International Labour Organization | GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORK ON FORCED LABOUR

Annual Report

January – December 2024

Website Email LinkedIn

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

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▶ Message from the Chair

Dear Network community,

Global efforts to prevent and eliminate forced labour continue, but the pace must accelerate to end this exploitation, which still affects 27.6 million people worldwide. Businesses play a crucial role in this fight, as 63% of forced labour victims (excluding forced commercial exploitation) are found in the private sector. Furthermore, a recent ILO estimate reveals that forced labour generates illegal annual profits of USD 236 billion. This figure reflects the wages or earnings stolen from the pockets of workers by the perpetrators of forced labour through their coercive practices. These profits fuel further exploitation, strengthen criminal networks, encourage corruption, undermine the rule of law, and create unfair competition among businesses.

In 2024, the International Labour Organization's Global Business Network on Forced Labour (ILO GBNFL) sought to increase its country presence, without neglecting the global-level activities. It continued to find opportunities for face-to-face and virtual awareness raising, training, and advocacy seminars and meetings.

Significant efforts were also spent on country-level work. In Malaysia, the Network participated in key roundtable discussions between the government and employers, hosted a country briefing with the private sector, and published a due diligence toolkit for fair recruitment customized for Malaysian businesses. In Mexico, the ILO GBNFL has been working with its member, the Confederation of Industrial Chambers of the United Mexican States (CONCAMIN), on a roadmap to establish concrete actions to support the private sector in the fight against forced labour. As part of this roadmap, the Network and CONCAMIN co-hosted a highly demanded seminar on forced labour for employer organisations and companies. In Mongolia, we participated in a workshop on Responsible Business and Forced Labour to help raise awareness and share international best practices. The Network is also increasing its capacity-building portfolio to better equip its members and bring added value to its country interventions. We expect to publish a flagship handbook for combatting forced labour for businesses and employers in the coming year.

It makes me proud to announce that our membership continues to grow. We welcomed the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Employers' Federation of Pakistan as new members to our Network. This partnership reinforces their work in eliminating forced labour and embracing fair and responsible business practices.

We also continued our online momentum. In response to the ongoing demand for our podcasts, we launched two new special episodes in 2024 on forced labour in Namibia and Malaysia. With a national focus, these podcasts aim to inspire businesses to act on forced labour.

In 2024, the Network underwent a change in management as we said goodbye to Laura Greene and welcomed Andrea Davila as our new Coordinator. I once again extend my deepest gratitude to both Coordinators and to all the members of the ILO GBNFL Steering Committee, whose hard work has allowed the Network to continue to thrive.

Finally, we are deeply thankful to our members for another year of unwavering commitment and efforts.

Yours faithfully,

Thomas Mackall

ILO GBNFL Steering Committee Chair for 2024
Senior Counsel, United States Council for International Business

▶ About the ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour

The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Global Business Network on Forced Labour (GBNFL) brings the ILO together 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 enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), develop practical resources and tools, and devise local solutions that help shape national frameworks to create lasting change.

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

The 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 set up 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 clear-cut data, information and resources to help busy businesses take steps to tackle forced labour.

ILO GBNFL members

The ILO GBNFL members are businesses, as well as employer and business membership organizations (EBMOs) including industry trade groups and sectoral associations. Other business-led initiatives with complementary mandates and expertise can join as partners.

In 2024, we warmly welcomed to our Network two new members: 1) The Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MNCCI) and 2) The Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP). Our membership in 2024 comprised a total of 22 companies, EBMOs, business networks, and partners.

Company members

Apple Inc

Employer and business membership organizations

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, employers and business membership organizations and business networks. It strives to ensure a good regional representation, to be diverse in terms of sectors, ethnicity, and gender, 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 2024, the Steering Committee met in July, October and December.

Steering Committee members by membership segment

Large enterprises	Company
Vidhi Aggarwal	Apple Inc

EBMOs/SMEs	Company/organization
Eduardo Ocampo Bautista	Confederation of Industrial Chambers of the United Mexican States (CONCAMIN)
Abigail Roxas	Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP)
Douglas Opio	Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE)
Jason Pegat-Toquet	International Organization of Employers (IOE)
Thomas Mackall	United States Council for International Business (USCIB) *(Chair since 2023)*

Business networks	Organization
Angela Bozzon	Brazil Association of Textile Retail (ABVTEX)
Didier Bergeret	Consumer Goods Forum (CGF)
Linda Kromjong	amfori
Thomas Thomas	ASEAN CSR Network (ACN)

▶ Highlights in 2024

There were many highlights throughout the year, as the Network intensified work at country level and as the needs and commitment to action of our members grew. We have selected a few achievements below.

Connect

- ▶ We directly reached a large number of business stakeholders, raising their awareness and providing training through various channels.

