

Civil society calls on G7 countries to renew commitment to business and human rights at Ise-Shima Summit

To the countries of the Group of Seven (G7):

We, the undersigned representatives of civil society, are concerned that the forthcoming G7 Summit at Ise-Shima, Japan, will fail to adequately address the grave human rights violations and environmental destruction that continue throughout global supply chains. Effective measures are needed urgently to ensure that supply chains deliver shared prosperity for the workers and communities at their base, as well as environmental sustainability, including implementation of the Paris COP agreement.

Abuses such as child labour, forced labour, land grab, restrictions on labour unions and harassment of human rights defenders, environmental damage, and poor working conditions continue in plantations, fisheries, resource extraction and mining, factories, and waste disposal sites throughout the global supply chains. Corruption often causes or aggravates such abuses. Now more than ever, it is imperative that the private sector minimise the negative impacts business activities have on society and the environment, and bring about long term positive impacts.

The 2015 G7 Summit at Schloss Elmau was ground-breaking in that G7 leaders for the first time discussed such issues. They pledged to promote “responsible supply chains”, and strongly supported the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). The G7 leaders also stressed the need to increase transparency, the identification and prevention of human rights risks, and the strengthening of grievance mechanisms to promote better working conditions, and urged the private sector to implement human rights due diligence. These commitments were made under the leadership of Japan and Germany, as current and preceding G7 chair.

We are concerned that, despite these commitments, and despite calls by civil society, these issues have not been included in the proposed Ise-Shima agenda.

We therefore call on the G7 governments, in particular Japan, the current chair, to take the following actions:

- Ensure that responsible supply chains are discussed in a meaningful manner at the Ise-Shima Summit, and that the G7 takes measures towards full implementation of the commitments that were made at Schloss Elmau. In particular, G7 countries should require, by law, that companies implement human rights due diligence in accordance with the highest international human rights and environmental standards.
- Ensure that the G7 Accountability Report evaluates fulfillment of the commitments made at Elmau in 2015 on responsible supply chains.
- Highlight the critical importance of transparency in supply chains, which facilitates respect and protection for labor rights. The G7 should urge greater transparency on the part of Multinational Enterprises (MNEs), while acknowledging those MNEs that have taken steps in this direction.

- Implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by developing substantive National Action Plans on the basis of meaningful consultations with all stakeholders, including NGOs, trade unions, labor rights groups, and organisations representing persons affected by business activities. In particular, we urge those members of the G7 that have not yet started the process of preparing a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights – Canada and Japan – to start do this without delay. A National Action Plan is particularly urgent in the case of Japan, which will host the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Strengthen the system of National Contact Points (NCPs) for grievance redress by making NCP peer reviews mandatory, providing adequate funds for such peer reviews to NCPs and the OECD Secretariat, strengthening the structure of NCPs, and revising the Procedural Guidance for NCPs.
- As the first G7 Summit with the advent of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, take effective measures to address the erosion of social protection of workers and the risk of child labour in global supply chains, keeping with the Elmau commitments and in line with Sustainable Development Goals 8.7 and 8.8.

We look forward to action on these issues by the G7 countries. We believe that it is crucial for G7 leaders to address responsible supply chains at the Ise-Shima Summit and to ensure voices of the affected people and civil society are properly heard. In order to do so, we urge the G7 countries to create, as a matter of urgency, a mechanism for meaningful engagement with all relevant stakeholders including civil society including the affected people, NGOs, international trade unions and labour rights groups, before, during, and after G7 Summits.

Respectfully,

Action Against Child Exploitation

Association of German Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs (VENRO).

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre

Caux Round Table - Japan

CorA Network for Corporate Accountability

CSO Network Japan

Friends of the Earth Japan

Greenpeace

Human Rights Now

Human Rights Watch

Japan International Volunteer Center

JAPAN TROPICAL FOREST ACTION NETWORK

Japan Youth Platform for Sustainability

Mekong Watch

Rainforest Action Network

Save the Children Japan

Transparency International

Transparency International Germany

Ugoku Ugokasu (GCAP Japan)

World Vision Japan