



International
Labour
Organization

GLOBAL BUSINESS
NETWORK ON
FORCED LABOUR

A close-up photograph of a smiling man wearing a yellow hard hat and a colorful patterned scarf. The hard hat has the text 'बि.वि.स. कास्की (SNRTP)' written on it. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with greenery and a road.

► Annual report

January – December 2020

[Website](#) | [Email](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#)

- ▶ **Driving action, scale and sustainability through collaboration.**

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► Message from the Chair

Dear network community,

We are pleased to share with you the ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour's second annual report. In these pages, you will see the progress we have made as a network, our collective impact, and the overall positive trajectory resulting from our efforts. This report also clearly illustrates the potential of the network to grow over the years to come, bringing the business community together with the ILO in our work to end forced labour once and for all.

These efforts have never been more relevant or urgent. In 2016, there were 25 million victims of forced labour around the world. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to reshape how we live, it is also exacerbating many of the root causes of forced labour. Locally owned and driven action to end this practice is critical, and we must ensure this fight continues to be a priority for governments and businesses – that limited resources are focused where they will have the most significant impact.

Our continued progress would not be possible without the oversight and direction provided by the Steering Committee during this past year and all those who contributed to the network in 2020. We are grateful for donor support from the European Union and United States Department of Labour through ILO projects, namely *From Protocol to Practice: Global Action to Improve the Recruitment Framework of Labour Migration*, *A Bridge to Global Action on Forced Labour*; and *Measurement, Awareness-raising and Policy Engagement to Accelerate Action Against Child Labour and Forced Labour*.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the ILO for the resources dedicated to hosting the network's secretariat and for their expertise. From presenting at webinars to fact-checking policy briefs, ILO experts continue to support and enhance our work. And last, but far from least, we would like to give a heartfelt thanks to our members - their tireless efforts are the force behind the progress we have made to date, and it is their dedication that will drive us forward in the years ahead.

Thank you, and please enjoy this report –

Laura Chapman Rubbo

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Laura C. Rubbo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Laura" being more prominent than the last name "Rubbo".

Executive Director, Global Public Policy, The Walt Disney Company
ILO GBNFL Steering Committee Chair for 2020

► About the ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour

The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Global Business Network on Forced Labour (GBNFL) brings together the ILO with businesses of all sizes and sectors, and their networks, from around the globe to eradicate forced labour.

Operating across all sectors and geographies, ILO GBNFL members work to engage smaller enterprises, develop actionable resources and tools, and devise local solutions that help shape national frameworks to create lasting change.

ILO GBNFL is a global business network coordinated by the ILO. This UN agency brings together governments, employers and workers to set international labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work. The network opened for membership in 2018.

ILO GBNFL reaches across sectors and geographies to advance the business case for an end to forced labour. The network is aligned with, and contributes to, other relevant international initiatives, in particular Alliance 8.7, the global partnership working to deliver on SDG Target 8.7 and eradicate all forced labour by 2030.

Key focus areas:



Connect

Break silos by linking up business actors from across sectors and geographies to eradicate forced labour.



Convene

Support businesses to engage with other relevant stakeholders, including government bodies, to find sustainable solutions to the structural drivers of forced labour.



Innovate

Create spaces where members identify gaps, develop new ways of tackling forced labour, and devise methods to scale up solutions.



Support

Share user-friendly and action-oriented data, information and resources to help busy businesses take steps to tackle forced labour.

Our members

ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour members are businesses of all sizes and sectors, employer and business membership organizations, industry trade groups and sectoral associations. Other business-led initiatives with complementary mandates and expertise join as partners.

Between June 2018 and December 2020. The following companies and business networks joined the ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour.

Company members



Business networks



Recognized partners



Governance

The ILO GBNFL is governed by a Steering Committee that is responsible for the overall strategic direction and activities of the network. The Steering Committee has representatives from large enterprises, business networks, and SMEs. It strives to ensure good regional representation and gender balance and to be as reflective of the ILO GBNFL membership as possible. The overall governance of the network is guided by a set of operating principles. In 2020, the Steering Committee met five times.

