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**McDONALD'S USA AND ITS PRODUCE SUPPLIERS TO WORK WITH THE COALITION
OF IMMOKALEE WORKERS**

ATLANTA – The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), and McDonald's USA, working with McDonald's produce suppliers, today announced plans to work together to address wages and working conditions for the farmworkers who pick Florida tomatoes.

Beginning in the 2007 growing season, McDonald's USA, through its produce suppliers, will pay an additional penny per pound for Florida tomatoes supplied to its U.S. restaurants. The increase will be paid directly to farmworkers harvesting tomatoes purchased by McDonald's.

The CIW and McDonald's produce suppliers will work together to develop a new code of conduct for Florida tomato growers as well as increase farmworker participation in monitoring supplier compliance. Farmworkers will also participate in investigating worker complaints and dispute resolution. Additionally, the CIW and McDonald's produce suppliers will work together toward developing and implementing a credible third-party verification system.

“I welcome McDonald's commitment to work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to improve the lives of the workers who supply their 13,000 U.S. restaurants with tomatoes,” said former United States President and founder of the Carter Center, Jimmy Carter. “This is a clear and welcome example of positive industry partnership. It demonstrates also McDonald's leadership in social responsibility and CIW's importance as a voice for farmworker rights. I encourage others to now follow the lead of McDonald's and Taco Bell to achieve the much needed change throughout the entire Florida-based tomato industry.” Representatives from the Carter Center, based in Atlanta, helped facilitate the agreement with the Coalition and McDonald's.

“Two years ago, our agreement with Yum Brands marked the first step toward a distant dream of ensuring human rights for workers in Florida's fields,” said Lucas Benitez of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. “Today, with McDonald's, we have taken another major step toward a world where we as farmworkers can enjoy a fair wage and humane working conditions in exchange for the hard and essential work we do every day. We are not there yet, but we are getting there, and today's agreement should send a strong message to the rest of the restaurant

and supermarket industry that it is now time to stand behind the food they sell from the field to the table.”

“We have always respected the CIW’s commitment to enhancing conditions for the workers,” said J.C. Gonzalez-Mendez, Senior Vice President, Supply Chain Management, McDonald’s USA. “We’ve made progress with our suppliers through our existing Florida tomato grower standards, which hold the growers accountable to standards higher than the industry, but that was only the beginning. We believe more needs to be done. McDonald’s produce suppliers are required to purchase tomatoes only from those growers that have adopted our standards.”

To foster further improvements throughout the tomato industry, the CIW and McDonald’s produce suppliers, with McDonald’s support, will also work together toward the development of a third-party mechanism that would carry out similar monitoring and investigative functions at the industry level. The third-party mechanism will be developed in such a way as to be expandable to include the participation of other willing members of the foodservice and retail food industry that buy Florida tomatoes.

CIW has ended its two-year campaign against McDonald’s and pledged to work with the company and its suppliers to drive systemic and sustainable changes in the Florida tomato industry.

Source: http://ciw-online.org/CIW_McDonalds_Release.html