



Members Fortnight Call – Opening Statements

The Food Network for Ethical Trade – Every fortnight 10 – 11 hrs



Competition Law and Safe Space Statements

Participant Identity:

*Please display your **name** and the **business name***

Competition Law Statement

“We are meeting to discuss issues raised in the forum of the Food Network for Ethical Trade.

We take competition compliance seriously. Whilst discussions can cover matters of interest to our industry, we cannot discuss or exchange sensitive commercial information.

If at any time during this meeting, you think our discussions may be in breach of competition rules, please inform the Chair. The Chair may close the meeting at any time if the chair believes that discussions are in breach of competition law”

Safe Space Statement

The fortnightly members call is a safe space for members to discuss and exchange ideas on human rights risks and improvement actions and all are reminded to please always respect this principle.

Agenda 3rd April 2024

Timing	Item
10.00 – 10.15	Presentation on Sustainability Stickerbook – John Isherwood
10.15- 10.25	FNET's role in advocacy
10.25 – 10.45	FNET business <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SWS online Grower roadshows• Member queries• Feedback on podcast/audio recordings

What should FNET's role be in Advocacy

'Advocacy is the activity carried out by an individual or group with the aim to influence and change the decisions made by political, economic, and social institutions.'

A collective voice can

- Help reduce a business's concern when raising a difficult issue.
- Be stronger than that of individual businesses when campaigning and can help policy makers, and stakeholders know what is working well, where gaps are and how best to target resources.

What are the risks?

- FNET lacks the regulatory affairs/ legal team and resources so will need to be tactical about when it lends its voice
- It could draw more criticism from stakeholders if FNET's name is more visible, but the opposite could equally be true



Oxfam request for FNET and FNET member organisations to sign this letter (DEADLINE 5th April)

BHREA Business Statement for UK Human Rights Due Diligence

We, the undersigned businesses, business associations and initiatives call on the Government to create ambitious primary legislation – a 'Business, Human Rights and Environment Act' – to mandate businesses and the public sector to prevent human rights and environmental harm in their own operations and value chains by conducting human rights and environmental due diligence.

All businesses, regardless of size, sector, operational context, ownership and structure, have a responsibility to respect human rights and the environment. The process of continuously conducting robust human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD) is a core requirement for businesses in fulfilling that responsibility, as specified in the recognised international standards of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The public sector must also carry out HREDD considering its market power and role in leading by example.

The UK Government – a member of the UN Human Rights Council when it unanimously endorsed the UNGPs in 2011 – was, until recently, a leader on these issues. It is now, sadly, a laggard. Mandatory HREDD is high on the agenda in the G7, and the EU is currently negotiating a directive which would also apply to UK companies over a certain threshold. Laws already exist in France, Germany and Norway.

Businesses can cause, contribute to, or otherwise be linked to human rights abuses or environmental harm in their own operations or throughout their value chain. While some businesses are already conducting HREDD to prevent harm from happening, there are significant gaps. Legislation is urgently needed to bring all businesses to the same standard and create a competitive level playing field.

A new law would increase legal certainty about the standards expected from companies, ensure consequences when responsibilities are not met, promote engagement and leverage between value chain partners and, above all, incentivise impactful and effective action on the ground. Investors also make a strong case in favour of HREDD legislation as it allows them to make more informed and sustainable investment decisions for people and the planet and demonstrate to beneficiaries that their money is being managed in line with international standards and expectations.

Governments have a duty to protect against human rights abuses, including those of businesses, through effective regulatory measures, particularly where voluntary corporate measures continue to leave significant gaps in human rights protections throughout value chains. In light of already developing legislation around the world, the UK has to act to set its own legal standards and not fall further behind.

Therefore, we, as businesses, make the following recommendations for robust UK legislation on mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence:

Due diligence processes aligned with international frameworks:

Oxfam is a member of the Corporate Justice Coalition, which has been instrumental in **campaigning for a Business, Human Rights and Environment Act in the UK to mandate human rights and environmental due diligence by companies**. For the first time, a **Bill** is expected to be discussed in the House of Lords that aims to prevent human rights and environmental harms, including an obligation on companies to undertake human rights and environmental due diligence.

A joint business and investor statement has been prepared that shows support for the key elements that would make a new law effective and in line with the UN Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights. This statement has already been signed by the UN Principles for Responsible Investment and the Investor Alliance for Human Rights. Many **businesses** and **investors** have previously signed statements recognising the need for – and value of – such legislation, and this updated 2024 statement is being shared with them for sign on.

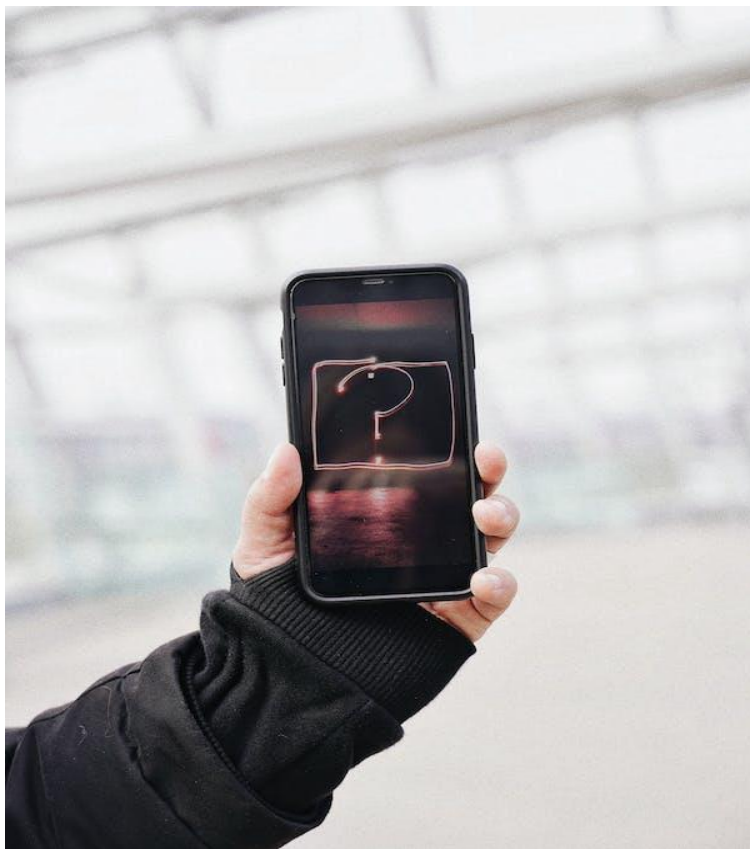
We are reaching out to ask if FNET would be able to circulate to your members to invite them to sign this statement and join responsible business voices in reinforcing the shared commitment on human rights at this pivotal moment.

