

Olympic organisations, sportswear and workers' rights: the story so far

Play Fair 2012

Introduction

Play Fair 2012

Play Fair 2012 wants to ensure an Olympics that, in the words of London Mayor Ken Livingstone, “*values the people who will work to produce it.*” In particular, we want London 2012 to raise the bar on ethical trading for all goods bearing the Olympic logo, ensuring workers' rights are respected throughout Olympic supply chains.

The campaign is coordinated by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and Labour Behind the Label (LBL), and includes other trades unions and campaigning organisations.

We are part of Play Fair 2008, a global campaign consisting of three international federations: the Clean Clothes Campaign, International Trade Union Confederation, and International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation. Play Fair 2008 calls on the sportswear industry and the Olympic movement to take responsibility for working conditions in their supply chains.

Why 2012?

The licensing and merchandise for the Olympic Games is an industry worth hundreds of millions of pounds, and a crucial part of every Games' business model, London included. Yet sportswear and other goods bearing the Olympic logo are made by workers who, like most workers in global supply chains, do not have access to their fundamental rights.

Meanwhile the Olympic Charter states that, “Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.” Play Fair 2008 calls on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to put these words into practice by through policies and procedures that safeguard workers' rights in Olympic goods production.

In the absence of effective action by the IOC, each Games must go it alone. During the bid process, London set out its stall to be as ethical as possible. “Equity and fair trade” were ‘One Planet Living Principles’ of London’s Olympic bid. London Mayor Ken Livingstone said at the time, “we will make sure this is ... an Olympics that values the people who will work to produce it.” Tessa Jowell has said that the Government is, “very keen that all the contracts [awarded for the Games] are characterised by good employment practices.”

LOCOG, the committee that organises the 2012 Games, is under pressure to keep costs down. This means there is a risk that it will not be able to put in place the creative and ambitious solutions necessary. The experience of previous Games has taught us that commitments to ensure respect for the poorest workers' rights in Olympic bids rarely translate into a concrete impact for workers.

Summer Olympics in 2000, 2004, and now 2008 have been preceded by strongly-worded criticism and dossiers of evidence of labour rights abuses from groups representing workers in the global clothing, sportswear and toy industries.¹ Play Fair 2008 researchers investigated working conditions in four Chinese factories producing bags, headgear and stationery bearing the Olympic logo. They found that the goods were being produced by children as young as 12 years old, adults earning 14p per hour (half the legal minimum wage), and employees made to work up to 15 hours per day, seven days a week in unsafe and unhealthy conditions.

For example, the Yue Wong Cheong company's operations in Shenzhen, with 3,800 employees, produce some 50 different items under licence for the 2008 Olympics. Play Fair 2008's investigation team found that it regularly pays its workers less than 50% of the minimum wage, and requires them to work 13 hours per day with few, if any, days off during each month. Many workers complained about the poor health and safety conditions, including constant pain due to bad ergonomics, fire hazards, skin problems from chemicals and respiratory problems from the dust and fluff in the workplaces. Fake salary slips are used to dupe outside inspectors sent by the

company's clients to check wages and conditions.

A global call

Play Fair 2008 calls upon the National Olympics Committees (NOCs) and the Organising Committees of the Olympic Games (OCOGs) to:

- Work through the International Olympics Committee to put in place mechanisms for ending abusive and exploitative practices.
- Use their influence on companies operating in their country and national team sponsors to push for the campaign demands.
- Require that the NOC and OCOG publicly discloses companies with which it has licensing, sponsorship and marketing agreements.
- Require that, as a contractual condition in its licensing, sponsorship and marketing agreements with companies, that they publicly disclose their production locations and ensure that labour practices and working conditions involved in the production of NOC and OCOG branded products comply with internationally recognized labour standards.

