

Traceability and Accountability in Value Chains:

A Pathway Towards Transparency in the Promotion of Decent Work and Gender Equality

10:00-11:30 (Bangkok time, GMT+7), 11 June 2020

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New Challenges. New Approaches.

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Background

The increasing pressure from responsible consumers and CSR trends have pushed businesses to prove their sustainability claims. Among those claims, decent working conditions for workers is one of the top priorities amid the wake of exposure of child labour, slave labour, gender-based discrimination and violence, and extreme violation of human rights in supply chains. To improve equality and inclusion for workers, transparency, traceability and sustainable procurement practices are a crucial first step. Business needs to gain visibility into their multi-tier supply chains to make the right choices. They must be able to analyse and react to data about sourcing, implementation of decent work practices, and procurement that are inclusive to vulnerable groups especially, women who account for the vast majority of supply chain workers and are often underrepresented in management and decision-making functions. These needs ask for actions. Businesses need to integrate a lens to their assessment and monitoring that is responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable workers, such as women, disabled and migrants.

Session Description

The session will provide an overview of the linkage between supply chains transparency and traceability of working conditions in global value chains. It will address questions such as how to trace working conditions along Global Value Chains (GVCs), how to design and implement gender-sensitive procurement policies, the role of employers and workers in the transparency of GVCs. It will shine a light on how shifting to innovative technology can not only help companies to track their materials and products but also under which conditions they were sourced, produced and transported. The panel will discuss how these instruments can be used to improve working conditions of the most vulnerable workers including women. The session will draw on the recommendations of the ILO's MNE declaration, the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) as well as other internationally recognised instruments for the promotion of responsible business conduct.

Session Objectives

This session aims to:

- Raise awareness on the impact of applying traceability in global value chains as a way to increase transparency in relation to labour conditions and inclusion in global value chains;
- Provide knowledge and good practices on how procurement and traceability can be tools to support the implementation of ILS in supply chains;
- Create a common understanding of Gender Responsive Procurement (GPR) and discuss the links to facilitating decent working conditions throughout the entire value chain and wider market system.

Questions

- Why should companies care about traceability data when monitoring and assessing their supply chains and how to practically obtain them?
- Why do companies need a gender-responsive supply-chain and procurement approach and how to put it in place?
- What is the role of governments and social partners in the accountability of GVCs when it comes to labour issues?
- How can traceability be utilized to support socially responsible labour practices in global supply chains?