



May 27, 2014

Dr. Jim Yong Kim
President
The World Bank
1818 H St, NW Washington, DC 20433

Dear Dr. Kim,

We write to share with you our serious concerns about two proposed new agricultural sector loans to Uzbekistan, the South Karakalpakstan Water Resource Management Improvement Project (P127764) and the Horticulture Development Project (P133703). Given the real possibility that funding under the new projects could support the Uzbek government's forced labor system of cotton production we strongly urge you to postpone consideration of these loans until the Uzbek government takes concrete steps to end its use of forced labor.

The mass use of forced labor in the cotton sector of Uzbekistan is particularly pernicious in that it is organized by the state. The World Bank acknowledges this problem in project documents for each of the proposed projects. Moreover, in a report issued on the existing RESP II project in December 2013, the Inspection Panel wrote that: "the Bank's support [for a loan for the modernization and diversification of Uzbekistan's agriculture sector] may be contributing to a perpetuation of the alleged harm [of forced labor]."

In Uzbekistan, farmers who produce cotton are subject to a state order system of forced labor. The Uzbek government owns all land and coerces farmers to produce annual quotas of cotton. Farmers must sell the cotton at state-established, artificially low procurement prices. If farmers fail to meet the government-mandated quota for cotton production, they risk losing their lease to farm the land, criminal charges and physical abuse. The government also forcibly mobilizes 16-17 year-old students, university students, teachers, health-care and other public-sector workers, private-sector workers and pensioners to harvest cotton each fall. Uzbek activists who monitored the harvest in 2013 noted no major changes in the state order system, the forced labor of farmers to cultivate cotton, or the massive government mobilization of forced labor to pick cotton. Although only mandated to monitor child labor and despite severe restrictions placed on monitors, the ILO recognized that cotton is produced in a forced labor system.¹

Please see attached details of our concerns about the Bank's proposed projects. We appreciate your attention to this matter and would be pleased to meet with you and your staff to discuss our concerns regarding these projects.

Sincerely,
Cotton Campaign:

Advocates for Public Interest Law



American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

AFL-CIO

American Federation of Teachers



Anti-Slavery International



Association for Human Rights in Central Asia



Bank Information Center



Boston Common Asset Management



BOSTON COMMON
ASSET MANAGEMENT, LLC

Calvert Investments



CEE Bankwatch Network



Dignity Health



The Eurasian Transition Group, e.V.



European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights



EUROPEAN CENTER FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL AND
HUMAN RIGHTS

International Labor Rights Forum



Open Society Foundations



Responsible Sourcing Network



Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia



Solidarity Center



Stop the Traffik



Sunshine Coalition



Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania



Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights



Walk Free



CC:
World Bank Vice President for ECA
World Bank Board of Executive Directors

¹ International Labour Organization (ILO), Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, ReportIII(1A)-2014-[NORME-140107-1]-En.docx, at page 172 (reviewing the Government of Uzbekistan's implementation of the Forced Labour Convention 105), stating: "the Committee observes the monitoring report which states that the monitors were in a position to note other issues relevant to the mandate of the ILO. The report also states that, importantly, among these issues is the framework and various practices under which the entire cotton

production is conducted. This pertains to the campaign and recruitment of the labour force to harvest the cotton, the potential and consequences of mechanization on the labour market, and the realization of fundamental rights of the workers, including the respect for the effective implementation of the Convention.”,

<[http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09661/09661\(2014-103-1A\).pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09661/09661(2014-103-1A).pdf)>