



Weekly news email

19th October 2023

News headlines

Australia - 'Has to be genuine': Corporate Australia urged to hold firm on Indigenous reconciliation. Indigenous Australians call for 'week of silence' after referendum failure. Mourning, calls for truth-telling after Australians vote no in referendum to give Indigenous people greater political representation.

Brazil - Heineken-owned brewery added to Brazil 'slave labor' list. Brazilian brewery Kaiser, which is owned by Heineken (HEIN.AS), has been added to the government's list of companies responsible for labor conditions analogous to slavery.

Ecuador - Daniel Noboa elected Ecuador's youngest president. Businessman Daniel Noboa, 35, will become the youngest president in Ecuador's history, after winning Sunday's run-off.

Egypt - Egyptian labourers wither under weight of 'work permit trade'. Sponsorship or 'kafala' system places significant amount of power in hands of employers of foreign workers, say activists

Europe - EU unlocks Single Market access for Western Balkans in exchange for reforms. EU leaders have offered the Western Balkans access to the single market, contingent on swift reforms, marking a significant step towards integration while providing a huge economic incentive amidst the backdrop of Russia's Ukraine conflict.

Europe – food policy Leaked Commission agenda sounds death knell for missing Farm to Fork files. A leaked version of the European Commission's work programme for 2024 lists none of the remaining EU sustainable food files, seemingly confirming stakeholders' worst fears that these proposals will not see the light of day before next June's EU elections.

Ghana - Ghana floods: 'My entire farm is under the water and so is my house'

Guinea-Bissau Turkish company Karpowership restores electricity to Guinea-Bissau capital. Turkish company Karpowership has restored power to Guinea-Bissau's capital after cutting off supplies over an unpaid bill of \$15m (£12m).

India - Unpacking Indian Supreme Court's verdict on same-sex marriage. India's top court stops short of allowing equal marriage, but recognises the rights of gay couples.

Ireland/China - Irish baby milk factory to close as China birth rate drops

Israel/Hamas war - [Israel-Hamas war and the impact of online disinformation](#) Update from Al Jazeera Update from [BBC](#) Update from [Reuters](#)

Lebanon/Israel - [‘No work back home’: Lebanon’s foreign domestic workers fear Israel war](#). In an economy that’s in free fall, migrant workers are already vulnerable. A war could make things worse.

Morocco - [By sea, by land: Desperate refugees still transit Morocco to get to Europe](#). A month after an earthquake killed nearly 3,000 people, the stream of refugees transiting Morocco to Europe continues.

Nepal - [Nepal’s migrant workers suffering ‘alarming’ rate of fertility problems](#). Doctors say high stress, heat and harsh living conditions may be the cause of low sperm counts in men returning from the Gulf

Norway - [Threat to Norway’s migrant workers after new law faces challenge](#). After many years, migrant workers won legal protection from exploitative agencies – but now an Efta surveillance authority decision puts progress in peril.

Peru - [Peru’s melting glaciers bring new harvests – and fears for the future](#). Water surplus has opened up short-term opportunities for a struggling community in the Cordillera Blanca – but what happens when it runs out?

Poland - [‘Emotional and proud’: Voters on Poland’s landmark election results](#). As Poland moves away from the rightwing PiS in favour of a likely coalition led by former PM Donald Tusk, four Poles speak of their hope for the future

UK – people smuggling [The Ilford kiosk man who hid a thriving people-smuggling business](#). Hewa Rahimpur came across as a friendly young man struggling to get by, but was responsible for transporting up to 10,000 people across the Channel.

UK – UK Guidance [Employer’s guide to right to work checks: 18 October 2023](#) (accessible version) Summary from ALP - Removes the requirement for employers to verify a digital Certificate of Application (CoA) with the Home Office Employer Checking Service (ECS) when conducting a right to work online check involving an outstanding EU Settlement Scheme application made on or after 1 July 2021.

- Removal of reference to Immigration Enforcement 28-day notices in respect of EEA citizens and their non-EEA family members which are no longer in use

USA - [Labour supplier Rancho Nuevo Harvesting to pay over \\$1 million USD in back-wages & penalties after repeated rights abuse](#).

