

Company Responses as of 27/09/2016

Huayou Cobalt said that it was investigating Amnesty International's findings and that in response to our report was talking to other companies, the DRC and Chinese governments to address the problem of child labour in the DRC's artisanal mines.

LG Chem confirmed to Amnesty International, in a letter in November 2015, that Huayou Cobalt was a "second-tier" supplier.

Samsung SDI said that after investigations, Huayou Cobalt had not supplied it with cobalt from the DRC.

BMW Group

BMW explained that it had previously identified the risks associated with cobalt originating from the DRC and had investigated the origin of the cobalt in its batteries. BMW explained that its battery supplier, Samsung SDI, had informed it that Huayou Cobalt was not part of its supply chain. In addition, "Samsung SDI has also assured us that there are no human rights violations in any other cobalt supply chains that concern the BMW Group," the company stated.

BMW said that in 2013 it had found that a different supplier (not Huayou Cobalt) was sourcing cobalt from the DRC. BMW explained that "with this supplier we are engaged to generate a process ensuring that all cobalt supplied by him is free from human rights abuses. This process is currently double-checked by an independent third party."

It is positive that BMW, unlike other companies says it has proactively identified the risks associated with cobalt and taken steps to address them. However BMW did not provide further information about this audit, or identify this supplier or its other cobalt smelters, in line with international standards.

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA)

FCA said that after receiving Amnesty's letter it contacted its battery supplier Samsung SDI, which confirmed "that the batteries supplied to FCA do not contain any cobalt coming from Huayou Cobalt...Further, Samsung SDI has described to FCA its enduring efforts and activity to strictly monitor its cobalt supply chain, in particular as regards child labour."

FCA also admitted that it "does not currently have a program specifically focused on the identification of the cobalt smelters and refiners." FCA details its policy

towards the so-called “conflict minerals” of gold, coltan/tantalum, tin and tungsten, has no similar due diligence system in place for other minerals such as cobalt.

As part of its research for its January 2016 report, Amnesty International previously contacted three other manufacturers of electric vehicles: BYD of China, Daimler and VW. Of these, BYD did not reply.

Daimler 29/08/16

Daimler said that none of the companies named by Amnesty International are its “direct suppliers,” and that “we neither source directly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) nor from suppliers in the DRC.” Daimler said that it “initialized a follow up process with our direct suppliers in order to further investigate the issues raised by Amnesty International and to check the processes and measures taken by our suppliers to prevent such alleged practices in their upstream supply chains.”

Daimler did not provide any detail of its investigation, as “we are not able to provide specific details concerning individual suppliers.”

Volkswagen

In a statement of 21 January 2016, VW wrote that: “we are taking the results of the Amnesty study very seriously and are in contact with our suppliers concerning the topic of cobalt. On the basis of the information available to us, we cannot confirm the delivery relationships presented in the study. However, we are taking the information from Amnesty as a reason for reviewing and if necessary revising our policy on conflict minerals.”

In response to an email in September 2016, VW provided no further information about the steps it has taken to trace its cobalt supply chain.