



December 3, 2010

Mr. George Kell, Executive Head
UN Global Compact
United Nations
New York/Geneva

Dear Mr. Kell:

We write to you on behalf of the AFL-CIO - the American trade union federation composed of 57 national and international trade unions and representing 12.2 million workers, the IUF - an international trade union federation of 370 trade unions in 120 countries representing 11 million workers worldwide and the ICEM - an international trade union federation of 467 trade unions in 132 countries representing over 20 million workers worldwide. We wish to raise what we believe is a serious breach of the principles outlined in the UN Global Compact by Roquette Frères, a French company which has committed to the Global Compact. Specifically, the owners of Roquette Frères have breached Global Compact Principle 3 which commits businesses to "uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining."

Roquette Frères owns Roquette America, the regional operating subsidiary of the privately held Roquette Frères, headquartered in Lestrem, France. On September 14, 2010, collective bargaining officially began between Roquette and the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 48G (the bargaining representative for production and maintenance employees working at Roquette America's corn milling facility located in Keokuk, Iowa). The company put forward over 130 proposals which effectively gutted the current bargaining agreement. While the company provided no relevant bargaining information, in violation of international labor standards and the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises, it demanded that the pension fund be closed, the end of the employee pension plan, an end to seniority with respect to layoffs, and the unilateral right to employ precarious workers with no benefits.

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On September 28 the Local overwhelmingly rejected the company's last offer. Upon expiration of the contract that same day, the company aggressively locked out all 240 Local 48G workers, ignoring the offer by the union to continue working and negotiating.

Before and since that time, the Local Union has made numerous efforts to resolve the dispute including offering to extend the terms of the former contract, to negotiate and making a proposal aimed at resolving the lock out. These good faith offers have all been refused.

On September 16, 2009, Roquette CEO Guy Talbourdet wrote to UN Secretary-General H.E. Ban Ki-moon: "I am pleased to confirm that ROQUETTE supports the ten principles of the Global Compact with respect to human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption. With this Communication, we express our intent to advance those principles within our sphere of influence." The company also committed to "making the Global Compact and its principles part of the strategy, culture and day-to-day operations of our company."

We are deeply concerned that despite repeated attempts by the workers bargaining representative, BCTGM Local 48G, to resolve the dispute, Roquette Frères continues to violate the principles of the Global Compact. We believe that Roquette Frères actions undermine the legitimacy of the Global Compact: a company should not be able to claim in international for that it supports the Global Compact while in reality it is systematically violating fundamental human rights.

We therefore urge your office to contact Roquette Frères immediately to discuss its failure to uphold Principle 3 of the Global Compact at Roquette America. Should Roquette Frères be unwilling to change its practice, please consider this a complaint under the Global Compact integrity measures.

Thank you for your consideration.



Ron Oswald
General Secretary
IUF



Richard L. Trumka
President
AFL-CIO



Manfred Warda
General Secretary
ICEM

cc: Sharan Burrow
Jim Baker