Three positions on the Committee remain vacant. As the network increases its focus on recruitment during 2021, we hope to fill these.

► Steering Committee members by membership segment

Large Enterprises	Company
Laura Chapman Rubbo	The Walt Disney Company (2020 chair)
Brent Wilton	The Coca Cola Company (until November 2020)
SMEs	Company/organization
Mustain Billah	World Bank (formerly Leather and Footwear Manufacturers Association of Bangladesh (LFMAB)) (until December 2020)
Douglas Opio	Federation of Uganda Employers

EBMOs and business networks	Organization
Didier Bergeret	Consumer Goods Forum (CGF)
Matthias Thorns	International Organization of Employers (IOE)
Thomas Thomas	ASEAN CSR Network (ACN)
Suresh DeMel	Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC)
Angela Bozzon	Brazil Association of Textile Retail (ABVTEX)

► Highlights in 2020

The ILO's Global Business Network on Forced Labour members, partners and secretariat stepped up efforts to meet Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals and end forced labour by 2030 despite the global COVID 19 pandemic.

- We gave more than 66 presentations on how to eradicate forced labour.
- We had more than 35 meetings with decision makers to drive change.
- Our online events reached almost 1,400 people and equipped them with information and tools to identify and end forced labour.
- Our communications and advocacy materials raised the awareness of more than 10,000 people.
- Our social media accounts, set up at the beginning of the year, quickly gained a dedicated and growing following, our newsletter audience increased six-fold, and we had more than 3,000 website visitors.
- We updated the Interactive Map for Business of Anti-Human Trafficking Organizations, which now features more than 200 initiatives.

Did all this activity make a difference? ILO GBNFL members say that the network is effectively raising awareness of forced labour and how to eradicate it. According to them, more businesses and business networks have the tools and motivation to eradicate forced labour, and encourage other businesses, networks and governments to take action, as a result of ILO GBNFL activities.

In 2020, there was a particular focus on Viet Nam, underpinned by a new ILO GBNFL policy brief and social dialogue. We directly contributed to major positive changes in Viet Nam's legal framework governing migrant worker recruitment practices. As a result, the 80,000 Vietnamese who leave for work abroad each year, and the nearly half a million who are already working abroad, will be significantly less vulnerable to forced labour from early 2022, when the new law comes into force.

In 2021, particular focus will be remain on policy advocacy. We will produce additional policy products to support advocacy including by developing global briefs, which can be adapted by members to reflect their national situations.

Moreover, we are planning the launch of our first podcasts to strengthen our online influence. The network will also galvanize small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) action through an online competition where initiatives supporting SMEs to address forced labour challenges can win funding and mentoring.

Finally, we will initiate a recruitment drive to convert current interest into membership and grow the network and its influence.



► Key results by focus area



Connect

Sharing the message

In 2020, the ILO GBNFL network as a whole gave more than 66 presentations on the nature of forced labour and how to eradicate it. Examples of events where the network presented include the annual Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Countries workshop, the UNCTAD Illicit Trade Forum, two ILO training programmes on fair recruitment and migration, and two events held by the Retail Industry Leaders Association and PSCI, respectively.

Improving coordination and collaboration

The www.modernslaverymap.org, a unified resource of information on organizations working with the private sector to eliminate human trafficking, forced labour and the worst forms of child labour, was recently updated. The map currently features 206 initiatives, compared to 92 in 2019, that work with the private sector, now including grassroots organizations and others in previously underrepresented geographies and sectors. The map had more than 3,000 visitors in 2020, up from 916 in 2019.

We would like to thank our collaborating partners for their extensive work on updating the map, namely the Global Business Coalition Against Human Trafficking and the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.



Convene

Advocacy messages

The network developed four policy briefs to support dialogue between the business community and government bodies. All four policy briefs analyse challenges to forced labour eradication in specific contexts and recommend actions. The briefs generally cover the nature of forced labour, root causes, as well as fair recruitment as a way to prevent it. Two of the briefs have already been published, with the other two due for publication in 2021.

