Well Made campaign and report "Help Wanted: Hiring, Human Trafficking and Slavery in the Global Economy”

Verité is launching the Well Made campaign to demonstrate how all stakeholder groups can make a difference through impactful programs in their supply chains, starting with looking for work across borders and how hiring traps can lead to human trafficking, slavery and debt bondage for so many migrant workers.

As part of the HELP WANTED initiative, the organization released a major report from a year-long investigation that illustrated the prevalence of forced labor and human trafficking across multiple sectors, and widespread throughout the globe. In addition, the group launched a website to help direct the many stakeholder groups with the questions needed to ask and steps needed to take in order to eradicate forced labor and slavery in supply chains around the world. To download a copy of the report and visit HELP WANTED, visit www.verite.org/wellmade .

“Our findings in this report illustrate that human trafficking and forced labor in our modern lives and across the global economy are very alive and well,” said Dan Viederman, Executive Director of Verite. “HELP WANTED was designed to highlight where this process begins – in the hiring stage – and to offer the tools, methods and solutions that need to be adopted by many groups in order to solve these widespread labor abuses; we look forward to guiding these groups through this process in the coming months,” Viederman added.

Migrant workers all around the world make the products we buy and harvest the food we eat.

In many ways our economy is driven by migrants, who cross borders for jobs that can help them achieve a better life, or simply allow them to feed their family. No matter what product - clothes, shoes, computers, toys, furniture and food - it is likely that migrant workers were a part of making or harvesting it. Migrants provide the flexible workforce that keeps our just-in-time global economy humming.

Workers will go to great lengths to snag promising jobs, no matter where they are located. Often prospective workers will pay sizable sums to one or more middlemen - labor brokers and moneylenders - whose practices are often exploitative and illegal. Often workers take out loans to pay the fees. In doing so, they make a simple calculation: if they work so many months at a certain rate, they will have a specific sum at the end of the contract period -enough to pay off the loan and still net significant savings.

What they don't realize is that:

The job probably won't pay what the broker promised;

They don't often know about the compound interest on their debt, which increases every month;

There are illegal wage deductions and unexpected fees;

Their passports may be taken away so that they can't complain or flee;

Their work visas will tie them to their employer, giving them no other alternative way to dig themselves out of debt; What they also don't know is that they may end up for months - even years -- in slave-like conditions or debt bondage.

It all starts with hiring. Whether you are - or work with - multinational brands, governments, investors, anti-slavery or labor-rights organizations, social auditors or certifiers, your approach to protecting migrant workers is not complete unless it includes a focus on the path into the workforce.