



# Weekly News email

10<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## Horizon scanning

**Africa** - The small-scale revolution against big agriculture: five farmers talk greener, better food. The climate crisis, conflict and the dominance of multinationals with industrial-scale production for export have popularised the concept of agroecology – promoting small-scale farming and farmers, protecting biodiversity and adapting traditional methods that do away with the need for chemicals and expensive fertilisers. The Guardian spoke to five devotees of greener, better food.

**Brazil**- Indigenous organizations in the Brazilian state of Para said they were not consulted by the government before it signed a deal with multinational companies to sell carbon offset credits to support conservation of the Amazon rainforest in the state.

**Canada** - Canada's carbon tax is popular, innovative and helps save the planet – but now it faces the axe. As prime minister Justin Trudeau trails in polls, opposition seek to persuade voters environmental policy is a burden

**EU** - EU Commission Proposes Delay for Anti-Deforestation Law. The European Union's Deforestation-Free Products Regulation (EUDR) is a piece of legislation that required considerable study, negotiation, and compromise. It requires EU companies to ensure the wood, palm oil, soy, coffee, cocoa, rubber, and cattle they export, or import has been produced in conditions that respect environmental laws and laws on land use rights, and that the products were farmed on land that was not deforested after 2020. It also requires the European Commission to designate areas as "low, standard, or high risk" for deforestation and forest degradation using a country benchmarking process.

**El Salvador** - El Salvador faces scrutiny for 'political' trial of five environmental activists. Five environmental activists who helped secure a historic mining ban in El Salvador are facing life imprisonment for an alleged civil war-era crime, in a case that has been condemned by UN and legal experts as baseless and politically motivated.

**Guatemala** - Hudbay Minerals settles civil lawsuits filed in Canada over alleged abuses at Fenix nickel mine in Guatemala

**India** - The Fisherman and the Banker: film charts Indian fishers' fight with a giant. Filmed over a decade, "the Fisherman and the Banker" is modern-day David and Goliath documentary that chronicles the struggle of a fishing community in India's Gulf of Kutch who take on one of the world's most powerful institutions, The World Bank Group, after it funded a coal-fired power plant on their coast. They alleged that the construction of the plant had adversely affected their livelihoods by depleting fish populations and increasing salinity levels.

**Ireland** - Migrant worker working '70-hour weeks' for less than minimum wage awarded €23,000. The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) ruled on Tuesday that Chicken Castle Limited, trading as Chicken Club, in Main Street, Castleisland, Kerry, had breached the employment rights of Suman Bhurtel, who was working with an employment permit as a Chef De Partie.

**Russia** - Unilever sells its subsidiary to local co., completes exit from country. The maker of Dove soap and Hellmann's condiments said the sale includes all of its business and four factories in Russia. Its business in Belarus is also included in the sale.

**Saudi Arabia** - MPs pile pressure on Labour to oppose Saudi bid to join UN's Human Rights Council. A letter to foreign secretary David Lammy – signed by MPs and peers from across parties – outlines concerns over the Kingdom's human rights record, including the jailing of women's rights advocates and a surge in executions.

**Thailand** - Authorities of Thailand are ramping up the crackdown on foreigners illegally working in the country, with a campaign launched by the Ministry of Labor to inspect workplaces employing migrant workers nationwide. Labor Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said from June 5 to Oct. 2, officials inspected 20,152 outlets employing 277,770 migrant workers, finding 844 workplaces employing illegal immigrant workers and arresting 2,063 individuals from some Southeast Asian countries and other nationalities.

**UK** - New UK laws to stop repeat of P&O mass sackings scandal go before parliament. Labour clamps down on poor working conditions at sea with laws on collective dismissal and minimum wage on cross-Channel ferries

**UK** - New enforcement agency will protect workers' rights as part of 'watershed' bill. Employment rights legislation has been widely heralded by trade unions despite some commitments being watered down. The Fair Work Agency will be created as part of the government's employment rights legislation, which will include stronger protections against unfair dismissal and exploitative contracts.