Human rights and ethical trade news

Automation - [Amazon unveils plan to deliver packages by drone in UK and Italy](#). US tech giant reveals new generation of drones at Seattle HQ but declines to comment on where in each country they will launch first.

Automation - Fears of employee displacement as Amazon brings robots into warehouses. Digit will begin its time on the floor by shifting empty tote boxes amid concerns humans will be shifted out of jobs.

Tech & discrimination - Submission by the BHRRC to the B-Tech call "Gender, tech & the role of business". The Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC) has developed this submission in response to the call from B-Tech for inputs on gender, tech, and the role of business.

Cocoa - Lack of formal contracts increases risk of forced labour along cocoa supply chain. The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), a non-profit foundation, has found that lack of formal contracts increases the risk of forced labour along the cocoa supply chain.

Indigenous Peoples - Over 70 organizations call for Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence to uphold Indigenous rights.

Anti-Slavery Day - 3 Practical Tips for Preventing Forced Labor in Your Supply Chain

Sustainability/climate

Microplastics - 'Glitter ban' comes into force across EU but critics say it's not enough. Microplastics such as glitter and other decorations are to be banned from sale across the EU.

Bird flu - Epicentre of deadly bird flu outbreaks shifts from Asia to Europe and Africa. Increase of virus in wild birds is driving evolution and spread of new strains

Climate defenders - Greta Thunberg charged with public order offence after London oil protest. Just Stop Oil says cofounders Indigo Rumbelow and Roger Hallam were also arrested on Wednesday.

Litigation - NGOs accuse Bayer of hiding glyphosate risk data. An NGO grouping said Wednesday it had filed claims in an Austrian court alleging that chemicals firm Bayer withheld data showing health risks from exposure to its herbicide glyphosate, which the EU has proposed to keep using for 10 more years.

Water - WWF Report: Water crisis threatens US\$58 trillion in economic value, food security and sustainability. First ever annual estimate of economic value of water and freshwater ecosystems is US\$58 trillion - equivalent to 60% of global GDP

Resources / Reports/Blogs

Modern slavery - Five things researchers are telling us about what's going wrong in business and modern slavery. Blog by University of Bath.

IGT Companion Tool - The Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) is pleased to launch the IGT Companion Tool — Operationalizing the Voluntary Principles Through the Lens of Protecting and Respecting the Unique Needs and Rights of Women and other Disadvantaged Groups.

2023 Seafood Stewardship Index – launched by the [World Benchmarking Alliance](#). The third iteration of the Seafood Stewardship Index ranks the sustainability performance of the world's 30 most influential companies in the seafood industry, representing about a quarter of the world's global seafood industry revenue.

UK climate hazard map – The National Trust has developed a [hazard map](#) that illustrates the threat climate change poses and highlights ways to tackle it. Working to a worst-case scenario model, the map plots places alongside existing data on climate change-related events, such as flooding and coastal erosion.

Coffee and cocoa - [EU Deforestation Regulation's impact on coffee and cocoa](#). The EU Deforestation Regulation will bring major changes to coffee and cocoa supply chains, as the EU is responsible for 35% of global cocoa grindings and 32% of global green coffee imports. Report by Rabobank.

Events and webinars

Sustainable Commodities and Landscapes Forum - [Towards nature positive](#): how business can adapt to regulatory pressure, protect livelihoods, and take an integrated approach to climate, nature and biodiversity

31st October 2023 - 1st November 2023 - Amsterdam

Action through Collaboration: [IDH Market Transformation Summit 2023](#). IDH will recognize 15 years of public-private collaboration at our Action through Collaboration Summit in Geneva, Switzerland where we'll be welcoming 200+ committed front-running leaders, ministers, investors, innovators and practitioners that have the most influence over global value chains to accelerate action towards market transformation.

15-16th November, Geneva, Switzerland

United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights. [27 - 29 November 2023](#)

Location - hybrid – in person element in palais des nations, Geneva (Switzerland)

The future of trade: trade justice in a changing political landscape – Trade Justice Movement

[Exploring the changes that we should be fighting for in 2024, a bumper election year.](#)

Wed, 15 Nov 2023 13:00 - 14:00 GMT