

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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Chair, London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games  
London 2012  
One Churchill Place  
Canary Wharf  
London, E14 5LN

19 October 2011

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**OPEN LETTER**

Dear Lord Coe,

**Re: Procurement of goods from Dow Chemical Company (Dow) for London Olympic Stadium**

Amnesty International is writing to express serious concern over the procurement of goods from Dow Chemical Company (Dow) by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG). It is our understanding that Dow has been successfully selected by the LOCOG to provide a fabric wrap which will be used to encircle the Olympic Stadium during the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in London.

Since 2001 Dow has been a 100% owner of US-based Union Carbide Corporation (UCC), the company which held a majority share in the Indian subsidiary that owned and operated the UCC plant responsible for the 1984 Bhopal disaster. A toxic gas leak killed between 7,000 and 10,000 people in its immediate aftermath, and a further 15,000 over the next 20 years.<sup>1</sup> Survivors and human rights groups have been campaigning for Dow to address outstanding demands and the ongoing impacts of the disaster, including contamination of water by chemical waste. The company has consistently ignored these calls, denying any responsibility for UCC's liabilities in Bhopal.

Nearly twenty-seven years after the tragedy, the site has still not been cleaned up, the leak and its impact have not been properly investigated, more than 100,000 people continue to suffer from health problems without the medical care they need. Survivors are still awaiting fair compensation and full redress for their suffering. Despite criminal charges being brought in India against UCC

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International fully documented these facts in its report "*Clouds of Injustice*", published in 2004; see: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA20/015/2004> .

and its Chairman at the time of the disaster, neither of them have responded to summons to appear before the Indian Court. They are still absconding from Indian justice while extradition requests from USA to India remain pending.<sup>2</sup> In 2009, at the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the catastrophe, Amnesty International sponsored a bus tour across Europe in an effort to raise awareness and bring justice to the Bhopal victims. However, injustice continues to prevail as corporate actors continue to refuse to accept responsibility for the disaster and the related clean-up.

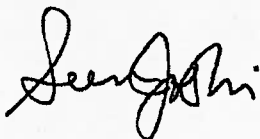
Amnesty International was surprised to uncover that Dow was awarded the tender pursuant to completion of a due diligence process and satisfying conditions laid out in the *LOGOC Sustainable Sourcing Code* (July 2011). These guidelines state that, "[the LOGOC] will place a high priority on environmental, **social and ethical issues** when procuring products and services for the Games". The Code further states that it sets a framework which enables the LOGOC to consider the relevant issues and make informed choices by applying a set of core principles throughout.

Amnesty International requests that the LOCOG advise as to the basis on which it has considered that Dow, given the unaddressed legacy of human rights abuses and outstanding concerns relating to legal redress in Bhopal, complies with the requirements of the Code. Please also advise how corporate related human rights abuses are considered as part of the procurement process as this is not evident based on a review of the guidelines.

Furthermore, it may have also come to the LOCOG's attention that the fact that Dow is an official partner of the 2012 Olympic games continues to cause shock and distress among Bhopal survivors as recently reported by the Indian and international press.<sup>3</sup> The high visibility and legitimacy that its close association with the LOCOG gives Dow is untenable in the face of its continuing failure to address one of the worse corporate related human rights disasters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, it risks delegitimizing the long standing calls of Bhopal survivors and other human rights groups for corporate accountability and redress for human rights abuses.

We look forward to hearing from LOGOC and welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter in greater detail.

Yours sincerely,



Seema Joshi

Head of Business and Human Rights  
Amnesty International

Cc: Sue Hunt  
Director of Strategic Programme

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/india-first-convictions-1984-union-carbide-disaster-too-little-too-late-20-1>

<sup>3</sup> See for instance BBC News, '[Indian anger at Dow Olympics move](#)' 8 August 2011. Financial Times, 'Indian protests planned over Olympics sponsor', 10 August 2011. Le Monde, 'Le parrainage des JO de Londres par Dow Chemical indigne l'Inde', 15 August 2011. The Times of India, 'Bhopal gas leak swirls around London Olympics', 8 August 2011.