



International
Labour
Organization

GLOBAL BUSINESS
NETWORK ON
FORCED LABOUR



Annual Report January – December 2021

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

▶ Contents

| | | |
|---|--|----|
| ▶ | Message from the Chair | 4 |
| ▶ | About the ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour | 5 |
| ▶ | Highlights in 2021 | 8 |
| ▶ | Key results by focus area | 10 |
| ▶ | The difference we made | 17 |
| ▶ | Looking ahead | 20 |

► Message from the Chair

Dear network community,

I am delighted to share the ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour's (GBNFL) 2021 annual report with you. It has been another challenging year, with the COVID-19 crisis continuing to exacerbate the root causes of forced labour.

For me, our first two podcast series are a particular achievement. As the world became increasingly fatigued by online meetings and events, we innovated and produced some of the most popular podcasts broadcast by the ILO. Our members have featured prominently in these topical podcasts, taking cooperation between members to a new level.

Our network brings the business community together with the ILO to end forced labour by 2030. Bottom-up, local action is vital if we are to win this fight. We must ensure that it continues to be a priority for governments and businesses. ILO GBNFL plays a major role here. I would like to thank the ILO GBNFL Steering Committee. Its dedicated members have ensured the network has had the direction and oversight required to leap ahead in 2021.

Our progress would not have been possible without donor support from the European Union, the French Ministry of Labour, and the United States Department of Labour through ILO projects, namely *From Protocol to Practice: Global Action to Improve the Recruitment Framework of Labour Migration*, *Entr'Alliance, 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 are sincerely grateful.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the ILO for hosting the network's secretariat and for their expertise. ILO experts continuously support and enhance our work and help us to raise the bar.

And finally, a heartfelt thanks to our members, whose commitment and efforts have made our joint achievements possible.

Thank you, and please enjoy this report.



Douglas Opio

ILO GBNFL Steering Committee Chair for 2021

Executive Director, Federation of Uganda Employers

► 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 2021, 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 2021, the Steering Committee met three times.

► Steering Committee members by membership segment

| Large Enterprises | | Company | EBMOs and business networks | | Organization |
|----------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Laura Chapman Rubbo | | The Walt Disney Company | Angela Bozzon | | Brazil Association of Textile Retail (ABVTEX) |
| Vidhi Aggarwal | | Apple Inc | Didier Bergeret | | Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) |
| SMEs | | Company/organization | Matthias Thorns | | International Organization of Employers (IOE) |
| Abigail Roxas | | Employers Confederation of the Philippines | Suresh DeMel | | Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) |
| Douglas Opio | | Federation of Uganda Employers (2021 Chair) | Thomas Mackall | | United States Council for International Business (USCIB) |
| Guido Ricci | | Guatemalan Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Industrial, Trade and Financial Associations (CACIF) | Thomas Thomas | | ASEAN CSR Network (ACN) |

▶ Highlights in 2021

The ILO GBNFL's members and secretariat stepped up efforts to end forced labour despite continuing restrictions imposed by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

- ▶ 1,800 people had listened to our first two podcast series by the end of 2021, with some of our podcasts being among the most popular episodes broadcast by the ILO.
- ▶ We launched the world's first award for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) leading the way in the fight against forced labour.
- ▶ We produced an introductory brief on the nature of forced labour of children, and the first steps businesses can take to tackle it. The brief explicitly sets out the links between forced labour and child labour, thereby filling a knowledge gap.
- ▶ Our social media accounts, set up in 2020 and underpinned by our improved website, continue to increase our reach and are raising awareness of forced labour as an issue and what businesses and their partners can do to end it.

In 2021, we continued focussing on Malaysia. Together with ILO GBNFL member the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), we helped to train more than 300 business employees on how to tackle forced labour.

In 2022, we will focus on supporting businesses to end forced labour by sharing clear-cut data, information, and resources (our 'Support' focus area). With the fifth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour taking place in May and following the 2021 International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, we will continue to focus on the links between child labour and forced labour and the actions that tackle both. This includes producing our first podcast in Spanish on forced labour in Mexico.

During the second half of the year, we will build on the lessons learned from the 2021 Global Award for SME Action on Forced Labour to launch a similar award. We will also promote the activities by the businesses who entered the 2021 Award throughout the year.

