

SILENCED TO DELIVER

MOBILE PHONE MANUFACTURING IN CHINA AND THE PHILIPPINES

This is a summary of the report "Silenced to Deliver: Mobile phone manufacturing in China and the Philippines, SOMO and SwedWatch, September 2008.

Mobile phones are the must-have accessory for young people. Demand for new products is immense. Since 2006, over one billion phones were produced every year. Currently half of the world's mobile phones are produced in China and 10% of global semiconductor production takes place in the Philippines. Most of the workers on the production lines are young women who are often their family's main breadwinner and are denied many of their basic rights.



MAKE IT FAIR!

Big brand electronics companies need to take responsibility for the labour rights violations and abuses occurring in their supply chain. In turn, consumers should demand more responsibly produced electronics goods.

VIOLATING RIGHTS

makeITfair researchers examined six factories in China and the Philippines that deliver components to the world's five biggest mobile phone companies: Nokia, Samsung, Motorola, LG and Sony Ericsson. These 'big five' currently hold more than 80% of the mobile phone market. makeITfair was shocked to discover serious labour violations:

- >> **Low wages** In both China and the Philippines workers often earn only the minimum wage for full-time work at the factory, even though these wage levels are very difficult to live on.
- >> **Excessive working hours** During peak periods, it is not unusual for workers to work 12 hours per day, six to seven days a week.
- >> **Punitive fines** Wage deductions, in the form of punitive fines for mistakes, were common at all four factories researched in China.
- >> **Disrespect of union rights** In the Philippines, harassment of workers, dismissals and even killings have been reported and less than 10% of the country's electronics firms are thought to have unions.
- >> **Health and safety problems** Workers interviewed for this report complained about muscle strains, eye problems, allergies, dizziness, exhaustion, burns, cuts, chest pains and weight loss. At one factory in China, workers said they are not provided with sufficient protective gear while handling chemicals. In one department, workers handling sulphuric acid did not have the time to put on safety masks due to the tight work schedule.
- >> **Gendered hiring practices to avoid protests** Most of the workers on the production lines are young women. Female workers are preferred, since they are seen as less prone to stand up for their rights, and better suited for detail-oriented work.

UNCONTROLLED SUPPLY CHAIN

The five biggest mobile phone companies have all adopted codes of conduct stating that the labour rights of workers will be guaranteed. However, makeITfair found that this is not the case. Our research revealed unacceptable violations of labour laws, international conventions and company codes of conduct. However, improving the situation is virtually impossible because anti-union tactics are common across the sector. It is therefore vital that electronics companies consider how they can challenge these attitudes and support workers' efforts to organise.

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RIGHTS VIOLATIONS
IN THE MOBILE PHONE
SECTOR IN CHINA AND THE
PHILIPPINES, PLEASE VISIT

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