



**VERITÉ®**

Fair Labor. **Worldwide.**

# UN Global Compact Communication on Engagement

**Verité  
August 2016**

## Statement of Continued of Support

To our stakeholders,

I am pleased to confirm that Verité continues to support the mandate of the UN Global Compact and its principles in the areas of human rights, labour and anti-corruption. Verité was established in 1995 with the objective of promoting fair labour standards for workers across the global economy. We work with a diverse set of stakeholders across regions and sectors to achieve this goal.

Our first Communication of Engagement summarizes Verité's work in the field of labour rights over the last two years and describes the actions we have taken aligned with UN Global Compact principles. Further information about Verité and its activities can be found on our website ([www.verite.org](http://www.verite.org)). We welcome all feedback on the content of this report.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shawn MacDonald  
Chief Executive Officer  
Verité

## Description of Actions

### Resource development

Verité has been a thought leader in the field of corporate responsibility and supply chains since it was established in 1995. One aspect of this leadership has been the publication of pioneering, open-source resources for business and stakeholders on key risks in supply chain compliance.

In 2010, we launched the flagship [Fair Hiring Toolkit](#), which examined the link between unethical recruitment practices and risks of forced labour and human trafficking in the global economy. The toolkit provides brands and their top tier suppliers with a wealth of information, tools and guidance on strengthening policies, improving social audits, enhancing transparency and disclosure, and screening and monitoring recruitment agencies. This work was expanded in 2016 in partnership with the US Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and other partners with the launch of the [Responsible Sourcing Tool](#), which in addition to providing practical tools, enables companies to review and visualize risks of trafficking and forced labour across supply chains.

Verité has also complemented such global and cross-sectoral resources with issue-specific guidance to help companies focus attention on key risks and indicators of abuse. With the UN Global Compact, we developed two "Calls to Action", the first of which examined the confiscation/retention of personal documents ([Addressing the Retention of Identity Documents](#)). This resource sets out specific guidance to help companies understand the risks associated with this practice, and the steps they can take to address them, both during hiring and employment and in terms of broader advocacy and engagement. The second "Call to Action" then focused the attention of UNGC participants on [Eliminating Recruitment Fees Charged to Migrant Workers](#). Excessive recruitment fees coupled with other costs associated with labour migration can exacerbate the vulnerability experienced by migrant workers and leave them in situations of debt bondage and forced labour. This guidance helps UNGC participants understand the issues at stake and what can be done in the areas of prevention, detection, remediation, compensation, collective action and policy advocacy.

In 2015, Verité expanded its work to support the development of industry-specific guidance for companies that operate in palm oil production. This was done in close collaboration with over twenty non-profit and civil society partners, resulting in a ground-breaking resource called [Free and Fair Labour in Palm Oil Production: Principles and Implementation Guidance](#). As its title suggests, the resource sets out civil society expectations for fair labour standards in palm oil production, including clear normative and operational guidance based on international standards and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The resource is an excellent example of how Verité partners with other civil society, trade union and non-profit actors to push forward advocacy on workers' rights in supply chains.

### Research and Awareness Raising

Another key pillar of Verité's engagement is research. The aim of this work is to raise awareness within the business and broader stakeholder communities about labour and human rights risks in supply chains, and the key steps to take across the stakeholder spectrum to address them.

Verité recently published a regional report on the risks of human trafficking in gold mining in Latin America called [The Nexus of Illegal Gold Mining and Human Trafficking in Global Supply Chains](#). The report charts how illegally mined gold linked to labour and human rights abuses is exported and integrated into the global economy. Besides identifying the key reputational and legal risks for companies with gold in their supply chains, the report sets out clear recommendations for action by governments that produce and import gold as well as the private sector.

Verité also maintains a [Forced Labour Commodity Atlas](#), which identifies the links between trafficking, forced labour and over 20 raw materials, including palm oil, cattle, fish, cocoa and timber, to name a few. The aim of the Atlas is to raise awareness about risks at the so-called “base” of supply chains, the challenges and complexities associated with these risks, and the need for companies to address them as a matter of urgency. Verité has also authored numerous other reports in recent years on [palm oil](#), [fishing and aquaculture](#), [electronics](#) as well as global and multi-industry [studies](#) that cover a range of sectors, industries and commodities. Verité’s [website](#) on responsible recruitment complements our research and other awareness raising activities by shining a light on risks of trafficking and forced labour associated with unethical recruitment practices.

