

2018 UN Forum on Business and Human Rights

Report from the session:

HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE IN PRACTICE IN THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM SECTOR

28 November 2018, Geneva



Introduction

The representatives from the travel and tourism industry came together at the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva to discuss the global action needed to end forced labour, human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children.



Co-organized by [ECPAT International](#) and [the International Tourism Partnership](#), the session on ‘human rights due diligence in practice in the tourism sector’, was the first time the sector has gathered to discuss solutions to these shared challenges before a United Nations audience.

The travel and tourism industry has rapidly expanded in recent years, with international tourist arrivals increasing from 528 million in 2005 to 1,323 million in 2017. Many developed countries that were once considered “remote” have now opened up to international visitors. However, this expansion has brought challenges to human rights, with the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children increasing. No country is immune to these ever-growing risks. The travel and tourism industry is in a unique position to identify the most vulnerable – and to prevent these breaches of human rights.

During the session, experts from non-profit organisations stood shoulder to shoulder with senior leaders from global travel and tourism companies, including [IATA](#), [Hilton](#), [TUI Group](#) and [Global Fund to End Modern Slavery](#) (GFEMS). They have committed to continue tackling the crimes, which cause suffering to millions around the world and in the long-term negatively impact the travel and tourism industry.

Panellists:

- **Madhu Rajesh**, Director, International Tourism Partnership (ITP);
- **Theo Noten**, Programme Manager, ECPAT Netherlands;

- **Mark Ehrlich**, Vice President, Global Compliance and Privacy, Hilton;
- **Helen Taylor**, Director of Grant Programs, Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS);
- **Jane Ashton**, Director of Sustainable Development, TUI Group; and
- **Linda Ristagno**, Manager, External Affairs, IATA.

The session was moderated by **Helen Marano**, WTTC, Executive Vice-President, External Affairs at the World Travel and Tourism Council.

Overview and key focus of ECPAT International and ITP in working with the private sector



Theo Noten representing **ECPAT International**, Board Member of The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism and Programme Manager at ECPAT Netherlands underlined:

“As the reach of global tourism expands, so too do opportunities for those who travel to harm children by sexually exploiting them. The travel and tourism industry has a key role to play in keeping children safe. Together with business leaders, especially from the travel industry, we call upon the private sector and governments to protect children and meet the commitments made to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. No child should be left behind!”

Theo Noten shared the history of ECPAT International through its origins as a campaign in the South East Asia region to a global network in over 100 countries. He reminded the audience, with reflections on his own country The Netherlands, that the problem of child sexual exploitation is not just a problem of the south but that it is global and that zero tolerance to this crime is needed.

He stressed that the private sector, including travel and tourism industry and ICT, have an important role to play in ending the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism and shared the work of [The Code](#) and how works with the private sector to ensure that cases of sexual exploitation of children are reported, and that offenders are prosecuted.

He referred to the [Global Study](#) on sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism that was the first ever consolidated effort to understand the global nature and scope of this crime. This series of studies is the most comprehensive picture to date of this crime and includes input from 67 partners around the world, as well as contributions from experts and children themselves.

Madhu Rajesh, Director, **International Tourism Partnership (ITP)** shared her personal experience from over two decades working in the travel and tourism industry and meeting many people: *“who put everything they owned at stake to leave their home, their family and country in the promise and hope of a better future, only to be find themselves exploited, at the hands of the middle men and facing a future that was really uncertain”*. She stressed that: *“their stories were never officially shared, and in my interactions with them I realized the pain, the betrayal they felt, and the fact that they had absolutely no choice”*.

She shared the multiple achievements of ITP through its membership of 15 hotel groups. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals the hotel industry unified itself under 4 ITP [Goals for 2030](#), including a human rights goal to raise awareness of human rights risks, embed human rights into corporate governance, and address risks arising in the labour supply chain and during hotel construction. This requires partnership with civil society and not for profits. First priorities for areas of work include raising staff awareness on human rights and identifying risks in the labour supply chain.

She emphasized the need to listen to the voices of survivors, who ask ‘what’s next’? Which is why ITP is ensuring youth employment opportunities for survivors of human trafficking through the [Youth Career Initiative](#). ITP not only provides opportunities for young people to prevent them from falling back into exploitation, but provides them with dignified careers within the tourism industry.

Helen Marano, Executive Vice-President, External Affairs at the World Travel and Tourism Council commented:

“As a global Council which represents all of the segments of the travel and tourism sector, we are proud to be leading the path forward for the broader industry’s commitment to the intolerance of all aspects of human trafficking. We will highlight the key efforts being conducted by members of our Council as a way for others to commit, engage and strengthen the ability of travel and tourism to tackle this challenge and eradicate all forms of human trafficking and child sexual exploitation”.

Solutions developed to address risks of sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism

Theo Noten, representing ECPAT **International** and **The Code**, introduced the problem of sexual exploitation of children by sharing the “Speak out” [video](#) that was created from the results of the Global Study to share the voices and perspectives of survivors of child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism. The video was made possible with the generous support of Carlson Family Foundation.

