

**U.S.-EU Tripartite Trade and Labor Dialogue (TALD)  
Social Partner Joint Statement on  
Transatlantic Forced Labor Trade Strategy**

As part of the U.S.-EU Tripartite Trade and Labor Dialogue (TALD), the signatories to this Joint Statement condemn forced labor in all its forms and affirm our shared commitment to eradicating it from global supply chains. Forced labor is an egregious violation of international labor laws, drags down wages, and prevents the realization of decent work across the globe.

Despite the efforts of many governments, trade unions, and companies, forced labor is on the rise in the global economy.<sup>1</sup> The problem is complex and the socio-economic pressures that render individuals and workers vulnerable to forced labor are multiple, mutually reinforcing and found in all aspects of labor markets, not just supply chains.

Eradication requires a multifaceted approach that includes trade policy elements<sup>2</sup> and corporate supply chain due diligence. Importantly, it also relies heavily on diplomatic collaboration and foreign assistance tools to build capacity and promote rule of law in nations struggling to adopt and enforce internationally recognized labor standards.

Accordingly, the transatlantic social partners call for enhanced cooperation and coordination between the U.S. and EU to eliminate forced labor with the following recommendations:

- As a top objective, the U.S. and EU should focus on policies that exclude from our markets items made using forced labor and, in the case of imported goods, prior to the arrival of violative goods at the border.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the International Labor Organization, in 2021, 27.6 million people were in forced labor. The Asia and the Pacific region has the highest number of people in forced labor (15.1 million) and the Arab States the highest prevalence (5.3 per thousand people). (Source: Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage, ILO - [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS\\_854733/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_854733/lang-en/index.htm)).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. and European business organizations believe that diplomatic engagement, capacity building, and robust information-sharing are the most effective tools in preventing the use of forced labor in production processes and excluding violative products from domestic and export markets; border- or market-centric enforcement approaches should be a tool of last resort. (See Texas A&M University report, [Improving Labor Compliance in Developing Countries: A Global Analysis of Policies Leading to Improved Labor Outcomes in Supply Chains](#).) Meanwhile, the labor organizations believe that import restrictions and other trade-related enforcement measures are vital tools for governments to incentivize greater corporate action to identify and remove forced labor from global supply chains.

- We call on both sides to adopt appropriate measures<sup>3</sup> to incentivize corporate supply chain due diligence in line with widely accepted benchmarks, including the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the 2011 OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.
- We encourage both governments to promote corporate uptake of the 2011 OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, including via strong and effective National Contact Points for Responsible Business Conduct.
- We support effective enforcement of the U.S. prohibition on importing goods made in whole or in part with forced labor under the Section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930, the CAATSA, and the recent Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA). To further effective implementation, we urge:
  - enforcement authorities to provide clear guidance to importers on compliance, and to pursue early and meaningful engagement with the trade community before enforcement actions to allow an opportunity to address the validity of allegations and limit unnecessary economic impacts.
  - issuance of regular, public, aggregated statistics on enforcement measures so that all parties can understand the products and sectors at risk.
- We take note of the EU's draft regulation to ban the commercialization of products made with forced labor and urge further dialogue with social partners so that it can effectively achieve its goal of removing forced labor-made products from the EU marketplace.
- We call on the U.S. and EU to establish close dialogue and coordination on the enforcement of their respective policies related to products made with forced labor, including the sharing of data and evidence under appropriate legal mechanisms regarding the existence of forced labor within specific companies, at particular facilities or in certain geographic regions, while protecting personal, business sensitive or confidential information.
- An incentive-based approach created by governments in consultation with labor and trusted industry partners should be central to any forced labor trade

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<sup>3</sup> The labor organizations welcome the draft EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive because of its legally binding character. U.S. and European business organizations will continue to share best practices and contribute to sustainability policy discussions to ensure measures are practical and implementable in the context of global supply chains.

strategy, including proactive technical assistance programs to advance the effectiveness of forced labor provisions in U.S. and EU trade agreements and trade preference programs.

- We call on both sides to increase awareness among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) of the risks of forced labor in global supply chains with appropriate guidance to assist them with compliance.
- The U.S. and EU should also collaborate on broader actions to help third countries eliminate all forms of forced labor, including:
  - Enhance dialogue with countries where state-sponsored forced labor is more prevalent, or countries likely to serve as venues for further manufacturing and distribution of items made using forced labor.
  - Redouble financing and efforts with allies to encourage respect, promotion, implementation and enforcement of the ILO Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.
  - Increase capacity building and technical assistance to improve governance, rule of law, and enforcement in countries struggling to meet their international labor commitments.
  - Ensure actions taken against forced labor in third countries are built into broader national development efforts aimed at mitigating socio-economic vulnerability and address other causes of forced labor through information sharing.
  - Promote macroeconomic, social, legal, and political frameworks needed to encourage large-scale creation of sustainable, decent jobs and business opportunities.
  - Partner with US and EU investors to demonstrate benefits of high standard labor practices and promote effective adoption of industry action in like-minded industries in third countries.

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