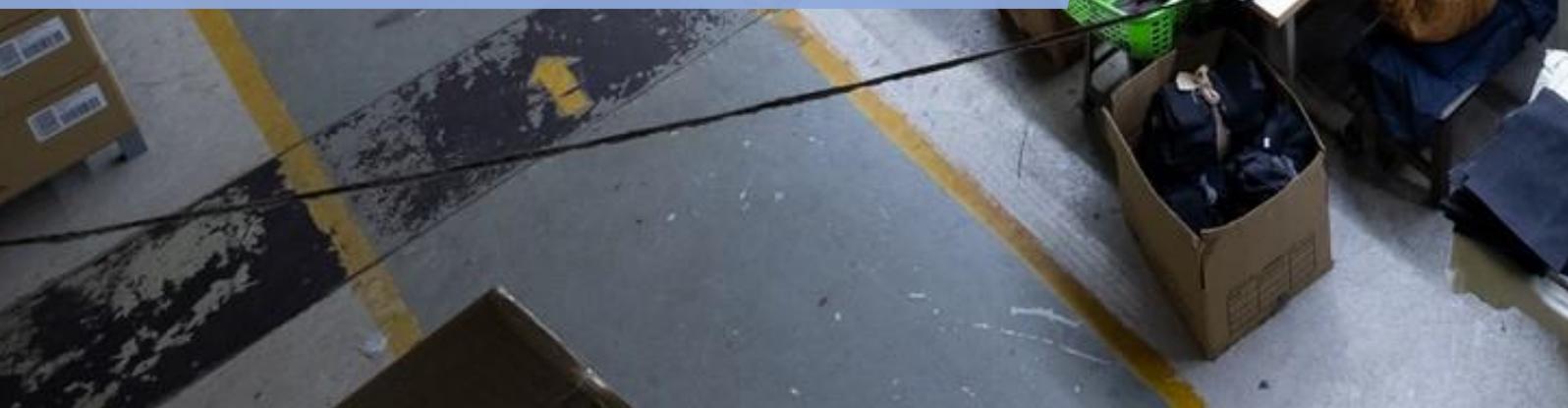




**Taking Measures to Improve Working Conditions in
Developing Countries**
ECOSOC

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Introduction

The world has become more and more concerned about the poor working conditions some people have in developing countries thanks to increased global awareness and this has led to many debates, scandals, and discussions as to how this could be solved. The term “working conditions” involves the working environment and the conditions of employment (more in-depth definition available in the definition section).

In recent years, in part due to the rise of social media, consumers have been able to criticize firms that are linked to poor working condition scandals; they have organized protests and boycotts which has greatly increased the pressure on private global firms, but also on international organizations. With the main objective to improve working conditions in LEDCs and make sure that international policies are followed in these countries when it comes to protecting workers. Even though there has been pressure to act, it has been challenging for organizations to solve these issues because of things such as informal economies, competitive prices, enforcement capacity, supply chain, and high demand but low supply of jobs.

A 2018 report found that there are 3.3B people who have poor working conditions and because poor working conditions have become such a large issue and involve so many people, the UN sustainable development goals 8 and 9 are especially focused on this issue in particular. In addition, there are several regulations and laws which have been put in place to protect workers, although these are not always efficient due to various reasons which will be discussed further down this research report along also with a general overview of the topic plus past and future solutions.

Definition of Key Terms

Working conditions

Working conditions is a broad term that refers to many things related to the conditions in which employees are. Firstly, it is about health and safety. The employees need to be physically safe from any dangers such as machinery, chemicals, and pollution but also mentally safe from bullying and abuse by



supervisors or employers. Examples of things needed for a good working environment are ventilation, moderate temperature, space, lighting, good facilities, and available drinking water. Furthermore, employers need to respect human rights and employees must have all the freedoms stated in the UN human rights. Secondly, workers need to be able to live from their salary/wage and they must not be exploited which means that the money they receive accurately represents their work effort and that they can afford basic needs with this money for themselves and their families. Thirdly, employees must have a good work-life balance and they must have a manageable number of hours of work per week so that they are not exploited and over-worked which is not healthy. Additionally, employers should train their employees and teach them useful skills to improve their employability.

