



## **Themes of Innovation: Outcomes from the Forum consultations**

### **PART ONE: Individual Consultation Outcomes**

#### **I.1 Overview**

COVID-19 impacted so much in 2020 and forced Free the Slaves (FTS) to reconsider how the Freedom from Slavery Forum should function and what format(s) is best suited for it. In turn, the pandemic opened up opportunities to re-evaluate not only the way the Forum is conducted, but what its main focus should be and what purpose the Forum should serve to the anti-human trafficking community at large.

To grapple with these questions, FTS invited stakeholders and past Forum attendees to participate in consultations to garner what worked best about the past Forums and what could be improved upon in future ones. With the coronavirus pandemic still impacting the world at large, there is no better time to rework future Forums, not only to make them more accessible during this unprecedented time, but also to ensure they are as valuable as possible for participants for years to come.

While answering the questions “how can the Forum be more effective?” and “how can the Forum be more strategic?” these consultations raised more existential questions about the Forum’s intentions. This report will break down some of the overarching themes that came out of these consultations as well as some of the larger questions that were raised.

While this report is not an exhaustive account of every suggestion or idea that was brought up during the consultation meetings, it aims to share the main recommendations and overarching themes that came out during this process. The following questions garnered the most engagement and yielded the most productive conversations throughout multiple meeting sessions. Please note that although the ideas fall into similar topics, the suggestions and improvements noted here are sometimes contradictory in nature, making it impossible to incorporate every piece of feedback going forward. Many of these suggestions are also conversation starters and not meant to be implemented.

## **I.2 Forum Purpose**

Many participants noted that the mandate of the Forum has become muddled throughout the years. Some noted that while originally constructed to be a CEO-level gathering bringing leaders together with the goals of creating and fostering an anti-human trafficking movement that was splintered and ineffectual at the time, the Forum has opened in recent years and no longer fits that model. There was also the suggestion that instead of reverting back to this model, there could be a separate CEO summit that would allow high-level stakeholders to discuss the main Forum's takeaways and how to best implement ideas that came out of it.

## **I.3 Participant Diversity**

There was a lot of feedback on the different levels of participation in the Forum, and nearly everyone brought up that identifying the target audience of the Forum was key to solidifying its goals and success. However, there was a split in the feedback about whether to contract or expand the Forum. Additionally, there was further dissonance among those in favor of expansion about which groups and individuals should be involved. Some participants noted that it may be the best interest of the Forum to return to its original CEO/Executive Director-led model, where leaders of the movement could have a chance to come together at the macro level in a safe space for both reflection on where the movement has been and what they see as their role moving the agenda forward. In their view, the added participation levels aided in muddling the original mandate of the Forum. They believe that leader retreats and workshops have historically led to massive long-term collaboration, and that creating spaces for actual discussion and idea sharing which then lead to deep and sustained collaboration is an important aspect of what makes the Forum a valuable tool.

While more than one person suggested this type of contraction of the Forum (either in whole or in part), there were far more cries to be more intentionally inclusive about Forum participation, with several different participant groups recommending that the Forum open up to include: more regionally balanced stakeholders across the Global North and Global South, corporate leaders and culprits, youth movement leaders, individuals representing larger international development organizations, and smaller grassroots organizations.

Some of the consultations noted that at this moment, the movement feels very insular, and the Forum acts as more of an echo chamber with the same voices in the room who already know each other, and there does not seem to have been a concerted effort to expand the conversation to include other people in the movement, especially along regional and size lines. There was a clear call to have a more globally representative attendance at the Forum going forward, especially targeting smaller grassroots organizations working on local issues.

Others noted that it would be advantageous to the Forum and to the anti-human trafficking movement in general to highlight the fact that many different movements and human rights issues intersect with human trafficking work, but many of those groups and organizations do not have human trafficking prevention on their radar. Part of the appeal of the Forum could be

increasing the participation of organizations working just outside the human trafficking space in order to educate them how to look for intersections with human trafficking and forced labor inside their programming and areas of expertise, as well as how their work intersects with human trafficking. The Forum could then provide them with the information and tools they need to be more intentional about and effective in their work.