Finally, we aim to build on the success of our first two podcast series. In 2022 we will produce several podcast episodes that, together, form a training package for SMEs on how to tackle forced labour.



1,800
People listened
to our podcasts

2
New policy
briefs

800
People reached by
ILO GBNFL events

▶ **2021**
in
numbers

3
SMEs recognized for their
action on forced labour

430
People trained in how to
tackle forced labour

2,400
Social media
followers

65,000
Social media
impressions

1
Toolkit for SMEs
on fair recruitment

8,000+
Visitors of the
Modern Slavery Map

60+
Presentations by members
and the secretariat

▶ Key results by focus area



Connect

Sharing the message

The COVID-19 crisis continued to hamper travel and face-to-face meetings in 2021. At the same time, Members increasingly reported an overload of webinars and other time-bound on-screen events and activities. To ensure ILO GBNFL's message continued to reach its target audience despite saturation, we refocused our efforts on communication activities where the audience could access the message in their own time, and even turn their screen off: social media and podcasts (more on this below).

Members and the Secretariat continued to personally advocate for an end to forced labour where possible. In 2021, ILO GBNFL members alone gave more than 57 presentations on the nature of forced labour and how to eradicate it, and on related topics.

The secretariat presented at various events, including the Swiss Business and Human Rights Forum, the UN Global Compact's 'Decent Work Action Platform Webinar on Forced Labour & Fair Recruitment', member PSCI's spring meeting, and a training workshop for ILO constituents (employers, workers, and governments) on fundamental principles and rights at work.

Our member TRACIT published a new report ['The human cost of illicit trade: exposing demand for forced labor in the dark corners of the economy'](#). The secretariat helped to promote the report and presented at the launch event.

Raising the bar

We launched the [Global Award for SME Action on Forced Labour](#) together with our member the International Organisation of Employers. The award is part of our campaign aiming to unleash the potential of SMEs in the fight against forced labour.

This is the first year that we have run the award. The promotion of the award led to significant profile for its key messages. Posts were widely shared on ILO GBNFL, IOE and ILO social media channels. Our Chair, Douglas Opio, also wrote a well-received [LinkedIn article](#).



While we did not receive enough submissions to formally award places, we did receive three submissions of incredibly high quality. In 2022 we will formally recognise these efforts and promote the actions by the SMEs. We will also run a similar award, learning from our experience of the first award and building on its profile.

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 228 initiatives, compared to 92 in 2019, that work with the private sector. 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.

The ILO GBNFL podcasts also provided opportunities for improved coordination and collaboration within and outside the network. The podcasts featured four members, and two members of ILO GBNFL member organizations, in addition to relevant external experts.



Convene

Advocacy messages

The network published two new policy briefs to support dialogue between the business community and government bodies. The policy briefs analyse challenges to forced labour eradication in specific contexts and recommend actions.

Policy briefs

- ▶ [An introduction to forced labour of children for businesses](#) (December 2021)
- ▶ [Why and how businesses want to eradicate forced labour](#) (February 2021)

For the first time we published a short communications piece inciting business to act on forced labour and providing them with some very basic first steps: [‘Calling all SMEs! Ten steps on the journey to ending forced labour by 2030’](#). This was well received by our members (see further down) and social media followers.

Country action

ILO GBNFL advocacy efforts target one or two Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Countries at a time to maximize impact. In 2021, the network mobilized the Malaysian business community to act.

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 millionⁱ. Reports of abuses are rife, including in palm oil production. In 2022 Malaysia was moved from the tier-2 watchlist to tier 3 of the US Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Personsⁱⁱ. This indicates that the situation is deteriorating, and significantly more efforts need to be made to combat forced labour.

The ILO and the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) organized a webinar in 2020 on how responsible business conduct prevents forced labour, with a particular focus on fair recruitment. The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), an ILO GBNFL member, was one of the speakers and actively debated with the other speakers, including the Malaysian Department of Labour.

Building on this webinar, the ILO GBNFL together with ILO Bridge and MEF, launched a series of online workshops for Malaysian companies in the export manufacturing and plantations sectors. An open webinar was followed by two interactive workshops on forced labour and fair recruitment. The workshops were an opportunity for companies to share experiences and ask questions. Over 300 people attended the webinars. A [frequently asked questions document](#) was distributed to all participants after the meeting.

