

## LDI reaffirms commitment to transparent negotiations with farm workers

Following the recent release of the video [Bitter Grapes - Slavery in the Vineyards](#), stakeholders in the Laborie Dialogue Initiative (LDI) - comprising VinPro, Hortgro, FAWU, and AWETUC - are concerned about the damage that is being caused to the image of the agriculture industry and the wine industry, in particular, not to mention the livelihood of those who depend on it.



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The LDI reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of constructive workplace engagement, i.e. ongoing honest and transparent negotiations between employers and employees on matters of mutual interest. The LDI regards this principle as the key to the sustainable transformation of the rural economy and to improve the economic viability within the agricultural value chain, including worker welfare and the livelihood of rural communities.

The LDI stakeholders agreed that the opportunism and political exploitation for short term gain by unrelated parties, as has apparently happened here, should be exposed and that perpetrators should be held accountable for their actions. This outdated stereotyping of stakeholders at the expense of the community workers, and employers, as well as the country at large, cannot be condoned.

At the same time, industry bodies should intensify their efforts to ensure that their members comply with labour legislation, and ethical audit institutions and the Inspectorate of the Department of Labour should publicly attest to the degree of compliance, and act where compliance is not in place.

In this regard, the LDI calls on the media to ensure balanced and fair reporting of events and to ensure the facts and statements are verified prior to publishing. Misinformation, deliberate manipulation of highly emotive events, and exploitation of vulnerable workers by third parties via the media has been highly problematic in recent years.

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