zhong Yin for the second group. In July the court had issued a ruling in favor of Zhong Yin. However, a legal analysis done by lawyers at Center for Alliance of Labor & Human Rights (CENTRAL), Cambodia, reveal grave procedural errors and errors in legal reasoning in the court's proceedings, as well as explained why the AC Award correctly interpreted Cambodia Labor Law. The trade union has appealed the decision, but it might take years before the case is processed, if ever.

Zhong Yin's terminations have also violated Fast Retailing's Code of Conduct prohibiting interference with

workers freedom of association and sanctions against workers for union membership or activities, which the September 2015 and February 2016 activities clearly were, as well as requires Fast Retailing, when violations are found, to agree on corrective action that eliminates the problem in a reasonable timeframe.

In the meantime the situation for the dismissed workers is growing more urgent. They face severe economic hardship and their families suffer enormously due to the loss of income. Some of the affected have lost their homes as they could not pay the rent, and for many of the families even the most basic food is now considered a luxury.

This cannot continue and therefore we today launch a campaign on three continents with the aim to inform consumers and others about what has happened at Zhong Yin factory and how the involved brands have reacted to the appeals from the workers. We know that other brands that produce in Zhong Yin, including H&M and Lindex, have told the factory management they support the Arbitration Council ruling and urged the factory to reinstate the workers. As far as we know Fast Retailing is the only brand that has not sent the same message to the factory or workerd in collaboration with other brands to increase their leverage. However, this can still be done and would then be in line with the recommendations in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights which states: "If the business enterprise has leverage to prevent or mitigate the adverse impact, it should exercise it."

We find it necessary to repeat that the Arbitration Council is a respected neutral institution, and their correct interpretation of Cambodia's Labor Law is a more than adequate basis for prompt action by Fast Retailing to correct the violations of your supplier Zhong Yin.

We therefore strongly urge you to

- Inform the Zhong Yin management and the its parent company, Beijing Joywin Fashion Textile Co., Ltd. management that you support the AC Award and its interpretation of Cambodian labor law and that the dismissed workers should immediately be reinstated with full back-pay for the time they were forced out of work.

- Make it explicit to Zhong Yin management that Fast Retailing will participate in any negotiations with C.CAWDU independent union to resolve the conflict consistent with its duty to take corrective action under its Code of Conduct.

- Inform the parent company that further orders to the other factories depend on a swift resolution of the unlawful violations by Zhong Yin management of the workers' right to unionize.

- Increasing your leverage by cooperating with other brands, e.g. H&M and Lindex, sourcing from both Zhong Yin as well as from a number of suppliers belonging to the parent company, Beijing Joywin.

We firmly call upon Fast Retailing to act swiftly and responsibly, to use all your leverage and ensure the fundamental rights of workers to freedom of association.

Please inform us no later than the 4th of October what steps you plan to

take to resolve this deeply concerning situation that has lasted far too long.

Sincerely,

Athit Kong
Vice President
Coalition of Cambodian Apparel
Workers' Democratic Union
(C.CAWDU)

Yuen-ki Yeung
Campaign Officer
Hong Kong Confederation of Trade
Union

Edgar Romney
Executive Secretary Treasurer
Workers United – SEIU

May Wong
Director
Globalization Monitor

Chen Pin Yu
Project Officer
Students and Scholars against
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Clean Clothes Campaign

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Center for Alliance of Labor & Human
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Secretary General
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Kazuoki Ono
Chairperson
Consumers Union of Japan

Noel Colina
Coordinator Asia
International Union League for Brand
Responsibility

Shoko Uchida/ Tadaaki Ooe
Co-president
Pacific Asia Resource Center (PARC)

Global Focus on Fighting against Antibiotic Resistance

Consumers International and its Members will be continuing to build pressure on KFC, McDonald's and Subway in the run-up to the UN high level meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance, to be held in New York this September.

"McDonald's and Yum! Brands (the parent company for KFC) have been holding their annual general meetings (AGMs) in May, 2016. Consumers International (CI) used both of these meetings to put pressure on the two companies to make global commitments on ending the use of antibiotics in their meat supply chains," explains Amanda Long, director of CI.

Amanda Long says, "We will also be launching a pilot digital action with a number of our Members. This will allow supporters of the Antibiotics off the Menu campaign in participating Member countries to directly email KFC, McDonald's and Subway to call on them to commit to ending the routine use of antibiotics important for human medicine in their global meat supply chains."

