



**Enabling Child and Human Rights
with Seed Organizations (ECHO)**



This multi-stakeholder forum is a joint initiative of seed industry and NGOs will work on addressing human rights issues in hybrid seed industry. *ECHO is established in December 2019, through the cooperation of the Seed organizations with the aim of promoting ethical seed production supply chain practices, to enable decent work place standards and human rights protection in seed supply chain. ECHO has evolved over a period of time initially from Child Labour Elimination Group (CLEG) in collaboration with Association of Seed Industries (ASI) around 2003 and subsequently named as Child Care Program (CCP) forum and now is the largest multi stakeholder forum promoting child rights and decent work with the support of social research organizations, seed industry members and other voluntary organizations. ECHO members include public and private seed companies and representatives from voluntary and professional organizations.*

A deeply rooted socio-economic problem, the bane of child labor is highly prevalent in hybrid seed production industry, especially cotton, corn and vegetables production for many decades in most of the seed producing regions the country. Several NGOs and researcher professionals have presented their study on child labor in hybrid seed production at various forums, advocating for immediate and effective solution on child labor.

Thus, the ECHO Forum is established after two years of deliberation among national and multi-national seed organizations, NGOs, experts, researchers and other interested professionals to address social issues in the industry with a mission, purpose and objectives. The forum consists of 14 national and multinational seed companies, 4 NGOs and research institutes as its members.

MISSION:

Sustainable seed production supply chain through protection of human rights and ensuring decent work place standards.

PURPOSE:

- ECHO organizes annual and biannual events, attracting seed industry professionals from throughout Indian continent regions and the world and to publish booklets/reports/literature on best practices.
- Study Tours and exposure visits provide an opportunity for members to visit seed production locations around the world, learning about seed industry developments in promoting ethical supply chain.
- Assist in the development of training courses align with the needs and potential.
- Liaise as appropriate with other regional and international organizations concerned with risks associated with supply chain management and government bodies.
- Develop position papers to provide input for the development and/or change of rules and regulations for seed industries.
- Develop uniform standards for Human rights and labor for the seed industry in India.
- To conduct relevant need-based research and systematic audits regarding human rights and labor standard compliance in the supply chains of the industry member companies.
- To explore opportunities for collaboration of member companies to drive common programs around Human Rights/ Corporate Social Responsibility in common areas or intensive production pockets.
- Develop a system of certification around human rights and labor standards
- To reinforce and recognize best practices based on KPI (Key Performance indicators – lagging and leading indicators) besides a reward and recognition program for best performing companies.
- To act as a knowledge base on global standards, federal laws and recent amendments on relevant legislations

OBJECTIVES:

- Maintain and sustain a regional forum, such as ECHO, for industry to address their needs and formulate industry positions (policies) and recommendations on supply chain issues to improve seed sector performance in attaining Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG).
- Promote the development of the seed industry practices in mitigating risks in seed production supply chain for promoting investor relationship.
- Stimulate technical and business co-operation among members. Share information and experience between and among ECHO members on all aspects of human rights and labor standards compliance in seed production supply chain.
- Represent the interests of ECHO members at regional and international levels. Establish and maintain relationships with other relevant organizations pursuing similar or related objectives.
- Encourage the establishment of state level regional forums and support their development.
- Facilitate and contribute to the harmonization of regulatory procedures towards International standards.
- To explore and identify relevant best practices from other industries and appropriately adapt to seed industry.



ECHO, in a nutshell, is established with an intent to seek consultation and address various social compliance issues like child rights, minimum wages, healthy and safe working conditions in the hybrid seed production industry. ECHO will work with seed companies implementing standardized strategies and protocols to handle the human rights issue in their supply chain. ECHO will also engage with stakeholders to create awareness about human rights in agriculture supply chain. The ECHO forum will develop auditing mechanism to review the work of the companies towards human rights in their supply chain. ECHO will also enable farmers by facilitating sustainable solution to for various issues and will continue emphasizing on mainstreaming the children into schooling.



ECHO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Mr. Suhas Joshi, Bayer
President

Mr. Pramod Kulkarni, Syngenta
Vice President

Ms. UVL Ananda, East West Seeds
Vice President

Dr. Davuluri Venkateswarlu,
Glocal Research
General Secretary

Mr. Satish Hegde, Advanta UPL
Joint Secretary

Ms. Rama Rao, HM Clause
Joint Secretary

Mr. Saikat De, BASF VS
Treasurer



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