



COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

ANTI-SLAVERY INTERNATIONAL

Period covered by this COE: From January 2022 to April 2024

Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive:

23rd April 2024

I am pleased to confirm that Anti-Slavery International reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents. In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organisation has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for Civil Society Organisations like ourselves. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders through our Annual Reports, Annual Reviews, and published materials on our website, which form the primary source material for the information provided in this Communication.

Sincerely yours,

Jasmine O'Connor OBE
Chief Executive Officer, Anti-Slavery International

Part II. Description of Actions:

TACKLING FORCED LABOUR IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

Modern supply chains are complex and create conditions where slavery can thrive, aided by the continual pressure to drive down costs and deliver shareholder profits. At least 17 million women, men and children are in forced labour in the private sector and almost 4 million in state-imposed forced labour worldwide, with many slavery-produced goods consumed in the Global North.

Addressing slavery practices in global supply chains is one of the central pillars of Anti-Slavery's mission and continued to be a key focus of our work in the period between 2022 - 2024.

- Throughout this period, we continued to deliver our supply chains advisory work supporting companies to address and respond to risk of modern slavery in their supply chains. We encouraged businesses to go beyond mere 'compliance' with relevant legislation, aiming to engage with businesses longer term as a 'critical friend', advising them on how to undertake due diligence in their supply chains and develop appropriate business strategies. Through this work we supported companies to review and improve their on-the ground practices, identifying risk areas and taking steps to prevent exploitation.
- In June 2022 the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act came into force in the US. As the law took effect in the US, Anti-Slavery International and our allies urged companies not to dump Uyghur forced labour goods into markets that lack equivalent strong laws, such as the EU and UK, and for governments around the world to introduce import laws that prevent this happening.
- Current laws and voluntary corporate social responsibility are not enough to end slavery in global supply chains; national and international laws making businesses legally responsible for preventing human rights abuses in their supply chains and providing access to justice for victims are needed.

Throughout 2022-24 we remained at the forefront of efforts to promote corporate human rights and environmental due diligence legislation and intensified our campaign for the EU to adopt a robust mandatory Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). We continued to support an active coalition of 100+ NGO partners and business champions working to influence the new law's development and pressing for its adoption. Amongst many initiatives, in June 2023 we published an analysis of the European Parliament's proposal for the CSDDD; and in November 2023 we issued an open letter on responsible disengagement in the CSDDD. On the 15 March 2024, the Council of the EU approved the CSDDD, and we expect the European Parliament to approve its adoption on 24 April 2024. While the law was watered down in negotiations, a great deal of what Anti-Slavery International advocated for specifically remains, such as mandatory stakeholder engagement and the requirement to remediate harm.

At the EU level, we have also been advocating on the Forced Labour Regulation (2022/0269 COD), which will prohibit the import and trade of goods made with forced labour from the EU market. Anti-Slavery International's Senior EU Advisor has been leading a coalition of civil society organisations in Brussels alongside our close partner ECCHR. We have benefited from the support of various coalitions including NForce, the Coalition to End Forced Labour in the Uyghur Region, the Cotton Campaign and the Coalition Against Forced Labour in Trade.

Among numerous other actions, in November 2022 alongside ECCHR and The Greens/EFA Group, we issued a policy brief on the Regulation setting out the key elements for inclusion in a model law. In March 2023 we brought a delegation of partners from producer countries to Brussels to press decision-makers to protect workers. In February 2024, alongside companies, trades unions, CSOs, certification organisations and multi-stakeholder initiatives, we issued a joint letter to Negotiators on Regulation, stressing the need for clear and effective provisions on remediation to be included. This was based on research we commissioned, which ran alongside our own research on the need for a lower evidentiary standard, on par with section 307 of the US Tariff Act. And we also issued a letter alongside 32 other CSOs and trades unions, outlining key issues that needed to be considered during the trilogues, in order to make the proposed Regulation a success. On 23 April 2024, the European Parliament approved its adoption, and we expect the law to pass by the end of 2024.

- During 2022-24 our campaign for similar legislation in the UK also intensified, in coalition with civil society across the UK. In August 2022, 39 investors, representing over £4.5 trillion in assets, signed a letter calling for a Business, Human Rights and Environment Act; and a public poll we commissioned showed that 80% of a cross-section of the UK public wanted the same. In April 2024, 167 businesses and investors called for a due diligence law modelled on the 2010 Bribery Act which would hold companies accountable for failing to prevent harm.

- After over a decade of campaigning alongside partners in the Cotton Campaign, in March 2022 we saw the elimination of state-imposed forced labour in Uzbekistan's cotton harvest. This could only be achieved by a coordinated global campaign by Uzbek civil society and human rights activists, campaigners and business associations to persuade the Uzbekistan government to trade responsibly.