ILO

ILO stands for International Labour Organization and it is an international body that works with the UN to improve working conditions across the globe but especially in LEDCs. Its main goals are to abolish child labour, improve the freedom of association (form and join trade unions), swiftly transfer from the informal economy to formal and set labour standards and policies. It does this by working closely with governments, employers, and employees and it brings these three parties together and this makes it effective as it includes all the parties in the creation of the employment standards and policies. Examples of ILO programs are Better Work and CoopAfrica.

Supply chain

In short, the supply chain is everything to do with logistics when a company produces its product. The product is likely to be sourced in different places, produced somewhere but sold somewhere else and the role of the supply chain is to get the product to the selling location so that it is readily available to the consumer. The two main parts of the supply chain are transportation, for example by ship, truck, or plane, and storage for example in ports or warehouses. A key thing to remember is that the product doesn't change when it is being transported or stored, therefore the supply chain doesn't add any value to the product.



Value chain

The value chain can easily be confused with the supply chain as they are similar in some areas but they also have large differences. The value chain is the process of giving value to the product sold; consumers see no value in the raw material but once it has been transformed into a useful product in the value chain process, consumers see value in it and so are willing to buy it for a given price. The value chain is what separates companies in the same industry as this is where they can gain a competitive advantage and reduce costs of production and so increase their profit margin. Examples of processes that happen in the value chain are the creation of the product, the packaging, marketing, sales, and maintenance.

Enforcement capacity

The enforcement capacity is the ability of a public or private organization to apply rules and policies and make people respect them and follow them. This is essential in the fight against poor working conditions as if policies are created by large international corporations such as the ILO but are then not properly applied and enforced in the necessary areas, this will reduce its effectiveness.

Trade Unions

Trade Unions are independent organizations created by workers of the same profession to defend the employee's rights and interests. The idea behind this is that if each employee was to complain or ask for a change individually, they would be much less likely of being heard compared to representatives who represent all the workers. Trade Unions allow employees to have a certain degree of power and it allows them to negotiate with firms.

Less Economically Developed Country(LEDC)

LEDCs are developing countries that have social, economic, and structural challenges and that have low GDPs and a low HDI index. GDP stands for gross domestic product and is a measure of a country's wealth while HDI stands for human development index and is a measure of human development and the standard of living such as life expectancy and education. LEDCs are mostly found in Eastern Europe South/Central Asia, South America, and Africa.



More Economically Developed Country(MEDC)

MEDCs are almost the contrary of LEDCs, they often have high GDPs and high HDI indexes while having high life expectancies, high standard of living, good education and healthcare systems and most of the jobs in these countries are in the secondary(manufacturing), tertiary(service) and quaternary (research and science) sectors which is where the most money can be made. These countries have well-developed infrastructure and are mostly found in the Northern hemisphere, in Europe, North America, Oceania, and North Asia.

Formal economy

The formal economy refers to the economic activities which operate within legal boundaries and which must follow certain laws and regulations. This economy is often monitored by the government which makes sure that formal contracts are crafted which include pre-defined salary, responsibilities, work conditions and working hours per week. These formal contracts protect the employer and the employee as the employee is often(not in all countries) covered by social security. The employee and employer both have to pay taxes and declare income and some other factors to allow the government to monitor the economy. Thanks to this organized and formal system, the rights of people are respected and protected and the economy as a whole contributes to the national economy and GDP.

Informal economy

Informal economies are the opposite of formal economies, they are illegal and are often under no supervision of the government. This means that there are no contracts and no pre-defined, formal agreements between the employer and the employee. The consequences of this are that wages and payments are not regular meaning that people live in constant insecurity and instability. Moreover, employers can fire their employees at free will and employees work in undermining and poor working conditions(not set hour schedules, etc). But more importantly, they are not protected by social security which means that if they have an accident while working they will be greatly financially impacted. Furthermore, because the informal economy is not regulated, employees and employers do not pay any taxes to the government which damages the national economy and the GDP and so in turn



doesn't allow the country to develop further and become an MEDC (if it is not already one).

General Overview

Working conditions, as previously mentioned, is a very important global issue as it causes many issues and even though lots of effort has been put in to improve the working conditions in developing countries, the situation is less than ideal and so this section will look at: the history of the factors that affect working conditions, the current situation and the main causes of this global issue.

