



CANNABIS EDUCATION GUILD (CEG)

a platform focused on global cannabis education, and social good.



CND THEMATIC INTERSESSIONAL 2021: SLAVERY-FREE CANNABIS

attn: VNGOC

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The following document is the Cannabis Education Guild's statement on the risks and current instances of modern slavery in the illicit and legal cannabis sector. The purpose of this statement is to provide the United Nation's Commission on Narcotic Drugs with an overview of the links between drug and human trafficking and the opportunity to develop and implement policies to create a slavery-free cannabis sector.



SLAVERY-FREE CANNABIS

With the recent declaration of 2021 as the “International Year of Elimination of Child Labour,” and the outcomes of the Crime Congress to “implement new measures to address the economic dimension of crime,” practices of modern slavery in the cannabis sector fall under dual importance to the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and both require attention as cannabis legalization continues to be adopted globally. Furthermore, when new trade agreements are executed, countries that already contribute to the problem, seen primarily at the chain of custody stage within the supply chain, along with having strong low-cost agricultural capabilities, will become leaders in the commodities of both cannabis and hemp.

As different nations across the world reform their cannabis policies, trade of cannabis across international borders will become common practice. As countries like Canada begin trading legal cannabis, more space will be introduced between supply and demand, and the trends of present day consumer industries will be followed which inevitably presents risk for labour exploitation.

Unlike most plant-based drugs, cultivated in a few countries, cannabis is grown in almost every country around the world, and continues to be, the most widely used drug worldwide. As global legalization continues, and trade agreements are revised, cannabis will be one of the most significant crops traded over the next decade. And with this, comes a timely opportunity to embed new policy into the foundation of a nascent industry - creating, a slavery-free industry.

Versatile and controversial, the cannabis plant is gaining social acceptance on a global level, while operating in both illicit and legal markets.

Cultivated in 151 countries. Legal now over 50 countries. There are over 25,000 products, across multiple sectors, that will be developed using the plant.

The land required to grow cannabis will rival that of tobacco, requiring millions of acres, and hundreds of thousands in the workforce. The global industry is worth nearly \$20 billion, projected to be worth over \$90 billion in less than five years; this is why, today is the smallest the cannabis industry will ever be.

Across Asia, Africa and Europe, governments have established task forces to evaluate cannabis legalization; with this not only comes agricultural requirements.

It is the advancement of consumer packaged goods, driving global cannabis demand; manufacturing the plant to create everything from food, to fiber, to fuel, to cosmetics, cannabis will be marketed to satisfy every ailment and consumer consumption occasion, and that is why, today is the smallest the cannabis industry will ever be.



SLAVERY-FREE CANNABIS

Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery already exists in the legal and illicit trade of cannabis. Today, the multi-billion dollar illicit market relies heavily on human trafficking. In some regions, high risk drug trafficking zones like the Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent in Asia, and the Emerald Triangle in Northern California, now overlap with newly legal cannabis markets.

As players from the illicit market continue to transition into the legal sector, cannabis risks the same bad practices of violence, forced labor and human trafficking. And though the cannabis supply chain is not yet as vast and murky as crops like coffee, cotton or cocoa, instances of modern slavery have already surfaced in the legal industry.

In 2021 alone, there have been three reported cases where migrant workers have been exploited in facilities across North America, demonstrating how the legal sector is as susceptible to contribute to modern-slavery as the illicit market.

Every commodity has become a race to the bottom; we need a system in place that provides mechanisms and measurement tools so the cannabis industry can be the benchmark for higher standards and human protection.

Cannabis is underdeveloped, it can be the first illicit market to create a new way of working, one that seeks accountability and transparency by bridging the gap between government policies and commercial practice.