SWS online grower roadshows

- Seasonal Worker Update and Addressing Key Challenges, 16th April, 9-11am [Book Here](#)
- Horticulture Supervisor Development Programme, 18th April, 9-11am [Book Here](#)



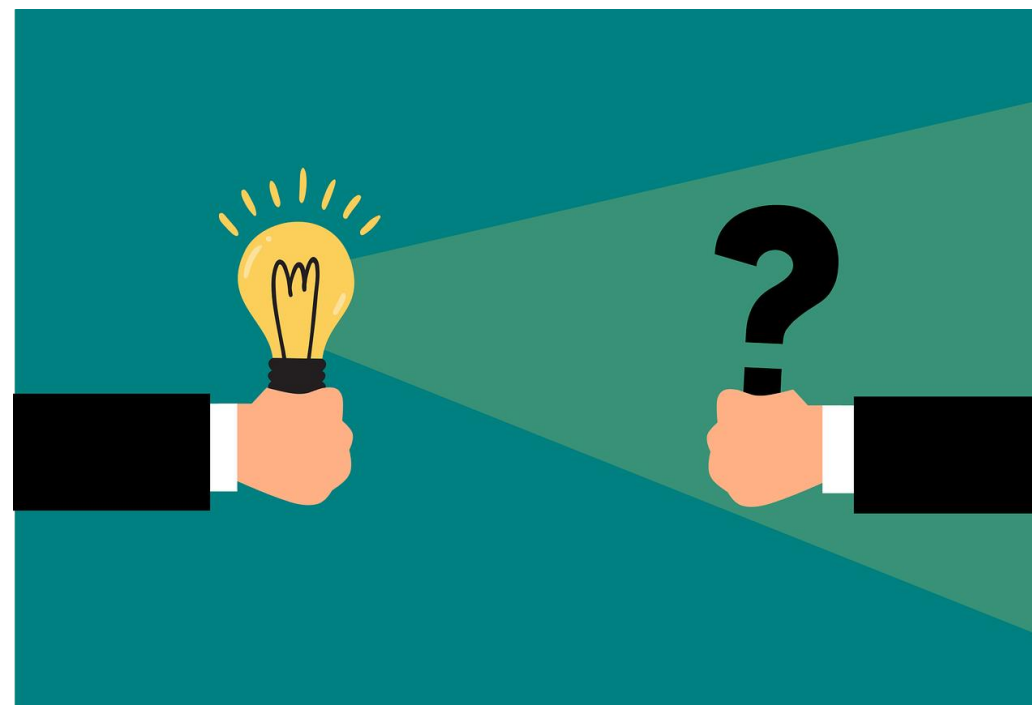
FNET - Member Queries



- ❖ **Remediation** - Have any FNET companies asked their seasonal work permit scheme operators to formally sign up to remediation arrangements where fees are identified?
- ❖ **Risk Assessment** - Has any company incorporated the below datasets into their human rights risk assessments? How did you the ranges for low, medium, and high risk, and are there industry guidelines that can be applied.
 - ❖ UNICEF Child Labour dataset
 - ❖ Global Slavery Index dataset – Modern Slavery Prevalence / Vulnerability
- ❖ **Sedex glitch** - the deadlines for an NC to be closed are counted from the day an audit is loaded in SEDEX, not the actual date of the audit. So if an audit is uploaded 30 days after it took place, the deadline for a critical NC with 30 days to close is actually showing as 60 days in the system. Anyone else experiencing this?

FNET REQUESTS

- ❖ Fortnightly call on Health and Safety. We are looking for a Grower/Producer and Manufacturer who has insightful ways to raise awareness and encourage a culture of Health & Safety in the workplace. 5-10 min case study.
- ❖ Any feedback on audio file useage?
- ❖ Reminder to send all SEDEX related queries for the next call on 17th April by 12th April.



Upcoming FNET meetings



- **Empowering Work working group** – In person Workshop on Worker Voice Alignment - Thursday 11th April 09.30-4pm (Hilton Foods, Huntingdon).
- **Sedex call** in next fortnightly call on Wednesday 17th April 10.30-11.30
- **Re-scheduled to in-person Raw Materials and Services working group** – In person workshop - Wednesday 1st May @ Sainsbury's London
- **Climate & Human Rights working group** – Thursday 25th April 1-3pm
- **Developing Common Due Diligence Tools** – Thursday 2nd May 2-4pm
- **FNET onboarding call for new members** – Wednesday 22nd May 12-1.30
- **All Members Meeting** – Tuesday 18th June – 9-4.30pm – Tesco Heart Building Welwyn Garden City