**UK** - Labour's employment rights bill: what key changes will it bring?. Explainer: Improvements to workers' rights to include day-one universal sick pay and an end to zero-hours contracts and fire and rehire

## Human rights and ethical trade news

**Mental Health** - Today is World Mental Health Day The theme for 2024 is "It is time to prioritise mental health in the workplace".

🧠 15% of working-age adults are estimated to have an existing mental health condition

🧠 5th most common reason for sickness absence in 2022 was mental health

🧠 Globally, an estimated 12 billion working days are lost every year to depression and anxiety at a cost of US\$ 1 trillion per year in lost productivity.

► More stats [here from World Health Organization](#)

► Conversation Guide: [Talking to someone about mental health and lots of other great tools](#)

**Unseen** - [Helpline wins £1 million in funding to expand the fight against modern slavery. More people from hard-to-reach communities will be helped to escape exploitation thanks to new funding made possible by National Lottery players.](#) The Helpline received a record number of calls and contacts via our web form and app in 2023. Our advisers handled 11,700 calls and contacts from potential victims and people requesting information and guidance, a 20% increase on the previous year.

**Forced Labour Legislation in EU** - [Slavery no more? – EU adopts the FLR.](#) Although sounding like a practice from a bygone age, forced labour – whereby individuals are compelled against their will to provide work or service through the use of force, fraud, or coercion – is still very much with us. And the figures are alarming. Read the full article.

**Cultural Rights** - [What is the Appropriate Role of Companies in the Field of Cultural Rights?](#) I believe we would benefit from a similar leap in our shared understanding of the appropriate role of companies in the field of cultural rights. This has become especially urgent given the growth of streaming, the evolution of ad-based business models, and the emergence of generative AI, all of which raise several pressing questions about the role of companies in protecting, respecting, and fulfilling cultural rights

**IHRB – Responsible Business Practices** – [Unpacking the UN Pact for the Future. What does it mean for the responsible business agenda?](#) Last week in New York, government leaders came together at the start of the annual United Nations (UN) General Assembly to adopt The Pact for the Future. This inter-governmental declaration, despite last minute efforts by a handful of states to derail the negotiations was presented as “a new beginning in multilateralism.”

**Oxfam – Responsible Business** - [How can we make responsible business the new normal?](#) Jan Joost Kessler on four ways to scale up responsible business models that are better for people and planet. “*We squeeze the fruit not the farmer*”

## Environment & sustainability

**What Climate Week NYC meant for business - Podcast.** Mark Lee talks to ERM leaders and experts across climate markets, social performance and nature about how Climate Week NYC 2024 shaped the global business sustainability agenda. They also discuss implications and expectations for the upcoming United Nations COP16 biodiversity and COP29 climate change conferences later this year.

**Carbon Market** – [Mandatory Environmental and Human Rights Safeguards Agreed for UN.](#) The Body mandated by the Paris Agreement to set up a new UN carbon market has agreed mandatory environmental and human rights safeguards early into a five-day meeting in Baku. These protections will require those participating in the UN's Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism to identify, evaluate, avoid, minimize and mitigate potential risks associated with projects.

The new rules mean environmental and social rights will be protected through a mandatory tool – known as the Sustainable Development Tool – that assesses and monitors project impacts throughout their lifespan.

**Just Transition** - [Energy giants collaborate to safeguard nature and communities during green transition.](#) As the transition to renewable energy grows, the World Economic Forum has launched

a new coalition assisting large developers in creating projects that benefit nature and local communities.

**WWF - Nature is disappearing:** The 2024 Living Planet Report is out, and the message is clear: Nature is in crisis. There has been a 73% decline in the average size of monitored wildlife populations since 1970. These declines are an early warning indicator of increasing extinction risk and the potential loss of ecosystem health and resilience. As vital ecosystems near collapse, we are dangerously close to tipping points that could lead to irreversible impacts for both people and the planet. The average size of wildlife populations has fallen by a staggering 73%.

