

RTE interactive Ireland – March 4, 2004

New campaign targets sportswear companies

A worldwide campaign was launched today to call on multi-national sportswear companies to clean up their act in advance of the Athens Olympics.

It was organised by the Clean Clothes Campaign, global unions and the British charity, Oxfam.

They say giant sportswear brands are violating the rights of millions of workers around the world in order to fill shops with the latest and cheapest sports gear in time for the games this summer.

In Dublin, the Congress of Trade Unions, Oxfam Ireland and SIPTU have called on companies such as Fila, Puma, Nike, Adidas, Umbro and others to take heed of the exploitation and abuse of workers' rights which are endemic in the industry.

New research on the issue draws on the testimony of workers and factory managers in countries such as Bulgaria, Cambodia, Thailand, China, Indonesia and Turkey.

The findings indicate that companies' promises to behave responsibly are often superficial and lacking in credibility, and are ignored by company buying teams who use cut-throat tactics to reach their targets.

In order to deliver, researchers found suppliers are forcing their employees to work longer and harder, denying them their fundamental rights.

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2004/0304/olympics.html>