We recognise the central role of the IOC in implementing a long-term approach, and call on it to:

- Make it a condition for future Olympic games events that the host country must have ratified, implemented and respected the core ILO conventions
- Require that, as a contractual condition in its licensing, sponsorship and marketing agreements, labour practices and working conditions involved in the production of IOC branded products comply with internationally recognized labour standards
- Commit resources to undertake proactive investigations of working conditions and to establish mechanisms for ending abusive and exploitative labour practices in IOC and NOC supply chains, including substantiated complaints.
- Commit to promoting publicly the necessity to end the exploitation and abuse involved in the sportswear and athletic footwear industries.
- Ensure that respect for workers rights is an integral part of the Olympic Charter and of the IOC Code of Ethics.
- Support efforts to ensure respect for workers' rights in other aspects of Games-related employment.

This document sets out the state of play with Olympics past, present and future. To compile it, we conducted a survey of Play Fair partners and some of their NOCs to gather more information.

1. Background and jargon-buster

Olympic organisationsⁱⁱ

There are three types of Olympic organisations with a role in licensing and merchandise. They are:

The International Olympic Committee (IOC)

“The IOC exists to serve as an umbrella organisation of the Olympic Movement. It owns all rights to the Olympic symbols, flag, motto, anthem and Olympic Games. Its primary responsibility is to supervise the organisation of the summer and winter Olympic Games.” New Committee Members are nominated by a nominations commission, and elected by the IOC itself – so it has no real democratic accountability. “The **members of the IOC** are individuals who act as the IOC's representatives in their respective countries, not as delegates of their country within the IOC. The members meet once a year at the IOC Session.”

Most decisions are actually taken by the **IOC Executive Board**, which consists of the IOC “President, four Vice-Presidents and ten other members. All the members of the Executive Board are elected by the Session, by secret ballot, by a majority of votes cast, for a four-year term.”

“The **IOC President** is elected by the IOC members by secret ballot for an initial term of eight years, renewable once for four additional years. The President presides over all activities of the IOC, acting as its permanent representative.”

THE IOC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	
PRESIDENT	
Jacques Rogge	Belgium
VICE PRESIDENT(S)	
Gunilla Lindberg	Sweden
Lambis V. Nikolaou	Greece
Chiharu Igaya	Japan
Thomas Bach	Germany
MEMBER(S)	
Gerhard Heiberg	Norway
Denis Oswald	Switzerland
Mario Vázquez Raña	Mexico
Ottavio Cinqunta	Italy
Sergey Bubka	Ukraine
Zaiqing Yu	China
Richard L. Carrión	Puerto Rico
Ser Miang Ng	Singapore
Mario Pescante	Italy
Sam Ramsamy	South Africa

A full list of IOC members is available at http://www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/ioc/members/index_uk.asp

National Olympic Committees (NOCs)

They have three roles:

1. To promote Olympism and sport in their country;
2. To organise the country's team to compete at each Olympic Games;
3. As the first stage in the selection process for Games candidate cities.

“The NOCs come together at least once every two years in the form of the **Association of National Olympic Committees** (ANOC) to exchange information and experiences in order to consolidate their role within the Olympic Movement.” There are also five continental groupings of NOCs. They have no formal power over the IOC, but they do make recommendations. The next ANOC session is in April 2008.

The Organising Committees of the Olympic Games (OCOGs)

The OCOGs are formally organised by the host NOC, with this responsibility delegated by the IOC, from which they receive 'instructions'. “The **OCOG executive body** includes: the IOC member or members in the country; the President and Secretary General of the NOC; and at least one member representing, and designated by, the host city. In addition, it generally includes representatives of the public authorities and other leading figures.”

Relationships between Olympic organisations and sportswear companies

By type of relationshipⁱⁱⁱ

“Sponsorship contributes more than 40% of Olympic marketing revenue. Each level of sponsorship entitles companies to different marketing rights in various regions, category exclusivity and the use of designated Olympic images and marks,” says the IOC.

There are four types of commercial relationships: licenses, suppliers, sponsors and partners, although the use of the terms seems to vary, and companies are often engaged in more than one relationship at the same time. Although formally, supplying, licensing and sponsorship are different things, the roles are often merged.

