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Joint Response to the JCHR Report on Forced Labour in UK Supply Chains | 24 July 2025

The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), the British Retail Consortium (BRC), the Corporate Justice Coalition (CJC) and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) welcome the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) recommendation for the government to introduce mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (mHREDD) legislation.

Together, our members represent over 350 UK high street brands with a combined turnover of £800bn, trade unions representing 230 million workers around the world, and over 100 civil society organisations globally. We strongly support the JCHR's call to establish legal duties on UK companies to identify and prevent human rights and environmental harms in their operations and global supply chains.

Modern slavery remains a pervasive issue, with over 27 million people worldwide subjected to forced labour¹ and \$236bn generated in illegal profits each year². Workers in global supply chains making products for British high streets continue to face unsafe working conditions, discrimination, harassment and violations of their fundamental rights at work, including the right to join a union and bargain collectively.

The scale of these abuses demonstrates the urgent need for new legislation to safeguard human rights and the environment.

mHREDD legislation is the most effective way to ensure that businesses across all sectors - whether sourcing clothes, food, medicines, electronics or cars - proactively identify, prevent and remedy human and labour rights and environmental harms. mHREDD enshrined in law will drive consistent and meaningful action across the UK private sector and beyond, helping to protect the rights of workers and communities around the world, and ensure that businesses meet their responsibility to respect human rights.

Importantly, mHREDD will create a level playing field, ensuring that responsible companies are not undercut by those turning a blind eye to exploitation. It's time ethical and responsible business practices became a baseline, not an exception.

Adopting this legislation would also ensure the UK does not fall behind as other countries move ahead with regulating global supply chains. We urge the government to seize this opportunity to make progress on business and human rights by introducing robust mHREDD legislation that protects both people and planet.

¹ [Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage | International Labour Organization](#)

² [Profits and poverty: The economics of forced labour | International Labour Organization](#)

Andrew Opie, Director of Food and Sustainability at the British Retail Consortium, said:

“We welcome the Joint Committee’s recommendation for mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence, which we have long advocated as key to improving standards in global supply chains. We look forward to engaging with the Government on their review of Responsible Business Conduct and the implementation of this recommendation going forward.”

Dominique Muller, Director of the Corporate Justice Coalition, said:

“CJC welcomes the urgent recommendation for robust and practical UK mHREDD legislation and a failure to prevent mechanism - an approach that draws on existing British legal models and will re-align the UK with global standards.”

A strong Business, Human Rights and Environment Act will tackle forced labour, human rights abuses, and environmental harm across both private and public sectors.

We look forward to working with the government on the Business, Human Rights and Environment Act to promote legislation with clear rules, tough enforcement, and real remedies—for companies and the communities they impact.”

Giles Bolton, Executive Director of the Ethical Trading Initiative, said

“Mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence is key to responsible business. It strengthens supply chain resilience and supports sustainable growth that works for people and planet. We welcome the Joint Committee’s recommendation and stand ready to support Government in making this a reality.”

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, said

“Employers have a responsibility to treat workers fairly - not just here in the UK but throughout their global supply chains. They shouldn’t be able to look the other way. We are pleased the Joint Committee is backing a new law to make sure businesses play by the rules and respect workers’ rights—wherever they operate. The TUC has long called for mandatory due diligence rules on labour and human rights. We’re ready to work with the government to make this happen.”