There has been more limited progress in Turkmenistan, but we continued to work with our partners in the Cotton Campaign to raise awareness and push for reform. We secured a review by the ILO which condemned the government for not making meaningful progress on ending forced labour in the cotton harvest since they last discussed the issue in 2016 and 2021.

- We have continued to help convene the Coalition to End Forced Labour in the Uyghur Region, comprised of human and labour rights organisations and trade unions, to develop strategies to pressure major brands and retailers to end the use of state-imposed forced labour of people from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, and to engage governments and multilateral organisations to pressure the Chinese government to end the persecution of Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim-majority peoples.

In January 2024, with the Investors Alliance and Sheffield Hallam University, we published a series of reports to support key stakeholders in the clean energy transition to address forced labour of Uyghurs and other Muslim and Turkic-majority peoples in the production of green technology. This included an Investor Guidance document, providing investment professionals with the tools to identify, exclude or engage businesses linked to human rights violations against the Uyghur people from their green energy portfolios. This Guidance also explores how investors can re-channel investments into companies which champion sustainability, innovation, and supply chain resilience.

- Our Reducing Slavery in Supply Chains programme in support of the 45,000+ migrant workers employed in export-oriented factories in Mauritius concluded successfully in the first quarter of 2022. The Migrant Resource Centre will continue to be run by our partners in Mauritius, providing information, handling new grievance cases and supporting workers. Our partners in Bangladesh have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training to deliver official pre-departure orientation training to migrant workers bound for Mauritius.

CLIMATE CHANGE

For people already at risk of exploitation and abuse, the climate crisis presents an increasingly urgent threat to their freedom. Businesses, governments, and civil society cannot ignore the link between the climate crisis and modern slavery. The growing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, together with rising sea levels and desertification, leaves millions of people at risk of losing their homes and livelihoods. Environmental degradation is leading to extreme inequality, driving migration, and leaving people at risk of exploitation. Without concerted efforts at the global level, potentially millions more people look set to fall into modern slavery due to the climate crisis.

- In 2023 we began a programme in partnership with Bangladesh NGO Ovivashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) and the International Institute for the Environment and Development (IIED) to

establish the global evidence base on the nexus between climate change and slavery, with a specific focus on climate induced migration. This work includes research and advocacy focused on vulnerable communities in Bangladesh, a country highly susceptible to climate change impacts.

Our work in this area also informed our advocacy and campaigning around the UN Climate Change Conferences in 2022 and 2023 (COP27, COP28), and it will continue onwards in the critical years ahead, as we help to make sure that modern slavery is put at the heart of global climate policymaking by businesses, governments, and international institutions.

Part III. Measurement of Outcomes:

Over the period covered by this COE, our broader engagement with businesses has benefitted hundreds of companies in a range of contexts, from one-off or short-term attendance at discussion forums, training events and courses to long-term partnerships that have assisted businesses in the development of robust and meaningful due diligence policies and implementation mechanisms.

Similarly, our advocacy and campaigning activities have involved partnerships and collaborations with hundreds of civil society organisations, with whom we have acted jointly on efforts to inform and influence business practices in the area of human rights and environmental due diligence.

We have also encouraged and supported many thousands of people - in their roles as consumers, voters and activists – to hold businesses, policymakers, and legislators to account for their actions and decisions in the context of efforts to eliminate slavery, forced labour, child labour and other exploitative and harmful practices.

- Our current **five-year organisational strategy** was launched in 2020/21. This identified five strategic priorities that we and the wider anti-slavery movement need to address to help international efforts to end slavery:

- 1. System change** - We want to see sustainable, long-term change to the root causes and systems which under-pin and drive slavery. Systemic change must involve all actors, including governments, business and civil society, and changes must have effect in law, policy, and practice.

- 2. Survivors' voices** - Survivors' voices are crucial to understanding and addressing slavery. Effective and ethical survivor engagement must be the norm, throughout our movement.

- 3. Movement building** - To be most effective in a changing world, the global anti-slavery movement would benefit from more effective coordination and more coherent planning. Power needs to be distributed more fairly across the movement with more representation of survivor-led and southern-led organisations in global policymaking.

- 4. Framing the issue** - The current and emerging movement has placed slavery on political agendas, but more work is required to create effective ways of presenting issues, so they remain a priority, responses are galvanised, and change is secured.

- 5. Legal frameworks** - International human rights instruments are under threat globally and are not being used to their full extent to end slavery. While most countries have ratified instruments to end slavery, only 55% have enacted legislation to put those rights into practice. Where domestic legislation does exist, it is underutilised to prevent slavery and protect victims.

Anti-Slavery International is committed to actions that address these strategic priorities at the global level and in the context of our focus themes:

- **Ending child slavery**
- **Responsible business**
- **Migration and trafficking**
- **Slavery and climate change**

As these themes and strategic priorities develop into concrete programmes and projects, we identify appropriate measures against which our progress in these areas is measured.