“Together with ILO GBNFL we successfully trained our members on the nature of forced labour and how to identify, prevent and tackle it. Our members were positive about the events, with some reporting that they have made changes to their policies and practices as a result. We are continuing our work with the ILO GBNFL to build on this momentum.”

Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan, Executive Director, Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF)

Network of Networks

Multiple business networks aim to eradicate forced labour and embed fair recruitment. The number of initiatives committed to fighting forced labour is testament to the importance the private sector places on working collectively on this issue. However, if we are to maximize impact, better coordination and collaboration across business networks is required to eliminate duplication and support the achievement of collective goals.

The ILO GBNFL sought to create a neutral platform to bring together these organizations. Set up in late 2020, the Forum for Business Initiatives (also known as the Network of Networks) found its stride in 2021. A total of 27 business networks from around the globe, including ILO GBNFL members, meet every two months with the primary goal of keeping each other informed and identifying opportunities to collaborate or build on existing work. The discussions focus on country level action, the development of tools and resources, changes in policy, and upcoming events.



Innovate

Podcasts

The network launched two podcast series in 2022. The first series focuses on why and how SMEs can fight forced labour and sets out some of the network's key messages.

The second series looks at how forced labour is linked to other crimes, abuses, and issues, such as child labour, climate change, environmental degradation, and illicit trade. The podcasts feature interviews with network members and experts.

The second series of podcasts was particularly successful, arguably because it made the most of heightened media profiles resulting from the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour and COP26 – the UN's global climate change conference.

All podcasts were in English, except for a longer, more in-depth episode in French on child labour and forced labour in Côte d'Ivoire and the actions businesses, employers' organizations and the government are taking to eradicate both.

All our podcasts are broadcast through ILO channels, together with all podcasts produced by the ILO. In 2021, our episode on the Côte d'Ivoire was the third most listened-to podcast out of all podcasts published on ILO channels.



Podcast Series 1

How and why SMEs could be catalysts in forced labour eradication

- Episode 1: Calling all SMEs: Why and how to achieve responsible business conduct.
- Episode 2: SME action is more important than ever to end forced labour during COVID-19.
- Episode 3: SMEs are crucial in the responsible business conduct conversation.

Podcast Series 2

Trapped in silos? Why forced labour eradication requires an integrated approach.

- Episode 4: Climate change, migration, and child and forced labour.
- Episode 5: Child and forced labour and environmental degradation in the fishing sector.
- Episode 6: Child and forced labour, human trafficking, and illicit trade.
- Episode 7: Une conversation sur le travail forcé et des enfants en Côte d'Ivoire (A conversation on forced labour and child labour in Côte d'Ivoire)
- Episode 8: Fighting child labour and forced labour in Mexico (forthcoming)

Fair recruitment and SMEs

Having already published several well-received tools on fair recruitment and SMEs in 2020, we worked with the ILO's International Training Centre to produce a long-awaited [Due Diligence Toolkit for Fair Recruitment](#) towards the end of 2021. Taking a practical approach, the digital toolkit helps companies set out a due diligence process when hiring workers from abroad, offering step-by-step guidance. The toolkit was used to support a training course for 130 ILO constituents. The toolkit, currently only in English, will be translated into French and Spanish in 2022. A separate version will be adapted to the national context of Malaysia.

What really works to end forced labour?

The ILO GBNFL research on what works to eradicate forced labour in different contexts began in 2021. To find the answers, we interviewed more than 40 stakeholders throughout the year, including governments, companies, employer and business membership organizations, worker representative organizations, and civil society. The research will be published in 2022.



Support

Online events

The secretariat organized and hosted two online events to allow members and relevant stakeholders to continue accessing action-oriented data, information, and resources to tackle forced labour.

► [*How SMEs Can End Forced Labour \(April\)*](#)

The ILO GBNFL and Alliance 8.7 – the global partnership aiming to eradicate modern slavery by 2030 – jointly hosted a webinar and online discussion to determine how to unleash the potential of SMEs in the fight against forced labour. Over 80 participants joined the webinar, with the English, French and Spanish recordings on YouTube achieving a total of 317 views. More than 160 people joined the online discussion. Together, they elaborated [five priorities for action](#).

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

The annual general meeting was open to members and interested stakeholders. In addition to looking at the network's 2021 achievements and lessons learned, and the ambitions for 2022, the meeting was an opportunity for those new to the network to become better acquainted. A total of 24 participants joined, with many asking questions and sharing resources. Participants represented the private sector, civil society organizations, the UN, and donors.