Licenses: These are companies that have bought the right to use the Olympic logo, mascot, name or brand on their merchandise. Usually they will also be an official supplier, sponsor or partner. All three types of Olympic Organisation administer different kinds of licenses:

- OCOGs: License to companies to create souvenirs relating to the Games.
- NOCs: License to companies to create team-specific souvenirs for their own country.
- IOC: Operates a limited world-wide licensing programme in certain categories such as film, video games and other multimedia opportunities.

Suppliers: In principle, they provide goods and services to the Games. Where they are paid as normal, they are sometimes referred to as 'goods providers'. This will be a normal contract and may be with a small, non-branded company. 'Official supplier', however, is used as the first tier of the sponsorship ladder, and where companies have this relationship, they will provide goods for free and/or pay for the privilege, which includes marketing rights.

- All Olympic organisations have official suppliers, although the IOC only has a few. Some, for example OCOGS, divide suppliers into 'official', 'exclusive', 'co-exclusive', etc. You can tell how much money they have paid by how prominent their logo is on the Olympic organisation's website!

Sponsors: In principle, they give money in return for publicity at the Games and for marketing rights. The IOC uses this term as a generic word for the other three things, while in other cases it is the second tier of the sponsorship ladder. They may or may not produce licensed goods, and supply the games.

Partners: This is a more vague term, but it is the highest level of sponsorship, often implying a long term relationship which costs a lot of money!

- The IOC administers the **TOP Partners** scheme, which is the most heavy level of involvement with the Games for companies. “TOP companies receive exclusive global marketing rights and opportunities within their designated product category.” They automatically receive marketing rights for the Games. There are no sportswear TOP Partners.
- NOCs and OCOGs all have their own sponsors/partners, but only in product categories in which there is no TOP sponsor.

By type of organisation

	Licensing	Suppliers	Sponsorship/ partnership
IOC	Film, video games, multimedia.	A few for logistics, uniforms, etc.	TOP partner scheme – 12 companies
NOC	Licenses Olympic brand within its country.	Of national team	Of national team
OCOG	Licenses the Games brand but also takes over licensing of the Olympic brand within the host country for a period of a few years before, during and after the Games.	Of Games	Of Games

Which sportswear companies are involved in the Olympics?

This is not an exhaustive list, but it gives examples of some of the bigger players in Olympic sponsorship.

- The IOC's official supplier (for IOC staff uniforms etc.) is **Mizuno**.^{iv}
- There is no TOP Partner in sportswear. In other sectors they include McDonald's, Lenovo and Panasonic.
- **Adidas** says that in 2004 it, “supplied more than 1.4 million products to federations, volunteers, officials and others. By outfitting 22 National Olympic Committees, adidas secured its position as the true Olympic brand in Athens and was the brand of choice of nearly 50% of the athletes at the 2004 Olympic Games.”^v Since then it has signed deals with many more teams, including the UK. It is a partner for the summer games in 2008 and 2012.
- Smaller companies also get a chance to make money from the Olympics: the Vancouver and Sochi Winter Games' sportswear partners are **HBC** and **Bosco** sport respectively, both national brands.
- Chinese brand **Li Ning** is the official supplier to the Swedish and Spanish teams.

Two examples of existing business relationships with Olympic organisations:

	USOC (US NOC)^{vi}	BOCOG (Chinese OCOG)^{vii}
Licensees	“A contractual agreement whereby an organisation grants another entity the commercial right to use its trademarked or registered logos and terminology, in return for a fee. USOC licensees have obtained the commercial right to use the USA 5-Ring logo on product and services. “	“An agreement that grants the rights to use Olympic marks on products for retail sale. In return, licensees pay royalties for the rights, which go directly toward funding the Olympic Games...[C]onsists of the manufacturing of souvenir products that are usually of a festive and commemorative nature, such as pins, T-shirts, baseball caps and the like”
	Company: Nike, Roots	Company: Various Chinese manufacturers
Suppliers	“The level of corporate support required to gain access to the U.S. Olympic Team supplier logo and commercial access to Olympic themes, terminology and imagery for use in supplier marketing programs. Suppliers provide cash and products or services in support of the U.S. Olympic Team.”	“The Beijing 2008 Sponsorship Program consists of three tiers of support: partner, sponsor, supplier [divided into two:] (exclusive/co-exclusive). For each tier, there is a price benchmark...[H]elp to promote Olympism throughout China and make significant contributions of technology, products and services to support the operations of [BOCOG and]...the Chinese Olympic Team. The level of support will determine the extent of the marketing rights granted to each corporation. These rights will be exclusive marketing rights within each category within the host country.”
	Company: Roots	Company: Zhejiang MengNa Knitting Co. (socks, exclusive), Aokang (leather, non-exclusive)
Sponsors	“The level of corporate support required to gain access to the USA 5 ring logo and commercial access to Olympic themes, terminology and imagery for use in sponsor marketing programs...Sponsors provide significant levels of cash and products or services in support of the U.S. Olympic Team.”	See above
	Company: Nike	Company: Heng Yuan Xiang (non-sportswear)
Partners	“The highest level of domestic sponsorship available in support of the U.S. Olympic Team....Partners provide the most significant levels of cash and products or services in support of the U.S. Olympic Team.”	See above
	Company: 5 companies, none for sportswear	Company: Adidas

2. Progress so far on labour rights: some case studies

NOTE: Some information given to Play Fair organisations was shared on a confidential basis, and as such cannot be reproduced here. Where this is the case, we have explained the gist.

While some Olympic organisations do not seem at all engaged with the Play Fair 2008 agenda, others have made some progress on labour rights. Here we give some examples.

OCOGs

SOCOG (Sydney Organising Committee of the 2000 Olympic Games)

A couple of years before the Sydney Games, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) reached agreement with SOCOG on the labour standards that should apply to the production of all goods carrying Olympic logos.^{viii} SOCOG itself was responsible for investigating working conditions, a system that did not prove effective. Furthermore, because SOCOG had signed confidentiality agreements with suppliers, it was unable to reveal information about wages and conditions to third parties.

SOCOG's poor investigative work was publicly exposed by Australian unions. Subsequently they reached an improved agreement with SOCOG which allowed the unions to nominate who would visit and investigate factory conditions (overseas as well as for Australian production).^{ix}

Unfortunately, by the time this second agreement was reached, all the goods bearing SOCOG logos had already been produced. As the unions involved in negotiating the second agreement have suggested, this process sets a number of useful precedents:

- an OCOG acknowledged that effective implementation, monitoring and verification are necessary as part of Olympic contracts
- factory names and locations were disclosed to trade unions
- obligations were placed on licensees retrospectively; that is, after contracts had been signed.

VANOC (Vancouver Organising Committee of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games)

Maquila Solidarity Network and Canada's Ethical Trading Action Group have been lobbying VANOC and participating in a consultation on its BuySmart program.^x The programme is based on four approaches to companies associated with the Olympics:

- For **licensees**, VANOC will require adherence to a Licensee Code of Conduct which sets out minimum labour and environmental standards, and will require third-party auditing of licensees' supply factories;
- For **sponsors**, VANOC will encourage them to align their practices with the Code but it will not be a condition of sponsorship;
- For **suppliers**, VANOC will try to identify readily-available alternatives which improve environmental, ethical or aboriginal participation performance and will make those a condition of supply contracts with VANOC (e.g. Fair Trade coffee).
- Where VANOC is not able to identify readily-available alternatives which improve environmental, ethical or aboriginal participation performance amongst **potential suppliers**, they will expect potential suppliers to identify any added value in these areas through a questionnaire, and potential suppliers will gain points in the bid process for

above-average environmental or ethical standards or aboriginal participation.

MSN/ETAG agree that it is the best that has been seen yet from an OCOG, but still have significant concerns, including:

- Tightening the wording of the code in places, for example on working hours and to include living wages.
- They suggest that the code should be applied across all suppliers, but with differing levels of enforcement.
- Ensuring worker rights training, not just posting the code in workplaces.
- The code and implementation do not take account of purchasing decisions and practices.
- There are concerns about the over-reliance on, and quality of, audits.
- Transparency of factory names and locations, and audit information, are not included.