- ▶ Our popular LinkedIn page provided weekly information on forced labour and Network related news. Our followers increased significantly to approximately 7,200 in 2024.

- ▶ Our website is continuously evolving with up-to-date information and enjoyed thousands of visitors in 2024.

- ▶ Our newsletter is published quarterly and has over 370 subscribers.

Convene

- ▶ The Network participated in a workshop on Responsible Business and Forced Labour in Mongolia. This event provided an excellent opportunity to raise awareness and share international best practices and identify potential areas of support and collaboration with the private sector in the country.

- ▶ Together with CONCAMIN, the Network co-hosted a seminar on forced labour in Mexico City to raise awareness and identify challenges related to forced labour in the mining, automobile, and agriculture sectors.

Innovate

- ▶ We published two special episodes on forced labour in Namibia and Malaysia. With a national focus, both podcasts aim to inspire businesses to act on forced labour and point listeners in the direction of free tools and resources. Each podcast reached over 400 listeners by the end of the year.

- ▶ We customized our highly demanded Due Diligence Toolkit for Fair Recruitment to the Malaysian context. The toolkit has helped businesses, especially SMEs, to set out a due diligence process when hiring workers from abroad.

Support

- ▶ A large part of the year was spent on producing the ILO GBNFL – IOE Handbook for Businesses and Employers on Combatting Forced Labour, which will be published next year. Our aim is to roll out the tool globally, translate it into different languages, and adapt it to different countries and sectors.

- ▶ We undertook a needs assessment to inform the development of a modular e-training course for specific functions within companies. The tool development is expected to finalize in 2025.

▶ Key results by focus area

Connect & Convene

Spreading the word

The ILO GBNFL presented at various events and workshops throughout the year reaching a large number of business stakeholders worldwide. We raised their awareness of forced labour and equipped businesses and their networks with important tools to tackle it.

▶ In May, The Network participated in a workshop on Responsible Business and Forced Labour in Mongolia. This event provided an excellent opportunity to raise awareness and share international best practices and identify potential areas of support and collaboration with the private sector in the country. Following the workshop, the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry became member of the Network.

▶ In August, the Network participated in a meeting organized by the ILO's 8.7 Accelerator Lab Multi-Partner Fund project, with the Employer's Association of Indonesia (APINDO) and representatives of employment agencies. The discussion focused on recruitment challenges and forced labour in Indonesia's fishing sector, particularly in commercial fishing in international waters. This meeting was instrumental in highlighting the need for stronger dialogue among supply chain actors to address these challenges effectively.

▶ In September, the Global Business Network was introduced during the National Conference on the Elimination of Forced Labour in Pakistan, which brought together over 100 participants from the private sector, including members of the Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP) and various companies. Following the conference, the EFP became a member of the Network.

▶ In December, the Network hosted its 2024 Annual Meeting online. An insightful panel discussion featuring representatives from employers' organizations in Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan and Uganda took place. Panelists shared recent country-level activities undertaken to combat forced labour, highlighted the primary challenges faced, explained the role of employers' organizations in supporting SMEs in these efforts, and discussed the role of the ILO GBNFL in supporting their work. Another highlight of the event was the preview of the ILO GBNFL - IOE Handbook for Employers and Businesses on Combatting Forced Labour which will be published next year. Ongoing actions to combat human trafficking and forced labour in United Nations and ILO supply chains were also showcased. To reach a broader audience, the meeting provided interpretation in both French and Spanish.

Online reach

We consistently engaged with members and other interested stakeholders through our active online presence.

▶ Our [LinkedIn](#) page provides relevant information on forced labour and Network news on a weekly basis. Our followers reached 7,200 people and organizations by the end of 2024.

▶ Our newsletter is published on a quarterly basis and provides timely updates on forced labour initiatives and useful shareable content, as well as GBNFL, ILO, and member news. By the end of 2024, we had over 370 subscribers to our newsletter from all over the world.

▶ Our combined [podcasts](#) were listened to over 6,400 times across all years since we produced our very first episode in 2020. Particularly demanded have been our series of training podcasts for SMEs.

▶ Our [website](#) is continuously being updated and receives thousands of visits every year, especially to our [online library](#), which showcases resources on forced labour published by the ILO, the ILO GBNFL and other actors.

▶ Our profile is also showcased in the ILO's core communications channels, reaching an audience of approximately 226,000 followers on Twitter and over 435,000 followers on LinkedIn. This has helped to raise the profile of forced labour, our Network, and several key 2024 products, such as our podcasts.

Country action

In 2024, the ILO GBNFL focused on working at country or sectoral levels in supporting the private sector and employer organisations.

Malaysia

Malaysia is a major destination country for migrant workers. We know from the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery report that migrant workers are three times more at risk of being in forced labour.