Policy briefs

- The social and economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis on forced labour.
- Business recommendations for forced labour eradication in Viet Nam.
- If we work together and harness the potential of SMEs, we can eradicate forced labour by 2030 (forthcoming).
- Malaysia can, and must, eradicate forced labour (forthcoming).

Country action

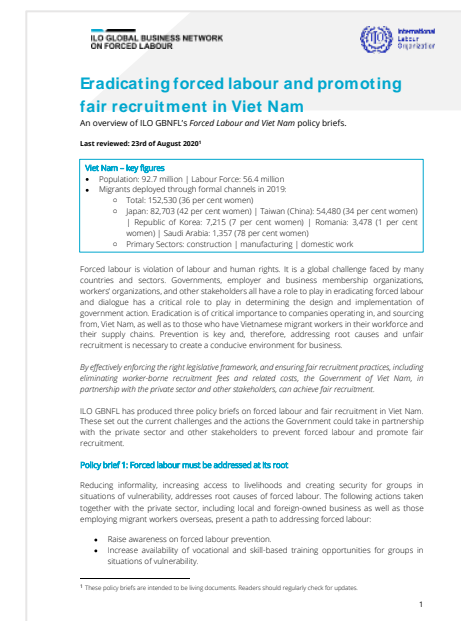
ILO GBNFL advocacy efforts target one or two Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Countries at a time to maximize impact. Throughout 2020, the network mobilized the Vietnamese and Malaysian business communities to present key decision-makers with credible solutions to forced labour.

Viet Nam

A total of 80,000 Vietnamese leave the country for jobs overseas each year.¹ Some three million Vietnamese live abroad, with another 450,000 residing abroad as temporary workers.² Many Vietnamese migrant workers struggle to earn a decent living due to excessive recruitment costs and fees. While there is limited information available on the number of Vietnamese migrant workers trapped in forced labour, regional forced labour estimates and national migrant worker data suggest it is a major issue.

¹ ILO 2020. Labour Migration in Viet Nam. Web page consulted on 28.01.2020. <https://www.ilo.org/hanoi/Areasofwork/labour-migration/lang-en/index.htm>

² IOM country web page consulted on 28.01.2020. <https://www.iom.int/countries/viet-nam>



The government of Viet Nam, with advice from ILO GBNFL and others, recently completed its revision of a key law regulating the recruitment of Vietnamese migrant workers. The Consumer Goods Forum, the International Organization of Employers (both ILO GBNFL members), as well as the secretariat participated in government consultations on the new and improved law. Dialogue was underpinned by the above-mentioned ILO GBNFL policy brief. The latter was shared with three other business networks and their members that attended the consultation event and helped to achieve an aligned position.

Malaysia

Malaysia is a major destination country for migrant workers, with the total number of foreign workers estimated to be between 2.96 to 3.26 million³. Reports of abuses are rife and in 2020 Malaysia was again put on the tier-2 watchlist of the US Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons⁴.

Dialogue with the government of Malaysia was informed by an ILO GBNFL policy brief. The ILO and the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) organized a webinar on how responsible business conduct prevents forced labour, with a particular focus on fair recruitment. The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), a network member, was one of the speakers and actively debated with the other speakers, including the Malaysian Department of Labour. Over 400 people registered to join the event, with the recording attracting an additional 648 views.



Annual general and members' meeting

The annual [general meeting](#) in November 2020, open to members and interested stakeholders, looked firstly at the impact of COVID-19 on doing business and resulting forced labour challenges, and secondly at how to engage SMEs in preventing forced labour and promoting fair recruitment. A total of 92 participants joined, with many asking questions and sharing resources. Participants represented the private sector, civil society organizations, the UN and donors. Attendance was more than double that of the 2019 general meeting. The meeting helped develop ideas for each ILO GBNFL's focus area and provided members with a platform to exchange ideas and experiences.

The second annual meeting event was open to members only. ILO GBNFL members and partners together laid the foundations for the network's 2021 workplan, thereby shaping the future of the network.

