



Amsterdam, 23 February 2012

**Open letter to the shareholders of Apple
GoodElectronics, makeITfair, International Metalworkers' Federation declare FLA investigation at
Apple supplier Foxconn to be a PR stunt.**

To the shareholders of Apple,

On the occasion of Apple's 2012 annual shareholders' meeting we would like to share our concerns with you regarding persisting labour rights violations at Apple's suppliers in China, as well as in India and other countries. GoodElectronics, makeITfair and the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) are among a growing group of concerned civil society organisations calling upon Apple to improve its act. Apple has recently joined the Fair Labor Association (FLA), but, seeing recent developments, this seems to be a mere PR stunt.

In January, GoodElectronics and makeITfair commented on Apple joining the FLA in an open statement¹, pointing out major flaws in the FLA system, but still expressing hope that FLA and Apple would take the necessary steps to address key problems within Apple's supply chain. Now that FLA has started auditing Foxconn's production facilities in China, our fears have been justified. Foxconn is one of Apple's main suppliers and has over the past years repeatedly received bad press for issues such as low wages, long working hours, high work pressure, harsh management style, abuse of student workers, insufficient health and safety measures, etc. The underlying problem is the lack of proper workers' representation and effective grievance mechanisms.

The FLA investigation at Foxconn is not being conducted, as one should expect, in a proper way. Contrary to FLA's standard methodology the Foxconn investigation was not unannounced. Foxconn management has been able to take measures to hide abuses: workers at Foxconn's facility in Zhengzhou reported that under-age workers (16-17 years old) who normally work 12 hours per day were excluded for overtime work during the FLA audit.² The FLA audit report is due for March. Nonetheless, on 15 February, FLA president Auret van Heerden publicly described the Foxconn factories as "very modern and very high tech", saying that the factory floor seemed "tranquil," and called physical conditions "way, way above the average of the norm", and blamed "boredom" and "alienation" for many of workers' problems, including the suicides among Foxconn workers of the past years³. Describing working conditions exclusively on the basis of visual observations made during a pre-arranged tour accompanied by Foxconn management shows no insight in the electronics industry or any comprehension of the issues at stake. GoodElectronics, makeITfair and IMF wonder how independent FLA audits can be when already at this stage FLA allows itself to be used for Apple PR stunts.

¹ see <http://makeitfair.org/en/the-facts/news/statement-on-apple-report>, 17 January 2012

² SACOM Open Statement, 18 February 2012, "FLA waters down rights violations at Apple suppliers".

³ two factories in Shenzhen and another in the south western city of Chengdu

Moreover, considering the size and number of Apple suppliers worldwide and the current capacity of FLA we have strong doubts that FLA will be capable to do the necessary serious independent investigations that will help Apple to stamp out labour rights abuses in its supply chain.

GoodElectronics, makeITfair and the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) appreciate Apple's step to join FLA. Misusing a multi stakeholder initiative as a PR stunt, however, will reflect very badly on Apple's sustainability initiatives and statements. In addition to proper auditing, Apple also needs to look into improving its purchasing practices by ensuring fair prices and well-planned lead times, allowing workers to work normal hours and earn a living wage. Workers' representation and training are key.

We call upon Apple shareholders to join us in calling on Apple to do the right thing.

Contact:

makeITfair – Irene Schipper – i.schipper@somo.nl

GoodElectronics – Pauline Overeem – p.overeem@goodelectronics.org

IMF – Jenny Holdcroft – j.holdcroft@imfmetal.org