



The Global Fairness Initiative Newsletter

Looking Forward to 2010!

local solutions for a global economy

Thursday, December 17, 2009

Making globalization work for the working poor

The Global Fairness Initiative (GFI) promotes a more equitable, sustainable approach to economic development for the world's working poor by advancing fair wages, equal access to markets and balanced public policy to generate opportunity and end the cycle of poverty.

www.globalfairness.org

Connect with GFI

At GFI we believe in dialogue and see engagement as key to creating fair and sustainable development initiatives. We have recently launched a new blog site and Facebook page.

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Featured GFI Partner:

The Just Governance Group



The mission of the Just Governance Group is to influence and contribute to the development of just societies by applying sound theoretical and

GFI News:



Labor Rights and The Informal Sector *By Michel Andrade*

Michel Andrade, Program Director of GFI's Promoting Informal Labor Rights Project (PILAR) shared his views on the promotion of labor rights for informal workers with "Multiples" a bulletin of the Just Governance Group. A summary translated from

Spanish follows:

Efforts to promote decent work standards have cursory involved the informal sector. Efforts have focused on reducing bureaucratic processes, improve the ease and flexibility on hiring and termination laws, and tax benefits, as "recipes" to improve competitiveness and productivity. Hence, this approach sees competitiveness as an excuse to suppress labor rights. At the same time, the development community supports projects that promote enforcement of labor rights, in the same countries that liberalize laws for competitiveness. These clashing approaches highlight the lack of coordination between approaches to development.

Thus, there is a need for a serious effort to coordinate a concerted public policy that allows the decent work agenda to be carried to the informal sector. The effort has to be lead by the each Government, however, due to the lack of information on the informal sector in most countries, this issue will be particularly suitable to be discussed under national round tables. In this way, countries can encourage the involvement of independent/informal workers and society as a whole for the creation of a holistic strategy that can orient public policy. This means, discussion has to extend from labor rights to taxation, social security, and employment generation policies. For example, certain characteristic of the informal sector should be kept, as they have potential for job creation.

PILAR is a project under the Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), working in Guatemala and Nicaragua to provide strategies for the promotion of labor rights and incentives for formalization. On December 16, 2009 the national press in both countries reported national surveys that confirmed an increase in unemployment and a decrease in the standard of living. For this reason, in 2010 GFI will continue to lead multi-stakeholder

practical knowledge in governance and justices initiatives internationally. The Just Governance Group believes that a just society is characterized by its degree of:

Respect for human rights
Respect for the rule of law
Participation and inclusion
Gender equality
Constructive dialogue
Commitment to participatory democracy
Respect for difference and pluralism
Equitable wealth distribution and opportunities for economic participation

engagement for a final proposal to the Government of Guatemala and Nicaragua while providing technical assistance to informal workers.

Upcoming Events:

IFC to Host Apparel and Footwear Stakeholder Engagement Program in February, 2010

One of the sectors worst hit by the economic downturn is the apparel and footwear industry. For countries heavily reliant on garment exports and that employ large numbers of workers in garment factories, the sharp decline in available financing and international orders has had a devastating downward impact. Over the past year, and forecast into 2010, tens of millions of workers will fall into extreme poverty as a result of the economic downturn, and with the loss of livelihoods comes the inevitable impact on health, living standards, and a rapid and destabilizing growth of informal economies that further undermine recovery in developing nations. In response to these challenges, GFI has been working with the IFC to organize a dialogue of sector stakeholders from the apparel industry, international labor organizations, financial institutions and non-governmental organizations to address the long-term impacts of the crisis facing workers in this industry as well as opportunities to mitigate the effects workforce retrenchment. The engagement will be hosted by the IFC on February 11 and 12 in Washington, DC.

Feature:

Help GFI launch a Decade of Opportunity for the Working Poor in 2010

Dear Friend,

This past year has seen some of the most difficult economic challenges that many of us, our neighbors and our global community have faced for quite some time. We have all been through a lot, but for the poorest workers with whom the Global Fairness Initiative engages every day the stakes are particularly high, and their ranks are growing. Just this fall in fact, the Washington Post reported that the global recession is expected to push 89 million additional people into extreme poverty by the end of 2010. In the face of this poverty crisis the Global Fairness Initiative is taking an urgent step forward to expand the reach and impact of our work and we need your support to help us do this. Please join us in making 2010 a year of recovery and opportunity by contributing to GFI and becoming a part of our commitment to a new decade of sustainable economic empowerment for the world's working poor.

Most Sincerely,

Karen A. Tramontano
President and Founder



Caleb R. Shreve
Executive Director



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