Linda Ristagno, **Manager, External Affairs at IATA** began by sharing the IATA’s initiative to support the governments and society to end human trafficking. She said that it can be best addressed through coordination and cooperation between governments and business. That’s why IATA has adopted a multi-stakeholder approach starting with the airlines’ [Resolution Against Trafficking in Persons](#). The resolution was unanimously approved by more than 290 airline members at the 74th Annual General Meeting in 2018 and commits the industry to join forces in preventing human trafficking. The IATA ‘#Eyes Open’ campaign, the policy guideline, the [video](#) and the training are concrete examples of the IATA’s efforts to raise global awareness and provide airlines with proper tools to identify indicators of human trafficking and to act. Further information on the resolution and IATA’s work to fight human trafficking is available [here](#).

Mark Ehrlich, Vice President, Global Compliance and Privacy, Hilton discussed a recently launched [Travel With Purpose 2030 Goals](#), including social investment goals, part of that is a commitment to due diligence in human rights in business. He shared example of following up membership of The Code with training of staff. Discussed the unique challenge of being a franchise brand, and how Hilton Group has ensured there are no gaps or risks by making training mandatory at all franchises.

Jane Ashton, Director of Sustainable Development, TUI Group shared TUI's continuing work with The Code by delivering child protection initiatives, as well as implementing policies and procedures and including supplier contracts that specifically reference the prevention of the sexual exploitation of children. She stressed that as a company that takes 20 million people on holiday a year *"protection of children through that process is very important to us"*.

In 2017, TUI trained 3,500 staff and over the last 10 years has been working closely with industry peers to develop sustainability certification programmes for hotels, to develop sustainability criteria and certifications for tourism. TUI set a target by 2020 to be taking 10 million customers to hotels that are sustainably certified and audited that have policies and procedures in place to protect children.

She concluded by emphasizing the need to see more cases to be reported along with the increasing training and reporting mechanisms. Getting the cases back to the companies still proves difficult therefore further collaboration is needed: *"we know it's happening; we need to get more results."*

Moderator, **Helen Marano, WTTC**, Executive Vice-President, External Affairs at the World Travel and Tourism Council concluded by reminding all, that child protection is a long term and strategic investment.



Solutions developed to address human rights risks in the recruitment supply chain

Mark Ehrlich, Vice President, Global Compliance and Privacy, Hilton discussed the Global Impact Assessment that was conducted by Hilton to identify modern slavery occurring in the supply chain. This resulted in overhauling the due diligence process for agencies and integrated responsible sourcing policy. Hilton requires the agencies to conduct third party assessment every two years and is piloting this program in Africa, Europe Middle east region.

The process lead to creating additional training, with specific modules for Hilton, because there wasn't anything that fit their company.

Addressing human rights risks is not something that any company can tackle alone, but need to collaborate. Hilton co-founded the stop slavery network and launched a framework for engaging suppliers.

Madhu Rajesh, Director, International Tourism Partnership (ITP) explained that the Modern slavery act in UK requires companies in the UK to produce an annual statement to confirm what they have done to eradicate modern slavery through their supply chain, as well as what they intend to do following year. Many of these issues are very well hidden therefore it is important that NGOs produce reports that highlight issues that allow the private sector to take specific action.

Linda Ristagno, Manager, External Affairs, IATA – *"Aviation calls itself the business of freedom, that connects the world and brings people together. We want our initiative to be a tool and an example for other industries"*.

She explained that IATA is working with other organizations and states to amplify the impact of the campaign. What they realized is that some policies are cascaded to businesses but are not harmonized and in some cases airlines don't know to which enforcement authority they have to report suspicions of human trafficking. Therefore, IATA is approaching other organizations and governments to take on reporting mechanisms for cabin crew and ground staff.

Helen Taylor, Director of Grant Programs, Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) shared the mission of a USD 75 million fund working to end modern slavery by making it economically unprofitable. She highlighted labour migration as a key issue due to the fact that many ethical recruiters that offer protections to workers are simply unable to compete financially. The fund comes in to increase their market share and to partner with the private sector to ensure there is demand for ethical companies. With the voice of the private sector demanding this, as well as legislation like the UK Modern Slavery Act, The Global Fund is confident that there will be a shift in this area.

Beyond risk management: scaling-up innovative solutions in Travel and Tourism



Theo Noten representing **ECPAT International and The Code** recalled the most important result from the first International Summit on Child Protection in Travel and Tourism that took place in Bogotá, was the multi-stakeholder [Call for Action](#). He explained that the private sector, local entrepreneurs approach the government and say that they have an interest in protecting the reputation of this destination and call for the government to do more to protect children. The private sector can be a driving force at the local destination level of tourism and instigate the government act. We should take our own responsibility as a sector, but we should cooperate to encourage the governments to act and protect children.

