ties of transnational corporations... Fur- where the company is based. thermore, the current draft would not close the existing legal loopholes that allow and will allow TNCs to violate human rights with impunity and to escape liability for their actions". (Stopcorporateimpunity.org)

## WHAT THE CHURCH SAYS

on the proposed legislation. In this the Conferences of European Bishops and Catholic Justice and Peace organisations called upon the European Union to adopt a legislation that will require all companies operating within the EU to map their supply chains in order to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for human rights and en- The choices we make when we vironmental impact.

EU rules to clearly indicate the obligations of Member States and the European Commission in monitoring, enforcing and imposing sanctions for non-compliance. By extension this

ers to the third draft of the UN Treaty would allow victims of corporate human published in August 2021. They de- rights violations, including Human Trafscribe it as "ineffective and toothless" ficking, to seek redress in courts, both in and of failing to "regulate the activi- their own countries and in the country

> The Church submission also calls for the EU legislation to complement and reinforce the treaty currently being negotiated by UN Member States.

Given the level of divided opinion and vested interest that exist it is likely that both the EU and UN efforts will take The position of the Catholic Church in considerable time to reach a conclusion. this debate was made clear in a submis- Whether or not their scope will be broad sion made to a 2021 EU consultation enough or strong enough to have a significant impact on injustices such as human trafficking remains to be seen.

> In the meantime the lack of this much needed international and national legislation allows the lucrative trade in illicit goods that motivates human traffickers to continue almost unchecked.

buy matter. So does our support The submission also calls for the new for action to focus public attention on trafficking abuse in supply chains and to enact effective legislation against it.

"Being faced with an unprecedented global crisis, we now need more than ever mandatory supply chain due diligence to stop corporate abuse and guarantee global solidarity,"

> Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich SJ, President Commission of the Bishops' Conferences, expressing support for an ambitious European due diligence legislation.



The \$43.4 billion per annum profit made from the sale of goods produced through the forced labour of trafficked persons is what motivates traffickers to identify and exploit new victims.

Removing this incentive is therefore key to combating **Human Trafficking.** 



### STOPPING THE PROFITS

Removing the commercial incentive which motivates traffickers will need pre- in terms of human suffering and ventative measures that detect, disrupt the bondage of people at various and legally penalise the distribution and stages along supply chains. sale of forced labour goods through supply chains. Measures to curb demand and to raise public awareness of the tainted nature of these goods are also needed to deter their sale by retailers and purchase by customers.

Achieving these two things will need commitment on international, national, corporate and individual levels.

# INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

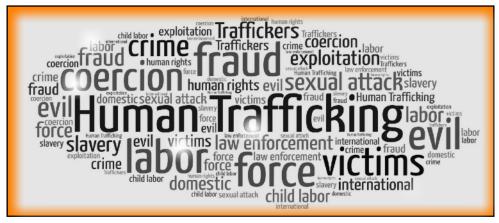
As buyers, we are at top of the supply chain and the source of the profits that trickle down the supply chain to Traffickers. Therefore, the choices we make to buy something are ethical as well as financial.

The goods we buy may cost much more than what we pay for them

They may be forced to labour in mines, on farms, in factories, or on fishingboats to generate profits for those who enslave them.

Without doubt it is difficult to know whether or not something we buy in a local shop or online is produced ethically, but we do have a responsibility to try to find out and not to knowingly buy products made though human trafficking.

If an item we wish to purchase seems impossibly cheap, then there is a fair chance that it was made with slave labour.



buy or to find an alternative "fair- forced labour. trade" brand.

As individuals we have a moral duty to inform ourselves as much as possible in order to avoid goods tainted by trafficking. There are many sources of information available to us simply by Googling "Human trafficking and supply chains"



But it's not just cheap goods - big brand We can also support campaigns which call and expensive goods such as garments for greater supply chain transparency and and smart-phones are also produced by for legislation requiring manufacturers and slave labour or may contain metals or suppliers to monitor their supply chains to minerals mined by slaves. If we have ensure that their raw materials and proddoubts then the safest option is not to ucts come from sources that do not use

# **GOVERNMENT & CORPORATE**

**RESPONSIBILITY** Primary responsibility for ensuring that the goods we buy come from sources where human rights and the environment are respected lies with International Organisations and Governments. It is they who must regulate those who import, manufacture and sell goods to ensure human rights are respected throughout supply-chains.

In an effort to introduce international good practice the UN, in 2011, agreed a set of Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. These voluntary guidelines sought to introduce 'due diligence' checks to identify and remedy human rights abuses throughout supply chains. However, it soon became clear that volthat asking corporations to police them- this includes the non-European suppliselves had failed.

In 2014, the UN Human Rights Council began what is still and on-going process of drafting an international legally binding treaty to regulate the activities of transnational corporations and oth- OPPOSITION AND DEBATE er business enterprises that will lead to mandatory human rights due diligence.

ment approved an outline proposal for the EU Directive on Mandatory Human Rights, Environmental and Good Gov- calling for the strongest possible proernance Due Diligence. It was hoped that this initiative would lead to the approval of new legislation in 2022 and the enactment of laws by member states as early as 2023. The aim is to introduce national Corporate Account- ests. TNCs also wish to minimise their ability Laws through which corpora- exposure to legal accountability and tions can be held accountable for sanction. human rights breaches in their supply An example of just how divided the chains. Companies will be required to take measures to prevent harm to human rights and to ensure good gov-

untary guidelines were not enough and ernance throughout their supply chains, ers they use. If they cause harm then the companies here in Europe can be held accountable and penalised unless they can prove they have acted in line with due diligence.

In both the United Nations and European Union contexts the content and In March 2021, the European Parlia- scope of these legal instruments are hotly debated, with human rights organisations, faith groups and NGO's tections for human rights and the environment while some Governments, Transnational Corporations (TNCs) and businesses are reacting strongly to protect their national and business inter-

> opinions of those trying to influence the formulation of these documents are is reflected in the response of campaign-

