



ethical
trading
initiative

PRESS RELEASE

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Power brokers of ethical trade gather in London

Gathering in London tomorrow (Thursday 12 May) are over 300 of the world's key decision makers in ethical trade. They are here to discuss, and more importantly to act on, one of the critical issues that impacts on global poverty: the way in which global companies trade with their suppliers, both in the UK and across the world.

Conference speakers at the Ethical Trading Initiative's Biennial Conference (12 and 13 May) include many of ETI's corporate members. Together, ETI member companies have leverage over 20,000 supplier companies across the world. Their supply chains ultimately affect millions of workers, from tea farms in Kenya to garment factories in China.

Conference highlights include the first presentation in Europe of the new Nike corporate responsibility report, which demonstrates how businesses can put ethical trade at the core of their business practices. It calls for greater collaboration between different organisations to tackle the tough challenges involved in improving workers' conditions.

ETI Chairman Alan Roberts says, "To have impact we must join forces. There is a huge need to build stronger and broader alliances between businesses, trade unions, NGOs and governments to tackle labour rights at a strategic and sectoral level as well as in the workplace".

Keynote speakers at the conference are Secretary of State for International Development Hilary Benn MP and Richard Howitt MEP.

Says Howitt: "The Ethical Trading Initiative is unique in Europe in bringing together so many leading lights in the corporate, NGO and governmental worlds with a combined interest in the social impact of business. It has pioneered the shift in focus from company philanthropy to understanding the link between the global supply chain of British and European companies and the fight against global poverty and for international labour standards.

"I have no doubt that ETI has been the inspiration for the European Union to adopt a multi-stakeholder approach to its own policy development in this field, and I hope it will be the

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champion of future concrete action to advance corporate responsibility and accountability at the European and international level."

Says ETI Director Dan Rees, "Helping companies get better at ethical trade is key to breaking the cycle of global poverty. We know that there is a very long way to go, but the responses of many businesses are encouraging. This conference offers some of the best advice and experience currently available on ethical trade."

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On 12 and 13 May, ETI conference (Novotel Hammersmith) contact telephone number: 0208 741 1555

For interviews with Richard Howitt call 0776 3329723.

Notes to editors:

1. Richard Howitt MEP is European Parliament Rapporteur on Corporate Social Responsibility and MEP representative on the EU Multi-Stakeholder Forum on CSR.