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**May 2013 Roundtable: Trafficking, Supply Chains, & Gender**

With the recent collapse of a factory in Bangladesh used by American apparel companies that harmed hundreds of workers, Americans have been forced to again confront the uncomfortable question of whether they are buying products from companies that play a role in abetting worker abuse and trafficking.

The San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, the Friends of the Commission on the Status of Women, and Verité, an international social auditing and advocacy NGO, worked to add to this national conversation by hosting a roundtable on trafficking, supply chains, and gender and their connection to [California's 2010 anti-human trafficking law](#). The law requires that large companies doing business in California post information on their website about the steps they are taking to ensure their supply chain is not connected to trafficking.

Representatives from large companies, such as Gap, Levi Strauss & Co., PG&E, Deloitte, and Symantec, as well as experts from leading nonprofits and foundations including GoodWeave USA, Not For Sale, and Humanity United, gathered to discuss issues of supply chains and trafficking.

Aimee Allison, Media and Community Affairs Director of the Department on the Status of Women, moderated a panel which featured the following knowledgeable speakers: Cynthia L. Jackson, an attorney focused on domestic and international employment counseling and litigation; Shawn MacDonald, PhD, an expert in supply chain labor issues; and Jeffrey Tsai, Special Assistant Attorney General for criminal law with the California Department of Justice.

Ms. Jackson introduced the [California Transparency in Supply Chains Act of 2010](#), specifying that it does not require companies to be socially responsible, but instead to disclose information about their supply chains. In other words, it requires companies to tell the public what they are doing - or not doing - to ensure their supply chains are free of human trafficking.

Special Assistant Attorney General Tsai added that the law is a conversation starter in that it opens up the discussion with companies about what they need to do to ensure trafficking does not take place. He reiterated that the law is primarily about transparency, and that if companies do not comply, only the Attorney General's office can take action.

Dr. MacDonald explained that the question is not *whether* companies are connected to human trafficking, but instead *how much* they are connected, adding that 12-27 million people are victims of slavery and forced labor worldwide. He concluded that it is important for companies to examine all of the suppliers they rely on, specifically focusing on how the people working for them are recruited.

For more information on trafficking and supply chains, please refer to the following handouts:

[Compliance is Not Enough: Best Practices in Responding to the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act](#)

[Beyond SB 657: How Businesses Can Meet and Exceed California's Requirements to Prevent Forced Labor in Supply Chains](#)

[California Requires Supply Chain Disclosures](#)

For more information on the Gender Equality Principles Initiative, visit [genderprinciples.org](http://genderprinciples.org).

