



ethical
trading
initiative

PRESS RELEASE

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ETI Biennial Conference 2005: *Shaping a new agenda for ethical trade*

Some of the world's leading consumer brands and retailers gather in London next month (May 2005) to debate how best to use their buying power to improve the lives of millions of workers in their supply chains.

Corporate social responsibility staff at Nike, Gap, H&M, Tesco and The Co-operative Group (CWS) Ltd; campaigning organisations, trade union representatives, and apparel and food manufacturers will all speak at the Ethical Trading Initiative's Fourth Biennial Conference on 12-13 May.

Dan Rees, ETI Director says: "Our conference speakers reflect the unique melting pot of diversity of debate and resultant action that is ETI. It provides a fantastic opportunity for us to showcase innovative practice, to hear the response of the critics, and most importantly, to make sure the momentum for change continues."

A major focus of the conference will be how companies can marry their commercial practices with their commitment to improving labour standards - and specifically how they can ensure their own purchasing practices do not undermine their suppliers' ability to comply with their codes.

Says Rees: "Ethical trade is still seen by many companies as an optional 'add-on' to their core business. But there is a pressing need for companies to re-think their commercial practices to make sure they are in line with their ethical policies. Our last conference acted as a springboard for debate on this issue and two years later we can see change'.

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Facts about the Ethical Trading Initiative



- The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) was established in 1998 to improve the lives of workers and their families in global supply chains. It believes that companies producing, supplying and selling goods for consumer markets should observe national and international labour laws. Its purpose is to identify and promote responsible corporate practice that will help to make this a reality.
- The ETI focuses on developing practical solutions to ethical trade that deliver concrete benefits for workers. Its tripartite membership of companies, trade unions and NGOs lends unique credibility to its work.
- **Corporate members** include ASDA, Chiquita, Fyffes, Gap, Levi Strauss, Marks & Spencer, Monsoon, Mothercare, New Look, Next, the Pentland Group, Sainsbury's, Somerfield, Tesco, the Body Shop, Boots, the Co-operative Group and WH Smith.
- **Non-governmental and trade union members** include Cafod, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Save the Children, Anti-Slavery International, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF), the International Union of Food Workers (IUF) and the Trades Union Congress.
- When corporate members join ETI they commit to adopting the **ETI Base Code** on an incremental basis throughout their supply chains. The Code is based ILO conventions and as such is widely acknowledged as a model code of labour practice. It contains provisions based on the following principles:
 - Employment is freely chosen
 - Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining and respected
 - Working conditions are safe and hygienic
 - Child labour shall not be used
 - Living wages are paid
 - Working hours are not excessive
 - No discrimination is practised
 - Regular employment is provided
 - No harsh or inhumane treatment is allowed
- Company members report annually to ETI on the progress they are making in implementing the Base Code. Their reports are a vital means of gathering intelligence on the progress of individual members and the membership as a whole, enabling ETI to identify key issues and trends over time.
- All members participate in ETI 'experimental projects' which provide a means for corporate, trade union and NGO members alike to learn together and to share that learning with others so they can incorporate the lessons into their own activities.

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Achievements of the Ethical Trading Initiative

The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), which was established in 1998 to improve the lives of workers and their families in global supply chains, has achieved the following since its inception:

- Grown its corporate membership from 12 to 34 companies with leverage over 22,000 suppliers. Each year companies have reported increases in the number of actions their suppliers take to improve workers' conditions and in 2004, companies reported that their suppliers had made over 5,000 improvements – up from under 3,000 last year.
- Developed practical tools for companies to use when implementing their ethical trade strategies, including the ETI Workbook, a risk assessment toolkit and guidelines for implementing the ETI Base Code with smallholders. All of these tools are developed by collaboration among companies, NGOs and trade unions through a process of learning what is good practice – and what works.
- Established itself as a leading international authority on the credible implementation of corporate codes of labour practice: ETI is consulted regularly by DFID, DTI, the International Labour Organisation and other international organisations focused on labour standards and development issues.
- Successfully lobbied for change in UK law. ETI led and continues to lead the Temporary Labour Working Group (TLWG), a cross-industry alliance that campaigned for the introduction of statutory licensing for temporary labour providers. The Group is now working in close co-operation with the Gangmasters Licensing Authority to help labour providers prepare for licensing.
- Supported the development of the Wine Industry Ethical Trade Association (WIETA), a South African multi-stakeholder organisation that seeks to inspect and improve labour conditions in the Western Cape wine industry;
- Helped improve conditions for workers on Kenyan flower farms by mediating between different stakeholders and helping broker solutions to long-standing problems;
- Is working on the development of common guidelines for some key aspects of labour practice through a joint initiative with the other multi-stakeholder code initiatives (Workers' Rights Consortium, the Fair Labour Association, the Clean Clothes Campaign, the Fairwear Foundation and Social Accountability International).
- Commissioned the most comprehensive assessment of the impact of codes of labour practice to date. Preliminary findings of the ETI Impact Assessment will be shared for the first time at the Conference.

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