By Aaron Wood

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US State Department And Coca-Cola To Use Blockchain Technology To Fight Forced Labor

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The beverage giant Coca-Cola is teaming up with the US (https://cointelegraph.com/tags/usa) State Department (https://www.state.gov/) and three other companies to launch a project that uses Blockchain (https://cointelegraph.com/tags/blockchain) technology to create a secure registry of workers worldwide, Reuters reports (https://www.reuters.com/article/us-blockchain-coca-cola-labor/coca-cola-u-s-state-department-to-use-blockchain-to-combat-forced-labor-idUSKCN1GS2PY) March 16.

According to the International Labor Organization, nearly 25 mln people work under forced labor conditions globally, 47 percent of whom live in the Asia-Pacific region.

Beverage companies have faced pressure from regulators to address the issue of forced labor in countries where they get their sugarcane. Last year, global supply-chain transparency organization KnowTheChain released a study which showed that most food and beverage companies fail to adequately address the problem of forced labor.

The new project will utilize Blockchain's validation and digital notary capabilities to create a secure registry for workers and their contracts.

Brent Wilton, Coca-Cola's head of workplace rights, said, "We are partnering with the pilot of this project to further increase transparency and efficiency of the verification process related to labor policies within our supply chain."

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Department of State expressed optimism about the project, stating that while the Blockchain cannot compel companies to respect contracts and implement ethical labor practices, it can create a chain of evidence that will encourage compliance.

The State Department said that this is its first major project regarding labor rights utilizing the Blockchain. The government agency sees Blockchain as a helpful tool in social development.

The US tech company Bitfury Group (https://cointelegraph.com/tags/bitfury) will build the Blockchain platform for the project, while Emercoin (https://cointelegraph.com/tags/emercoin) wll also provide blockchain services

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