



Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken



Bundesministerium für  
wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit  
und Entwicklung

**Joint Declaration**  
**by**  
**the Minister**  
**for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation**  
**of the Netherlands**  
**and**  
**the Federal Minister**  
**for Economic Cooperation and Development**  
**of the Federal Republic of Germany**  
**regarding**  
**Living Wage and Living Income**  
27. January 2021

1. We, the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands and the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany, met virtually, 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2021.
2. We met at a time with great challenges to sustainable world trade, with rising inequalities and enormous disparities of opportunity, wealth and power within global supply chains; when eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge and central prerequisite for sustainable development.
3. We also met at a time of immense opportunities. The opportunities we take and choices we make will determine the effectiveness of interventions towards a sustainable world economy to secure the future.
4. We believe that **acting in collaborative partnership** and joint action by European member countries will **strengthen driving forces for the eradication of poverty**, contributing to shared prosperity and sustainable development, and improve

well-being in the world, taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG 1, SDG 8 and SDG 12, as well as the National Action Plans for Business and Human Rights.

5. In this context, we, the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands and the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany, have forged a partnership for a sustainable, inclusive and balanced global economy, and thereby announce today the following actions:
  
6. We **foster the dialogue** between governments from consumer countries and governments from producer countries in the context of **realizing sustainable supply chains**. We promote the importance of an **adequate minimum wage**, which is sufficient to cover costs of living. At the same time, we continue to support higher productivity as one basis for higher wages for workers in our partner countries, e.g. via better education and qualification. We also support the ILO in developing indicators and methodologies on the needs of workers and their families in sourcing countries, leading towards **benchmarks for costs of living**. These benchmarks could form a normative basis in future supply chain projects for living wage and living income in economically less developed countries.
  
7. We realize that a living wage for workers and their families in global supply chains as well as living incomes for producers and entrepreneurs and their families are essential to eradicate absolute poverty, and thereby child- and forced labor. **Making our global supply chains sustainable** is one crucial part in reaching this global goal. We, the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands and the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany, stand for the importance of living wages and living incomes to eliminate absolute poverty. In particular, they believe this common goal can be achieved by (i) **supporting social dialogue** and **empowerment** of workers and producers in **development cooperation**, and (ii) advocating **responsible business conduct**. We will advocate this policy in relevant multilateral and European fora.
  
8. We advocate to include living wages and living incomes in **EU policy** concerning sustainable value chains and in future reviews of National Actions Plans for Business and Human Rights in the Netherlands and in Germany.

Signed on 27 January 2021 in Berlin and Den Haag.

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**Sigrid Kaag**

Minister  
for Foreign Trade and Development Co-  
operation of the Netherlands

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**Dr. Gerd Müller**

Federal Minister  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development of the Federal  
Republic of Germany