Network of Networks meeting

Multiple business networks work to eradicate forced labour. If we want to maximize our impact, we must improve coordination and collaboration, and eliminate duplication. In October 2020, for the first time, the ILO GBNFL organized a meeting where 21 business networks explored opportunities to do

³ World Bank 2019. [Malaysia: Estimating the number of foreign workers.](#)

⁴ US Department of State 2020. [Trafficking in Person Report June 2020.](#)

exactly this. In 2021, the ILO GBNFL will organize regular meetings to help the networks keep abreast of each other's activities and identify opportunities for joint action. We will focus in particular on coherence in use of standards, jointly targeting forced labour hotspots, and taking action to end worst forms of child labour, which is also considered as forced labour



Innovate

Connecting members

The year 2020 saw an increase in online activity as a direct result of lockdown and home working measures. To further support members in connecting virtually, the secretariat set up a private online discussion forum. All members received personal logins at the end of the year and a total of 28 member representatives quickly joined. The discussion forum will be used as a private space where members identify gaps, develop new ways of tackling forced labour, and devise methods to scale up solutions.

Fair recruitment and SMEs

In 2020, the ILO GBNFL started developing tools for SMEs on eradicating forced labour and achieving fair recruitment. The first tool is a practical guide to the ILO's 11 indicators on forced labour. The second is a due diligence toolkit on fair recruitment for SMEs, which guides managers through the process of hiring migrant workers.

Both toolkits are being finalized and will be published in 2021. The guide to the ILO's 11 indicators will be heavily promoted as part of the forthcoming SME campaign while the due diligence toolkit on fair recruitment will be adapted to country contexts (please see the section entitled 'Looking ahead' for further information).



Support

Webinars

The secretariat organized and hosted four online events to allow members to continue accessing action-oriented data, information and resources to tackle forced labour despite the pandemic.

► [*The ILO's 11 operational indicators of forced labour \(March\)*](#)

The ILO's Technical Specialist on Forced Labour presented the indicators and shared practical examples of how these are applied.

► [*An inclusive approach to eradicating forced labour in the better normal \(May\)*](#)

Following an introduction by the ILO Director-General, Guy Ryder, four expert panellists, all network members, discussed challenges to eradicating forced labour in a COVID-19 context and local solutions that involve smaller enterprises.

► [*How to achieve fair recruitment: What works? \(September\)*](#)

ILO experts, initiatives working on fair recruitment, and employer and business membership organizations discussed current models that are working well to promote fair recruitment as well as lessons learned.

► [*ILO GBNFL annual event \(November\)*](#)

As already mentioned, this included sessions on how to harness the potential of SMEs in the fight against forced labour and up to date information on the impact of COVID-19 on forced labour challenges.



Social media

In early 2020 the secretariat set up [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) accounts. So far, these have been mainly used to advertise events, communicate key messages and share relevant ILO resources. The website underwent further development and now features additional useful resources and a video introducing the network.

Podcasts

The network developed its first three podcasts in 2020. These focus on why and how we should harness the potential of SMEs in the fight against forced labour. The podcasts feature interviews with network members and experts and are due to be launched in 2021.

Advocacy and communications toolkit for members

The toolkit provides guidance on, for example, how to write position papers/policy briefs and how to be an effective advocate. It also features useful materials such as a basic presentation introducing the network and a social media pack. The toolkit was developed in 2020 and will be shared with members in 2021.

Forced labour fact sheet

The fact sheet, '[Forced labour: Global facts and figures](#)', is based on the latest data and includes numerous infographics. It provides a quick overview of the nature of forced labour, prevalence, where it is found, who is most vulnerable, as well as key international legal instruments aimed at forced labour eradication.

► The difference we made

Determining the impact of communications and advocacy efforts is a highly challenging and resource-intensive endeavor. Instead, this section uses available monitoring data to determine progress and contribution to positive change.