History of working conditions in developing countries

Let's first quickly look at MEDCs; in 1794 the first trade union was founded, in 1802 the first modern law was passed in the UK and in 1935 the USA passed the National Labour relations act. We can see from this that in MEDCs, working conditions were something taken seriously from very early on and so we can ask ourselves why some LEDCs are centuries late when it comes to working conditions and labour. Well, there are various reasons for this and most reasons include MEDCs. The main reason is colonization by MEDCs of continents such as South America and Africa. This had a very negative effect as MEDCs exploited these developing nations by taking all their natural resources and exporting them back to their countries. They did this by installing monopolies on industries such as the mineral extraction industry and this meant that MEDCs had more power over labour and so could do as it pleased them which meant very poor working conditions for most locals and very low wages. This eventually led to social unrest as the local people were starting to express their discontent with these terrible working conditions. To solve this and bring back peace, MEDCs put labour laws and regulations in place but the main problem with these new regulations was that they were made just to appease the people therefore they were superficial and focused only on a few industries. Furthermore, these regulations were not followed by MEDCs because they had a monopoly on most industries, there was no competition and competition is an important factor to self-regulate firms as they all want fair competition. Because of this, the new labour laws were not enforced nor followed which highlights the degree to which MEDCs were exploiting LEDCs. Additionally, during this period of colonization, MEDCs took large quantities of



resources from LEDCs which left LEDCs in a poor economic situation and so the governments couldn't afford to properly and strictly enforce the labour laws and policies. Moreover, when there was not enough labour, colonialist firms and nations would destroy local farms and markets to force locals to work for them in the extraction industry for low wages and poor working conditions as the locals could not live off their subsistent farming as it had been destroyed. After this happened, during World War 2(1939-1945), the MEDCs involved used the pretext of the war to exploit developing nations, especially in Africa. They did this by installing the Compulsory Labour act which was a clear sign of exploitation as it forced all locals to work for very low wages and in non-regulated, poor conditions. By looking in the past we can see that the presence of MEDCs in developing countries is the main reason for poor working conditions as in the past, MEDCs exploited locals under the cover of artificial laws and when this ended, working conditions never really came back to a good standard and so this is how this issue came to happen. In more recent history, in 2013, a factory in Bangladesh collapsed and killed 1134 people. This is a recent example of poor working conditions as the factory had been built without proper permits and this put the health and wellbeing of all the employees in great danger and it eventually ended with a high death toll. Additionally, it was discovered that the people in this factory were getting paid 38 euros a month which is not sustainable to support a family and indicates very poor working conditions.

The main causes of poor working conditions in developing countries

Poor working conditions is an issue caused by several different factors. Firstly, value and supply chains have a part to play. As mentioned in the definition section, firms can use the value chain to reduce their costs of production and one of those costs is labour costs. By putting firms in LEDCs in their value chain, large firms(TNCs) can gain a competitive advantage but this is at the expense of fair wages for the workers which means that workers struggle to provide for themselves and their families with this small wage. Furthermore, TNCs often have very long and extensive supply chains where each supplier has its supplier. This large network makes it hard for policymakers and firms to audit their supply chain and make sure that good working conditions are in place. This results in many companies being linked to poor working conditions without knowing it which is an issue as if they don't know it, they can't act on it. Another reason why the supply chain causes poor working conditions is that within



the supply chain, firms do a lot of subcontracting which involved partnering with firms that are in the informal economy which means that its worker's right might be infringed and they are not protected. By allowing subcontracting to happen within their supply chain, TNCs encourage in a way poor working conditions and working in the informal economy. This brings us to the second cause of poor working conditions which is the informal economy. In many developing countries, there are not enough jobs in the formal economy and so, therefore, people turn to the informal economy where it is easier to get a job but as mentioned previously, there are no contracts and so workers are not protected which often leads to poor working conditions on a safety and wage level. Informal economies play an important role in the overall health of the national economy in LEDCs but they are a threat to progress in working conditions as they are not regulated by any institutional body which makes it easier for employers to exploit workers and abuse their rights. The third cause is economic instability and volatility. Many LEDCs are victims of corruption and are in poor financial situations which in turn means that it is challenging for the government to fund the enforcement of laws, including labour laws which means that even though comprehensive labour laws might be passed, they will most likely not be respected and this will greatly reduce their impact and efficiency to combat this issue. Moreover, international organizations such as the ILO are often distant from LEDCs which makes it hard for them to truly judge the impact and usefulness of their regulations and to enforce them which overall leads to a low enforcement capacity from a private and national level. The impact of economic instability is greater than just poor enforcement capacity; it also extends to the ability of firms to provide good working conditions. Even if they were willing to, most smaller firms would not be financially able to operate with better working conditions and higher wages. Additionally, due to the economical fragility, firms are focused on short-term profit as they are aware that they could go bankrupt at any time. This means that smaller firms rarely invest in long term upgrades such as worker productivity which is closely linked to their working conditions. The fourth cause is one of the main causes: lack of education. Even though there is a certain level of education in LEDCs, it is correct to say that it is lower on average compared to MEDCs. This has a very negative effect on working conditions as the average person is often only able to get jobs in the primary (agriculture) and secondary (manufacturing) sectors; these are the sectors where the least education and skills



are required which means that the workers do not get paid well and they are not trained. Accordingly, they don't gain any new skills and their employability is not improved which in turn will affect their working conditions in the future. The education and awareness of the consumers are also essential as currently, many people don't mind how the good they purchased was fabricated and this lack of interest allows poor working conditions to continue and remain undetected.

Consumers are the reason why companies produce goods, and companies will adapt to the desires and needs of their consumers which gives the people in MEDCs tremendous power over what happens in LEDCs but at present, this power is not being used due to a lack of education. The education of supervisors and managers also has an important effect and is part of the problem. Firstly, it exposes workers, especially women, to sexual abuse which damages their mental and physical health and can permanently impact their wellbeing at work and home. Secondly, if workers haven't been trained properly or do not have the right management techniques and skills, they are likely not to have a good relationship with the workers which can increase the likely hood of abuse and exploitation. Furthermore, the manager or supervisor will struggle to get understood by the workers and this can potentially lead to more friction which has an undesirable effect on working conditions. Thirdly, the leaders of local firms in LEDCs are likely to have little knowledge and expertise in modern techniques to manage a firm which can potentially degrade working conditions or not allow them to improve. This is best seen with the human resource management(HRM) sector of a firm. HRM takes care of the workers and employees within a company and because in LEDCs there is little knowledge in this area, the company often only looks at direct costs when it comes to employees; they don't consider the indirect benefits of investing in their workforce. For example, a small company is likely not to invest in air conditioning as they see this as a cost. But actually, it is an investment that is going to have indirect benefits as moderate temperatures might allow workers to be more productive and motivated.

Productivity doesn't only benefit the company, it also benefits the workers as if the firm is making larger profits, they will potentially have more money to spend on their workforce and their working conditions, including wages which highlights the low productivity that often characterises LEDCs is one of the causes for poor working conditions. Another issue that leads to the exploitation of workers and poor working conditions is the high demand for employment but the low supply of jobs. This means



that employers have more power and purposely employ people only if they will work overtime, basically exploiting them and forcing them to work more for very low wages. Therefore, the lack of employment opportunities, which can be linked to colonialism as seen previously, also plays a part in the poor working conditions which can be found in LEDCs.

Why are poor working conditions a global issue and a major problem?

Working conditions are a very important problem and they matter as they can have a detrimental effect on the whole international economy. Poor working conditions mean reduced productivity for the company as the workers cannot work at their full potential for various reasons (mentioned above). This lack of productivity affects the national economy of LEDCs and because LEDCs are very often part of global supply and value chains, this has an impact on the economies of other countries, including MEDCs. More importantly, poor working conditions have a very large human dimension as in some places, people work in slave-like conditions and their basic human rights are being violated which in the world of today, where we strive for equality and justice, cannot be tolerated. Furthermore, this can cause migration from LEDCs to MEDCs as people seek better employment and work conditions. This could potentially if poorly managed by governments, put stress on the welfare system of MEDCs and so impact almost all countries.

Major Parties Involved

International Labour Organisation(ILO)

As previously stated, ILO is an international organisation that works on a triparty system that included the workers, the employers and the policymakers. ILO has several programs going on in LEDCs with the aim of improving working conditions and the one with the greatest impact is the Better work program. Better Work is focused on the garment and footwear industry and it has divided its program into two parts: firstly, they encourage factories to improve working conditions through financial incentives, data collection and extensive research, reputation management and exposing firms that do not comply and through using the influence of large international firms to influence the market and encourage all firms to work on working conditions. Secondly, they help national stakeholders play a



greater part and have a larger positive impact which they do by helping national institutions create or reform labour laws and create more specific programs for individual countries.

Bangladesh

A 2017 research showed that Bangladesh was the worst country in the world when it came to workers rights. The clothing and textile industry plays a large role in the national economy of the country and 4.5 million people work in this industry as part of 4500 factories. There have been numerous reports of workers being abused and their health and safety being in danger. A prime example of this is the Dhaka garment factory collapse in 2013 and the factory fire in Dhaka in 2019 (killed 69 people). There is also gender inequality as 85% of workers in the clothing industry are women who are being exploited. The government, NGOs and ILO have been working together in recent years with the aim of solving this issue. They have done this by educating managers, supervisors and trade union leaders with the aim of improving their relationship and their understanding of each other. Furthermore, ILO has implemented a road map to trace the progress made and make the government keep ILO up to date. But the problem is that the Bangladeshi government hasn't been very cooperative with ILO and other NGOs as it keeps pushing back changes and is employing several delaying techniques.

Brazil

Even though Brazil has greatly industrialized in recent decades it is still considered a developing country and it has a suboptimal situation when it comes to working conditions. Firstly, in the agriculture sector especially with cattle, cotton and soya, workers are treated like slaves and their rights are frequently infringed. But as Brazil shifted to manufacturing, slave-like labour increased in the urban sector and employers use a technique called the "truck system" which consists of making workers pay for their equipment, their food and their shelters at elevated prices which puts workers in a debt cycle which forces them to work for the employers. Furthermore, employers often take away legal documentation from the workers so that they are bound to them. Brazil is relatively harsh when it comes to extreme working conditions and prime examples of this severity are articles 149 and 203 of the Brazilian Criminal Code which condemn the use of debt to trap workers and the use



of abusive methods on workers and which present severe punishments to the employers found guilty. The Brazilian government understood early on the effect of poor working conditions on their national economy and illegal activities such as illegal logging and this is why it is very strict on it. Additionally, the government has a high enforcement capacity which is emphasized by the creation of the Special Mobile Inspection Group (GEFM) which is a team of inspectors which audit firms and factories frequently and the creation of the National Commission to Eradicate Slave Labour (CONATRAE). Moreover, the government has created a "dirty list" on which all the firms and employers who have been found guilty of abusing their employees or using poor working conditions are put. This then has huge financial implications for these firms as they will struggle to find investment capital and loans due to their presence on this list. We can see that the working condition issues are similar in Brazil and Bangladesh but the way each country has responded is vastly different.

Egypt

Egypt is similar to Bangladesh in the way that they both have poor working conditions and poor enforcement capacity. The Egyptian government greatly restricts the right of the workers and even though they have the right to join trade unions, they are not allowed to go on strikes which greatly reduces the influence and power of these trade unions. Additionally, because of the high demand but low supply of jobs, employers can pay very low wages even though there is a national minimum wage of 33 USD as this is often not respected by factories and employers. Furthermore, there is a high degree of gender inequality as women are paid much less than men and they are more prone to sexual abuse. The underlying issue in Egypt that causes these problems is education; currently, there is 35% illiteracy (for men it's 58% for women). Moreover, working conditions in Egypt have been characterized by child labour as there is over 1.5% of the workforce which is under 14 years old. These children are mostly employed in the construction and agriculture industry which is very labour intensive and often leads to exploitation. One of the causes for poor working conditions is the IMF economic reform which took place in Egypt as the costs of this reform participated in the decrease in working conditions.