#### **I.4 Survivor Engagement**

During the discussions, it was largely acknowledged that survivors should have more of a role in the movement outside of services or advising, such as in policy, data, law, leadership, etc. Participants also noted that we should have candid discussions about tokenism, ensuring that survivors are listened to as individuals and are not just at the Forum because they are survivors. For example, there were suggestions to make efforts to choose survivor-led groups when inviting organizations to the Forum as well as a resolution related to organizations with certain characteristics and who have substantive engagement with survivor-led groups. Additionally, as COVID has disproportionately negatively affected survivors and victims, and part of the Forum agenda, especially for 2021, should be focused on meaningful and swift action in that regard.

#### **I.5 Alignment with Alliance 8.7**

As FTS is a CSO representative at Alliance 8.7 and is the convener of the Forum, there is opportunity to increase alignment between the two bodies. Past forums have acted to strengthen these ties; however, a divide was seen throughout the consultations with some Forum participants hoping to see a more concrete relationship between the Forum and the Alliance and some noting that allying so closely to SDG 8.7 is hindering the expanse of the movement.

Some participants noted that the dynamic of the Forum changed when it aligned so closely with SDG 8.7. As many small organizations already incorporate the SDGs into their work, it doesn't make sense to only focus on 8.7 and elevate it so highly. They noted that the movement in general has changed so much in the last 7 years since the Forum started, and a number of participants have seen that there is a distinct need to connect with more people and organizations outside of the modern slavery movement. They also note that the movement should be more about looking outward than looking inward and there should be a larger focus on prevention measures, which would mean taking into consideration more than just SDG 8.7.

Other participants hoped that the Alliance/Forum relationship would grow stronger, with FTS acting as a conduit for the Forum's voice at the Alliance level. Some suggested instituting a voting situation to make everything inclusive and address concerns, thereby giving other organizations a voice to weigh in on what they believe Alliance priorities would be. In this case, the Forum could act as a coalition with participants all having a voice to put forth resolutions and decide as a group. It was also noted that a stronger Forum/Alliance relationship would allow Forum members to have a greater voice in the monitoring of Pathfinder Countries under the Alliance 8.7 mechanism.

## **I.6 Forum Structure**

Some feedback was centered around the question of whether the Forum wanted to be a movement or a network, and what the merits of each categorization would be.

Those in favor of a more network-aligned model believed that the Forum has a great capacity for network building, and it may need a bit more of a push on follow-through. If there is an opportunity for folks to find alliances or networks for their specific work or whether dissemination of best practices or matchmaking of organizations that holds organizations to account for how we are following through on collaborations. The Forum could then be able to achieve a multiplier effect or become a space in which people can identify and grow their networks. Some issues with a network model were also discussed, including that the network model involves more of a commitment from organizations that they may not be willing or able to make.

Those in favor of the movement model hoped that the Forum would foster investment in movement-building and discussion with the goals of mobilizing a broad coalition and creating something independent in terms of movements. These individuals saw the Forum as a space to convene to look at shared problems, create a "cheat sheet" of talking points to coalesce advocacy around priority areas, and advocate together in formal spaces (such as the ILO, donor governments, G7, D10, etc.).

Consultations also brought up whether or not the format should change from just the one main Forum session each year, as the themes of recent Forums have become too broad, hindering participants from leaving the gathering with a clear action plan. There were suggestions to both center the Forum thematically around a specific topic or regionally to capture nuance.