Raising our voice

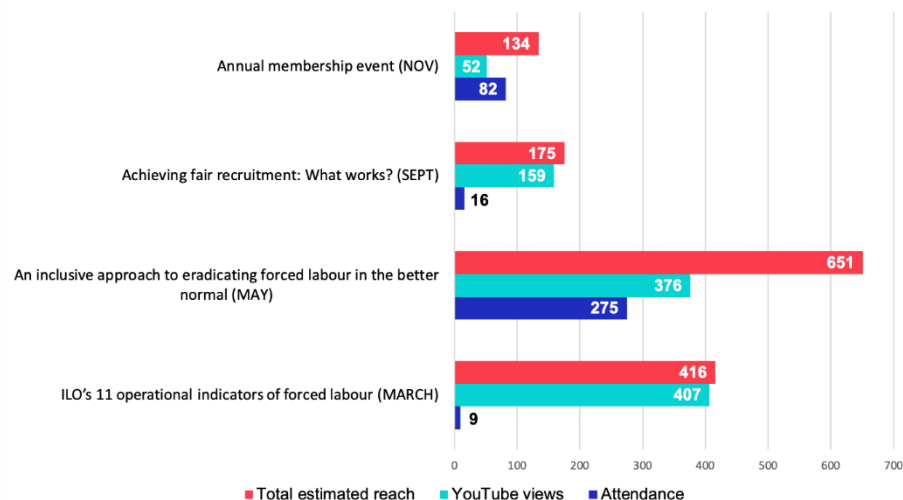
In 2020 we amplified our voice as a network.

- At least six members shared ILO GBNFL materials with over 10,000 people.
- Members gave over 60 presentation on forced labour, reaching more than 300 people.
- The secretariat's events reached nearly 1,400 people.

Online, the network built a relatively small but engaged following that is growing at a steady pace.

- The website, launched in late 2019, attracted around 3,000 visitors in 2020, with a noteworthy low average bounce⁵ rate of just 2.25%.
- The LinkedIn account, set up in early 2020, gathered an impressive 677 followers and achieved a particularly strong engagement rate⁶, which peaked at 12%. Around two-fifths (40%) of all followers are in senior positions, an indication of the (potential) influence of ILO GBNFL communications using this channel.

Direct reach of major ILO GBNFL online events 2020



⁵ A bounce is a single-page session where, for example, a user opens a single page and then exits. A low bounce rate implies engaging content that causes visitors to view more pages and continue deeper into the website.

⁶ The engagement rate for a post is the number of interactions, clicks, and new followers acquired, divided by the number of impressions the post receives. On LinkedIn, an 'impression' is the total number of times at least 50% of the post was visible for more than 300 milliseconds.

- The Twitter account quickly gained 138 followers, achieving a total of 35,000 impressions⁷.
- The newsletter audience has shown steady growth since the beginning of 2020, starting with just 20 subscribers and ending with a total of 116 subscribers, a nearly six-fold increase.

Influencing decisions

Overall, network members had more than 35 meetings with decision makers in their countries to drive action on forced labour eradication. At a national level, the network targeted its efforts at improving the legal framework in Viet Nam, underpinned by an ILO GBNFL policy brief and social dialogue.

Country action: Viet Nam

The average recruitment fees and costs for a Vietnamese migrant worker are around USD 6,500, against average monthly wages of USD 800 for work overseas. On average the migrant has to work 8.7 months to recover the cost of labour migration where legal ceiling amounts are respected, making them highly vulnerable to forced labour and other abuses.⁸

In 2020, the network contributed to significant improvements in Viet Nam's national legal framework for fair recruitment. Network members and the secretariat participated in social dialogue, also advising on technical legalities.

The updated and improved law on the recruitment of Vietnamese migrant workers will come into force on 1 January 2022. It will effectively cover all Vietnamese businesses as well as foreign entities recruiting Vietnamese migrant workers through recruitment or employment agencies. Key improvements are outlined below.

- Migrant workers will no longer be made to pay a category of recruitment fees and costs entitled 'brokerage fees'. Currently, where ceiling limits are respected, the maximum brokerage fee is one month's salary per year up to a maximum of USD 1,500 per year, or USD 4,500 for three years.

⁷ On Twitter, an 'impression' is the number of times a user saw a tweet on Twitter.