During 2024, the Network built on its ongoing efforts in Malaysia during the last couple of years, mostly focused on training Malaysian businesses. We continued to work closely with the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) to support roundtable discussions with their members and the government and also hosted a country briefing with the private sector. We also customized our highly demanded [Due Diligence Toolkit for Fair Recruitment](#) to the Malaysian context. The toolkit has helped businesses, especially SMEs, to use a due diligence process when hiring workers from abroad.

Mexico

Mexico, an Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country that has shown increased political will and a growing committed private sector to fighting forced labour, has been an area of focus for the Network.

During 2024, the ILO GBNFL worked with its member, CONCAMIN, on a roadmap to support the private sector in their efforts to prevent and eliminate forced labour. The roadmap includes sectoral dialogues in the mining, automobile, and agricultural sectors to identify challenges and propose targeted activities. As part of this roadmap, the Network co-hosted with CONCAMIN a seminar on forced labour for the private sector in November. The objective of this seminar was to raise awareness about forced labour, fair recruitment, the 11 indicators of forced labour, responsible business conduct, and due diligence. The event also facilitated three sectoral panel discussions with key stakeholders from the automobile, mining, and agricultural sectors to understand their specific challenges and concerns with respect to preventing forced labour, enabling the Network to better address these issues moving forward. The event hosted a high number of attendees from different industries. Take a look at our event report in Spanish and a short video from the event available on our website.

> **BOX 1: USEFUL RESOURCES ON FORCED LABOUR IN MEXICO**
>
> Policy briefs (in Spanish)
> - ▶ A summary for companies on forced labour in Mexico
> - ▶ A summary for companies on fair recruitment in Mexico
> - ▶ Measures and recommendations for companies and EBMOs to try and fight forced labour in Mexico
>
> Podcast (in Spanish)
> - ▶ Ending forced labour and child labour in Mexico: A business perspective

Mongolia and Pakistan

The membership of the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MNCCI) and the Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP) marked an important milestone in 2024. Moving forward, the Network will collaborate with the ILO in Mongolia and Pakistan to provide more targeted support to the private sector in preventing and eliminating forced labour.

Innovate & Support

Tools and resources

The Network is increasing its capacity-building portfolio to better equip its members and bring added value to its country interventions.

▶ In 2024 the ILO GBNFL produced and launched a Due Diligence Toolkit for Fair Recruitment in Malaysia. This toolkit provides guidelines to Malaysian businesses, especially SMEs, to use a due diligence process when hiring workers from abroad. It features step-by-step guidance for companies throughout the recruitment process.

▶ A large part of 2024 was spent on producing the ILO *GBNFL – IOE Handbook for Businesses and Employers on Combatting Forced Labour*, which will be published next year. We organized two feedback sessions with employers' organizations and companies, which provided valuable feedback. The aim is to roll out the tools globally, translate them into different languages, and adapt it to the realities of countries and/or sectors.

▶ The Network has also conducted a needs assessment through desk review and company interviews for its upcoming e-learning modules, which will address specific functions within companies, such as procurement, human resources, and more. These modules will be developed next year, with plans to roll them out and translate and adapt them in the following years.

▶ The ILO GBFNL supported the efforts to update the due diligence section of the Forced Labour Observatory. Network members provided valuable insights though a survey interview circulated to them.

Podcasts

We continued our podcast production, following the success of last year's training series for SMEs in podcast format. During the first quarter of the year, we published in our online library two special edition podcasts on forced labour in Namibia and Malaysia. With a national focus, both podcasts aim to inspire businesses to act on forced labour and point listeners in the direction of free tools and resources. We hope you will enjoy listening to these podcasts and share them widely.

All our podcasts are broadcasted through ILO channels, together with all podcasts produced by the ILO. They can be heard through the various platforms: Apple, Spotify, and Sound Cloud.

▶   **Podcast: "[Fighting forced labour in fishing: How Namibia became a pioneer](#)"**

Find out how Namibia is taking on forced labour and other labour rights violations in fishing while also tackling environmental degradation. Hear from national and global forced labour experts as well as the Namibian Labour Inspectorate.

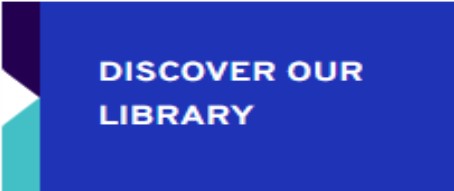▶   **Podcast: "[Malaysia's rubber industry takes on forced labour](#)"**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, global demand for rubber gloves soared, prompting the Malaysian rubber industry to increase production in the face of labour shortages. Forced labour reports led to the United States blocking imports of the goods of seven Malaysian companies. In response, the sector adopted a zero-recruitment fee model and reimbursed migrant workers, making significant progress in just four years.