## **I.7 Accessibility**

Accessibility in the structure of the Forum was a huge theme across the consultations. The past Forums have been held in English, and this is a barrier for many to participate. Having simultaneous translation would allow for a more diverse and inclusive audience. Some participants suggested that in order to avoid becoming an echo-chamber where the same groups meet up each year, many of which already have long-standing partnerships with each other, there should be an effort to make sessions as accessible as possible. There is a great cost to smaller organizations to travel to the Forums and some may not be able to justify the investment in the current space since there is not much engagement between Forum sessions and it is heavily up to the individual organizations to maintain their own communications with other Forum members. Consultations emphasized the need to connect more than once a year, whether through regional, quarterly, or topic-based forums throughout the year, as just once a year doesn't engage the community and it's not as beneficial to the goal of movement building and cuts off any momentum that may have been sparked by the Forum. It was additionally suggested that in order to foster these relationships year-round, the Forum should hold additional events, meetings, roundtables, etc. throughout the year to keep engagement among

participants up. Furthermore, it was suggested that both these outside events and the Forum itself should have virtual components, especially with regard to COVID now. The idea is that this would lower the participation barrier for smaller organizations and allow more members of stakeholder groups to participate. It could also allow for more granular topics to be discussed in the realm of the Forum without risk of alienating those to whom these sessions would be repetitive or unnecessary.

Many participants noted that even though a virtual component would be beneficial to have more people in the Forum sharing ideas, there are risks to a purely online model, especially with regard to lessened engagement. Many ideas and connections between organizations, stakeholders, and other institutions are created and solidified outside of formal Forum events, during side discussions and coffee breaks. To move to a purely virtual model would hinder these informal connections and engagement as a whole. As more people participating virtually does not translate into a greater quality of engagement, a hybrid model would work best to continue to achieve Forum goals.

### **I.8 Top Takeaways by Number of Suggestions**

- There should be greater representation among the participants of the Forum
- The Forum should work towards being more accessible in general
- Future forums should have more contained and specific themes
- The work of the Forum should not be limited to only one event, and there should be more ways to connect throughout the year to foster engagement

### **I.9 Additional Ideas and Feedback**

- There could be a track system at each Forum. For example, Business, CEO, Youth, Advocacy, and Program tracks could allow for specialization even further within the Forum agenda itself.
- Each Forum could focus on a specific goal that needs to be achieved in order for modern slavery to be eradicated. The agendas of the Forums would be time-bound by year and subsequently scale up each year until eradication occurs.
- Businesses should not become involved in the Forum as they will take away from the safe space created and become more trouble to deal with in this way than their presence would be worth.
- Different groups within the Forum structure should take ownership over areas that lend well to their expertise (ie., GoodWeave on supply chain issues).
- Forum sessions should have sub-sessions that dive deeper into different themes in order to maximize efficiency.
- There should be a virtual "rolling meeting" where people in different time zones would be able to build off of each other.
- There should be investment into simultaneous translation so more people could be involved.
- The Forum should create a mechanism to subsidize the attendance of smaller NGOs and help address funding gaps in survivor- or BIPOC-led organizations.

## **PART TWO: March 31 Meeting Outcomes**

### **II.1 Presentation Overview**

During the first half of the March 31 meeting, Free the Slaves presented the proposed changes to the 2021-2023 Freedom from Slavery Forums and processes that came out of the various consultations held earlier in the year.

#### **II.1.1 Board**

First, it was proposed that the Forum compose a Board in order to formalize leadership and guidance, while mobilizing resources for future forums. It will consist of 5 members each with a 3-year term limit. In order to create an inclusive Board, members will need to meet certain criteria, so that CSOs, survivors, academics, foundations, and faith-based organizations all have representation. The Board process will be formalized via a board engagement memo for all members.

#### **II.1.2 Ambassadors and Awards**

In order to continue to raise the profile of the Forum, ambassadors and awards will be introduced. In addition to the members of the Board who will raise awareness about the Forum, the Forum will also have ambassadors. Their mandate will be to promote the forum and the movement through speaking engagements, advocate for the forum in an official capacity, and initiate ideas that can raise the profile of the movement. It is hoped that a set of ambassadors will rotate in these positions, and that at least one of them will be a survivor and the other an esteemed, high-profile figure.

