



REPRESENTING EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Forced Labour: An Employers' Perspective

By Brent Wilton
Deputy Secretary-General



- Forced labour – lower profile than other “business risk” issues
- More on the agenda as companies dig deeper into supply chain risks
- Grey zone between formal and informal is more evident
- Increasing awareness of consumers and buyers
- Increasing pressure to respect fundamental / human rights



- For buyers the issue becomes relevant where:
 - ✓ Suppliers fall into grey/informal economy
 - ✓ Where trafficked people enter the labour market within the supply chain



- For employers at national level impacts on:
 - ✓ Their own supply chain
 - ✓ Employees leaving to another “employer”
 - ✓ Labour practices (taking ID/passports, locking people in the workplace, etc.)



- “The term forced or compulsory labour shall mean all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily” – ILO Convention 29.
- Problem of “content” of forced labour in an ILO context contentious issues surround overtime and private prison work.
- Mixed in with human trafficking



REPRESENTING EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

- Need for sensitization
 - A cultural as well as legal issue
 - Actively work with ILO
 - Action focused on governments – Myanmar
 - Alliance to combat forced labour



- Issue of remediation if uncovered
- Need to treat like any other supply chain “risk” factor
 - Support local employer organizations in:
 - ✓ Assessing national risk;
 - ✓ Engaging in national employer initiatives;
 - ✓ Addressing issues upon discovery;
 - ✓ Sensitizing local employers generally on forced labour issues.



- IOE focus on Convention content and support ILO efforts to address forced labour in that context.
- Where it is done? It is done in general terms
 - Statements against use of forced labour, either underlined or linked to:
 - ✓ Global Compact principle;
 - ✓ 1998 ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; or
 - ✓ Conventions:
 - Convention 29 (1930) – 168 ratifications
 - Convention 105 (1957) – 172 ratifications