



Global Leaders Meet in Ethiopia to Strengthen Civil Society Response to Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery

ADDIS ABABA, 11 December — Human rights activists from around the globe are strategizing new ways to confront the widespread problem of human trafficking and modern slavery during a special three-day convening at the U.N. Conference Centre. Experts from 46 organizations in 18 countries are crafting plans to accelerate civil society action in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Americas.

The U.N. estimates that more than 40 million people are trapped in modern forms of slavery worldwide. Many of them are forced to work without pay as domestic servants or in the construction, manufacturing, agriculture and fishing industries. They generate USD \$150 billion in illicit profits every year for traffickers and slaveholders. About 25 percent of enslaved people today are children.

Civil society organizations play a critical role in the prevention of such abuse, the protection of those victimized by it, and the prosecution of perpetrators. Efforts are now underway to increase civil society's impact in order to achieve U.N. Sustainable Development Goal 8.7, the end of child labor by 2025 and forced labor by 2030.

This week's convening in Ethiopia is the seventh annual Freedom from Slavery Forum. The forum's mission is to gather anti-trafficking experts from a wide range of independent civil society groups to identify opportunities for coordinated action and to develop a stronger collective voice.

A forum briefing for journalists featured the following speakers and themes:

- Bukeni Waruzi, Free the Slaves, United States: Slavery is widespread in Africa and the world; the Freedom from Slavery Forum exists to develop global solutions.
- Daniel Melese, The Freedom Fund, Ethiopia: Ethiopia is about to become a U.N. "Pathfinder" model nation; the country's new national action plan must include civil society solutions.
- Lawrenta Igoh, National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, Nigeria: Victims and survivors must lead the way by shaping and implementing anti-trafficking programs.
- Tina Frundt, Courtney's House, United States: Governments and nonprofit groups must work together effectively for anti-trafficking plans to be successful.
- Purva Gupta, Global March Against Child Labor, India: Being gender responsive is a key for ending exploitation.
- Mara Vanderslice Kelly, United Way, United States: Today's anti-slavery programs must be scaled-up to have significant impact, and funding for them must be increased.

- Mark Makinde, Dignity Foundation for Relief and Development, South Africa: “Bringing dignity to survivors grounds our work in human values.”

Media Contact: Terry FitzPatrick, Free the Slaves (Forum secretariat)

Email: terry.fitzpatrick@freetheslaves.net | Mobile/WhatsApp: +1.571.282.9913

###

TENS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ARE IN SLAVERY TODAY
 RESEARCHERS ESTIMATE **40 MILLION** ARE ENSLAVED WORLDWIDE¹

Slavery generates **\$150 billion** for traffickers each year²



SLAVERY is not legal anywhere but happens **EVERYWHERE**¹