Social media

In early 2020 the secretariat set up [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) accounts. In 2021 we picked up the pace. In addition to sharing relevant content for a business and policy maker audience, we also posted original content at least once a week.

The ILO GBNFL website

The ILO rebranded in 2021, entailing changes to the ILO GBNFL's website. We used this as an opportunity to improve design, functionality, and content. The website now features a new, much larger [library](#) with tools and resources for businesses on forced labour. We also improved integration of the website with other communication tools, such as social media channels and the quarterly newsletter.

Improving inclusion

In 2021 we made concerted efforts to reach additional audiences, in particular SMEs and policy makers more comfortable communicating in French and Spanish as opposed to English.

- On social media, we post and share regularly in French and Spanish. This has gained us additional followers and visibility, as well as helping to reach Latin American audiences.
- While our website is predominantly in English, it now also features information in French and Spanish. For instance, our [membership page](#) features several brochures on the network, all of which are available in English, French, and Spanish.
- Our quarterly newsletter has been published in both French and English throughout 2021.
- We produced our first podcast in French, with a podcast in Spanish currently in the making.
- The webinar with Alliance 8.7 benefited from instantaneous translation in French and Spanish. The summaries and webinar recordings were also shared in English, French, and Spanish.

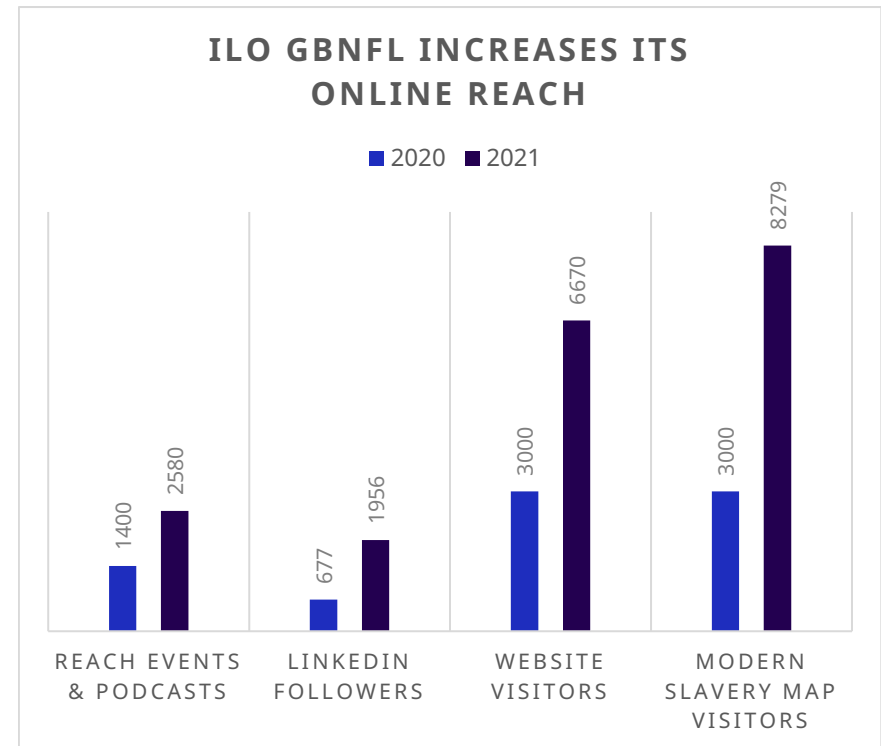
▶ The difference we made

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

Increasing our reach

In 2021 we successfully amplified our digital voice.

- ▶ Through our events and podcasts, we reached 2,580 people. Our podcasts were listened to 1,780 times, and the number of listens continues to climb. The secretariat's events reached more than 800 people.
- ▶ The number of LinkedIn followers nearly tripled compared to 2020 figures, reaching just under 2,000 by the end of 2021. Our LinkedIn account made an estimated 54,000 impressions. Nearly two out of five followers (39%) occupy senior positions in their organizations, and therefore are in a position of influence. The top three industries our followers work in are international affairs (10.2%), non-profit organizations (8.2%), and government administration (5%).
- ▶ We more than doubled our Twitter followers to 356, with our tweets making nearly 11,000 impressions and tripling figures for 2021.
- ▶ We had more than double the amount of website visitors in 2021 compared to 2020, with almost 6,700 visiting our website.
- ▶ The Modern Slavery Map had more than 8,000 visitors, up from 3,000 visitors in 2020 and 916 in 2019.
- ▶ The newsletter audience has shown steady growth since the beginning of 2020, starting with just 20 subscribers, and now reaching 170 readers.



