

# Foreword

For more than 25 years, the Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) has conducted research and reporting to inform U.S. foreign and trade policy with the aim, among others, of shining a light on labor abuses in key sectors across the world. As the economy becomes more global and supply chains more extensive, ILAB's effort to reveal abusive child labor and forced labor practices becomes even more important.

Central to those efforts are ILAB's annual *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* and biennial *List of Goods Produced by Child or Forced Labor*. The reports provide specific, actionable information to governments, businesses, non-profits, and other key actors in the global economy on how to combat child labor and forced labor in more than 145 countries and territories. Policymakers and companies can rely on these reports to conduct risk assessments, perform due diligence on supply chains, and develop strategies to address child labor and forced labor.

To assist businesses in identifying risks and in remediating abuses in their supply chains, the Department of Labor also offers the *Comply Chain* smartphone app. This year, we updated its content with real-world examples of actions taken by companies to ensure workers in their supply chains are not exploited. These examples will give businesses additional tools and ideas on ways to ensure compliance and prevent labor abuses.

The historic United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) adopted earlier this year provides ILAB another important opportunity for impact, as the agency works with key trading partners on increasing

and strengthening labor protections through technical assistance, capacity-building projects, and cutting-edge research. The USMCA explicitly

requires each country to prohibit the importation of goods made with forced labor, and ILAB's research and reporting will play a key role in the implementation of this provision.

While it is heartening to see in this year's reports that some countries have progressed in combatting child or forced labor practices within their borders, other nations have taken a step back. And unfortunately, some of the world's largest economies are home to some of the worst violators. As the world grapples with a pandemic, forced labor and unacceptable child labor is likely to become more frequent, not less. Ending these practices demands persistence and requires that all of us around the world, whether businesses, governments, or worker advocates, do our part by sharing our expertise, our lessons learned, and our best practices. Our hope is that these reports will be valuable tools in those efforts.



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