



UN.GIFT Private Sector Advisory Panel (Ver 3)

Background and justification

Private sector involvement is becoming critical to the overall development of national economies and the international economic system and is actively being woven into the development agenda of every nation. Recent studies suggest a correlation between the effects created by globalization, and trafficking in persons.¹ With rising global consumer demand for products and services, businesses seek cheap labour and resources. This constantly challenges the balance between the business requirement to be profitable and the ethical responsibility to increase development standards in society.

Therefore, it is becoming increasingly imperative that private sector entities consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customer, employees, shareholders, communities and the environment in all aspects of their operations. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that best practices in supply-chain management are implemented

and maintained, strengthening capacity-building measures, providing increasing sustainability to the bottom of the pyramid, and creating adequate monitoring systems for private sector behavior.

Recognizing the importance of the private sector's influence in the world, the United Nations enacted the UN Global Compact in 2000, a forum for building common partnerships between governments, companies, labor civil society organizations to influence policy dialogues, learning, local networks and projects on sustainable development and social responsibility.

The core principles of the Global Compact include the preservation of human rights and the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labor.

It is the task of governments to create legal, political and institutional space for civil society to express its views; organise and participate in the development process; participate in the planning and review of MDG-based strategies; deliver services; train and involve communities; network; build coalitions; share advice; exert pressure for resource mobilisation; foster

¹ Bales, Kevin. *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

political will; and socially mobilize particular communities, especially those that are vulnerable and marginalized.

For civil society to effectively perform these functions it is important that its capacity is strengthened, financial sustainability maintained, internal accountability and transparency enhanced and the mistrust between government and CSO removed through enhanced dialogue, partnership and collaboration²

Therefore, in keeping with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, we recognize that efforts to mitigate human trafficking cannot be undertaken by member states and non-private actors alone but through a multilateral participative approach involving all stake holders. It is incumbent upon us to work together, along with the private sector to respond to the challenges and enhance the contribution to mitigating the crime of trafficking in persons.

Human trafficking is about maximizing profits through exploiting persons against their will. It can occur anywhere, not only in the sex industry but in the work place and within the supply chain as well within many sectors e.g. in construction, agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality industry, and other services sectors including domestic.

The business community can play a crucial role in fighting human trafficking: on the one hand it can address and reduce the factors that allow human trafficking to be profitable (e.g. through ethical trading initiatives, code of conducts or supply chain responsibility); on the other hand it can contribute – through knowledge and resources – to facilitate and multiply action against human trafficking (e.g. philanthropic support to projects or corporate social responsibility activities).

With the increasing interest on their social responsibility, the private sector is becoming a strong active partner and a main catalyst in all arenas of social development. Its strength in quick deployment of resources across a wide geographic area make it a very effective and sustainable model in the fight against human trafficking when partnered with States and other civil society groups, including NGOs. To date, only a few companies have ventured into fighting human trafficking as a key part of their social responsibility strategy.

Therefore we aim to increase active participation of the private sector to combat trafficking in persons.

² Government for the Millennium Development Goals: Core Issues and Good Practises, UN DESA publication, March 2007

Objectives

Specifically, UN.GIFT wants to create a platform where the private sector is given an opportunity and a substantive role in interacting with government, civil society, NGO's and others to actively engage against human trafficking, through new and existing programs and projects.

Many anti human trafficking projects have been initiated by the private sector in the past years not to create a better public image but in support of their corporate social responsibility. They include job creation and/or training activities for victims of human trafficking (Microsoft, Amul, Heritage Hotel Group); securing slave or forced labour free production (Calibaut, Nestlé, Rugmark); research into child and forced labour (Burberry, Manpower); awareness (MTV, Air France) and dealing with the public and managing the supply chain (Adidas/Reebok, GAP). These are only some of the examples to showcase the involvement of the private sector in fighting human trafficking.