CI will be working with Members to develop additional campaign ideas and support national campaigning activity in the months leading up to the UN high level meeting in September.

Stop Using Antibiotics for Farm Animals: Questionnaire

Report: The Message from Consumers in Japan:

Stop using Antibiotics at Animal Farms!

– We asked fast food companies to reply to our questionnaire –

July 20, 2016

"The antibiotics won't work..." Isn't it rather unbelievable to hear about such a crisis for modern medicine? If no action is taken, resistance to antibiotics and similar drugs (antimicrobial resistance) will cause 300 million deaths a year globally by 2050. Massive overuse of antibiotics has increased the growth of antibiotic resistant bacteria. Whilst over-consumption of antibiotics in human medicine is a huge problem, what is less well known is that around half of the world's antibiotics are consumed by farm animals. In many cases animals are not given the drugs because they are sick, but because producers want them to grow faster, or to prevent illness from spreading amongst animals raised in poor conditions. Is meat from such cattle, pigs and chicken really safe to eat?

Consumers Union of Japan decided to send a questionnaire to food companies including fast food chains, convenience stores and family restaurants that sell a lot of different meat products in Japan.

The aim of our investigation was to get a clear picture of how globalization has influenced the fast food industry in Japan, and how food safety is being dealt with at fast food chains and restaurants operating in this country. Our questionnaire included a number of issues, but in this report we will focus on the question: Does the company have a policy for not using antibiotics for animal growth promotion? These foods are imported legally and sold in Japan, even as they are causing an increased level of concern worldwide.

About the questionnaire:

Many consumers are wondering, “Is the food made by this company really OK?” when eating out or purchasing it at a supermarket or a convenience store. There is no choice but to believe in the information provided, regarding food safety. But we also have doubts that a corporation pursuing profits will be making all kinds of fanciful statements.

Consumers International (CI) and its Members are calling on multinational restaurant chains, including McDonald’s, KFC and Subway, to make global commitments to end the routine use of antibiotics important for human medicine.

Specifically, in February 2016 a CI report found that McDonald’s, KFC and Subway currently fall far short in their response to the global antibiotic resistance health risk. We need to use this opportunity to tell McDonalds, KFC and Subway that they must act to:

- Define a global, time-bound action plan to phase out the routine use of antibiotics important in human medicine across all meat and poultry supply chains
- Show progress by adopting third-party auditing of their antibiotics use policies and publishing the results.

Replies from companies in Japan: “Do you use meat from animals given antibiotics for growth promotion purposes?”

McDonald’s: “Our company uses a global feed standard and restricts the use of antibiotics in the US, but the animals in other countries are raised following the rules in each country. The beef used in Japan comes from cattle raised in New Zealand and Australia, and we follow the Japanese Food Hygiene Law and the local regulations for animal drugs and feed additives as well as the global standard. Pork used in Japan comes from the US and chicken from Thailand. Also for these products we follow the global standard and local regulations.”

CUJ comment: The above reply does not confirm that McDonald’s does not use antibiotics as for the purpose of growth promotion in animal feed, but rather that it is possibly being used routinely. There seems to be no real concern for antibiotic resistance and the need to phase out the routine use of antibiotics important in human medicine, or to adopt third-party auditing as called for by CI.

KFC: “All chicken we sell in Japan are being raised at farms in Japan. Antibiotics and antimicrobials are not used for the purpose of growth promotion.”

CUJ comment: This reply from KFC clearly denies using antibiotics, but we cannot be sure that this is the case. We also do not know if they use antibiotics important in human medicine in the case when birds get sick, and if they use it for the entire flock or just administer it to individual birds. Third-party auditing as called for by CI would be an assurance that they understand the seriousness of the issue of antibiotic resistance.

Subway: “We do not use antibiotics as drugs to cattle for the purpose of growth promotion.”

CUJ comment: This reply from Subway clearly denies using antibiotics, but we cannot be sure that this is the case. We also do not know if they use antibiotics important in human medicine in the case when birds get sick, and if they use it for the entire flock or just administer it to individual birds. Third-party auditing as called for by CI would be an assurance that they understand the seriousness of the issue of antibiotic resistance.

Freshness Burger: “We can confirm that there is almost no use.”

CUJ comment: It can be said that the level of awareness about antibiotics is high.

Mos Burger: Antibiotics and antimicrobial agents are being used to different degrees to treat disease depending on the type of illness, and we use the drugs properly according to the situation.”