NOCs and other sports teams

British Olympic Association (BOA)

In the wake of the 2004 Olympics campaign, the BOA signed a contract with Adidas to provide clothes for its athletes, which included a clause on labour standards.^{xi} The text commits Adidas to the Ethical Ethical Trading Initiative base code - a well-recognised and respected standard - to disclose factory names and locations to the BOA, and to potential factory inspections by the BOA. Key problems with it are:

- It has no provision for implementing the ETI base code: in other words, it is unlikely to secure protect against typical abuses of workers' rights that are endemic in the industry, or to secure a significant improvement in working conditions.
- While it does make some provision for disclosure of factory data, Adidas could still withhold it from unions and NGOs, and it makes no provision for such organisations to use the data, in the event that they can access it.
- No remediation measures are specified, in the event that significant abuses of workers' rights are uncovered.

Dutch Olympic Association (NOC*NSF)

The NOC*FSB has an ongoing dialogue with Play Fair supporters in the Netherlands (CCC–NL and the FNV [Federation Dutch Labour Movement]). It told them that it would like to see an initiative at the IOC level, but that it cannot influence the Olympic family on its own. In 2005, it signed a contract with Asics which contained a clause with similar provisions to the BOA's contract with Adidas.

Swiss Olympic

Swiss Olympic has developed a standard, which it monitors only through completion of a self-assessment questionnaire.^{xii} Both the development and monitoring of the standard were outsourced to private companies. Swiss Olympic itself says that its involvement is limited to supporting, cooperating and formulating milestones. Contractual requirements were disclosed to Playfair but under a condition of confidentiality. As well as some changes needed to the wording of the labour rights provisions, they are not very specific about monitoring and verification requirements, and seem to have no provisions for enforcement by Swiss Olympic.

Other responses

Some other NOCs have expressed support for Play Fair 2008's aims:

- **Norway:** The Norges Idrettsforbund og Olympiske Komité (NIF) is a member of Etisk Handel [ETI Norway, a multi-stakeholder initiative]. It requires written documentation from suppliers on labour standards.
- **Austria:** The president of the Österreichisches Olympisches Comité (OOC), Leo Wallner, has stated publicly that he supports the Play Fair campaign. The Austrian OOC has argued that it has limited influence on brands or the Olympic movement that Austria is a small country without much purchasing power.
- **Sweden:** The NOC said in response to a questionnaire, “Li Ning [supplier and licensee] is a member of the [World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry] and has a commitment to follow their code of conduct. The contract includes above that some more points concerning ethics. The contract is confidential as is normally the case for commercial/sponsor contracts.”

3. What can OCOGs and NOCs do?

The role of the IOC

Play Fair 2012 fully agrees that a sustainable solution for the whole Olympic movement should come from the IOC. We continue to call on the IOC to:

- Make it a condition for future Olympic games events that the host country must have ratified, implemented and respected the core ILO conventions
- Require that, as a contractual condition in its licensing, sponsorship and marketing agreements, labour practices and working conditions involved in the production of IOC branded products comply with internationally recognized labour standards
- Commit resources to undertake proactive investigations of working conditions and to establish mechanisms for ending abusive and exploitative labour practices in IOC and NOC supply chains, including substantiated complaints.
- Commit to promoting publicly the necessity to end the exploitation and abuse involved in the sportswear and athletic footwear industries.
- Ensure that respect for workers rights is an integral part of the Olympic Charter and of the IOC Code of Ethics.
- Support efforts to ensure respect for workers' rights in other aspects of Games-related employment.

