

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

REEBOK ANNOUNCES AN INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE

HON. JOHN JOSEPH MOAKLEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 25, 1996

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, at a time when many companies are asking themselves how they can select manufactures that do not exploit workers around the world, Reebok International Ltd. has announced an innovative and precedent-setting initiative in Pakistan.

Mr. Speaker, about half of the world's soccer balls are made in Pakistan and recent reports indicate that as many as 20 percent of the balls are being stitched by children. As a result, Reebok has spent months negotiating with soccer ball manufacturers to come up with a way to ensure that children will not stitch Reebok balls. The result is an agreement between Reebok, Moltex, a Pakistani ball manufacturer, and Reed and Associates, a design and development company, that requires the construction of a new factory in which all stitching will be performed inside the factory, together with vigorous monitoring and an educational program to help area children formerly employed stitching balls.

Reebok has long been recognized for its leadership in creating awareness of human rights through its sponsorship of the Amnesty International Human Rights Now! Concert tour, through its annual Reebok Human Rights Award, and through its thoughtful implementation of its Reebok Human Rights Production Standards. With the child-labor-free soccer ball initiative, Reebok has again demonstrated that it can honor its commitment to human rights and be a successful business at the same time.

I have attached the letter from Peter Moore, senior vice president, Global Soccer/Rugby at Reebok which explains the initiative and ask that it be inserted into the RECORD at this time.

REEBOK

Stoughton, MA, June 12, 1996.

I am writing to announce that after many months of research and planning, Reebok has put into place plans to buy Pakistani-made soccer balls that we know with certainty will not be stitched by children. Before I describe this program to you, I want to provide you with the background that has led us to embark on this venture.

Reebok is a global athletic sports and fitness brand dedicated to bringing exciting, quality products to market. As a company that has long stood for human rights, we are also committed to finding partners that will manufacture these products in a fair and just manner.

Our soccer business is critically important to us worldwide and, ever since we first learned that as many as 20% of soccer ball stitchers in Pakistan may be children, we have been reassessing this aspect of our business with the hope that we could find a way to operate there that reflects our human rights standards.

Working with colleagues at the Soccer Industry Council of America (SICA), Reebok

helped establish the Task Force on Global Manufacturing Practices to organize, research and develop recommendations for action. The SICA Task Force represents a significant attempt by U.S. industry to address the problem of child labor. The Task Force has called on the services of outside experts, including a noted human rights activist and professor of human rights and business ethics at Columbia University and a highly-regarded research organization based in Pakistan with experience working with UNICEF and other international organizations.

Through the Task Force we have been able to understand possible options to explore—and what to avoid—when approaching this problem.

We learned that child labor in Pakistan is a symptom of serious social and economic challenges—rampant poverty, inadequate educational opportunities, and cultural attitudes concerning the responsibilities of family members, to name only three.

Although the conditions for children were by no means as abusive as we had feared (researchers found no support for allegations of “bonded” or “slave” labor in soccer ball assembly and conditions were substantially better than in other industries in that region) the use of children violated internationally recognized labor standards and our own code of conduct, the Reebok Human Rights Production Standards.

We learned that when children are used to stitch soccer ball panels, they are outside the factories, in homes and small stitching centers scattered across 250 square kilometers surrounding the industrial town of Sialkot. Under these conditions, it has been impossible to adequately monitor whether or not children were stitching balls.

Most knowledgeable individuals, non-governmental organizations and social service providers in Pakistan want U.S. companies to continue buying soccer balls made in Pakistan. Ceasing to source balls in Pakistan would cause additional hardship for the very workers and their families we are seeking to protect.

Industry alone cannot alleviate the conditions that give rise to child labor, although we feel we can and must do our part.

After soliciting a number of proposals from soccer ball manufacturers in Pakistan, Reebok has reached an agreement with Moltex Sporting Goods (PVT) Ltd. and Reed and Associates to establish a new manufacturing facility. Reed and Associates is a French-based company specializing in research and development, sourcing and manufacturing of soccer and rugby balls. Moltex is a Pakistani soccer and rugby ball manufacturing company. The agreement has three major components:

Moltex and Reed have agreed to begin immediate construction on a new soccer ball facility that will be dedicated to the production of Reebok balls. All work on the balls will be performed on this factory site. All workers will be age 15 (the legal working age in Pakistan) or higher. Should the minimum age for workers in Pakistan be raised, the higher age will apply to factory workers.

