The Initiative for Global Solidarity (IGS) promotes the implementation of human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD) in global supply chains. It scales and harmonises approaches that allow for a comprehensive and joint implementation of due diligence. In this way, IGS enables buying and supplying companies to exercise shared responsibility for the impacts of their business practices on people and the planet.

Background

Today’s business relations and value chains know no boundaries. The involvement and integration into global supply chains open up tremendous opportunities for producing countries to develop and diversify their economy. However, human rights and social and environmental standards are regularly undermined within these complex supply networks. Employees in producing countries, the local population and, last but not least, the environment and climate, are directly affected.

Globally, the response to this situation is a greater focus on sustainability as well as human rights and environmental due diligence. Fair production and sustainable consumption are the guiding principles and are increasingly being embedded in national laws, for example in Germany with the Act on Corporate Due Diligence Obligations in Supply Chains passed in 2021. The European Union is also planning to introduce regulations in this area. Companies are required to analyse the risks in their supply chains, take appropriate preventive measures and monitor their effectiveness.

Approach

The IGS aims to achieve tangible benefits for people and environment in producing countries. IGS’s work focuses on four areas of action:

1. Shared responsibility
   Buying and supplying companies share responsibility for social and environmental conditions in the supply chain. The IGS promotes that they cooperate as partners in the implementation of HREDD and preventively address and mitigate risks. The aim is for companies with at least 250,000 employees to take measures to better protect their workforce.
Data and transparency
Reliable supply chain data is the basis for purchasing companies to act more sustainably. This is why IGS fosters industry-wide standards and trains suppliers on how to better collect and manage data. Transparency is another key prerequisite for social and environmental improvements. The IGS cooperates with the Open Apparel Registry and promotes the development of a database for production sites (Open Goods Registry).

Responsible Business Hubs
The IGS is establishing local helpdesks that inform, raise awareness and advise production companies on standards and requirements of HREDD and network them with local service providers. At least 150 companies are to use the offer of the Responsible Business Hubs (RBH).

Effective complaints mechanisms
Until now, workers have often not been able to report violations of labour and environmental standards. The IGS wants to change this and is working with companies, industry initiatives and civil society organisations to establish internal and external complaints mechanisms. 125,000 workers are to be given access to effective complaints mechanisms, 75,000 of them women. Gender-based violence and discrimination will be given special attention.

Partner network
Many Organisations and initiatives are already working towards greater sustainability in supply chains, sometimes at different levels and with different content. The IGS accelerates proven approaches and thus contributes to pushing best practices and increasing their impact. Cooperations exist with, among others OECD, International Trade Center, Open Apparel Registry, Sustainable Apparel Coalition, Responsible Business Alliance and Fair Wear Foundation.