

Answer from the Norwegian LO (Trade Union Congress)

BSPC Working Group on Civil Security

LO is very concerned about Trafficking in Human Beings (THB). THB is contrary to the basic principles of the trade union movement and accordingly is a theme that engages us at a national as well as an international level.

In general, it can be said that strengthening the trade union movement's role with the purpose of securing decent working conditions is the core element in LO's solidarity work. The trade union movement believes that a commitment to combating poverty and promoting decent working conditions is an important step in the fight against THB. LO's support and work in connection with the ILO's Decent Work campaign is in accordance with this commitment.

A new action plan for LO was adopted at the 2009 LO Congress. From the chapter entitled 'Poverty':

'The labour movement plays an important role in efforts to reduce poverty in the world. At the national level and through the international labour movement, LO works actively to fulfil the UN Millennium Development Goals. Other important contributions to the war on poverty include helping to strengthen the labour movement in developing countries so that trade union and human rights are protected, social justice promoted and to ensure people a living wage. At every level, the war on corruption is an important road to ensuring good governance. Tripartite cooperation and social dialogue between the authorities and workers' and employers' organisations, as practised in Norway for example, are crucial.

LO will play an active role in the international fight against child labour. Children should have an education, while their families must be guaranteed work and a decent wage. Trafficking in women and children across national borders is an immense and growing problem and accounts for an increasingly larger part of the global black-market economy. Poverty and joblessness are the main explanations. The labour movement must actively battle the sex industry and trafficking.'

During the 2009 LO Congress a statement on international solidarity and decent global labour conditions was adopted. Among other things, one could read the following here:

'A capital market and an economic system with too little control and governance, especially transnationally, has led to the financial crisis. This constitutes a direct threat against the fundamental goals of the labour union movement and the livelihood for millions of people. The ones responsible for the crisis and the losses walk away with sky-high wages, bonuses and golden handshakes. It is the poor and everyday working people who are footing the bill. LO fears that more than 100 million people will be unemployed by the end of 2009. Further millions will be forced into extreme poverty. Job security will be threatened, not least in developing countries. This will affect vulnerable groups, especially women. Social deprivation leads to increased trafficking in human beings, social dumping and further deterioration of a decent working life, which has been built on human rights laid down in international conventions.'

THB is often difficult to distinguish from other related subjects such as child labour and slavery/forced labour. Some of LO's solidarity projects with the trade union movement in Africa address child labour, e.g. our joint project in Ghana. In addition to this, THB may be raised as a theme in conferences with our partners.

LO is also a member of the reference group for the Norwegian Coordinating Unit for Victims of Human Trafficking (KOM). KOM deals with various forms of THB in the greyzone between forced labour and social dumping.

LO is also committed to the fight against THB at the international level. LO is a member of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), an international trade union movement, and is represented in the ILO, the UN's tripartite organization for promoting decent and productive work. The ILO has several projects against THB and slavery. ITUC has launched guidelines on how to fight THB and forced labour and has initiated several projects for this purpose.