CUJ comment: This is not a direct reply to our question, so we contacted their consumer hot-line for clarification. They confirmed that they currently use antibiotics for meat production.

CUJ summary:

“KFC, Subway and Freshness Burger all appear to have gone to great length to avoid using antibiotics for the purpose of growth promotion at their respective animal farms,” says Michiyo Koketsu, CUJ.

“On the other hand, McDonald’s did not reply that they do not use antibiotics in this way, and Mos Burger clearly said they use antibiotics. McDonald’s in the US has stated that they will move away from using antibiotics for growth promotion for chicken, so there is a chance that McDonald’s in Japan will also move in this direction sooner or later. We strongly support Consumers International’s global campaign to lobby these corporations to move away from routinely using antibiotics in animal feed for the purpose of growth promotion.”

Newsflash: Bhutan Aiming for 100% Organic Agriculture by 2020

***Rice paddy field management
without herbicides made possible
by Japanese aid***

By Koa Tasaka (CUJ co-chair and
Asian Rural Institute director)

Bhutan, the nation of happiness

Recently, I have been engaged in a grass root technological cooperation project for organic agriculture, in the country where the national aim is happiness. Bhutan wants to develop local agriculture with a focus on organic farming through a project with Mr. Inaba Mitsukuni from Minkan Inasaku Kenkyujo, a rice growing research center in Tochigi prefecture. I was able to help him and his research center get funding for the project from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Bhutan is known for making Gross National Happiness (GNH) an index of state development instead of GDP, which is the economic indicator of gross domestic product. Many will also remember that the Bhutanese king consoled Japan just after Japan's suffered from the earthquake and tsunami in March, 2011. It was in 2011 that their Majesties the King and Queen of Bhutan visited Japan. Their Majesties' visit to areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake encouraged many people.

Massive herbicide use is a problem

Bhutan covers educational expenses and medical expenses for its people without charge as a national policy, and it is possible to say it is an ideal welfare state. But food remains a big problem. The self-sufficiency rate of rice, which is Bhutan's principal food, is only around 50% and almost all meat is imported from India.

During the global conference of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) held in Bhutan in March, 2014, the Bhutanese agricultural minister announced the target for agricultural production to be 100% organic agriculture by 2020. All agricultural chemicals such as DDT that are left in the country are now being collected and sent to Switzerland for disposal there, a policy carried out without exception. But it was explained that it is a big problem that a great deal of herbicides are still being used in Bhutan.

When hearing the lecture of the agricultural minister, I raised my hand and spoke: "There is a place in Japan where herbicides are not used at all. It is a Japanese private rice growing research center based in Tochigi prefecture. Moreover, they have established a method to control weeds in rice paddy farming."

The agricultural minister showed a very big interest, and wanted to know more in detail. I provided him with English articles written by Mr. Inaba Mitsukuni of the rice growing research center, as well as information about the weed control method. He expressed a strong wish

to bring Mr. Inaba and others to Bhutan.

Fighting rice paddy weed

I received a very positive answer from Mr. Inaba: "Let's do international cooperation for Bhutan to help them achieve 100% organic agriculture!" Fortunately, JICA decided it would support the project for three years. A visit to Bhutan was arranged including Mr. Inaba and staff from JICA. Discussions were held with the Bhutanese Department of Agriculture in June, 2016 and the project could start right away.

The problem in Bhutan is rice paddy weed (*Potamogeton distinctus*). The plan is to deal with it at two experimental farms, with one of the test fields run by an organic farmer. Two Bhutanese Department of Agriculture staff have begun a study from this spring at the rice growing research center in Tochigi together with Asian Rural Institute*. After the training has finished, we are going to begin activities in Bhutan in December.

Most people in Bhutan follow Tibetan Buddhism. Soybeans are cultivated and used for their daily food. If the use of soybeans protein is developed instead of importing meat, it will also be possible to use the leftovers from soybeans, for example as fertilizer.

I'm sure Bhutan, the nation of happiness, will conquer these issues and reach its target, 100% organic agriculture, by 2020.

Consumers Union of Japan

CUJ is a politically and financially independent non-governmental organization (NGO). We are funded by membership fees, sales of publications and donations.

CUJ was founded in April 1969 as Japan's first nationwide grassroots consumer organization. CUJ is officially certified as a non-profit organization by the Japanese NPO legislation.

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