

SUPPORT & RESPECT WORKER REPRESENTATION



Giving workers greater ability to affect corporate decision-making about the terms and conditions under which they work

The need for business action

Meaningful worker engagement is key for tackling inequality and distributing value and risk more equitably. When businesses understand the various perspectives and needs of their workers, they are better positioned to drive enhanced and more sustained outcomes for all involved. At the same time, when workers organize and bargain collectively, they have greater influence on the terms and conditions under which they work.

US\$ 200B

Estimated additional income US workers would be earning every year if worker representation had remained at 1979 levels

Catalyzing business action

To ensure that they are well positioned to respect and support meaningful worker engagement and representation, businesses can take the following actions:

1 Promoting a culture of worker representation within the organization

Companies should look to engage with workers' representative structures in an honest and fair manner, including by agreeing upon an engagement process which works for all parties and considering and responding to their positions.

2 Complementing (and not supplanting) existing worker representation structures with new engagement platforms

In recent years companies have deployed a range of mechanisms to capture worker perspectives. These provide important avenues for workers to communicate their ideas and grievances to management but should be conducted alongside – and not instead of – good faith engagement with workers' own representative structures.

3 Supporting worker representation throughout the supply chain

This includes committing to support worker empowerment throughout the supply chain, by making freedom of association a critical component of contractual agreements with suppliers and executing a robust due diligence process.

The business case

Supporting and respecting worker representation can unlock a number of business benefits, including:



Workforce benefits: When companies respect, support and engage in good faith with workers and their representatives, they can build a more stable and productive workforce.



Meeting public expectations: Public opinion and expectations around worker representation have also begun to change as worker wages have stagnated and inequality has increased.



Managing risk: Workforce representation also enables businesses to better mitigate risk at early stages through clear channels for workers to raise issues.