

13 August 2013

Ms. Constance Thomas  
Director  
International Program on Child Labour (IPEC)  
International Labor Organization (ILO)

Dear Ms. Constance Thomas

**RE: Child Labour in Tobacco Cultivation - ILO and the Tobacco Industry**

We, the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA), are a regional organization working closely with governments and non-government organizations to advance tobacco control policies among the ASEAN countries according to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and its Guidelines.

We believe the ILO, being a member of the United Nations Ad Hoc Inter-agency Task Force on Tobacco Control, will have to abide by the obligations under the FCTC and its Guidelines. We wish to raise our concern regarding IPEC's endorsement of the tobacco industry-sponsored Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation (ECLT). We see this as a breach of the FCTC particularly Article 5.3, Article 13 and their Guidelines. These articles require Parties (177 countries) to **ban** tobacco industry related CSR activities and contributions from tobacco companies to any entity for "socially responsible causes", as this is a form of tobacco sponsorship.

Corporations generally have a very clear policy on child labour – they abhor it and do everything possible to ensure their products do not use any child labour. When their products are exposed to be using child labour, companies condemn such activity, conduct an immediate investigation, and often immediately terminate their contracts with the implicated producers.

However unlike other industries that have a zero tolerance for child labour, the tobacco industry has set no such policies or target date for complete eradication of child labour. The tobacco industry, while publicly condemning child labour, continues to purchase and use leaves that are produced by child labour and profits from them. The tobacco industry's miniscule contributions through so-called corporate social responsibility activities including the ECLT are a whitewash of the problem. The more serious issue is that these CSR activities provide a convenient platform for tobacco companies to gain access to policy makers who are responsible to approve and implement tobacco control measures. The endorsement from IPEC and ILO of ECLT only serves to strengthen and protect the tobacco industry.

We have compiled a report "Child Labour in Tobacco Cultivation in the ASEAN Region" (attached) which explains this problem further with a focus on Indonesia. The report provides some recommendations on how to address this issue. A soft copy can be downloaded here: <http://seatca.org/?p=2701>

We are appealing to you to give this your serious consideration and do the following:

- IPEC and ILO to dissociate yourselves from the tobacco industry-sponsored Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation (ECLT)
- Set a definitive deadline, e.g. 2015, to completely halt child labour in tobacco farming and put in place a phase-out plan.

We are happy to provide you with further information and answer any queries you may have.



# SEATCA

SOUTHEAST ASIA TOBACCO CONTROL ALLIANCE

Thank you

Sincerely yours,

Mary Assunta  
Senior Policy Advisor  
SEATCA [www.seatca.org](http://www.seatca.org)

cc.

**Mr. Guy Ryder**, Director-General, ILO

**Ms. Sandra Polaski**, Deputy Director-General for Policy, ILO

**Dr. Douglas Bettcher**, Director, Department for Prevention of Noncommunicable Diseases, WHO