Additionally, the Forum will be used to recognize meaningful contributions to the movement by presenting two awards. The Leadership Award will be given to a member of the movement who demonstrates innovative influence. The Resilience Award will be presented to a member who demonstrates groundwork innovation to build community resilience against modern slavery.

#### **II.1.3. Forum Format**

The presentation also updated participants on the formats for the 2021-2023 Forums. In order to address key issues including increased participation and access, reaching more regional organizations, tailoring regional and local agendas, addressing language barriers, and ensuring inclusiveness, all 2021 and 2022 Forums will be regional. This will allow each regional forum to have a specific agenda most relevant to the issues facing the region. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all 2021 Forums will be held online. They will also be conducted in more regionally-focused languages, helping to ease the language barrier to participation that has occurred in the past. The proposed dates and languages for the Forum are:

Africa: Late June in English  
South and Southeast Asia: Late July in English  
Latin America: Late August in Spanish

North America, the Caribbean and Europe: Late September in English  
Middle East and North Africa: Late October in Arabic

After the regional forums take place, a **convening for the Heads of CSOs** will take place from **December 6-8, 2021**. The goal of this convening is to elevate the regional agendas and make connections with the larger global agenda. The group was presented with 4 geographical locations from which to choose and chose **Marrakesh, Morocco** by a wide margin via the poll.

#### II.1.4 Connection to the Alliance 8.7

During the consultations, there was a lot of discussion about the Forum's relationship with Alliance 8.7. The presentation noted how the Forum could facilitate further CSO participation in the pathfinder process in-country, serve as the channel through which CSOs can bring forward their agendas to the Alliance 8.7, and serve as a space to share learning between each entity.

Along with discussing the purpose of the Forum to contribute to the movement building through networking, inclusivity, and democratization, the Forum's connection to the Alliance was examined. With Free the Slaves' role as a representative at the Alliance 8.7, the Forum can serve as a channel between the Alliance and the CSOs that participate in it, reflecting agendas and sharing information between the two entities.

#### II. 1.5 Forum Website and Communication

Another theme that was heavily discussed in the consultations was that of democratization and ruminating on how the Forum can best achieve equity and transparency in its work. In response, FTS proposed updates to the current Forum website and communications that could facilitate these changes. The website can be redone so that it can actively contribute to the work of the movement by hosting materials and resources from Forum members, information and research, and advertising key events from the movement. The website will serve as a collaborative space to showcase the movement's work as well as continue engagement throughout the year. Additionally, the Forum will overhaul its strategic communication strategy by increasing its social media presence and digital communications, drawing a larger audience to the movement's work. A quarterly e-newsletter will also aim to keep communication channels amongst participants open throughout the year between Forums.

#### II.1.6 Forum Sponsorship

Finally, in the interest of furthering the movement and increasing democratization, the presentation urged members to seek additional sponsorship for the Forum. By inviting additional sponsors into the fold of the Forum to support the movement, such as ethical businesses, foundations, and individuals, we can not only raise the profile of the movement, but also be able to ensure more grassroots and youth participation can occur at the Forums.

### **II.2 Post-Presentation Discussion**

The discussion quickly turned to the logistics of the Board suggestion and how it would best be implemented. It is hoped that the idea of creating a Forum Board will help solidify the Forum's

purpose and mission going forward. Individuals noted that there needs to be a great level of thought put into the execution of this idea so that the Board/governing body of the Forum truly represents the movement in as equitable a way possible. As this Board, and the Forum as a whole, is meant to be owned by the movement, issues of inclusivity, transparency, and balance between larger organizations and smaller ones and along geographical lines need to be at the core of the decision-making processes.

As these larger questions were deemed essential by most of the participants, a suggestion was raised to use the Forums themselves as a space to ruminate on these ideas and form a movement-wide consensus. This would then allow the regional Forums to act as spaces to talk about regional inclusivity and grassroots involvement, which can then be reported on and discussed in the in-person Forum in December 2021. Sessions within the Forums can focus on gathering information that can help shape the Forum's purpose statements and objectives, as well as the Board structure and parameters. With the regional forums occurring before the Heads of CSOs convening, we can ensure that regional and grassroots priorities and feedback are incorporated into the objectives as well.

