

Monsanto launches anti-child labour project in Gujarat

Monsanto, a global agricultural products company, has successfully implemented anti-child labour programmes in Gujarat, said a top company official here Thursday.

'We have pledged over Rs.110 million for the programme from 2006 till date,' Monsanto India senior manager-public affairs Christopher Samuel told reporters.

According to him, with awareness campaigns and incentive/disincentive programme, Monsanto is educating farmers to produce hybrid cotton seed with only adult labour.

The company began producing hybrid cotton seed in Gujarat in 2007 on 250 acres and on Wednesday it felicitated its farmers for employing only adult labour at Idar village in Gujarat, Christopher said.

When Monsanto began production of its Paras Brahma hybrid cotton seed in 2004, it launched an anti-child labour programme for reducing child labour from 20 percent in 2004 to less than one per cent in 2007.

Christopher said farmers employing only adult labour receive an additional incentive of average Rs.3,750 per acre (depending on quantity of seed produced).

'Human Rights is a key focus area for Monsanto and in India the anti-child labour programme is example of successful partnership. Reducing child labour requires commitment by civil society, companies, and the government, and NGO expertise,' said Maureen Mazurek, Monsanto's global human rights director.

Monsanto's human rights anti-child labour programme is the only comprehensive anti-child labour programme initiated in Gujarat, and from 250 acres in 2007 it is being expanded to 1,900 acres in 2008, covering 177 small and large-holding farmers, Maureen said.

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