European Union(EU)

The EU is a political and economic union with various aims which includes improving inclusivity and abolishing poverty. Because of these goals, the EU takes poor working conditions very seriously, especially in LEDCs. Examples of its actions are the European Employment Strategy and the 86.4B euro European Social fund. The EU also has a set of policies that apply to all its member countries and which address things such as minimum wages, working hours per week and working environment(health and safety). The EU specifies that these regulations are a minimum and member countries are invited to put harsher labour laws. The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union(TFEU) is another prime example of how the EU improves working conditions, communication between managers and workers, social protection and human resources management. Fair working conditions are part of the European Pillar of Social Rights which makes them a priority for the EU. Another focus of the EU is to improve the meaningfulness of jobs which it has done by making sure that workers gain and learn new skills in their jobs(this is less of a priority compared to health and safety).

Cambodia

Cambodia is one of the largest exporters in the garment industry and it has often made the news for poor working conditions. However, with the help of the ILO and foreign governments, the Royal Government of Cambodia has shown willingness to solve this national issue. Firstly, it has cooperated with the ILO program "Better Factories Cambodia". This program aims to improve transparency between private firms, the government and NGOs. The USA made a trade agreement with Cambodia where it exchanged access to the US market in return for improvements in working conditions in Cambodia which is how this ILO program came to happen. Moreover, Cambodia also has a Labour law and a Law on Minimum wage. Even though there are several actions and plans in place, their impact is limited as the Cambodian government is only improving working conditions because of globalization and international acceptance which means that there are still reports of worker's rights being abused and the government not acting as it should and ultimately, this can be related to their real goal. An example of this is the "Work Faster or Get out" report by the Human rights watch and this report exposes the fact that there are several factories part of the "Better Factories Cambodia" program where workers are still



forced to work overtime and work in poor conditions. Therefore, just like most LEDCs, efforts are being made to improve working conditions but their effect is limited due to transparency issues.

Workers Right Consortium(WRC)

The Workers Rights Consortium is an international, independent organization that focuses on providing data and information to the public, to governments and firms. Their ideology is that the most accurate information about working conditions can be found through the workers which is why the WRC has a large team of on the ground interviewers who interview workers offsite so that they are not pressured by their employer and this allows the WRC to get more trustful information. The WRC then publishes public reports which explain their findings of the working conditions of certain factories in LEDCs and it also looks at how TNCs respond to these revelations. Furthermore, WRC helps to increase the transparency of supply and value chains. By making all the information they find public, the WRC puts pressure on governments and on global firms to act quickly and effectively and their information can be used by institutions to make effective and comprehensive policies and regulations. One of the problems with the WRC is that because it is a non-profit organisation and it has high costs due to its in-depth investigations, it requires a constant cash flow to run and it sometimes uses its power to receive “charitable donations” from the companies it threatens to expose. This can lead to some biases on what information surfaces or not.

Timeline of Key Events

1802	The “Health and Morals of Apprentices Act was passed”. It was the first-ever labour law in the UK
1819	“The Cotton Mills and Factories Act” was introduced and banned child labour in the UK
Early 19 th Century	Rapid industrialization which negatively affected working conditions and labour standards as optimization of profits was put above all.



1850-1855	It was made compulsory for employers to report fatal accidents and health and safety policies were put in place for places such as mines in the UK
1872	The introduction of the "Coal Mines act" in the UK which protected the worker's health and safety highlighted a change in leadership and management of firms and governments and more inspections and auditing
1881	Introduction of the first labour law in Bangladesh when it was under British control. This law applied to the whole Indian sub-continent
1919	The International Labour Organisation was founded
1997	Cambodia passed its first Labour law. This Labour law would then be modified in 2007
1998	The first international labour law was put into action. It was proposed by the ILO and is called the "Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work". This law however is voluntary, not obligatory for member countries of the UN
April 7 th 2000	The Worker Rights Consortium was founded
2001	The ILO introduced the "Better Factories Cambodia" program
2006	The Bangladesh Labour Act was passed which cemented worker's rights in the law. This was a reviewed and amended version of the first labour act in 1881
2007	The ILO started the "Better Work" program