Participants also discussed how to best utilize the Forum space once these larger, more existential questions are answered and the objectives are set. One of the lengthiest points of discussion focused on how the Forum could best serve the wider movement. Some participants hoped to use future Forums as spaces to find and foster meaningful partnerships with other organizations. It was also noted that there is a gap outside of conferences and high-level gatherings that could be filled by the Forum.

As the same voices are usually represented and heard in those types of spaces (usually governmental or highly-funded organizations), there is a need for the Forum to exist outside of those parameters, as a space where smaller organizations can come together to form connections and partnerships, while coming up with new strategic ideas for the movement. This approach could also allow for more grassroots voices, especially youth voices, to reach the larger players in the room, spawning greater consensus and efficacy for the movement's future.

The Forum reports, especially the regional reports, could also act as a document that gets shared to these larger audiences, allowing them to more fully understand the perspectives and needs of those working on the ground. It was also noted that these reports could be turned into funder-friendly materials. Additionally, it was suggested to plan the Forum near and around these meetings in the future, not just to consolidate travel and expenses for participation, but also to act as jumping off points for discussions and ways to bring new voices into those spaces that otherwise would not have a seat at those higher-level convenings.



## **ANNEX**

### **Individual Consultation Sessions and Participants**

- January 14, 2021- Shawn MacDonald (Verite), Zoe Trodd (Rights Lab), Evelyn Chumbow (FTS), Tina Frundt (Courtney's House), Davina Durgana (Minderoo/WalkFree)
- January 21, 2021- Nick Grono (Freedom Fund), Cheryl Periera (OneChild), Jasmine O'Connor (Anti-Slavery International), Lou C. deBaca (Yale/Fmr. TIP Ambassador)
- January 27, 2021- Alice Eckstein (UNU Policy Research/Delta 8.7), Tim Ryan (Global March/Solidarity Center), Shelley Stinelli (DOL child and forced labor), Marcia Eugenio (DOL child labor and trafficking), Purva Gupta (Global March), Rachel Raba (DOL international programs), Nina Smith (Goodweave International), Veronica Zeitlin (DOL child labor forced labor and trafficking research and policy), Tina Faulkner (DOL), Martina Vandenberg (Human Trafficking Legal Center)
- January 27, 2021 - Deborah Pembroke (Monterrey County Rape Crisis Center)
- January 28, 2021 – Anna Pienaar (IJM)
- February 16, 2021- Thomas Wissing (ILO/Alliance 8.7)
- March 8, 2021- David Okech (APRIES-Univ. Of Georgia)
- March 9, 2021- Helen Sworn (Chab Dai), Willy Buloso (ECPAT), Linda Al-Kalash (Tamkeen)
- March 9, 2021- Janet Butler (United Way)
- March 14- Mme Toutou Ahmed Jiddou (ALCD)

### **March 31 Meeting Participants**

- Shawn MacDonald (Verite), Zoe Trodd (Rights Lab), Evelyn Chumbow (FTS), Tina Frundt (Courtney's House), Nick Grono (Freedom Fund), Cheryl Periera (OneChild), Jasmine O'Connor (Anti-Slavery International), Lou C. deBaca (Yale/Fmr. TIP Ambassador), Alice Eckstein (UNU Policy Research/Delta 8.7), Shelley Stinelli (DOL child and forced labor), Marcia Eugenio (DOL child labor and trafficking), Purva Gupta (Global March), Veronica Zeitlin (DOL child labor forced labor and trafficking research and policy), Anna Pienaar (IJM), Thomas Wissing (ILO/Alliance 8.7), David Okech (APRIES-Univ. Of Georgia), Helen Sworn (Chab Dai), Willy Buloso (ECPAT), Janet Butler (United Way), Mara Vanderslice Kelly (United Way), Terry FitzPatrick (FTS)