

Business and Human Rights: An Analysis of the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015

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Abstract : Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have become a global agenda for all. The role of the business sector is significant in promoting sustainable development, particularly to prevent, address, and remedy human rights abuses committed in business operations. Modern slavery is one of the complex issues of human rights. The paper aims to study the UK Modern Slavery Act (MSA) 2015, whose main purpose is to tackle modern slavery in all its forms: human trafficking, slavery, forced labor, and domestic servitude. The Act has a great significance in its approach to involving businesses in combating modern slavery without imposing stricter regulations on them. In doing so, Section 54 of the MSA requires commercial organizations to disclose a statement confirming the transparency in their corporate supply chains. Even though the statement is required by law, in practice, it is rather similar to the 'comply or explain' scheme. In other words, compliance is mainly enforced due to fear of reputational risk, rather than of lawbreaking. Thailand has been reported a number of modern slavery cases, particularly in the production stage of supply chains. With desperate attempts to solve modern slavery, the Thai government tends to seek stricter regulation and stronger punishment as the main approach. The paper will analyze the effective implementation of section 54 and conclude whether and to what extent the MSA can be applied to the case of Thailand.

Keywords : human rights, responsible business, SDGs, the UK modern slavery act 2015

Conference Title : ICHRLCPR 2020 : International Conference on Human Rights Law, Civil and Political Rights

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : April 23-24, 2020