What is the Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labour?

Launched in 2005, the National Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labour is a multi-stakeholder initiative involving Ethos Institute, the Social Observatory Institute, the International Labour Organization and NGO RedesBrasil, which combines efforts to engage national and international companies that have become signatories of the Pact, to maintain their supply chains free from slave labour.

The Pact foresees not only to establish commercial restrictions on enterprises that profit from the exploitation of slave labour, but also to promote decent work, social integration of workers and awareness raising of workers vulnerable to enslavement into slave labour. Companies are also expected to monitor and implement actions and publicize the results of their efforts to eradicate modern slavery.

Since the Pact was launched, signatory companies have committed to the following commitments: cutting commercial ties with businesses that have made use of slave labour; incorporating contractual clauses associated with practices that characterize slavery; implementing mechanisms to track products and providing in-house training for employees and trading partners on slave labour to eradicate the problem.

How to join the Pact?

Since 1996, more than 40,000 victims have been rescued in Brazil by the Federal Government. On average, the National Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labour has raised the overall wellbeing of workers. Among its principles are the eradication of this hideous crime and the promotion of decent work.

Although the business sector benefits from this initiative because it gains instruments to help maintain the various industry sectors free from slave labour, the main beneficiaries are the Brazilian workers, since the National Pact has made bad employers think twice before exploiting workers.

Society is on watch

The supply chain troubles and the National Pact are valuable instruments in the fight against contemporary slavery, especially due to commercial implications. These instruments enable society to become more conscious and aware of the problem, and easily identify companies that profit from the exploitation of slave labour.

Professional Training

The Committee offers in-house training for employees of signatory companies and any of their suppliers free of charge. A virtual platform (www.pactorascional.com.br) was created containing information about corporate social responsibility policies towards the fight against slave labour. Information about the Pact, the signatories, and how to join the Pact, news and documents on slave labour. Furthermore, it provides access to a list of companies that have been identified as using slave labour, better known as the “Grey List.”

Contact:
Pacto@rereportbra3Log.ti
+55 (11) 2506-5570

NATIONAL PACT FOR THE ERADICATION OF SLAVE LABOUR IN BRAZIL

Considering:

a) that there is a list of all companies and their sub-contractors who exploit people through slave labour in Brazil, known as the “Grey List” (Law 11.346/2006) by means of physical and moral repression involving both fines and the actual or partial revocation of their certificate;

b) that describes the changes already made and the efforts taken by the companies involved in the various productive chains and by agencies from both the government and civil society from alternative ways of “freed” labour in Brazil; and that in the rural area this forced labour usually assumes the features of slavery because of debt, for the priority of the government and the society should be to eradicate this immediately;

c) that all kinds of forced labour represent a serious violation of human rights, also recognized by the Universal Human Rights Declaration, the 23rd and 25th International Labour Organization Conventions, and the Declaration of the Universal Principles and Rights at Work from the EU, and by the American Convention on Human Rights;

d) that the protection of a positive agenda is important, so that the commitment of all companies and the various agencies involved with social responsibility and sustainable development can be better valued;

All signatories, upon endorsement, agree to increase their efforts to dignify and improve labour modalities within productive chains in all activities carried out by the “Employers Register Act 11.346/2006” and that will work in conditions analogous to slavery. So, within their own sphere of activity, any company joining the initiative is expected to:

1. Define specific goals to regulate labour relations of producers and suppliers within the productive chain, not only by providing adequate access to decent work and social integration, but also by developing preventive safety and health measures;

2. Define commercial restrictions to companies and/or identified people in the productive chain that make use of degrading working conditions associated with practices that are considered analogous to slavery;

3. Support social and productive integration of workers that are still working under degrading or uncertain conditions, so that they can have opportunities to overcome social exclusion;

4. Raise workers’ awareness to the vulnerabilities of slave labour enslavement and support slavery prevention campaigns to society;

5. Support public and private partnership actions to feedback vocational and professional training of workers;

6. Support actions against evasion of taxes and fines;

7. Support and discuss proposals that will accelerate and demand implementation, by the National Government, of actions to be carried out in the Brazil’s National Plan to Eradicate Slave Labour;

8. Monitor the implementation of the actions launched above and the achievements of the proposed goals, as well as disseminating the results of this joint effort;

9. Institutionalize and disseminate the experience in order to replicate these actions in Brazilian and other countries at the highest level and in all kinds of developing work and trade relations;

10. Assess the results of these policies and activities in the agreement a year after its formulation;

In this case the National Pact and entities, considering that they do not have any power to control these measures, their commitment remains of advising their associates to observe the recommended practices in the present agreement.

This initiative is voluntary, any social actor committed to dignity, formation, modernization and eradication of degrading labour and slavery can join.

Brasilia, May 10th, 2005
SLAVE LABOUR: ITS TIME TO END THIS SHAME ONCE AND FOR ALL.