



The State of Child Labour in Pozzolana Mining in Uganda Press Statement on Child Labour in the Supply Chain of LafargeHolcim in Uganda

For Immediate Release

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According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), as of 2012 there were still an estimated 168 million child labourers, including over 85 million in hazardous work- one of the worst forms of child labour that poses the greatest risks to children's mental and physical health.¹ Worldwide, approximately one in every 10 children is involved in child labour, and in Sub-Saharan Africa it is one in five².

Hima Cement started buying pozzolana from artisanal miners in 1992, and child labour in the quarries had been confirmed since the early 2000s. Through its subsidiary company :Hima Cement, the company announced in September 2016 that it wanted to reduce its supply from artisanal miners. The Company denied that it had child labourers in its supply chain and informed stakeholders that it wanted to completely cease its collaboration with artisanal miners and to switch to mechanised mining. In September 2016, the company decided to source only 10% of its material from artisanal miners and 90% from mechanized mines. In January 2017, Hima Cement announced it would completely stop buying from artisanal miners and it denied having had children in its supply chain.

To fulfil the commitments of ILO Convention 182 on the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour, the Ugandan Government defined the types of hazardous work for children. It has developed relevant national laws for the protection of the rights of children, including child labour:

- Section 32 of the Employment Act, 2006 provides that a child under the age of 12 shall not be employed in any business, undertaking or workplace;³

¹ ILO-IPEC, "Global child labour trends 2008 to 2012" (Geneva), 2013).

² Ibid.

³ The Employment Act, 2006, Laws of Uganda.

- A child under the age of 14 shall not be employed in any business, undertaking or work place, except for light work carried out under supervision of an adult aged over 18 years, and which does not affect the child's education⁴

The Act further states that a child shall not be employed in any employment or work which is injurious to his or her health, dangerous or hazardous or otherwise unsuitable⁵

Article 34(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides for the "protection of children against social and economic exploitation."⁶ It further "prohibits the employment of children in work that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with their education or is harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development."⁷

However, investigation⁸ by Twerwaneho Listeners' Club (TLC) and Bread for All (BFA) on child labor in the supply chain of Hima Cement Limited, the subsidiary of LafargeHolcim in Uganda revealed that for more than 10 years, LafargeHolcim and its suppliers benefitted from child labour among artisanal miners who supplied raw materials (specifically pozzolana, a volcanic rock) to the company in Uganda.

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According to our investigations, approximately 150 children worked in the quarries that were supplying pozzolana to Hima Cement Limited. The study interviewed 20 working children between the ages of 12 and 17. Many children who worked at the quarries dropped out of school and did not proceed to secondary level. They reported having experienced injuries (leg, hand, foot). They also reported that working in

⁴ Ibid., Sec 32(2).

⁵ Ibid., Sec 32(4).

⁶ Uganda Parliament website, Uganda National Constitution, <http://www.parliament.go.ug/index.php/documents-and-reports/the-constitution>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Twerwaneho Listeners' Club (TLC), based in Fort Portal (Uganda) partnered with Bread for All (BFA), based in Bern (Switzerland) and interviewed 54 key informants over a period of six months (March-November 2016).

quarries had a negative impact on their health and physical development. This type of work is classified by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as “hazardous child labour.”

While we recognize that child labour is a complex issue, we strongly note that **firms have to respect the rights of children** in their supply chain. Since Hima Cement stopped buying raw materials from artisanal miners, most of the children, who dropped out of school, lost their sources of income. The increased unemployment led to higher theft in the communities and also led to more school drop outs (as some parents who entirely depended on quarrying cannot afford school fees). After more than 10 years of benefitting from child labor in its supply chain, a company bears a huge responsibility. In our analysis, the Company has chosen to simply reduce reputational risks for themselves while ignoring the need to provide remediation for victims of human rights violations. In this respect, LafargeHolcim does not meet the requirements of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), according to which companies should use their leverage on their suppliers to provide remediation in the case of negative human rights impacts.

We are therefore concerned and call upon:

1. **LafargeHolcim** to work with its suppliers to implement programmes that enable former child labourers to return to school or receive vocational training in order to generate another source of income.
2. Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) should introduce legally binding human rights due diligence for companies seeking investment licenses in Uganda through new national regulations.
3. Parliament through its various committees should play its oversight role in monitoring companies compliance to human rights standards and labour laws
4. The Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) should as a matter of urgency work with companies to streamline the labour issues by ensuring that companies using child labor are blacklisted or their licenses canceled.
5. Government as part of its duty to protect against business-related human rights abuse, must take appropriate steps to ensure, through judicial, administrative, legislative or other appropriate means, that the children affected and their families get access to effective remedy.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY