

## **Twinings' response to the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC)'s questions of 13 December 2022.**

Date: Andover, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023

At Twinings we believe that everyone has the right to a decent quality of life and should be able to provide for themselves and their families. We are aware that challenges exist in parts of the tea sector, and our Sourced with Care programme is designed to improve the lives of those working in our supply chain. As part of this programme, we are partnering with IDH - the sustainable trade initiative, under their Living Wages Roadmap to work towards closing the living wage gap in our tea supply chain.

At Twinings we only source tea from our list of approved tea gardens. Regarding the BHRRC's Sri Lanka report, Twinings sources tea from five companies mentioned: Kelani Valley, Kegalle Plantations, Maskeliya Plantations Ltd, Talawakelle Tea Estates Plc and Bogawantalawa Tea Estates Plc, as set-out in our global sourcing map<sup>1</sup>.

We became aware that certain plantation companies were challenging the decision of the wages board in March 2022, whilst carrying out Twinings Community Needs Assessments<sup>2</sup> on Bogawantalawa's tea estates. We investigated this issue with the five producers that Twinings sources from and they have confirmed to us that they are complying with the new minimum wage legislation for tea plantation workers.

As a responsible business we are committed to playing our part in improving the lives of those working in our supply chain. Last year, we started rolling out the Living wages roadmap to key producers to measure the Living Wage gap. Using 2021 data, we were able to establish that there was on average a 7% gap between actual wage and living wage for workers in Sri Lanka. However, we are conscious that last year's events in Sri Lanka have led to a hyperinflation crisis and rising food prices, meaning that previous benchmarks need to be revaluated to best reflect the current situation. We are continuing to monitor the data and work closely with partners to help close the gap.

Effective mechanisms for workers to raise grievances and concerns regarding pay and working conditions are essential. To enable this, we have set up Community Development Forums in Sri Lanka with CARE International and our local implementing partner Chrysalis. We will also continue to conduct Twinings Community Needs Assessments in Sri Lanka, in order to hear from workers themselves and get a first-hand understanding of the situation on the ground, so we can develop a tailored action plan with producers to help address human rights issues and community needs.

For more information on our approach to human rights, living wages and workers' voice, please refer to our recently published human rights report<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sourcedwithcare.com/en/our-approach/sourcing-map/>

<sup>2</sup> [Our Approach | Twinings Sourced With Care](#)

<sup>3</sup> [twinings-ovo-hr-update-design-digital.pdf \(sourcedwithcare.com\)](#)