The role of OCOGs and NOCs

OCOGs and NOCs therefore need a two-pronged approach. They need to work with the IOC to achieve a long-term sustainable solution for the whole Olympic movement. But the absence of such a framework does not mean that they can ignore the issue. They should:

- Work through the IOC to put in place mechanisms for ending abusive and exploitative practices.
- Use their influence on companies operating in their country and national team sponsors to push for the campaign demands.
- Publicly disclose companies with which they have licensing, sponsorship and marketing agreements.
- Require, as a contractual condition in licensing, sponsorship and marketing agreements with companies, that they publicly disclose their production locations and ensure that labour practices and working conditions involved in the production of NOC and OCOG branded products comply with internationally recognized labour standards.

Practical steps

Be active within the Olympic family

NOCs often say that they need the IOC to act, and this is true, but this does not get them off the hook – far from it! Many of them also say that they are too small to influence the Olympic family – but many of them are saying this and combined they are quite big! NOCs can act themselves by:

- Putting direct pressure on the IOC.
- Using the IOC members in their country to influence the IOC.

- Joining forces with other NOCs and OCOGs: they could do this through the ANOC in April 2008; alternatively, a pledge by a number of different NOCs and OCOGs, stating that they want the IOC to act, would be a positive step.
- In the meantime, setting precedents and developing models for how it can be done themselves.

Include a clause themselves

Some NOCs/OCOGs have included a clause, but none have got it quite right yet. It needs to have the following elements:

- Reference to a **credible code of conduct**, such as ETI, Jo-In, CCC.
- **Binding for all goods** bearing the Olympic brand or used at the Games, and all production locations including subcontractors, homeworkers.
- Implementation modalities including requirement for evidence of **credible monitoring and verification** and remediation.
- **Disclosure of production locations**, either publicly or to Play Fair.
- **Right of access** for the NOC and agencies of its choosing, potentially to include Play Fair organisations.
- **Sanctions** up to and including the exclusion from future Olympic contracts for suppliers and licensees who fail to act when violations are discovered.
- **Worker rights training** by appropriate worker rights organisations at all workplaces where Olympic goods are produced.

Work with an MSI

Some NOCs/OCOGs, including the Norwegian NOC and London OCOG, are collaborating with national multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs). MSIs provide a route to avoid 're-inventing the wheel' and to ensure that actions taken by NOCs/OCOGs are not isolated, but part of a wider programme of improvement. Requiring that suppliers and licensees join an MSI is one option.

Playfair 2012 proposal to LOCOG

Play Fair 2012 has submitted a proposal to LOCOG [Annex], which includes the following,

- **Binding contractual obligations** that reinforce a code of labour practice and implementation principles contained in contracts between LOCOG and its licensees and suppliers of Olympic goods.
- An **independent committee** of experts and stakeholders to assist it in establishing the code of practice and detailed contractual provisions as well as the management systems and procedures to support the full implementation and verification of the code. The Commission would have the power to conduct or commission research into working conditions.
- An obligation to **disclose** supplier locations and audit results.
- A **sanctions procedure** for companies found to be in non-compliance with the code of practice, up to and including the withdrawal of the right to produce or organise production of Olympic goods.
- A **complaints mechanism**, overseen by the committee, which ensures any violations of workers' rights can be reported and dealt with, and that stakeholders (workers and their unions, local labour rights organisations) are involved in overseeing implementation.
- **Training** for LOCOG staff that may be required in order to meet these obligations.

- A **designated LOCOG board member**, with staff support, to oversee this process.
- Regular **public communication** of progress by LOCOG.

4. Responses to six arguments made by Olympic Organisations

Our supplier/licensee/sponsor/partner has given us a written guarantee that working conditions are OK.

Years of experience by clothing brands and others have demonstrated that a written guarantee on its own is worth very little. While they might sound shocking, poor working conditions highlighted in media reports are in fact the norm throughout the garment industry.

OCOGs **should** draw out learning from the experience of major brands companies – for example those in the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) - to stamp out child and forced labour, keep working hours down, and secure at least payment of the minimum wage (which is itself much below a living wage). What they **should not** do is settle for merely emulating these measures, because they have had a limited success rate, and labour rights abuses still occur in even the most effectively inspected workplaces. This is especially true where suppliers are pressured to cut costs and produce at short notice.