Linking businesses with support

The Network is available year-round to its members and interested stakeholders that may have questions or contributions about eradicating forced labour. Questions can be directed to fl-businessnetwork@ilo.org or by sending us a message [here](#).

The Network has an extensive [online library](#) where businesses can access up-to-date relevant information, tools, and resources on forced labour and fair recruitment. We continue to regularly share and promote these resources at our meetings, as applicable. These resources have been developed and published by the Network, the ILO, or members and partners of the Network. We continued to make concerted efforts to reach additional audiences, in particular SMEs and policy makers at national levels. While our library is predominantly in English, we have to date produced various tools and resources in French, Spanish and Portuguese.

DISCOVER OUR LIBRARY

ONLINE LIBRARY

A sample of key resources:

▶ Eradicating Forced Labour: What Works in Practice (report and toolbox) - summary of actions that have been identified as gaining ground on the eradication of forced labour by contributing towards identification, prevention, and remediation of forced labour (the toolbox is also available in French and Spanish)

▶ Due Diligence Toolkit for Fair Recruitment - helps businesses, especially SMEs, to set out a due diligence process when hiring workers from abroad (also available in French and Spanish)

▶ ILO Forced Labour Observatory - a platform that provides comprehensive global and country information on forced labour

▶ ILO GBNFL Factsheet: The Latest Global Facts and Figures on Forced Labour at Your Fingertips – summary of the main figures and insights of the new Global Estimates on Modern Slavery report (also available in French and Spanish)

▶ Online training course: The ILO'S 11 Indicators of Forced Labour - webinar that discusses the 11 operational indicators; intended to help with the identification of forced labour, how it arises, and how it affects its victims

▶ ILO Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs - summary and schematic of the ILO's definition of recruitment fees and related costs

▶ ILO Hub: Labour Provisions in Trade Agreements - allows users to navigate and analyse labour provisions in trade agreements through an interactive world map, trend graphs and tables

▶ Looking ahead

In 2025, the Network will focus its efforts on country-level action and expanding its capacity-building portfolio. This section outlines our approach to achieving these objectives.

Country-level action

The Network will continue its country-level work with its members in Mexico, Mongolia and Pakistan where private-sector action can provide support and impetus to the wider implementation of national strategies and actions to eradicate forced labour and thereby support sustainable change. The Network hopes to increase interventions in other countries with time and explore synergies to join forces with other ILO projects being implemented. Sectoral capacity building and raising awareness will be key activities.

Some of our country-level activities for 2025 will include:

Mexico:

- Continue the implementation of the roadmap together with CONCAMIN.
- Join forces with other ILO projects as well as external organizations to provide more targeted support to the mining sector.

Mongolia:

- Enhance the capacities of the MEF and MNCCI, enabling them to better support their members, particularly SMEs, through awareness-raising and training on forced labour.
- Explore the establishment of a country working group.

Pakistan:

- Support the efforts of the EFP to engage with employers in informal sectors such as mining, agriculture, and brick kilns—areas known for high instances of forced and bonded labour.

Global / Regional level

Fishing sector dialogue

- The Network plans to collaborate with ongoing ILO projects in Ghana, Indonesia, and Thailand targeting the fishing sector, along with other organizations, to facilitate a global dialogue on fair recruitment and forced labour with supply chain actors.

Capacity-building

The ILO GBNFL will be increasing its capacity building portfolio to better equip its members and bring added value to its country interventions.

- The Network will publish and disseminate the ILO *GBNFL – IOE Handbook for Businesses and Employers on Combatting Forced Labour*, which contains practical tools for conducting due diligence on forced labour. This will be a flagship handbook, and it is expected to be translated and adapted to the specific realities of different countries and sectors.
- The Network will develop a version of the Handbook adapted to the realities of SMEs to be rolled out at the country level.
- The Network will develop e-learning modules on the prevention and elimination of forced labour tackling specific functions within companies such as procurement, human resources, among others.

Knowledge-Sharing

- In 2025, the Network aims to organize a series of informative webinars. The first of these webinars is planned for January 2025 and will be a dialogue with European Commission representatives on understanding the new "European Union regulation on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the Union market".
- The Network will continue to provide opportunities to convene by promoting different events throughout the year. Stay tuned to our website for this information.

Thank you to all our members for their ongoing support. We look forward to continued engagement in 2025.

The ILO Global Business Network on Forced Labour would like to thank the French Ministry of Labour and the Agence Francaise de Développement, the United States Department of Labor, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany for their financial support during the annual reporting period, complementing the financial and technical resources provided by ILO.

To join us, and for further information | fl-businessnetwork@ilo.org or visit flbusiness.network