



ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Oslo, 6 July 2010

Dear Juliette Williams and Umida Niyazova

Thank you very much for your letter of 12 May in which you requested that the Government of Norway call on Uzbekistan to abolish its persistent, systematic and widespread use of forced child and adult labour in cotton production.

Representatives from Norway participated when Uzbekistan was treated as a special case in the Committee of Application of Standards at the 99th session of the International Labour Conference in June 2010. The issue discussed was Uzbekistan's inadequate implementation of Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Norway expressed its deep concern about the abuse of children in Uzbekistan at the Session.

Norway stands fully behind the conclusion of the Committee, which urged the Government of Uzbekistan to accept an ILO high-level tripartite observer mission that would have full freedom of movement and access to all situations and relevant parties, including in the cotton fields, in order to assess Uzbekistan's implementation of Convention No.182.

Regarding your request that the Norwegian Government call on the Government of Uzbekistan to publically commit to the introduction of policies to remedy the situation, committing to systemic reform of cotton procurement and production practices in order to end such abusive practices, I can assure you that labour rights are of great concern to Norway. In your letter you underline the importance of ensuring commitment on the part of the Government of Uzbekistan to the introduction of policies to remedy the situation by committing to systemic reform of cotton procurement and production practices in order to end such abusive practices. I can assure you that labour rights are of great concern to Norway. In the area of trade policy, Norway continues to play an active role in efforts to promote international labour standards, both bilaterally and through free trade agreements.

Norway has repeatedly raised the issue of the persistent breaches of fundamental human rights by the Government of Uzbekistan in a variety of multilateral forums, such as the OSCE, where the Government of Uzbekistan has failed to fulfil its commitments to secure fundamental freedoms for the people of Uzbekistan. My hope is that the persistent attention of the international community on the Government of Uzbekistan's failure to honour its human rights commitments will lead to reforms within the country.

I take this opportunity to commend you for your efforts to draw attention to the serious issue of forced child labour.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonas Gahr Støre', written in a cursive style.

Jonas Gahr Støre

Juliette Williams Environmental Justice Foundation
Umida Niyazova, Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights