

**Public Hearing to Collect Information to  
Assist in the Development of the List of Goods from  
Countries Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor**

**Wednesday, May 28, 2008**

**Questions for Meg Roggensack  
Policy Director, Free the Slaves  
Follow-up: June 13, 2008**

1. Could you please provide the specifics of the information you have on slavery in the beef commodity chain in Brazil and forced labor in other goods and countries to which you alluded during the hearing and in your written testimony?

- o Cotton (Brazil)

Information from the Ministry of Labor confirms that workers in the cotton production chain were among those freed, principally in the states of Mato Grosso and Bahia. Of the cases involving slave labor, cotton is no longer one of the predominant commodities, as was true earlier.

Industry is taking specific steps to combat this problem, like the Instituto Algodão Social, created by the cotton producers of Mato Grosso. The major Brazilian cotton producers, Coteminas and Vicunha, have signed the National Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labor. Coteminas, for example, monitors its production chain and has systematically stopped sourcing from ranches using slave labor.

As for the other commodities referenced, please see the attached document.

- o List of specific goods “touched by slavery” as stated in the written testimony

See attached supplemental statement, prepared by Kevin Bales.

2. In each of these countries and industries, would you characterize the incidence of forced labor as “more than an isolated incident?”

Brazil has approximately 4.5 million farms. Between 1995 and 2006, the Brazilian government liberated workers from approximately 2000 farms, representing 0.04% of the total number of farms. In this same period, 30,000 rural workers were liberated, representing 0.17% of the total of 17.5 million rural workers.

The principal slave labor cases are in cattle ranching (based on the number of farms committing this crime) and sugar cane (based on the number of workers found). The difference is attributable to the fact that sugar cane is extremely labor intensive. In other words, of the 5,999 workers rescued from slave labor in the past year, 3131 were in sugar cane, on 9 farms. By contrast, slave labor was discovered in dozens of cattle ranching operations. These data confirm that slave labor is a serious challenge, but in none of the cases did it influence the price or commercial practices of the sector in issue. This conclusion is supported by established research institutions in Brazil.

## **Brazil**

3. How, to your knowledge, is the Brazilian government addressing child labor and forced labor in the informal sector? Could you please provide more information on how the overall strategy of identifying and pursuing records relates to the overall law enforcement effort?

The Brazilian program to combat slave labor does not distinguish between workers liberated in the formal and informal sector. All of the workers receive the same treatment, in accordance with the law.

Complaints are received by public authorities or civil society and passed on to the Ministry of Labor and Employment to be verified by the Brazilian federal government through the Mobile Inspection Units. The workers are liberated and are guaranteed all of the rights to repayment of wages and benefits provided by law. They also receive unemployment insurance and are registered in the federal Bolsa Família program.

Please see the attached referenced websites for additional information on Brazil's program.

4. The "dirty list" publishes total number of workers freed from forced labor. Are these numbers available disaggregated by age and gender?

Statistics produced by the Ministry of Labor and Employment in partnership with Reporter Brasil show that, for example, between 2003 and 2007, 95.34% of the freed workers were men and 4.66% were women. Of these, 44.61% were illiterate, and 30.64% had minimal education. Of the total, 28.35% were between 18 and 24 years old and 31.79% were between 25 and 34 years of age. These were the major age groupings. Slaves 17 or younger represent 3.72% of the total, and slaves 55 years or older represent 4.05% of the total.

The Ministry of Labor and Employment maintains a data base of all of the rescues of enslaved workers. In addition to age, sex and education level, the data base has numerous additional data fields of information collected at the time of rescue. The data that is gathered is consolidated by the federal government and by entities that work to end slave labor; it is used in shaping public and private sector responses to slave labor.

This system of complaints and rescue of workers and the production of statistical information doesn't exist in any other part of the world, including the United States. If the US government is interested, the Brazilian government and civil society partners would be pleased to provide additional information on this system.

5. In each of these countries and industries, would you characterize the incidence of forced labor as "more than an isolated incident?"

Please see the attached information.