

Concept Note
Expert Meeting on Human Trafficking and Global Supply Chains
November 12 – 13, 2012
Ankara, Turkey

Overview

Trafficking in persons has received increasing attention in recent years at international, regional and national levels. As the UN Human Rights Council has noted, trafficking in persons violates fundamental human rights and continues to pose serious challenges to humanity. In this context, the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, was established in 2004 by the then Commission on Human Rights to focus on the human rights aspects of human trafficking. The current mandate-holder, Ms. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, was appointed in June 2008.

The Special Rapporteur's mandate includes, among others, promoting the prevention of trafficking in persons in all its forms and the adoption of measures to uphold and protect the human rights of victims of trafficking in persons. Her mandate extends to all forms of trafficking in men, women and children, whether committed by State or non-State actors. In the exercise of her mandate, the Special Rapporteur has noted that private actors are implicated in a majority of trafficking cases and trafficking in persons has emerged as a key challenge and risk in a wide range of industries and sectors integrated into global markets, such as agriculture, information and communications technology, garments and textiles. Despite the rapid growth of corporate social responsibility programmes in recent years, many of them do not treat human trafficking as a priority issue and lack any specific policies or programmes to ensure that their supply chains are free of trafficked labour.

In response, the Special Rapporteur has devoted her report to the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly (A/67/261) in October 2012 (to the issue of trafficking in global supply chains). In this report, she examines the different ways human trafficking manifests itself in the global economy; the response of global businesses to this scourge; existing and emerging strategies to combat abuse; and the immediate and long-term steps necessary for business leaders to take effective and sustainable action. The report also outlines a series of clear and practical recommendations for business and States to eliminate trafficking in the supply chain.

Objectives and expected outcomes of the expert consultation

As part of this process, the Special Rapporteur will convene a two-day consultation and experts meeting on November 12 – 13, 2012 in Turkey. This meeting will elicit the input of leading international experts from across stakeholder groups. The objectives of the meeting are as follows:

1. To deepen the discussion around the main findings of the Special Rapporteur's report and its recommendations for follow-up;
2. To enhance and deepen thematic expertise on issues relating to human trafficking and supply chains;
3. To share information across stakeholder groups on current trends, good practices and lessons learned, including case studies, in addressing trafficking in global supply chains; and
4. To consider and discuss elements of possible standards and indicators for achieving a trafficking free supply chain.

The expected outcome of the consultation is to develop – based on the observations and conclusions of the experts – an agreed and refined set of recommendations for business and government and to advance the debate on the standards applicable to businesses in addressing trafficking in the context of global supply chains.

Modalities

The consultation will be organized as a two-day experts meeting. It will consist of multiple sessions addressing the following topics:

1. Human Trafficking & Global Supply Chains: Understanding Challenges & Risks;
2. Raising the Game: How Business & Employers Have Responded to Risks of Human Trafficking;
3. International Standards & Public Policy Addressed to Human Trafficking & Supply Chains;
4. New Strategies for Supply Chain & Consumer Engagement; and
5. Next Steps in Supply Chain Action.

During discussion, it is envisaged that the respective roles of stakeholders including brands, supply chain companies, employers' organizations, public policy actors, civil society groups and international organizations will be discussed.

A detailed agenda of the meeting is forthcoming. It is anticipated that 20 experts will participate in the consultation, drawn from business enterprises and their representative associations, international and governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations and academia. Representatives will be drawn from across regions and relevant industries. The working language of the meeting will be English. No simultaneous interpretation will be provided.