⁸ ILO GBNFL 2020. [Business recommendations for forced labour eradication in Viet Nam](#).

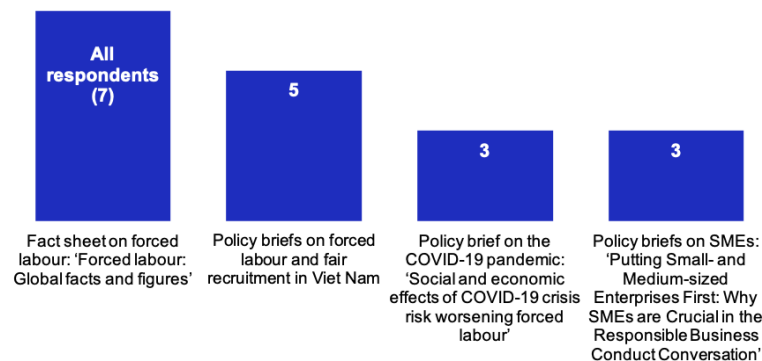
- 'Service fees' will still be legally charged, and effectively amount to a recruitment fee. The Vietnamese National Assembly Standing Committee has made a recommendation to 'minimize service charges to workers and eventually move to the model of zero fees for workers as recommended by the International Labour Organization (ILO)'.
- Migrant workers will be able to unilaterally annul employment contracts where there is threat, sexual harassment, maltreatment or forced labour.
- Legal aid will be available in cases of abuse, violence or discrimination whilst working abroad.
- Vietnamese migrant workers pay a deposit to their recruitment agency before departure. The new law allows workers to appeal to the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) if their deposit is not returned.
- Pre-departure training for migrant workers will cover forced labour and human trafficking.
- Private recruitment agents will be prohibited from deceiving 'workers or to recruit workers for the purpose of human trafficking, exploitation, forced labor or taking advantage of the placement of workers abroad to conduct illegal acts'.
- Private recruitment agencies must arrange medical and unemployment insurance for workers.

Supporting members

Annual survey respondents are overwhelmingly positive about the impact of ILO GBNFL membership on their advocacy efforts, saying it is helping them to (better) advocate for an end to forced labour. Moreover, all respondents said they would recommend the network to others.

All survey respondents had read ILO GBNFL policy products, with the fact sheet being most popular, followed by the Viet Nam policy briefs. Five respondents also said that they had shared advocacy products with others.

Which of ILO GBNFL's 2020 advocacy products have you read?

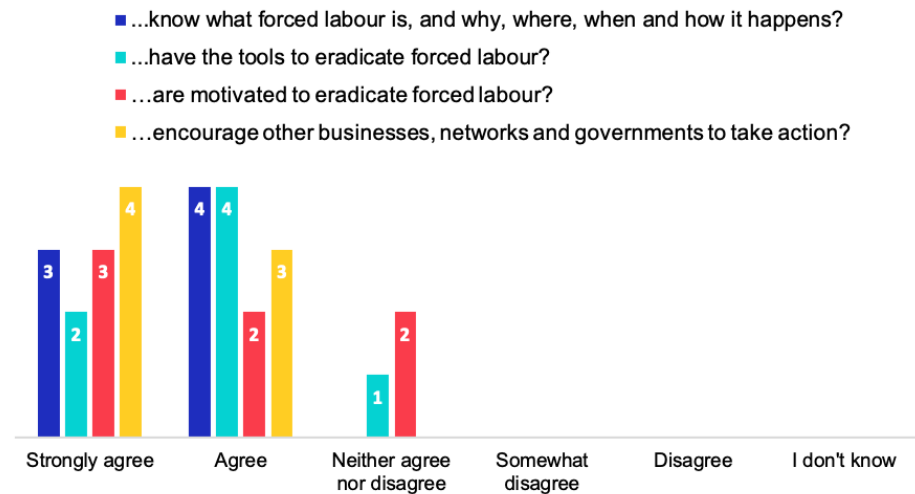


Delivering on our commitment

The membership survey conducted at the end of 2020 included specific questions to help determine whether, in the view of network members, ILO GBNFL is turning its vision into reality. Members were asked whether the network is delivering the outputs set out in its theory of change. The response was overwhelmingly positive. Respondents generally agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of ILO GBNFL work in 2020, more businesses and their networks:

- Know what forced labour is, and why, where, when and how it happens
- Have the tools to eradicate forced labour
- Are motivated to eradicate forced labour
- Encourage other businesses, networks and governments to take action.