The creation of a private sector panel or coalition at the Vienna Forum will set the basis for establishing a permanent business advisory relationship to advise UN.GIFT on what the private sector can and is willing to do in the concerted fight against human trafficking.

Approach

The members of the private sector coalition will include CEOs and other top management representatives from the private corporations, specialized agencies against human trafficking and forced labor, workers and employers organisations, experts and organizations dealing with corporate social responsibility, other individuals and private bodies active in development in general. There will be efforts made to ensure a balanced geographical and industry representation.

Experts and organizations dealing with corporate social responsibility would for example be some of the following: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Europe, CSR Asia, International Business Leadership Forum (IBLF), World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), International Workers organisations, The Global Compact, International Employers Organization (IEO), United Nations Office for International Partnerships (UNFIP), ILO etc.

In all circumstances, the involved organisations must be willing to abide to the globally accepted values and principles of the United Nations.

Organization of the work

The invitees will provide inputs through consultative sessions on the development and implementation of activities within the scope of UN.GIFT at a global and regional/local level.

In particular, it is anticipated that two meetings will be held per year in the life-span of UN.GIFT. The first such meeting is proposed for the fourth quarter of 2007 and the second is proposed at the Vienna Forum. The meetings will be established with support from the International Business Leadership Forum (IBLF).

These meetings will include e discussion/ virtual meetings in addition to the traditional meetings.

Expected outputs

1. Partnerships forged between the business community for creative response to fighting human trafficking;
2. Awareness raised on human trafficking within the business community;
3. Best practices established in the prevention, protection, prosecution and reintegration thematic areas where the private sector has been involved.
4. Projects and programmes developed for active private sector participation and support to fight human trafficking.
5. Concrete measures identified on how the private sector can contribute to fighting human trafficking.
6. More companies inspired to bring the fight against human trafficking significantly in their corporate social responsibility arena.
7. Resources mobilized (financial and or other) from the private sector in the fight against human trafficking.

Work plan

November / December 2007

Organize a meeting with leading private sector companies, workers and employers organisations with the help of IBLF to discuss business cases which will be presented at the Vienna Forum;

Discuss with these organizations a follow up on how to partner with UN.GIFT to fight human trafficking and create joint action;

Develop and collect best practices fighting human trafficking from the corporate sector to actively communicate to the public-at-large

Build industry specific business cases to fight human trafficking

Build strategies to engage with the youth and communities in creating awareness to prevent victimization.

February 2008 – Vienna Forum

Organize and launch a private sector panel or coalition against human trafficking

Present and discuss best practices in fighting human trafficking through leveraging core competencies:

Microsoft's commitment to adding jobs in order to alleviate poor socio-economic conditions that lead to trafficking in persons in its area of operations

The chocolate industry actively avoiding forms of slavery by purchasing from supplies that do not use forced labour

The apparel industry's desire to partner with other actors to conduct research on human trafficking to identify its root causes and implement solutions

Amul's role in bringing victims to run collection centres and shops for dairy products in India

The role of the airlines in creating awareness against human trafficking

The tourism industry and its role in the fight against child exploitation and sexual trafficking.

The case of Ricky Martin foundation working with local telephone operators in creating specific free hot lines for reporting human trafficking and assistance to victims.

Present and discuss specific challenges that exist for the private sector that hinder their active involvement in this fight.

Discuss the specific assistance the private sector requires from the developmental partners, the Governments and the United Nations to help it fight human trafficking.

June 2008 – Post Vienna Forum

Follow-up meeting with the progress in the fight against human trafficking

Compiling and showcasing the good practices of companies to expand the number of active private sector companies in AHT activities.

Building increasing multi sector links with the private sector in advancing sustainability of the global fight against human trafficking

Launching of a hologram/ label "Free from human trafficking" or "Made by non-trafficked persons" or "Human-Trafficking Free"

Initiation of a research in the apparel industry and the extent, of human trafficking involvement