### **Training and Building Capacity**

Beyond research and resource development, Verité also provides general and tailored training for companies and stakeholders to better equip them to improve labour standards and respect for human rights in supply chains. We provide [Lead Auditor Training](#) for auditors operating within the Electronics Industry Citizenship Coalition; training for brands on worker empowerment and skills as well as worker participation; and supplier training on the “systems approach” to social responsibility, among other offerings. This training and a variety of capacity building efforts provide companies with practical tools, skills and knowledge to build controls into everyday business practices.

Verité also conducts project-specific training on targeted issues such as forced labour, human trafficking and ethical recruitment. For example, we recently partnered with the International Labour Organisation to provide training to recruitment agencies and labour attachés in migrant sending countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines and India, with a focus on risks facing migrant health care workers. We also complement this issue-specific, face-to-face training with open-source eLearning modules on [human trafficking](#) and [forced labour](#) that interested users can access at any time. Other online courses Verité has helped to develop include ILO training on the worst forms of child labour, child labour monitoring and labour inspection and administration.

### **Advocacy and Advisory Work**

Promoting fair labour standards and respect for the labour principles of the UN Global Compact also requires advocacy and partnership to leverage expertise and resources. To this end, Verité is active in a variety of international and national-level forums with a broad cross-section of stakeholders.

For example, Verité is a member of the International Steering Committee of the [Global Forum on Migration and Development](#) Civil Society Days; an Advisory Committee member of the [International Recruitment Integrity System](#) convened by the International Organisation for Migration; a strategic partner to the ILO's [Fair Recruitment Initiative](#); a civil society member of the [Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment](#); and a member of the UN Global Compact's [Human Rights and Labour Working Group](#). In the United States, Verité is a coalition member of the [Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking](#) and the [International Labour Recruitment Working Group](#). Advocacy within each of these diverse initiatives rests at the intersection of supply chains, labour standards and protection of migrant and vulnerable workers.

Partnership strategies also inform our technical and project engagement related to labour migration and human trafficking. Verité partners with a diverse set of international and intergovernmental agencies, notably the ILO and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Special Procedures Branch as well as past partnerships with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. With the OHCHR Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Verité currently implements a joint [project](#) to engage industry-based and multi-stakeholder initiatives to improve strategies to protect workers against risks of human trafficking. This project aims to support the development of more effective normative, institutional and assessment systems across a range of initiatives, including those that conduct social labelling and certification.

Verité's advocacy also extends to membership within sector-specific initiatives such as the [Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil](#) and the [Palm Oil Innovation Group](#), where in partnership with civil society and other stakeholder allies we promote greater awareness of and support for worker protections in palm oil production, processing and supply chains. On issues such as transparency and disclosure in supply chains, Verité is actively involved in the [KnowtheChain](#) initiative, which provides research and resources to businesses, investors and other stakeholders to help them better understand and address forced labour in supply chains. A key result of this partnership is the publication of sector-based [benchmarks](#) to assess disclosure statements and corporate engagement among 60 leading companies in the Information and Communications Technology, Food and Beverage, and Apparel and Footwear industries.

Finally, Verité partners with the ILO's [Work in Freedom](#) programme and Fair Recruitment Initiative to engage business, global brands, recruitment industry actors and other stakeholders on a project basis in countries including Nepal, India, Lebanon, and others, linking migrant sending and receiving communities and the diverse actors involved in labour migration. A key focus of this partnership has been awareness raising and advocacy with recruitment agencies and national representatives of private employment services to promote principles of ethical recruitment and fair migration. In partnership with the Institute for Human Rights and Business, the Ethical Trading Initiative and Sedex, Verité convened a [business briefing](#) on responsible recruitment to discuss risks, challenges and solutions with a multi-stakeholder audience of practitioners.

### **Participation in UN Global Compact Activities**

Verité cooperates with the UN Global Compact in the publication of resources such as the joint Calls to Action referred to above on the [retention of identity documents](#) and [recruitment fees](#).

In 2016, Verité was also invited to join the UN Global Compact's Human Rights and Labour Working Group.

**About Verité**

Verité is an international not-for-profit consulting and research NGO that has been a leader in supply chain social responsibility and sustainability since 1995. For its work, Verité was the winner of the Schwab Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2011 and the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship in 2007.