Supporting members

Seven of our members answered a survey about their experience of ILO GBNFL between late 2021 and early 2022.

All seven read ILO GBNFL communications materials such as the regular newsletter, Twitter feed, Linked-In posts, and/or website updates, at least once a month. All found these useful to varying degrees in helping them play a bigger, more effective role in eradicating forced labour. They also shared ILO GBNFL communications materials with at least 2,500 others, such as colleagues, partners, peers, members of their organization, and social media audiences. Only two members regularly shared ILO GBNFL communications material on social media.

All seven survey respondents had attended ILO GBNFL events and meetings and agreed that these helped increase their awareness of the nature of forced labour (what forced labour is, why it occurs, and where, when, and how it is found). Five respondents also said that the events helped them gain tools to tackle forced labour and made them feel more confident in their ability to do so.

Advocacy

Among ILO GBNFL's knowledge products, the [fact sheet on forced labour](#) (2020) and the online [Modern Slavery Map](#) were most popular. These were followed by the [policy briefs on forced labour and fair recruitment in Vietnam](#) (2020) and the checklist for SMEs (2021): '[Calling all SMEs! Ten steps on the journey to ending forced labour by 2030](#)'. Four members used ILO GBNFL knowledge products in their advocacy efforts.

The seven survey respondents met at least 24 times in 2021 with decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders as part of their efforts to end forced labour. They also gave at least 57 presentations on forced labour and related topics. The respondents reached more than 10,000 people indirectly through media (newsletters, radio, TV, newspapers, websites, and so on) and social media.

As a result of members' efforts, at least seven additional decision-makers now publicly support ending forced labour.

Delivering on our commitment

The membership survey 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 positive. Respondents generally agreed that because of ILO GBNFL work in 2021, 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 act.
- ▶ All recommend ILO GBNFL membership to other organizations and businesses.

► Looking ahead

This section provides an overview of our 2022 priorities. In 2022, we will focus on supporting businesses to end forced labour by sharing clear-cut data, information, and resources (our 'Support' focus area). As COVID-19 restrictions appear to be easing somewhat, we also hope to plan in-person events to help members and relevant stakeholders to connect.

Country action: Mexico

Our focus will move to Mexico, another Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country. A set of policy briefs on forced labour in Mexico is currently being developed and due for launch in 2022. The new toolkit for SMEs on how to eradicate forced labour through due diligence and fair recruitment will be adapted to Mexico's specific context. We will also produce a podcast in Spanish on forced labour in Mexico, including on what businesses, employers' organizations and the government can do to tackle it.

Eliminating forced labour of children

With the fifth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour taking place in May and following the 2021 International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, we will continue to focus on the links between child labour and forced labour and the actions that tackle both. This includes information sessions for employer and business membership organizations during the Conference, as well as further promotion of our policy brief on forced labour of children and relevant podcasts.

2022 Global Award for SME Action on Forced Labour

While the number of entries to the 2021 award was low, the promotion of the award significantly raised the profile of our key message that 'SMEs can turn the tide on forced labour'. Entries to the 2021 award were received towards the end of the year, and the first half of 2022 will see us dedicate time and energy to promoting the good practices of the contestants through events and communications. During the second half of the year, we will build on the lessons learned from the 2021 Global Award for SME Action on Forced Labour to launch a similar award.

Supporting the network and driving growth

As we dedicated additional resources to digital campaigning in 2021 because of continued COVID-19 restrictions, we were not able to put as much effort into network recruitment as we had planned. Monitoring data 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 in 2022.

Sharing new data

In 2022 the ILO plans to release its updated Global Estimates of Forced Labour. We will raise awareness of the new figures and their implications for businesses.

Thank you to all our members for their ongoing support and we look forward to continued engagement in 2022.

The ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour would like to thank the European Union, French Ministry of Labour, 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

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

ⁱⁱ US Department of State 2021. [2021 Trafficking in Person Report.](#)