

The Commonwealth of Australia

Positions for the General Assembly Plenary

I. Securing Domestic Industries from Human Trafficking

The Commonwealth of Australia has taken extensive measures to address the concerning trend of labor trafficking in our domestic industries and beyond. We have demonstrated our commitment to reducing the impact of these crimes by embarking on several anti-trafficking initiatives and introducing comprehensive reporting and supply chain auditing legislation. Alongside our fellow Asian-Pacific Member States, The Commonwealth of Australia has co-chaired a number of regional conferences addressing trafficking and smuggling, events which provided technical workshops, practical capacity-building activities for officials, and improvements for information and policy sharing.¹ Additionally, in 2003, our Member State announced a 20 million AUD anti-trafficking package that included measures such as two new police force units specifically tasked with preventing, investigating, and prosecuting offenders of trafficking; visa arrangements for victims; counseling, legal, and medical support for victims; and improvements to legislation that allow perpetrators to be punished by up to twenty years in jail.² Finally, in an effort to comprehensively secure our domestic industries, we have introduced and expanded upon policy recommendations, issued by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2011, which aim to assist in auditing supply chains beyond first-tier suppliers. They also establish National Contact Points which operate as reporting stations to effectively communicate concerns regarding violations of the OECD Guidelines.³

The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia has recently signed into law The Modern Slavery Act of 2018, our largest and most concerted effort to date. This law requires all domestic and foreign companies that have a turnover of 100 million AUD annually to publicly report the risks of labour trafficking and exploitation in their supply chains which may extend beyond our sovereign borders.⁴ Not only are these companies expected to report the results of their inquiry, which is a standard requirement among similar legislation passed by several Member States, but they are also required to report the steps that they have taken to remediate with due diligence the concerns found. If there are concerns found, there is no penalty or fine that will be applied by the Australian government and companies are well within their rights to report that they do not investigate their supply chains.⁵ This indifference to the atrocities of labor trafficking, however, often does not translate to successful public relations strategies. In an era of enhanced transparency and ever-increasing speed of communication, companies who report that they do not investigate their supply chains or who do investigate their supply chains but take no steps to remediate instances of labor trafficking and exploitation will be targeted by concerned media and will appear less attractive to consumers.

In an effort to expand the successes of this legislation as well as protecting the free-market principles that underpin our international economy, the Commonwealth of Australia recommends that all Member States adopt legislation similar to the Modern Slavery Act of 2018 to build a global consensus on the repudiation of labour trafficking and exploitation. We further recommend that those Member States who have already passed similar legislation expand their reporting requirements to oblige their companies to include the definitive efforts their enterprise has taken to remediate any notable trafficking concerns. Finally, we recommend the creation of global advertising campaigns designed to raise awareness of companies who overlook labor trafficking within their operations and hold them accountable for their indifference. The Commonwealth of Australia looks forward to collaborating with our fellow Member States to develop innovative solutions designed to end modern slavery once and for all.

¹ “The Bali Process.” Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Commonwealth of Australia. <https://bit.ly/39tUTk3>

² Keck, Madeleine. “Australia Is Cracking Down on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in Major Ways.” Global Citizen. Accessed March 5, 2020. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/australia-modern-slavery-human-trafficking/>.

³ “Components of Effective Supply Chain Management.” Human Rights Due Diligence 2018. Norton Rose Fullbright. Accessed March 5, 2020. <https://bit.ly/2Tq0r9G>

⁴ Modern Slavery Act 2018

⁵ Ibid.

II. Evaluating the Effectiveness of UN Peacekeeping Operations

The Commonwealth of Australia is in no way a stranger to the challenges of peacekeeping. The Commonwealth has been a leading and incredibly active participant in worldwide peacekeeping operations for 73 years and has commanded six multinational operations.⁶ The beginning of Australia's larger operations was their role in Zimbabwe, where a force of 150 Australian soldiers assisted a British Commonwealth operation to help Zimbabwe gain their independence at the end of the 1970s. In the 1980s, Australia was a leading diplomatic participant in peacekeeping efforts in Cambodia, where the genocidal Pol Pot regime of the 1970s had created lasting partisan conflict.⁷ Australia also participated in inspecting weapons-manufacturing facilities and monitoring and policing sanctions in Iraq in the 1990s after the Iran-Iraq War ended. However, Australia's role in East Timor as they were gaining independence from Indonesia is by far its most involved and effective peace operation to date. In 1999, the Commonwealth led the International Force East Timor, which existed to restore peace and security, protect and support the United Nations Mission in East Timor, and engage in humanitarian assistance operations. Australia initially contributed over 5,500 personnel and have kept between 1,500 to 2,000 personnel along with landing craft and Blackhawk helicopters to continue Australia's role as the longest contributor to the peacekeeping mission.⁸

Australia is now the 11th largest contributor of finances to the United Nations Peacekeeping Fund that has supported projects in Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, and Solomon Islands.⁹ It is currently serving in the UN Truce Supervision Organization, the Multinational Force and Observers in the Middle East, and the UN Mission in South Sudan. Australians have been serving in Cyprus since 1964, where they are assisting with improving relations among communities and reducing the effects of conflict.¹⁰ At the 2015 Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping, the Commonwealth pledged to provide United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations in crisis situations with strategic air lift support and to increase the amount of troops being contributed by other Member States in their region.¹¹ Investing time and money into the preparation and sustainment of peacekeeping forces is crucial to creating more effective operations, and the cost of peacekeeping is now at an all-time high with a total of 6.69 Billion USD in 2018.¹² Australia is committed to making the usage of that fund as effective as it can be.

As the General Assembly Plenary is the committee designated with the task of evaluating the performance of peacekeeping operations, Australia is requesting that we collaborate in revising the UN's Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System in order to make peacekeeping missions as efficient as possible. The Commonwealth of Australia's recommendation to the committee is to introduce a set of initiatives that would expand the number of Member States that have pledged to set their militaries to the fourth level of Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System Preparedness: Rapid Deployment. These initiatives would first designate the Member States who have committed to this Rapid Deployment level as the "UN Emergency Response Unit," and develop advertising campaigns that would portray this unit as a prestigious and privileged position. These would be partially funded by a form of social impact bonds that allow Member States and some private investors to invest in themselves and all other Member States through the expedition of their current systems. It would also encourage the Member States at the Third Level of Deployment Readiness to improve their current deployment strategies.¹³ Creating incentives for all Member States to improve the status of their peacekeeping readiness systems is the first step to solving this matter. The Commonwealth of Australia is very much looking forward to tackling the issue of the effectiveness of peace operations worldwide.

⁶"Australians and Peacekeeping: The Australian War Memorial." Australian War Memorial. Accessed February 20, 2020. <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/peacekeeping>.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹"Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding." Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, October 10, 2018. <https://bit.ly/39uaffD>

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Smith, Helen, Celina Mahabir, and Kathleen N. Conow. "General Assembly Plenary Background Guide." SRMUN Charlotte 2020. Accessed February 27, 2020. http://www.srmun.org/charlotte/docs/2020/SRMUN_Charlotte_2020_GA_Plen_BGG.pdf

¹³"Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS)." United Nations. United Nations Department of Peace Operations and Department of Operational Support. Accessed February 27, 2020.

[https://pcrs.un.org/Lists/Announcements/Attachments/17/2019.01 Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System_Guidelines.pdf?Mobile=1](https://pcrs.un.org/Lists/Announcements/Attachments/17/2019.01%20Peacekeeping%20Capability%20Readiness%20System_Guidelines.pdf?Mobile=1).