



Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme

ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE NON GOUVERNEMENTALE AYANT STATUT CONSULTATIF AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES, DE L'UNESCO,
DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE ET D'OBSERVATEUR AUPRES DE LA COMMISSION AFRICAINE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DES PEUPLES

International Federation
for Human Rights

Federación Internacional
de los Derechos Humanos

الغدرالية الدولية لحقوق الانسان

Public statement on the membership of FIDH in the GSCP's Advisory Board

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) has been invited to join the Advisory Board of the Global Social Compliance Programme, which is an initiative of the CIES – Food Business Forum, aimed at improving respect for workers' rights in the global supply chain. It will be represented on the Board by Olivier De Schutter, its General Secretary on the issue of globalization and human rights.

FIDH sees its involvement in this initiative as a continuation of its long standing partnership with European retailer Carrefour. Initial discussions between FIDH and Carrefour in 1997-98 led to Carrefour adopting an Ethical Charter in 2000, which is based on the existing standards of international human rights law and international labor rights, and is part of the contractual relationships Carrefour has with its suppliers. It also led to the creation of Infans, a joint association allowing for a common program of work to ensure improved respect of human and trade union rights in Carrefour's supply chain and stores. Over the years, the content of the work has evolved to include the design and third party control of social auditing programs, trainings for workers and factory management, and the active promotion of international labour standards for businesses. In 2005, Carrefour made a public statement in support of the UN Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Regard to Human Rights. Although it did not initiate them, and at no point was involved in them, FIDH has welcomed discussions between Carrefour and other major retailers (Wal-Mart, Migros, Tesco, Metro). Indeed, FIDH considers that joint efforts and commitments by a critical mass of companies are necessary to bring sustainable improvements to the respect and promotion of workers' rights in the global supply chain.

FIDH has agreed to join the advisory board of the GSCP, in order to provide advice to the participating companies in the process, to encourage an alignment with the existing international standards as minimum requirements, and to advocate the linkage between this initiative and other initiatives, particularly multistakeholder initiatives, also aimed at harmonizing attempts to improve respect for workers' rights in the supply chain.

It is understood the FIDH retains fully its freedom to criticize, both publicly and in private, any company, including companies participating in the GSCP initiative. Although a member of the Advisory Board of the GSCP, FIDH will denounce human rights' abuses in which companies that are members of the GSCP would be complicit, or any violations those companies might commit directly. FIDH will not refrain from publicly criticizing decisions by these companies that would not be in line with their commitment to address labour rights issues in the supply chain.

FIDH did not seek participation in GSCP's decision-making bodies as it believes that, as an international human rights non-governmental organization, it should not be involved in a business initiative and should rather channel the Programme towards increased accountability of all actors. FIDH is of the opinion that, as a member of the GSCP's Advisory Board, it will be in the most appropriate position to play its surveillance role.

FIDH shall evaluate its participation in the GSCP's Advisory Board in one year's time, on the basis of the development of the initiative.