

**ITEM G.102
FOR ACTION**

FOR PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S OFFICE USE ONLY					
	A. Resource Allocation & Stewardship		D. Coordinating Committee		G. Outreach to the World
	B. Personnel & Nominating		E. Mid-Councils		H. Ministerial Teams
	C. Property/Legal		F. Nurture the Body		P. Plenary

Subject: Endorsement of Worker-driven Social Responsibility Principles

Recommendation:

That the Board of The Presbyterian Mission Agency endorse the Worker-driven Social Responsibility (WSR) Principles; that the Office of Public Witness and other program areas, and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, be given approval to use these principles as guidance for achieving human rights in global supply chains based on the agreement of WSR principles with General Assembly policy on human trafficking, labor rights, and in light of the church’s ongoing work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

Background:

This background information describes the Worker-driven Social Responsibility Principles and support for them in General Assembly social witness policy. In brief, the principles of WSR are in line with General Assembly policy and previous effective action with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and Campaign for Fair Food that have brought about the Fair Food Program, from which the WSR model was distilled. Endorsement of these principles would help increase workers’ rights nationally and internationally and bring PCUSA information and access to researchers and policy-makers both nationally and internationally. Note: endorsing the network and its principles are not the endorsement of any particular campaign, strategy, or tactic.

The WSR Principles have already been endorsed by the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility and many other organizations nationally and globally. The WSR paradigm and its proven, unparalleled success has been lifted up as an international benchmark in ending forced labor by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Trafficking and one of the CIW’s co-founders was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship for the articulation of this capacious, adaptable paradigm. The architects of the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Safety used WSR principals to establish the Accord, notably the binding agreements with corporations that have resulted in the repair/renovation of tens of thousands of factories in Bangladesh to ensure workers safety following the Rana Plaza and Tazreen factory fire tragedies.

Endorsing these principles would clearly articulate PC(USA) support for a paradigm that has had singular success in eradicating human rights abuses and which is, even now, being taken up by worker organizations, NGOs, and governments around the world for adaption into different industries and supply chains.

A recent example of PC(USA) social witness relative to the WSR paradigm comes from June, 2017, when Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson released a public letter calling on Ben 'n Jerry's to sign a “Milk With

Dignity Agreement” with the Migrant Justice workers’ organization (not a union or investor responsibility action) noting the effectiveness of Worker-driven Social Responsibility elsewhere¹. In October of 2017, Ben ‘n Jerry’s signed the Milk With Dignity agreement for better wages and conditions for dairy farmworkers and the program is now being implemented. The WSR paradigm was lifted up in the most recent 222nd General Assembly (2016) policy on ending slavery in supply chains.

The WSR Network was launched in 2017 to develop and implement a strategy to expand the WSR model where it is already in operation and replicate it in other sectors and locations. Creators, practitioners and proponents of the WSR model lead the network. The Network’s Coordinating Committee includes the [Alliance for Fair Food](#), [Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity](#), [Business and Human Rights Resource Centre](#), [Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha](#), [Coalition of Immokalee Workers](#), [Migrant Justice](#), [National Economic and Social Right Initiative](#), [T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights](#), and [United Students Against Sweatshops](#). The [Fair Food Standards Council](#) and the [Worker Rights Consortium](#) serve as Technical Advisors to the Network.

The main elements in the WSR principles that are sought in the consumer and investor campaigns (including Taco Bell Boycott (concluded) and the Wendy’s boycott and others) are found in summary form in A Social Creed for the 21st Century, adopted in 2008:

“In faith, responding to our Creator, we celebrate the full humanity of each woman, man, and child, all created in the divine image as individuals of infinite worth, by working for:

- Full civil, political and economic rights for women and men of all races.
- Abolition of forced labor, human trafficking, and the exploitation of children.
- Employment for all, at a family-sustaining living wage, with equal pay for comparable work.
- The rights of workers to organize, and to share in workplace decisions and productivity growth.
- Protection from dangerous working conditions, with time and benefits to enable full family life.”

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/1-connectingtothecreed-2008.pdf>

More detailed policy excerpts may be found in: “Selected Social Witness Policies on Work as Vocation, Unions and Collective Bargaining From the Presbyterian Social Policy Compilation”

(https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/5-collective_bargaining_policy-2008.pdf)

Policy on boycotts and selective purchasing (much of which originates prior to Nestle Infant Formula, J.P.Stevens labor, “Sweat-Free” clothing, and more recent Fair Food-related campaigns) can be found in: “Boycotts: Policy Analysis and Criteria.” (https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/4-boycotts_policy_analysis_criteria-1979.pdf)

The General Assembly affirmed the rights of workers in international supply chains in the 2016 “Human Trafficking and Human Rights” policy: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/human-trafficking-human-rights-children-god-not-for-sale.pdf>

Statement of Principles of Worker-Driven Social Responsibility (WSR)

We, the undersigned, committed to a vision of a just workplace where every worker is assured dignity, decent conditions and the right to organize, recognize that effective programs to protect the rights of workers in contracted supply chains must be based on agreements between global corporations and worker organizations that embody the following principles:

¹ <http://pres-outlook.org/2017/06/stated-clerk-urges-ben-jerrys-strike-agreement-vermont-dairy-farmers/>

