

5<sup>th</sup> June 2012

### **'Light the flame for workers' human rights'**

As we prepare for the arrival of the Olympic torch relay on the streets of Dublin arguments about who might carry it have dominated the debate. However, the symbolism of the Olympic torch, respect, excellence and friendship, also provide an opportunity for us to demand an Olympics that respects the human rights of all workers who help to make the Games possible.

Evidence from the London 2012 and Beijing 2008 Olympics shows that workers making Olympic-branded goods and sportswear continue to be exploited. The *Fair Games?* report investigated working conditions in 10 factories producing sportswear, including Adidas-London 2012 goods, and uniforms for 2012 officials, in China, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. Evidence showed the systematic and widespread exploitation of workers in sportswear factories, including poverty pay, forced overtime, the repeated use of short-term contracts to deny workers legal entitlements, and workers being too frightened to join a union, for fear of losing their jobs.

Campaigners have been calling on the International Olympic Committee, head of the Olympic family, to 'Light the flame for workers' human rights' by ensuring that *all* workers involved in delivering the Games have their rights respected. This could include the principle of respect for workers' rights in the Olympic Charter and Code of Ethics; requiring that for all participating countries (including Ireland), National Olympic Committees include respect for internationally recognised labour standards in their contracts with companies supplying goods and services; and publishing information about the locations of factories making Olympic-branded goods and the conditions that workers are employed in.

Only then will we be able to say that the International Olympic Committee is doing everything in its power to protect the human rights of workers, in keeping with the Olympic values of fair play, respect and equality.



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