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

The UN has always worked closely with organizations such as the ILO when it comes to the issue of poor working conditions and this is reflected in the resolutions it has passed on the issue. The ECOSOC passed a resolution on "Promoting full employment and decent work for all" in 2008 and the General Assembly passed a



resolution entitled “International Labour Organization Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work” in 2019 during its 73rd session. These two resolutions are greatly focused on the idea of accepting and implementing the ILO regulations, laws and programs in all member countries. But, the UN is not the only one to act on this issue, the private sector is also acting and this is best shown by H&M; As previously mentioned, the supply and value chains play important parts in improving working conditions, therefore, to improve its supply chain transparency H&M has been publishing a list of all its suppliers, where they are located and which materials they use since 2013. Moreover, they signed the Transparency Pledge in 2017 and these two actions have been in response to scandals about their supplier exploiting workers. Another private company that has attempted to solve this problem is Nike which has started implementing lean manufacturing since 2012 when it introduced the Manufacturing Index(MI). Lean manufacturing aims to improve production efficiency while also upgrading working conditions as for example, workers are trained better and they are in charge of different tasks(in traditional manufacturing, workers focus on one, repetitive task). Nike, similarly to H&M, also publishes a list of all its contract factories and in 2005, it started publishing a report on pay scales and working conditions and in this report, Nike admits the problems it has in its supply chain and this allows it to better address the issue. Nike also aims, through lean manufacturing, to improve manager-employee relations and communications as this helps reduce abuse and exploitation. On a national level, the USA has attempted to resolve the issue by making trade agreements where LEDCs have to improve working conditions to have access to the US market. For example, the USA-Cambodia trade agreement entailed this. On the NGO side, Labour Behind the Label is an NGO founded in 2001 and it has put its focus on raising public awareness on working conditions in foreign countries through heavy campaigning. It was one of the major actors in the signing of the “Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety” by firms.

Possible Solutions

There are a variety of possible solutions which can be incorporated by various institutions and organizations. Firstly, to solve the issue of employer-employee relations, aid from MEDCs in the form of consultants could be helpful to small firms as



their managers will become more skilled and better trained and so they will be able to work better with the employees. Better communication between the firm leaders and the workers is an effective way to improve working conditions.

Moreover, consultants from MEDCs could help Trade Unions become better organized and have greater power in negotiations with firms and national institutions. The idea of bringing all the exploited workers together to form one big movement could be further perused in the quest to solve this issue.

As previously mentioned, firms are focused on making profits and maximizing revenue in the short term. This could be changed by reducing governmental corruption in LEDCs and improving economic and social stability in those countries so that a sustainable environment is created, which would be favourable for firm growth in the long term, including working conditions. This could include: reducing tension between ethnic groups, foreign financial aid and preserving the same economical conditions through prolonged periods.

Creating laws and policies is very useful but if they are not properly implemented and enforced, their impact will not reach its full potential. This is why working on improving the enforcement capacity of LEDCs is an essential part of the solution to poor working conditions. Firms need to know that there will be consequences if they do not follow the rules as this gives them an incentive to do it. Another enforcement technique without punishment is providing subsidies to companies and factories which properly follow the policies of international organisations and the government.

The resolutions passed by the UN on this issue highlight how important the ILO is to the international community. This is why an increase in budget from the current 784USD could be considered as this would potentially allow the ILO to develop further and implement more deeply in LEDCs and so have a greater presence and enforcement capacity.

Additionally to all this, regulations to improve global supply chains and their transparency are things that many people are campaigning for as supply chains and sub-contracting can often finance poor working conditions. Increased



transparency could be achieved by more frequent and in-depth auditing by independent institutions and by subsidizing the costs of audits as this would allow exploitation of workers to be removed from the supply chain while still keeping the profit-maximizing that firms strive for. The globalization of supply chains can also potentially be used to regulate the access to the international market to firms in LEDCs to only allow firms who respect labour laws and their workers' rights to trade on the global market. This can be very heavily leveraged as it refers to large financial penalties which greatly stimulates firms, especially small firms in LEDCs which want short term profit.

One part of the blame for poor working conditions can be put on entities in the LEDCs but the other part of the blame goes to consumers. Companies will only produce goods and services for which there is a demand, therefore consumers, mostly in MEDCs, have great responsibility when it comes to how and which products are produced as often, it is the consumers asking for reduced prices and this transmits down the supply chain and ends up with the workers getting paid little and little money being invested in them and their training. This is why one of the solutions could be to raise awareness through education and campaigns in MEDCs so that consumers are aware of this social impact when purchasing a good. Furthermore, there could be more social labels on the products so that to easily and simply inform consumers on how each product was conceived.

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