## Resources/Reports/Blogs/Films

**Human Rights In Business - CSDDD – Podcast:** Turning soft law into hard law - what are the implications of the EU CSDDD?

**UNGP Commitments** - Attention business leaders: Now is the time to double down on your UNGPs commitment. Jo Reyes, the COO of Global Business Initiative on Human Rights shares an important conversation with GBI's Chair, Andrea Shemberg, in which they discuss the value for companies of reinforcing their UNGPs commitments and work programmes in the light of increased mandatory measures.

- Listen to the podcast [here](#)
- You can access the blog accompanying the podcast [here](#).

**Just 4 All Best Practices – #2 Women** - The practices gathered in the framework of the Just4All project highlight the vital connection between environmental education and economic empowerment, employing innovative strategies that bridge this gap by linking environmental issues to participants' daily lives. These 9 focus on women

**IHRB - Seafarers and Illegal Recruitment Fees: 2024 Insights.** New research for 2024 shows that almost a third (31%) of seafarers have been asked to pay a recruitment fee to secure a job onboard a merchant vessel - of these, 28% were asked in 2024 - meaning the problem is both endemic and current.

**United Nations: Pact for the Future,** Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations. Read the Report from September 2024

**Climate Change and Modern Slavery Hub** - Resource on the intersection between climate change, migration and modern slavery. Modern slavery – an umbrella term for several types of exploitation, including forced labour, and its forms, forced marriage, and human trafficking – and its enabling factors are complex and still poorly understood. This is especially true in the context of climate change, including climate-induced migration or immobility. This poor understanding results in the absence of policies and programmes that adequately protect and support people who are especially vulnerable, which enables the perpetuation of abuses and severe exploitation.

This website brings together the existing evidence on the link between climate change, migration and modern slavery. It aims to support informed decision making to reduce vulnerability to all forms of modern slavery, specifically in the context of climate change. We will add resources as new research and information becomes available. Explore the [Map here](#).

**TUC** - TUC submission to the Treasury for Autumn Budget 2024. Working people and their families have paid the price for failure for far too long. The Chancellor now has an important opportunity to support the economy, strengthen growth and start to rebuild living standards. [This submission sets out the scale of the economic and fiscal challenges the country faces and evidences the need for change.](#)

**Living Wage** - "Living wages are to social sustainability... what net zero was to environmentalism... Net zero carbon emissions gave companies a specific, quantifiable objective to aim for, and allowed them to track progress toward an environmental goal. The living wage seems to be on a similar path—it offers a quantifiable, comparable metric, but toward a social/economic goal." Elizabeth A. Bennett [Article One latest blog.](#)

**Living Wage Indicator** - To explore Living wages further look at [WageIndicator Foundation](#) database estimates #livingwages for 2600+ regions across 165+ countries.

## Events and webinars

**14<sup>th</sup> October - [Screening of Death at Sea](#) and expert roundtable in London.** Tickets: [deathatsea.eventbrite.co.uk](https://deathatsea.eventbrite.co.uk) Time: 18:15 - 20:30

Location: Everyman Cinema Borough Yards, London, SE1 9PA

### 18<sup>th</sup> October Anti-Slavery Day

[What are you doing to mark Anti-Slavery Day?](#) – Free resources from Slave Free Alliance

[Stronger Together](#) Resources

**Fri, 18 Oct 2024 15:00 - 17:00 BST - Tackling Modern Slavery and Exploitation in Greater Manchester:**

Register here to reserve a spot – [Eventbrite Link](#)

An introduction with local experts

Speakers include

- Kate Green, Deputy Mayor for Safer and Stronger Communities (Greater Manchester)
- Ben Greaves, Head of Anti-Slavery Services at Causeway
- Dr Jon Davies, University of Manchester
- Angela Hughes, ESG Manager at Speedy Hire

