



What is Trafficking in Human Beings (THB)?

It is “...the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability (...) for the purpose of exploitation.”¹

Exploitation includes sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery-like practices, servitude or the removal of organs.

According to the ILO, human trafficking can also be regarded as forced labour. Therefore, the newly-released [ILO 2012 Global Estimate of Forced Labour](#), stating that there are **20.9 million victims**, of which **90%** are exploited by private individuals and **enterprises**, captures the full spectrum of human trafficking abuses, except cases of organ removal, forced marriage or adoption, unless these result in forced labour.

Why is Human Trafficking an issue for Business?

Human trafficking violates international human rights norms and laws, often defies international labour standards, and regularly involves corruption. Business should ensure that all elements of their operations, including their products, premises and services are not contributing to human trafficking.

How can Business engage?

- Raise public awareness of human trafficking in the informal recruitment industry, in order to promote responsible recruitment practices and work towards the establishment of legally-regulated agencies to mitigate the risk of human trafficking.
- Lobby governments to improve laws and regulations, take part in community activities and contribute to awareness-raising campaigns.
- Develop a corporate strategy to prevent human trafficking, improve monitoring of the supply chain and enable human rights due diligence action.
- Seek advice from national and international business and employers' organisations, participate in peer activities and forums, form partnerships and support anti-trafficking projects.
- Train internally to be able to understand, identify and prevent cases of human trafficking in business operations and in relationships with suppliers.

¹ United Nations, Treaty Series, Volume 2237, No. 39574

What is the IOE Position on THB?

The IOE is committed to providing clear guidance to members with regard to the different forms forced labour may take in the modern global economy, the ways it can be identified and the remedial action that can be taken by business and employers' organisations at different levels of operations.

Forced Labour is no longer considered a legal issue only for States; it also concerns the private sector. It is also becoming **a significant risk for employers**, and not only for small enterprises on the margins of the formal economy in developing countries, but also for multinational enterprises with complex supply chains and outsourcing operations.

How is the IOE engaging?

The IOE provides guidance, together with examples of good business practice and advice on remediation, via:

- A Handbook for Employers and Business in collaboration with the ILO (currently being updated): *Combating Forced Labour. A Handbook for Employers and Business*, 2008, www.ioe-emp.org
- An IOE Position Paper on Forced Labour for Member Federations: *Forced Labour. Why it is an issue for Employers*, 2010, www.ioe-emp.org

At the global level, the IOE supports the adoption of ILO Conventions on forced labour (Nos. 29 & 105) and promotes the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which includes the abolition of forced labour, and informs the labour principles of the UN Global Compact.

The IOE is committed to a human rights approach and engages with relevant global actors such as the [ILO Global Alliance against Forced Labour](#), [UN GIFT](#), and the [Organisation for Security and Co-operation \(OSCE\) Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons](#) to build partnership, develop strategies and participate in global policy framework discussions to advance the international business agenda against human trafficking.

For more Information and Answers to your Questions

Please visit the [Forced Labour](#) section of our website www.ioe-emp.org. If you do not find what you are looking for, please contact the IOE's Adviser on Forced Labour: Amelia Espejo: espejo@ioe-emp.org, or call +41 22 929 00 19.