



Demand briefing: Decent Jobs

The issue

Decent jobs refer to employment conditions of freedom, equality, dignity and human rights. Namely, decent work refers to employment that is productive, delivers a fair and secure income with opportunities to develop, offers safety and security in the workplace, is free from discrimination, and allows freedom for people to organise meetings and participate in decisions that affect their lives and employment.

More than two-thirds of the planet's 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty reside in rural areas. The creation of productive, decent and equitable employment is the key to ensuring poverty alleviation in these areas.

The food and beverage industry

Decent jobs are desperately needed in the agricultural sector where:

- Every year around 170,000 agricultural workers are killed as a result of workplace accidents, and some 40,000 of those deaths are from pesticide exposure.
- Between 3 to 4 million people are affected by hazardous pesticides.
- 70% of child labour is found in the agricultural sector, a large proportion of these cases are the worst forms of child labour.
- Only 5% of the world's 1.3 billion agricultural workers have access to labour inspection services.
- Around less than 10% of agricultural waged workers are members of trade unions or rural workers' organisations.

Solutions

Increasing the availability of decent work in the food and beverage industry creates safer, more secure employment for the 1.3 billion people involved in agriculture. As employers, companies in the food and beverage industry have a role to play in seeing these commitments are met in coming years.

Our demands

Food and beverage companies, as one of the largest employment sectors in the world, should:

- Help ensure the realisation of MDG 1B: "Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people".
- Address commitments in Agenda 21, to empower women (Para 5.48), including through training, job opportunities and participation in decision-making.

In general, food and beverage companies should:

- Commit to the decent work agenda and integrate it into the core of the businesses and supply chains.
- Work in multi-stakeholder initiatives to address labour issues throughout the supply chain.
- Uphold ILO labour standards regarding child labour, forced labour, discrimination, minimum wages, freedom of association and workplace health and safety.
- Work with sustainability initiatives and explore good practices for establishing an economy founded on decent jobs.

Note for the editor:

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Fairfood International is a vital part of the global movement of people who are passionate about creating change towards a sustainable food and beverage industry. www.fairfood.org