



COP26 Policy Brief: Addressing Modern Slavery at COP26

Tackling the modern slavery – environmental degradation – climate change nexus

KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

Achieving the environmental SDGs must address modern slavery (SDG 8.7), through expanding collaborative action to centre the voices and rights of workers, communities, and survivors of modern slavery at all levels of legislation design and implementation.

Background

Modern slavery has increasingly been [linked to the environment](#); in particular environmental degradation and climate change. This nexus is both cyclical and bi-directional meaning that modern slavery can be a driver of environmental change as well an outcome- changes in the environment can push people into situations where they may become vulnerable to modern slavery and vice versa. To address climate change, the impacts of modern slavery must be accounted for.

Research at Nottingham

At the University of Nottingham Rights Lab, the [Ecosystems and the Environment Programme](#) is working toward understanding this nexus in a range of sectors – from [fishing](#) and [food systems](#), to [forests](#) and carbon emissions. This aims to address the co-occurrence between the environment and modern slavery, and move beyond this to quantify the relationship and provide evidence for the [development of data-oriented policy change](#) that concurrently tackles the nexus.

In June 2021, [The Rights Lab hosted a roundtable event](#) in partnership with Delta 8.7 and WWF US, bringing together experts who work to address the nexus. COP26 was seen as a vital opportunity to develop and promote policy change that can support both people and the environment. Action on climate change should incorporate policy changes that expand beyond collaboration between civil society actors alone, into those that incorporate policy makers, businesses, and survivors.

Implications for Climate Change

Without appropriate mitigation strategies the attainment of some of the SDG's environmental targets may negatively influence progress on modern slavery. Issues which arise within this nexus therefore require a coordinated and collaborative response from those within the antislavery



sector, and those working to address climate change. COP26 provides an opportunity to engage the international community and increase awareness of the legislative movement needed to address the modern slavery-environmental degradation-climate change nexus.

Without ending modern slavery, the cycle of the nexus will not be eliminated, thus leading to continued environment, social and climatic issues. It is paramount that our actions centre the rights and voices of workers and communities—including survivors of modern slavery—to end modern slavery, protect the planet and mitigate against the impacts of climate change.

Further Reading

Read the [roadmap recommendations](#)

Read the [COP26 blog](#)

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