



Press release

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Be an 'ethical pest'

The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) is launching new guidance (<http://www.eti-ten.org/ethicalpest.html>) which gives hints and tips on how shoppers can help promote ethical trade in the fashion industry.

Says Julia Hawkins of ETI, "More and more people are concerned about how the workers who make their clothes are treated. They want to make a difference, but aren't sure exactly what to do. Although ethical trade is a complex area, our new guidance shows that there are some simple steps that everyone can take, ranging from checking what ETI member companies sign up to, to asking tough questions of fashion retailers. We want people to know it's OK to be an ethical pest".

The Ethical Pest initiative is spearheaded by Tara Scott and Stacey Dooley, two of the six young people whose experiences working in the garment industry in India were filmed as part of the BBC series *Blood, Sweat and T-shirts*.

Says Stacey, "We think it's really important that shoppers think about where to spend their money when they go shopping. More people are becoming aware of what can happen to the workers who make our clothes and want to do something about it – this website helps them ask the right questions and be an 'ethical pest'."

Says Tara, "Compassion and responsibility should be fundamental in trade. Businesses have a responsibility to their customers and to the workers who make their products; both of whom they would not exist without. Honesty and transparency are crucial for a business to maintain a healthy relationship with its customers, and too many businesses have been caught red-handed breaching their ethical commitment. We need to make sure that companies who have made public commitments to trading ethically, including ETI members, are working hard for change. Consumer pressure is something businesses can't ignore. They work for us, so make them! Be an ethical pest."

Four ways to be an ethical pest

It's not easy being an ethical pest because the issues are complex but you can:

- **check** which companies are members of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) – they have made serious commitments to ethical trade and their activities are scrutinised by ETI's trade union and NGO members
- **find out more**. You can learn more about the issues – see ETI's Factsheet for consumers at <http://www.eti-ten.org/ethicalpest.html>
- **join a campaign** for better conditions in supply chains - see our Factsheet for examples of organisations that campaign on workers' rights
- **ask searching questions** – write to CEOs; ask store staff if they know where their products come from.

More probing questions, information and factsheets can be found at <http://www.eti-ten.org/ethicalpest.html>

The ETI initiative has been developed as one of several during ETI's tenth anniversary year. Since its inception, ETI has established itself as a global authority on corporate responsibility for workers' rights. It has demonstrated that ETI members' activities are bringing material benefits to workers: last year, member companies registered over 50,000 separate improvements to workers' conditions, collectively touching the lives of over 6 million workers.

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Further information from Julia Hawkins/Jane Lyons at the Ethical Trading Initiative
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Notes to editors

1. The Ethical Trading Initiative (www.ethicaltrade.org) is a not-for profit alliance of companies, trade unions, charities and campaigning organisations. Its 52 corporate members, which include many of the UK's leading retailers (Tesco, Gap and Marks & Spencer to name a few) have a combined turnover of over £107 billion; dedicate over 400 staff to ethical trade and last year instigated 54,000 separate actions to improve worker conditions among a 38,000 supplier base, collectively touching the lives of more than 6 million workers.
2. More information on other activities being carried out during ETI's 10th anniversary year, including a DVD: *ETI – the first decade*, and a conference: *Ethical trade – the next decade* can be found at www.eti-ten.org

Press release

Release date 4 August 2008

Ten questions to ask fashion retailers about their ethical trading policy

1. Do you have a code of conduct, and does it include the workers' rights outlined in the ETI Base Code – including their right to join trade unions?
2. How much of your supply chain is covered by your code of labour practice? Does it include particularly vulnerable workers, like homeworkers?
3. What are you doing to make sure your suppliers understand the importance of treating workers fairly?
4. What are you doing to make sure the workers who make your clothes understand their rights?
5. Is there senior management – at board level - responsibility for your code of labour practice?
6. How many staff do you have working on ethical trade in your company?
7. How do you check what progress your suppliers are making on improving working conditions?
8. What practical support do you give your suppliers to help them understand how they can improve their practices?
9. Sometimes garment suppliers face unreasonable pressure to change clothing designs at the last minute – sometimes even after production has started – and workers can often end up working excessive hours as a result. How do you prevent this from happening?
10. Does the price you pay your suppliers for your garments allow them to pay their workers a wage they can afford to live on?

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Background information

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ETI – the first ten years

In its first ten years the Ethical Trading Initiative has:

- **demonstrated that its members' activities have brought material benefits to workers**, including safer and healthier working environments; a reduction in the incidence of child labour, better pay and fewer hours. Last year, ETI member companies registered over 50,000 separate improvements to workers' conditions and their ethical trade activities now touch the lives of over six million workers;
- **galvanised alliances that have brought about widespread change** for workers around the world, for example:
 - in India, ETI is supporting a groundbreaking multi-stakeholder initiative in the garment industry, aimed at improving homeworkers' conditions
 - in South Africa, ETI helped create the Wine and Agricultural Industry Ethical Trade Association (WIETA); and
 - in the UK, ETI led a cross-industry alliance that successfully lobbied the Government to introduce licensing of temporary labour providers to the agricultural industry.
- **established itself as a global authority** on corporate responsibility for workers in supply chains and developed a raft of practical tools and resources to help companies put their ethical trade principles into practice.

ETI's aims going into the next decade include:

- **driving ethical trade to the heart of business practice**, particularly in making sure that the prices paid by companies to their suppliers allows them to pay their workers a living wage they can afford to live on, and in making sure that lead times do not create unnecessary pressure on suppliers to cut corners and force unnecessary overtime;
- **helping workers help themselves** - making sure workers are actively engaged in ethical trade, which includes helping them learn about their rights and creating the space for them to organise themselves and bargain with management through trade unions and other structures;
- **working towards making a 'living wage' a reality, not an abstract concept** – given that progress in this area has been limited, yet it is the most consistent and pressing need identified by workers in supply chains;
- tackling **the issues of particularly vulnerable workers**: continuing to develop concerted approaches to tackling the needs of vulnerable workers, including homeworkers; smallholders and their workers; migrant and contract workers.

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