

RUGMARK Imaginative Way to End Slavery

Submitted by: Rugmark UK

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RUGMARK is imaginative way to end slavery says former Tory leader

William Hague speaking on Radio 4's Today programme (25 January 2005), following his inaugural Abraham Lincoln Lecture, specifically praised market based schemes such as RUGMARK as an imaginative way to tackle on-going slavery. RUGMARK UK welcomed the recognition of its work here in the UK and India and Hague's contribution to raising awareness of how businesses and consumers can easily make a difference.

Hague told Radio 4 listeners: "We have slavery on a scale today which we've never seen in the world before and there are certain things we can do..." He then went on to give examples of imaginative ways to do that such as: " Market based schemes like the RUGMARK scheme for India where people can buy a product from India on the assurance that child slave labour has not been used in making it".

RUGMARK is a non-profit initiative working to end illegal and exploited child labour through monitoring production as well as improving conditions in carpet making communities through provision of free schools and other social programmes.

In 2004 alone the UK sold over a quarter of a million of rugs bearing the RUGMARK label. RUGMARK UK aims to double those sales within the coming two years, in partnership with its importing licensees and committed retailers. The importing company pays a levy for each rug it brings into the UK. This levy helps fund the RUGMARK schools, education programmes and community welfare for the thousands of Indian and Nepalese children rescued from illegal, forced labour.

The problem of child labour is still rife and RUGMARK UK hopes that once more shoppers know to look for the RUGMARK label their consciences will influence their buying decision.

In the UK you can find the RUGMARK label on collections of rugs by: Asiatic Carpets, Gooch Oriental Carpets, Flair Flooring, Handmade Carpets, Oriental Weavers (UK), Selected Rug and Matting, Nawrozzadeh Trading Company, and Shenkin Rug Innovations. There are many retail outlets for these rugs including Co-op Department Stores, Alders, Allied Carpets, Makro, Costco The Pier, B&Q and independent retailers. For further information on where to buy RUGMARK labelled rugs visit www.rugmark.net

Editor's Additional Notes

1. RUGMARK was established in India 1994 and is now active in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Germany, the USA and the UK.
2. A levy of 1% is paid on each rug by the importing company, which funds schools, education programmes, day care centres and children's homes in India and Nepal for children rescued from child labour in the hand woven rug industry and children of carpet making communities. A smaller levy paid by the manufacturer on each rug exported is used to fund loom inspections.
3. Over 3.3m rugs from India alone have been sold worldwide with the RUGMARK label in the past decade.

4. 65% of Nepal's rug industry is now registered with RUGMARK.

5. William Hague made the inaugural Abraham Lincoln speech on Monday 24 January, organised by The Centre for Social Justice

Case Study Example

Mukesh was just nine years old when RUGMARK inspectors rescued him from the carpet loom. Far from home and family he was regularly beaten whenever he made a mistake and constantly hungry. Now 13 he lives in RUGMARK's welcoming Balashrya centre for former child weavers near Varanasi, India's holy city, and is receiving a full education to enable him to have a better future. As he says: "Here, nobody beats us. There are many things that I like about this place. But I especially like drawing. I would like to be a well-known painter one day" He recently won a district art competition so maybe his dream will come true.

Images: A large selection of JPEG images of new rugs launched in 2004 and sold with the RUGMARK logo are available on request.

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