Reebok is making a commitment to support educational and/or vocational training for children in the soccer ball manufacturing region of Pakistan. We are keenly aware of the impact the changes we contemplate will have on children and their families currently

stitching soccer balls. Experts agree that the antidote to child labor is education. Reebok will support educational and/or vocational training programs in Pakistan, thus contributing to a more secure, hopeful future.

Reebok will undertake a vigorous monitoring program to ensure that: a/ children are not entering the workplace, and b/ soccer ball panels are not leaving the factory to be stitched by children. We are now involved in the process of determining what kind of monitoring would be most effective to achieve this end.

We are confident that this agreement will give us the framework to work with our Pakistani partners to commence initial production later this year and to achieve full production capacity by early 1997.

To those who wonder whether there are additional costs associated with in-factory stitchers and answer is: “yes.” Nevertheless, we are committed, as are our factory partners, to retaining our competitive place in the marketplace, delivering the high quality balls our consumers have come to expect and living up to our human rights production standards.

There is much to be done to implement this plan. We know it will not be easy and that there will be bumps along the road. Yet we know we cannot remain in the soccer ball business until and unless we find a way of doing business that allows us to live up to our commitments. We believe this arrangement can do that.

Sincerely,

PETER MOORE,

Senior Vice President, Global Soccer/Rugby Division.

U.N. CHARTER DAY—51 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

HON. RONALD V. DELLUMS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 25, 1996

Mr. DELLUMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 51st anniversary of the signing of the United Nations' Charter. The United Nations [UN] was created over World War II to meet a number of supranational objectives. It was tasked to maintain international peace and security, to promote recognition of fundamental human rights, to promote respect for international law, and to promote social progress and better standards of life worldwide.

There are some who feel that the United Nations has outlived its usefulness. Some see it as an irrelevant bureaucratically bloated organization, where diplomatic talk continues endlessly. There are unquestionably aspects of the United Nations that merit reform. But while friends of the United Nations recognize its problems to be a reason for reform, its enemies use those same problems as a basis to call for its destruction.

It is too easy to overlook the United Nation's many accomplishments, because many of them we now take for granted. For example, the United Nations helped to peacefully bring down the racist government in South Africa.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

U.N. peacekeeping in Namibia helped to create a civil administration of government. The United Nations has helped to end civil contract and hold elections in Cambodia, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Some look of the efforts gone awry in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia as indicative of its uselessness. Yet, while the United Nations did not accomplish all that was intended or hoped, neither were those total failures either. The United Nations was able to ensure that food and other humanitarian aid reached civilians caught in the conflict. As bad as the situation was in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, it would have been far worse without the United Nations' intervention.

The United Nations has also been fairly successful in fostering the recognition of human rights throughout the world. In 1948, the U.N. General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This declaration has subsequently been recognized by many legal scholars as constituting customary international law. The United Nations followed this up in 1966 with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. In addition, the United Nations has been instrumental in developing treaties focused on eradicating racial discrimination, gender discrimination, and torture. The U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva helps to monitor and enforce these international human rights.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] has also been very successful in aiding and resettling refugees, who are displaced by conflict or natural disasters. UNHCR was even awarded the Nobel Prize for this work in Europe in 1954 and in Asia in 1981.

The United Nations has many successes in health care. Everyone has benefited from its efforts. In 1980, the World Health Organization [WHO] eradicated smallpox worldwide. In 1991, it eradicated poliomyelitis from the Western hemisphere. The U.N. Children's Fund [UNICEF] works with mothers and children to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates. UNICEF provides maternal health care and vaccinations against childhood diseases in developing countries. UNICEF was awarded the 1965 Nobel Peace Prize for these efforts.

The United Nations has also been successful in aiding the development of Third World countries. The U.N. Development Programme [UNDP] has helped aid developing countries to become economically self sufficient. It has aided over 170 countries to grow their own food and to participate in the global economy. The International Labour Organization [ILO], an independent U.N. agency, has been working to establish worker's rights worldwide. It includes in its membership governmental officials and representatives of both labor and management. It has drafted numerous treaties that have helped to establish minimum health and safety standards and prohibit forced labor and child labor.

