

Presbytery of Hudson River

12 April 2016, Stony Point Center

The Advocacy, Education, and Networks Team recommends that the Presbytery of Hudson River concur with the Presbytery of Newark in respectfully overturing the 222 General Assembly (2016) to do the following:

- 1. Encourage the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to be aware of the presence of slavery in international chains of commerce.**
- 2. Encourage the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to inquire of each vendor with which they do business (a) that the vendor disclose the nature and extent of slavery in its supply chains, (b) that the vendor disclose the programs and strategies that it has adopted to eradicate slavery from its supply chains and (c) that the vendor provide to the inquiring ministry or agency those reports, analyses, and other materials that confirm or otherwise illuminate the vendor's representations.**
- 3. Encourage the ministries and agencies that invest in companies to inquire of each company in which they make an investment (a) that the company disclose the nature and extent of slavery in its supply chains, (b) that the company disclose the programs and strategies that is has adopted to eradicate slavery from its supply chains, and (c) that the company provide to the inquiring ministry or agency those reports, analyses, and other materials that confirm or otherwise illuminate the company's representations.**
- 4. Encourage the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to do business with and make investments in those companies that (a) have a rigorous program intended to eradicate slavery from their supply chains and (b) disclose those reports and other information that enable the ministries and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and such other persons as may be interested, to understand and evaluate the program that is intended to eradicate slavery from the company's supply chains.**

Rationale

As Christians, we have a biblical mandate to establish justice, to care for the powerless, and to break the yokes of oppression. Micah 6:8, Isaiah 58:6. The General Assembly has recognized and affirmed that mandate and has approved reports and statements condemning and addressing modern forms of slavery and human trafficking including A Resolution on Developing a Comprehensive Social Witness Policy on Human Trafficking as a Human Rights Issue (221 General Assembly (2014)), A Resolution to Expand the Church's Ministry with and Advocacy Against Human Trafficking (218 General Assembly (2008), and a Resolution in Support of Ongoing Partnership Work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the Campaign for Fair Food (217th General Assembly, 2006).

The ILO estimates that 20.9 million men, women and children are working in situations of forced labor globally, trapped in jobs into which they were coerced or deceived and which they cannot leave – here in the US and around the world.¹

The presence of slavery in supply chains of commerce has been well documented. Slavery has been reported in the fishing industry, in the mining of gold, tantalum, tin, and tungsten, in the cocoa industry, and in the manufacture of clothes, rugs, and other textile products, and in the production of other goods

¹ International Labour Organisation, 2012 Global estimate of forced labour, Executive Summary, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_181953.pdf

and products. The taint of slavery follows products through the supply chain to the consumer. For example, gold ore is transformed and used in cell phones, computers, jewelry and medicine. Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report 2015, "Preventing Trafficking in Global Supply Chains", Siddharth Kara, "Eyewitness Account: Child Labor in North India's Hand-Woven Carpet Sector", "Revealed: Asian slave labor producing prawns for supermarkets in US,UK", The Guardian, June 10, 2014, Free the Slaves, "Congo's Mining Slaves, Enslavement of South Kivu Mining Sites" (2013).

Increasingly, governments, consumers, businesses, civil society groups, worker organizations, and others have sought to develop those programs and strategies that will eradicate slavery from international chains of commerce.

Corporations have a critical role to play in ensuring their business practices, at minimum, do not contribute to creating conditions in which slavery flourishes in *both* their domestic and international supply chains. Addressing and preventing modern slavery in corporate supply chains is paramount and policies that have been adopted by companies should be evaluated for whether they possess, in design and function, the standards, monitoring, enforcement and supplier consequences necessary for actually eliminating and preventing slavery and the conditions in which it flourishes.

Such evaluation is a work in progress in the global arena and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can meaningfully contribute to such efforts by evaluating those programs or efforts that do exist among those corporations in which it is invested or with which it does business.²

The PC(USA) actually has experience with the only program and model in the world that has proven effective at ending, and now preventing, modern slavery in corporate supply chains: the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' Fair Food Program and its model of Worker-driven Social Responsibility (WSR).³ The 216th General Assembly (2006) passed a "Resolution in support of ongoing work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the Campaign for Fair Food" to address modern slavery in corporate supply chains and eliminate the conditions in which it flourishes by bringing together corporations, their suppliers, workers, and consumers to create a sustainable and binding commitment to this end. That commitment eventuated in the development of the Fair Food Program in 2011.

The Fair Food Program, in which some of the most powerful corporations in the world such as Wal-Mart and McDonald's participate, and its WSR model have been uniquely promoted as a singularly effective paradigm by the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights and the Clinton Global Initiative among others. The CIW was awarded the Presidential Medal for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Modern Slavery in 2015 for the program's and model's unparalleled effectiveness in eliminating and preventing slavery. The Fair Food Program and WSR model have served as a blueprint for the development of the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Safety and governments, NGOs, and worker organizations around the world are using their lessons to design corporate accountability programs that will actually end human rights violations. Using this WSR model as a benchmark, the church is on solid ground for evaluating and engaging corporate efforts to address modern slavery in domestic and international supply chains.

This Overture asks that the Presbyterian Church (USA), together with its ministries and agencies, begin to take those steps as consumers, as investors, and as followers of Jesus Christ, to help to ensure that the scourge of slavery is eradicated, at least, from the supply chains of those with whom we do business.

² See Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Evaluation Benchmarks (Dec. 2015) <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/211146>, and OSCE, "Ending Exploitation: Ensuring that businesses do not Contribute to Trafficking in Human Beings: Duties of States and the Private Sector," (Nov. 2014) <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/126306>.

³ Fair Food Standards Council, "Fair Food Program 2015 Annual Report," <http://fairfoodstandards.org/15SOTP-Web.pdf>