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## INSPIRATIONAL CASE STUDIES- HUMAN RIGHTS

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*This document briefly summarizes examples where human rights violations were identified in a market setting and industry actors collaboratively engaged to improve conditions.*

### **CONSENSUS BUILDING IN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT- CONFLICT MINERALS**

**ISSUE:** Mineral mines in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo are controlled by armed militias, rebels, or the Congolese Army who demand taxes, bribes or other payments for the minerals extracted from the mines. DRC mineral resources fund the conflict, and feed a range of complex and non-transparent supply chains. These minerals are raw materials for component parts in everything from cell phones and cutting tools to jet engines and jewelry. Efforts to eliminate DRC conflict minerals from individual supply chains would only shift the use of these minerals into other supply chains.

**OPPORTUNITY:** Eliminating conflict minerals from all supply chains and addressing the critical situation in the DRC requires collaborative action from a variety of stakeholders and a number of industries.

**KEY ACTIONS NEEDED:** Supply chain responsibility, government engagement, and economic development and capacity building.

**IMPROVEMENTS:** [RESOLVE](#) conducted a collaborative research project investigating the supply chain for 'conflict minerals' sourced from the DRC and surrounding countries. The research program brought together electronics companies, NGOs, mining companies, investors, trade associations, and other experts to understand the supply chain challenges and explore responses to advance responsible sourcing and corporate social responsibility. Commissioned by the Electronics Industry Citizenship Coalition (EICC) and the Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI), RESOLVE's design and facilitation services resulted in [a report](#) that helped guide the strategies now being implemented by EICC and GeSI member companies like Intel, Motorola, HP, Dell, Apple and Nokia to address conflict minerals. RESOLVE continues to work with electronics and other sectors, NGOs, and government to advance supply chain solutions on conflict minerals.

## **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT TO SPOTLIGHT ACTION OPPORTUNITIES - APPAREL**

**ISSUE:** Mass production and consumption of garments have environmental and social impacts from the collection of raw materials up to the labor conditions of factory workers. Major retailers have limited visibility into their supply chains and recognize that their supplier might buy from any number of companies, operating in a factory they had never visited in China or Vietnam, that may exploit workers or dump pollution into a nearby river.

**OPPORTUNITY:** Development of a meaningful sustainability index that requires companies to ask tough questions and share with others what they learned.

**KEY ACTIONS NEEDED:** The world's largest clothing companies must join together to adopt an index that measures the environmental and social impact of their products.

**IMPROVEMENTS:** The [Sustainable Apparel Coalition](#) developed, piloted, and promoted broad adoption of the [Higg Index](#), a tool for measuring the environmental and social performance of apparel products and investigating full life cycle transparency. The Coalition is a trade organization comprised of brands, retailers, manufacturers, government, and non-governmental organizations and academic experts, currently representing more than a third of the global apparel and footwear market.

## **RAISING AWARENESS AND CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE- UZBEKISTAN COTTON**

**ISSUE:** The cotton industry in Uzbekistan forces thousands of adults and children to work in cotton production with little or no pay where they are subjected to abuse. The [Environmental Justice Foundation's](#) report and accompanying film [White Gold](#), resulted in high-profile media attention on this issue.

**OPPORTUNITY:** Major retailers wanted to implement a ban on Uzbek cotton due to increased media and consumer pressure as a result of EJF's campaign, but lacked supply chain transparency tools to track and trace their supply chain.

**KEY ACTIONS NEEDED:** The implementation of supply chain transparency measures that enabled retailers to exclude cotton from Uzbekistan.

**IMPROVEMENTS:** EJF addressed the need for more effective supply chain traceability mechanisms by raising public awareness of the issue through consumer-focused campaigns, encouraging people to ask retailers where their cotton is sourced and refuse to buy products with an unknown country of origin. A global coalition of civil society organizations continues to apply pressure on industry to improve supply chain monitoring and call on governments to introduce mandatory labeling which includes the country of origin for fiber as well as manufacturing.

## TACKLING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THAI SUPPLY CHAINS

**ISSUE:** An estimated four million foreign migrants work in Thailand, mainly from Burma, Cambodia, and Laos, with many of them in export-oriented industries such as seafood processing. Weak government policies coupled with high levels of corruption allow for human trafficking, with hundreds of thousands of workers estimated to be in forced labor, to persist in these seafood supply chains.

**OPPORTUNITY:** Major retailers can use their buying power to help eradicate forced labor in the Thai fishing industry.

**KEY ACTIONS NEEDED:** Greater visibility into supply chains, identification of risks and engagement with Thai suppliers to find concrete, practical solutions.

**IMPROVEMENTS:** [Project Issara](#) is an Alliance of public and private sector partners joining forces to advance good business practice and reduce human trafficking. The field-based Project Issara team engages with Thai suppliers with the support of global brands and retailers to identify and address trafficking risk in supply chains, and assist victims of labor abuses. Issara work also helps to build better labor recruitment and protection systems nationally and regionally. Brands and retailers engage in corporate advocacy, provide supply chain access and data, and uphold standards for responsible sourcing and ethical trade.

The Sustainability Incubator and Humanity United developed the [Labor Safe Screen](#), software that seafood companies can use to track working conditions in seafood supply chains. Labor Safe Screen investigates working conditions in seafood supplies for 10 major Thai seafood products, from fishing grounds through trans-shipping and onshore processing through to export. The Labor-Safe Screen verifies where labor is safe and determines where and how working conditions need to be improved to eliminate vulnerability for trafficked workers and risk for seafood companies.