The United Nations has many environmental accomplishments, particularly relating to pollution of the ocean and the atmosphere. It was through the United Nations that the Law of the Sea Conventions of 1956 and 1982 were drafted. These conventions reflect existing customary law as well as developing law, and are designed to protect freedom of the seas,

prevent ocean pollution, and recognize the valid interests of coastal states. The International Maritime Organization [IMO] has also been instrumental in reducing pollution in the oceans—by as much as 60 percent.

It was the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Environment that brought focus to international environmental issues. Out of this came the U.N. Environmental Programme [UNEP], which helped to clean up the Mediterranean Sea, and helped to develop a number of international treaties. These treaties include: the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. In 1992, the United Nations convened the Rio Conference on the Environment and Development, which helped to focus on the need for sustainable development.

The United Nations has also been important in the effort to control nuclear weapons. The International Atomic Energy Association [IAEA] is an independent agency of the United Nations that enforces the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The IAEA was formed in order to help nations develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons. The IAEA monitors nuclear energy plants to ensure they are not being used for non-peaceful purposes. The IAEA, working with the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq, has been inspecting Iraq's nuclear plants to make sure that they are not used to develop nuclear weapons.

The United Nations is an invaluable institution. It has been particularly important to those living in Third World countries, but even those of us in the United States have benefited from the United Nations' many-focused agencies. We have more peace, more justice, better health, more self-sufficiency, cleaner air, cleaner water, and a consciousness of the interdependence of all nations in one global village.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE DAY

HON. DAVID R. OBEY

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 25, 1996

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, July 6 is recognized around the world as International Cooperative Day. This 74-year-old tradition presents an opportunity to people from all corners of the earth to recognize the important difference that cooperatives make in their lives.

The potential role of cooperative enterprises in promoting economic development in areas of most critical need, in many cases businesses, has been recognized by the United Nations. Last year, the U.N. declared that the International Day of Cooperatives should be celebrated every year by governments in collaboration with their national cooperative movements.

Next Monday, July 1, cooperative leaders from the United States and from around the world will meet at U.N. Headquarters in New

York to celebrate in International Day of Cooperatives at an event organized by the United Nations, International Day of Cooperative Alliance, and the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives. This event will provide an opportunity to discuss and to demonstrate the actual and potential contribution of cooperative business enterprise to the achievement of economic goals, including:

The potential of the cooperative movement to participate as a distinct stakeholder and full partner with the United Nations and institutional procedures and structures hereby such participation may be most effective.

The contribution of cooperative business enterprise to the achievement of the goals of the International Year and Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and the realization of the goals of the World Food Summit.

The potential of the cooperative movement to develop human resources and institutional capabilities.

The cooperative movement as a means for the economic, social, and political empowerment of women.

The contribution of cooperative business to the provision of appropriate and affordable social services.

The capacity of the cooperative movement to undertake appropriate technical assistance as a complement to governmental multilateral and bilateral assistance.

The ways and means whereby partnerships may be strengthened between cooperatively organized business enterprises and the U.N. development system.

I have believed for many years that cooperatives provide people with an economic alternative that empowers them economically to help themselves. Throughout this century, this body has passed legislation that created the spark for cooperative development and opened the door for cooperatives in this country.

The result has been the creation of our rural electric and telephone cooperative systems, the farm credit banking system, the National Cooperative Bank, and credit unions and community development credit unions. All of those have been tools that allow people to accomplish together things they could not accomplish alone. All are owned by the members who benefit from them, and are controlled through the election of boards of directors by that membership.

It is fitting that the international community should recognize that power and the possibilities that cooperatives represent in developing countries. Today, over 760 million people around the world are members of cooperatives. And that fact has made all of their lives a little brighter.

I encourage my colleagues to look to their own districts and recognize the existence of cooperatives there that meet their constituents needs. What you will find is over 100 million Americans and 45,000 businesses ranging in size from small buying clubs to businesses included in the Fortune 500. Today, we have cooperative businesses in the fields of housing, health care, finance, insurance, child care, agricultural marketing and supply, rural utilities and consumer goods and services.

Cooperatives have helped to make this country the economic powerhouse of the world. It's a legacy we should share with the rest of the world.