1. **Labor Rights Initiatives Must Be Worker-Driven:** Workers are the only actors in the supply chain with a vital and abiding interest in ensuring their rights are protected. If, therefore, a program intended to improve their situation is to work, workers and their representative organizations – global, national or local labor unions, worker-based human rights organizations, or other organizations that genuinely represent workers' interests – must be at the head of the table in creating and implementing the program, including its priorities, design, monitoring and enforcement. An initiative's labor standards must be based on universal labor and human rights principles, which are embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and defined by the Conventions of the ILO.
2. **Obligations for Global Corporations Must Be Binding and Enforceable:** Respect for human rights in corporate supply chains cannot be optional or voluntary. Effective enforcement is key to the success of any social responsibility program. Worker organizations must be able to enforce the commitments of brands and retailers as a matter of contractual obligation.
3. **Buyers Must Afford Suppliers the Financial Incentive and Capacity to Comply:** Corporations at the top of supply chains place constant price pressure on their suppliers, which inexorably translates into downward pressure on wages and labor conditions: the market incentivizes abuse. Corporations must instead be required to incentivize respect for human rights through a price premium, negotiated higher prices, and/or other financial inducements that enable suppliers to afford the additional cost of compliance with the agreed labor standards.
4. **Consequences for Non-Compliant Suppliers Must Be Mandatory:** The obligations of global brands and retailers must include the imposition of meaningful, swift, and certain economic consequences for suppliers that violate their workers' human rights, whether or not ending the supplier relationship suits the economic and logistical convenience of the brand or retailer. Only programs that include such economic consequences can ensure protection for workers.
5. **Gains for Workers Must be Measurable and Timely:** The ability of brands and retailers to obscure the failure of voluntary labor rights initiatives is greatly aided by the absence from these initiatives of the obligation to achieve concrete, measurable outcomes at the workplace level within specific time-frames. To ensure accountability, any program designed to correct specific labor rights problems must include objectively measurable outcomes and clear deadlines.
6. **Verification of Workplace Compliance Must Be Rigorous and Independent:** Workplace audits – often infrequent and perfunctory and never free of buyer influence – are the exclusive monitoring mechanism in traditional CSR programs and have proven inadequate time and again. Effective verification of supplier compliance is essential and must include the following components: inspectors who have deep knowledge of the relevant industry and labor issues and who operate independently of financial control and influence by buyers; in-depth worker interviews, carried out under conditions where workers can speak freely, as a central component of the process; effective worker education that enables workers to function as partners with outside inspectors; and a complaint resolution mechanism that operates independently of buyers and suppliers and in which workers organizations play a central role.

As endorsers, we recognize that an approach that embodies these principles, increasingly known as Worker- Driven Social Responsibility (WSR), is the best model for ensuring respect for human rights in supply chains where workplace abuses are prevalent and we commit to ensuring that less effective approaches are not promoted at the expense of the expansion of this model and the well-being of workers.

Current list of Endorsers (Sept 2018)

ORGANIZATIONAL ENDORSERS

- AFL-CIO
- Alliance for Fair Food
- Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity
- Business & Human Rights Resource Centre
- Center for Constitutional Rights
- Center for Popular Democracy
- Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha
- Clean Clothes Campaign – International Office
- Coalition of Immokalee Workers
- Corporate Accountability Lab
- Fair Food Standards Council
- Fair World Project
- Focus on Labor Exploitation
- Freedom Network USA
- Fuerza del Valle Workers' Center
- Garment Worker Center
- Globalization Monitor
- Greater Minnesota Worker Center
- Human Rights Watch
- Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility
- International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM)
- International Labor Rights Forum
- Jobs with Justice
- KIWA (Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance)
- Maquiladora Health & Safety Support Network

- Migrant Justice
- Milk with Dignity Standards Council
- Model Alliance
- National Center for Law and Economic Justice
- National Council of Churches of Christ
- National Economic and Social Rights Initiative
- National Employment Law Project
- National Family Farm Coalition
- Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center
- People and Planet
- Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
- Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
- SEIU United Service Workers West
- Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
- Student/Farmworker Alliance
- The Street Vendor Project
- T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
- United for a Fair Economy
- United Steelworkers (USW)
- United Students Against Sweatshops
- United Workers
- Vermont Workers' Center
- Warehouse Workers for Justice
- Worker Rights Consortium
- Workers Defense Project
- Workers Lab
- Workers Uniting

- Workers Center of Central New York

Last updated: 8/3/18

INDIVIDUAL ENDORSERS

- Carol Anderson, Professor and Chair of African American Studies, Emory University
- Mark Anner, Associate Professor of Labor and Employment Relations and Director of Center for Global Workers' Rights, Penn State University
- Rich Applebaum, Professor of Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara
- Mark Barenberg, Director, Columbia Program on Labor Law and Political Economy, Columbia University School of Law
- Joanne Bauer, Senior Researcher, Business and Human Rights, Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University School of Law
- David Boje, Regents Professor, New Mexico State University
- Eileen Boris, Hull Professor of Feminist Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara
- Garrett Brown, MPH, CIH, Maquiladora Health & Safety Support Network
- James Brudney, Chair in Labor and Employment Law, Fordham University
- Teri L. Caraway, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
- Jerry A. Carbo II, Professor of Management, Shippensburg University
- Bruce Cohen, Worcester State University
- Stephen Crowley, Professor and Chair, Department of Politics, Oberlin College
- Jamil Dakwar, Director of Human Rights Program, American Civil Liberties Union
- Jill Esbenschade, Professor of Sociology, San Diego State University
- Barry Estabrook, journalist and New York Times-bestselling author
- Peter Evans, Professor Emeritus, University of California, Berkeley
- Janice Fine, Associate Professor of Labor Relations and Research and Strategy Director for the Center for Innovation in Worker Organizing, Rutgers University
- Eric Fink, Associate Professor, Elon Law School
- Wendy Goldman, Paul Mellon Distinguished Professor of History, Carnegie Mellon University
- Jennifer Gordon, Professor of Law, Fordham University

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(Institutions listed for identification purposes only)

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