On the whole, as a result of ILO GBNFL work over the past year, to what extent do you agree that more businesses and their networks...



► Looking ahead

This section provides an overview of our 2021 priorities.

Country action

The focus will move from Viet Nam to Mexico and Malaysia, both Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Countries. A set of policy briefs on forced labour and Malaysia, developed in 2020, is due for launch and will underpin social dialogue. Another set of policy briefs setting out the network's solutions for ending forced labour in Mexico will be developed. The new toolkit for SMEs on how to eradicate forced labour, in particular through due diligence and fair recruitment, will be adapted to each country's specific context.

One of ILO GBNFL's major activities for 2021 will be a national SME campaign. The network will organize a competition where initiatives working with SMEs to eradicate forced labour are matched to mentors and/or funding to help them fulfil their potential. Mentors have significant experience of responsible business conduct and could include companies, business networks, the ILO and ILO GBNFL itself. The competition will take place online and constitute a hook for a large communications drive, both nationally and internationally. The above-mentioned new toolkit for SMEs on how to eradicate forced labour will be heavily promoted through the campaign.

Supporting the network and driving growth

We clearly recognize the importance for our members to connect now more than ever. We will continue to focus on bringing together the network virtually throughout 2021. This includes more active moderation and use of the newly set up online discussion platform, allowing members to share information, support each other and solve problems together. We will continue to offer online events with a practical focus.

ILO GBNFL will share the aforementioned communications and advocacy toolkit for members, developed in 2020, and embed it in the network's way of working. This will ensure effective and aligned advocacy and communications across the network. Alongside the toolkit, the secretariat will offer short training and information sharing sessions on communications and advocacy.

Monitoring data for 2020 clearly shows that the network is attracting an audience that includes potential network members. Both the secretariat and members will focus on converting this interest into actual membership through a recruitment drive.

Pooling and sharing expertise

We will dedicate significant time and energy to the new Network of Networks group. ILO GBNFL will build the group's peer support function. We will tap into the group's expertise to develop a policy brief outlining what works to address forced labour in difference contexts. The brief will consider, in particular,

tackling forced labour in countries with large informal economies and/or high levels of irregular migration. In first instance, the brief will be shared with Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Countries and those countries implementing the ILO's Forced Labour Protocol.

Increasing online visibility and influence

We will increase our online communications and advocacy efforts and further develop the resources section on the website, as it has been particularly popular with visitors. Similarly, we plan to build to on the success of the LinkedIn account and dedicate additional resources to it.

We will use all online channels to promote the above-mentioned SME campaign in 2021, including using these channels to launch and market our first podcast series.

Finally, we will play an advisory role in the ILO's and Human Resources Without Borders' forced labour cartoon competition and contribute to its promotion.

Monitoring the results of our work

Monitoring of the network's activities started in 2020 in earnest, and basic monitoring tools are now in place. We will build on this in 2021, in particular by implementing a communications and advocacy tracker tool, already developed in 2020. The tool will track positive changes for forced labour eradication and the contribution the network has made to achieving these. The data collected will also form the basis for internal discussions on what works and what does not, which in turn will inform continuous improvement efforts.

Thank you to all our members and partners for their ongoing support and we look forward to continued engagement in 2021.

ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour would like to thank the European Union and the United States Department of Labour for their financial support during the annual reporting period, complementing the financial and technical resources provided by ILO.

- ▶ The ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour (GBNFL) brings together businesses of all sizes and sectors, and their networks, from around the globe to eradicate forced labour.

To join us, and for further information

fl-businessnetwork@ilo.org or visit flbusiness.network