Jane Ashton, Director of Sustainable Development, TUI Group – explained that they are focusing on working with TUI Care Foundation and focus on vocational training in destinations where youth are at risk of exploitation. Currently they are training 150 youth ranging from 17 to early twenties, in the Dominican Republic.

First 50 have just graduated and signed contracts with TUI hotels. TUI is working towards reducing youth vulnerability to exploitation. They are focusing on prevention and also actively involve vulnerable young people to create job opportunities and to ensure that they benefit from the tourism industry.

In Mexico and Thailand, destinations that are important for TUI Group, TUI Care Foundation is partnering with ECPAT International to promote child protection in tourism. Currently they are working to train hoteliers and to strengthen the linkages between the private sector and local authorities. This is done to improve the reporting process of suspicious cases of sexual exploitation of children. Moreover, they also empower young people to know their rights.

Mark Ehrlich, Vice President, Global Compliance and Privacy, Hilton presented the program that Hilton runs with Vital Voices NGO that focuses on training female anti trafficking advocates to provide them with leadership, mentorship and networking skills. They trained 112 women in 45 countries in the last 5 years. He provided an example of a woman from Thailand that participated in the programme and got inspired to form the first child advocacy centre in the SEA region. He concluded: *“Now human rights is not just a nice to have, but a must to have.”*

Helen Taylor, Director of Grant Programs, Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) reminded the audience that many are trafficked through false offers of employment, and after they are trafficked, they still need a job. GFEMS is working with Youth Career Initiative (YCI) to double the numbers of participants who will go through the programme and look at what can be replicated in other industries that want to employ survivors of modern slavery. YCI video is available [here](#).

She concluded by saying that GFEMS is committed to ending modern slavery by making it economically unprofitable, and businesses must play a prominent role if we hope to achieve that mission. GFEMS is pleased to see global tourism business leaders joining forces to work towards a shared goal of fighting human trafficking and they hope this forum will motivate other companies to get involved in driving solutions forward.

Summary and conclusions

The session concluded with a screening of IATA's [video](#) that brings public attention to human trafficking indicators.

The discussion with the public brought attention to the need of involving a wider range of the stakeholders from the private sector, including the cruise industry.

Helen Marano, Executive Vice-President, External Affairs at the World Travel and Tourism Council, concluded by saying that the session served to show that the travel and tourism sector is standing up, is recognizing the problem and is trying to bring the discussion about human rights due diligence to the table. She shared that **the World Travel and Tourism Council is going to create a Task Force on Child Protection and Human Trafficking** in 2019 to address the discussed topics.

The panelist expressed hope that the session will continue to spur with even more non-governmental organizations and private sector representatives working together towards a common cause to end human trafficking, sexual exploitation of children and modern slavery.

"We are all travelers and we all have to have our eyes open and we all individually have a stake in it. We all need to tackle the problem and continue the momentum" - Helen Marano, Executive Vice-President, External Affairs at the World Travel and Tourism Council.

Key research and initiatives have been achieved in the tourism sector on this topic which provided background to this discussion:

- The [Global Study on the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism](#), that was the result of inputs from 67 global partners.
- The [Call for Action](#) from the first International Summit on Child Protection in Travel and Tourism provide a roadmap how to address this worldwide challenge while contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goals.

- The [ITP Goal on human rights](#) in the hotel industry to raise awareness of human rights risks, embed human rights into corporate governance, and address risks arising in the labour supply chain and during construction.
- The [ITP Principles on Forced Labour](#) launched at the IHRB-ILO Global Forum for Responsible Recruitment and Employment in June 2018.

KEY INDICATORS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

- Does the passenger appear to be coached on what to say?
- Does the passenger have freedom of movement?
- Does the passenger avoid eye contact? Or on the contrary, does she/he try to establish eyes contact?
- Does the passenger have few or no personal possessions?
- Are the answers provided by this passenger consistent at all times?
- Is the passenger branded with tattoos indicating adherence to somebody else?
- Does the passenger provide inconsistent responses from the person(s) travelling with him/her when asked questions?
- Is the passenger wearing appropriate clothing? Does his/her appearance fit the route of travel or weather?
- Is this passenger speaking of modelling, dancing, singing, hospitality job or something similar in a location (without knowing who will be meeting him/her upon arrival, and with few details about the job);
- Are there any unusual circumstances that just do not feel right to you?
- Is the passenger **disoriented or confused**, or showing signs of mental or physical abuse?
- Is the passenger **fearful, timid, or submissive**?
- Does the passenger **show signs** of having been denied food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- Does the passenger appear to have **suffered injuries** as result of an assault or aggression?
- Does the passenger defer to another person to speak for him or her or someone who seems to be in control of the situation, e.g., where they go or who they talk to?
- Is the passenger (especially children) accompanied by someone claiming to be a parent or guardian who is in fact not related to the child?
- Is the passenger in control of his own travel documents?

Source: IATA