

# GUGGENHEIM

May 20, 2016

Sharan Burrow  
ITUC  
Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5, Bte 1  
1210 Brussels  
Belgium

Sarah Leah Whitson  
Human Rights Watch  
350 Fifth Avenue, 34th floor  
New York, NY 10118-3299

Dear Ms. Burrow and Ms. Whitson:

On behalf of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, I am writing in response to your request for a meeting in Brussels to discuss labor conditions related to construction on Saadiyat Island. As you note in your March letter, and as I hope was evident from our meeting in New York in February, the Guggenheim shares your organizations' commitment to safeguarding conditions for workers who will build the future Guggenheim Abu Dhabi.

Since the outset of the project in 2007, we have worked with TDIC and other partners to advance measurable progress on several fronts. In advance of construction on the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, for which a contract has yet to be awarded, we continue to identify and review with TDIC areas for ongoing improvement.

Last summer, TDIC revised its Employment Practices Policy (EPP), a workers' welfare agreement endorsed by the Guggenheim in 2010 and to which we contributed recommendations for the revision. The latest updates to the EPP require employers to fully reimburse workers for all recruitment, travel and visa costs; wages must be paid to workers on a regular monthly basis without delay, with no deductions for travel or work permit fees; protections have been added to ensure safe working hours during the summer months; and documentation from contractors and subcontractors must now be provided in workers' native languages. These changes are to be enforced by TDIC under threat of monetary penalties. In addition, the UAE Ministry of Labour introduced new decrees earlier this year that standardize contract terms and increase flexibility for workers to move between employers.

We respect and support the work of ITUC and HRW on the important topic of workers' welfare. However, given the global complexity of the issue and the nature of the Guggenheim as an arts institution, we believe that our resources are most effectively directed at working in coordination with TDIC on our specific, shared goals for the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Armstrong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line above the "A" and a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Richard Armstrong  
Director, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation