

“ENDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS SMART BUSINESS”

EHTN-ESCAP: Luncheon with the Business Community

**Asia Pacific Business Forum
Bangkok, Thailand, 26 July 2011**



OBJECTIVE:

End Human Trafficking Now (EHTN) is the first worldwide initiative to engage the private sector in anti-trafficking efforts. Whilst striving to put an end to human trafficking altogether, the organization puts business companies in the forefront of anti-trafficking efforts. The purpose of the meeting is to share experiences; showcase existing tools, developed in partnership with Microsoft and UNGIFT, for the use of companies to identify and prevent trafficking in their workplace; and inform them of the first-of-its-kind business leader's prize developed by UN Global Compact and UNGIFT that will be bestowed in 2012. This award recognizes the tireless work of business executives engaged in combating human trafficking.

MODERATOR:

Mr. David Arkless, *President, EHTN Board and President Corporate Affairs & Government, ManpowerGroup.*

SPEAKERS:

- **Dr. Noeleen Heyzer**, *Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP* (opening and closing statements);
- **Mr. David Arkless**, *President EHTN Board and President Corporate Affairs & Government, ManpowerGroup;*
- **Mr. Desarack Teso**, *Director, Corporate Affairs, South East Asia Emerging Markets, Microsoft (Thailand) Limited;*
- **Dr. Aleya Hammad**, *Executive Vice-President EHTN Board and Chair of the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Trafficking in Persons;*
- **Mr. Martin Reeve**, *Regional Advisor (Human Trafficking), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).*

DR. NOELEEN HEYZER
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)



As we speak, 1.36 million people are being trafficked in Asia-Pacific. People are bought and sold against their wishes just to live or support their families. Behind every figure is a tragic story that has a human face: daughters sold to pay a debt; young boys forced to work as slave labour on shipping vessels. The sad fact is that business is partially fueling the demand for trafficked labour.

Estimated annual profits made from the exploitation of all trafficked forced labour is US\$9.7 billion, and of that, 30.6% is generated in Asia and the Pacific.

The scope and magnitude of human trafficking in fact is so huge that unless we change the way we do business, not as business as usual, but a different way of doing business, we're not going to be able to address this serious transnational crime. Private sector must play a role. Traditional partners such as UN agencies and law enforcement organizations are no longer able to address the magnitude of the crime.

The need for business to engage on the issue of human trafficking, therefore, is paramount. Consumers and stakeholders are increasingly aware of ethical sourcing and supply chain issues through the media and advocacy groups. Consequently, companies especially those operating on a transnational level, are now expected to exhibit more transparency in their sourcing, and cannot afford to be complicit in the labour and human rights violations in any part of their value chain. Becoming active in the fight against human trafficking is smart business which will in turn reflect positively with consumers and stakeholders alike.

But more than that, companies now have a socially-contracted duty to ensure that international labour and human rights standards are cascaded throughout their entire value chain. Companies are also expected to be proactive in enforcing these standards, especially in regions where local laws are not yet inclusive of migrant labour issues and governments are not capable of enforcement on their own.

I am urging businesses today to sign the Athens Ethical Principles, in which companies pledge to help educate the public about trafficking and to avoid any use of trafficked labor. Some 10,000 companies globally have signed the protocol, but few of them are in Asia.

Let me close with a call to action – ending human trafficking is a fight that needs champions. Bringing to an end human trafficking is not only smart business, but it is where business is an indispensable partner and force for good – please join us today in this important struggle.

MR. DAVID ARKLESS
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD, END HUMAN TRAFFICKING NOW
PRESIDENT CORPORATE AFFAIRS & GOVERNMENT, MANPOWERGROUP



This is my first meeting as President of the Board of End Human Trafficking Now, and I feel great to be among you all!

I would like to thank you, Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, for having had the brilliant idea of bringing us together here to discuss an issue which, I know, is very close to your heart.

I would also like to thank the Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking of Thailand, for sponsoring this luncheon; and all of you here with us today.

I just want to start by asking two questions:

1. Did you know that human trafficking is the third largest industry in the criminal world?
2. Did you know that there are more “slaves” at work today than there has ever been at any point in history?

In fact, due to low costs and huge financial benefits, human trafficking has become one of the most lucrative illicit industries, generating tremendous profits of over an estimated US\$32 billion per year.

This terrible crime is born from the desire to maximize profit with minimal risks. The repercussions are felt on those businesses that choose to do ethical work with a moral standing, let alone the victims themselves who may never recover and who bear the highest cost – the cost of their lives.