We are waiting for the IOC to act, we can't do anything on our own.

This is not quite true. While we all agree that it would be better for the IOC to coordinate a global solution, in the absence of this NOCs/OCOGs can still,

- Lobby the IOC;
- Make a public statement that they want the IOC to act;
- Coordinate work with other NOCs without the IOC's help;
- Make their own contractual requirements on companies, as for example have been done by the British, Dutch and Swiss NOCs, and by SOCOG and VANOC.

We don't have enough influence – the amount of supplied/licensed goods is actually quite small

NOCs and OCOGs **can** influence the brands. This is because:

- Licensing/supply contracts are often coupled with big sponsorship deals, because NOCs/OCOGs control the Olympic brand in their country. So their influence on the brands is bigger than just the size of the production.
- The bigger brands have contracts with several different NOCs/OCOGs, so why don't they join together to negotiate on labour rights demands, to increase their purchasing power?
- Other NOCs/OCOGs have commercial relationships with smaller national brands, on whom they have much more influence and could ask for more.
- It's likely that production connected to an NOC/OCOG will represent a significant amount of production capacity at individual factories – so there can still be an influence on the workplace.
- They can make ethics a part of the tender criteria in the first place, picking a supplier/licensee/sponsor that **is** prepared to support a workers' rights agenda to start with.

Having said this, NOCs' size might limit their effectiveness in some cases, and they might need to apply different policies depending on the size of their influence on a brand.

We don't have enough influence – we are only making short-term purchases

There is no reason for such a defeatist attitude! It's true that sustainable improvements in working conditions are difficult in supply chains for Olympic merchandise and supplied goods, because each OCOG only ever has one shot, and even arrangements with NOCs are only really relevant for the brief period of the summer Games, every four years. But there are still arguments to be made:

- This is exactly why they should be pushing for the IOC to do more, or collaborating with other Olympic organisations. Individual NOCs and OCOGs have less influence, but the whole Olympic movement is worth a lot of money to sportswear brands.
- They can make positive choices about who to enter into commercial relationships with in the first place based on labour rights criteria, such as MSI membership.
- Most brands have a long-term relationship with the Olympic movement, even if not with a particular OCOG/NOC, and therefore individual Olympic organisations can exercise their leverage by committing to communicating about ethical performance to their peers.
- Not everything in our demands requires long-term effort in a workplace. For example, disclosure of factory names and locations, and worker rights training, are two 'one-off' events that in a short time would have a lasting and positive impact on working conditions.
- If they approach this through a sustainable process such as an MSI, then it is not a one-off, but an additional impulse into an existing movement.

Too late! We have already signed the contract / confidentiality agreement

It is possible – and there is precedent, such as Sydney – to reopen the contract or negotiate changes to it. In some cases, such as London, the contract itself does not specify the detail of labour rights provisions, but refers to a separate document which can be changed at any time.

We are publicly funded and have to show value for money

'Value for money' can be interpreted in different ways. Rather than meaning 'cheapest', it can mean the optimum combination of price and quality, which can include social quality. This discussion is well rehearsed in regard to EU public procurement regulation.^{xiii}

- i See, for example, Play Fair At The Olympics, 2004, 'Respect workers' rights in the sportswear industry' from www.fairolympics.org/background.html and Playfair 2008, 'No Medal for the Olympics' from www.playfair208.org
- ii All information in this section taken from the IOC website, www.olympics.org
- iii *ibid*
- iv *ibid*
- v '2004 Athens Olympics best ever for adidas'
http://www.press.adidas.com/DesktopDefault.aspx/tabid-16/94_read-390/
- vi All from <http://www.usolympicteam.com/12953.htm>
- vii All from <http://en.beijing2008.cn/bocog/sponsors/n214077622.shtml>
- viii Agreement on file
- ix Agreement on file
- x Documents on file
- xi Clause on file
- xii Documents on file
- xiii See, for example, Eurocities, 2005, 'The CARPE guide to responsible procurement' at http://www.carpe-net.org/site/article.php?id_article=50