It is in this context that End Human Trafficking Now was launched, bringing on board the business community, knowing that through its global outreach and network of connections, together, we would be able to make a contribution in reversing the tide of this illicit trade. We understood that a great deal was at stake for legitimate businesses if human trafficking continued to flourish. In fact, it *was* the business community that highlighted the fact that the financial and economic dimensions were central aspects of this trade, making the economic calculus as important as the moral argument.

Speaking for myself, when I began this work, I did not fully comprehend what all of this meant. And I can tell you that many corporate leaders are unaware of the implications that trafficking can have on their businesses. Sadly, many, after close examination, have found trafficking in a part of their supply chain. And some, to their cost, had to suffer the consequences when this was revealed by others.

Today, End Human Trafficking Now has become synonymous with the business fight against human trafficking. We have partnered with CNN International and BBC World over the last years to encourage business solutions to this problem. In partnership with the United Nations, we have elaborated case studies to highlight challenges and good practices of businesses in applying anti-trafficking corporate strategy, and the benefits they can gain from doing so. It is a win-win situation for both.

In order to support my colleagues in the business community to avoid falling in this trap, End Human Trafficking Now can offer you several proactive measures we can take together.

First, I invite you to look at, and sign the Athens Ethical Principles (which you will find in your folders). By applying the Athens Ethical Principles, businesses will significantly reduce legal, brand, financial and moral risks of their being implicated in human trafficking within their operations, supply chain, and procurement processes. The Guidelines to the Athens Ethical Principles, known as the “Luxor Protocol”, contain very specific steps to be adopted by companies in order to implement the Athens Ethical Principles.

Second, by raising awareness among our own employees, we have developed an e-Learning tool, which I will invite Mr. Derasack Teso, Director Corporate Affairs, South East Asia and Emerging Markets, Microsoft, to present.

Third, we have launched the first global award for business leaders who have committed themselves against trafficking – to acknowledge their vision and commitment in advancing this cause. I will invite Dr. Aleya Hammad, Executive Vice-President of the Board of End Human Trafficking Now, to brief you further on this initiative.

Finally, I will share with you, as part of the UN Secretary-General’s Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, a list of concrete proposals for NGOs providing support to victims in this region. These proposals are modest but highly needed by those who have been exploited in the global slave trade.

We promise you that we will ensure that the corporations that offer assistance here *today* will be recognized and highly publicized. You will be leaders in the region and the world, as proactive campaigners. Let me underscore that you will be the *first regional business leaders* to stand up and support this global call.

My thanks again to our sponsors, the Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking of Thailand – and in no small measure, to Dr. Heyzer, who has recognized the importance of this agenda for our work and who has given us the support to work together.

Thank you.



DR. ALEYA HAMMAD
Executive Vice-President of the Board of
End Human Trafficking Now
Chair of the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for
Victims of Trafficking in Persons

MAIN CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND OUTCOMES:

(1) The market value of human trafficking is estimated at US\$32 billion a year, with profit margins around 35-40%, making it one of the most profitable global illicit trades today.

(2) The root causes of human trafficking are economic, i.e. unemployment and poverty.

(3) Human trafficking is a business problem and therefore ending it requires cooperation and action from business.

(4) Companies can create employment opportunities for disadvantaged social groups through special programmes, in particular for young people.

(5) In order to take appropriate action, companies need to be aware of human trafficking issues which may exist but is hidden in every link of their supply chain.

(6) Companies can commit to the Athens Ethical Principles, which have the support of the Secretary General, and start developing a sound anti-trafficking strategy within their framework of their daily activities. Companies which do sign up to the Athens Ethical Principles will get immediate publicity by EHTN.

Signing up can be done on the following website:

www.endhumantraffickingnow.com/sign_athens_ethical_principles.php

(7) Certification was proposed as a way to advance the issue further. However, care should be taken that an excess of certifications does not become an obstacle to doing business and conducting trade.

(8) Applications that scan barcodes can be a way to reduce the confusion of multiple consumer ethical branding labels.

(9) Bureaucracy and corruption associated with issuance of visa is being exploited and can lead to human trafficking. For that purpose, this issue needs to be addressed including through liberalization of trade in services under GATS mode 4 (presence of natural persons).

(10) EHTN and UN.GIFT have jointly developed an e-Learning training program on human trafficking for business leaders, managers and employees of business companies. The tool was technically developed and sponsored by Microsoft.

(11) Companies are invited to provide contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, which is managed by UNODC (www.unodc.org/humantraffickingfund). “Contributing companies will be acknowledged by the United Nations Secretary-General and Executive Director of UNODC”.

(12) Companies and others can also nominate business leaders as candidates for receiving the Business Leader’s Award to Fight Human Trafficking at www.businessleaderaward.org



MR. MARTIN REEVE
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