



Declaration of Principles for Aligned Action to End Modern Slavery

Adopted at the 2026 Global Freedom from Slavery Forum

Preamble

We, the participants in the 2026 Global Freedom from Slavery Forum,

Guided by the principles of human dignity, equality, and non-discrimination,

Recognizing that modern slavery, including forced labor, child labor, human trafficking, and other forms of human exploitation, continues across regions, sectors, and supply chains,

Acknowledging that exploitation persists where economic, political, cultural, and social incentives reward abuse, where accountability gaps allow exploitation to go unpunished, and where opacity in supply chains enables it to remain hidden,

Emphasizing that responsibility lies with those who cause, enable, or profit from exploitation and must not be displaced onto those who are exploited,

Affirming that how modern slavery is described shapes public understanding, policy, resources, and accountability, and

Recognizing that survivor engagement and leadership are essential for the movement's legitimacy and effectiveness,

Declare as follows:

PURPOSE

Ending modern slavery requires public understanding and political commitment on the scale given to other global challenges, and a movement aligned in how it speaks and in how it acts. This Declaration is adopted to unify the movement around core principles for how modern slavery is described, how responses are coordinated and held accountable, and how lived-experience experts direct the movement's efforts. Applied together, these principles sustain strategic communication that conveys both the harms of modern slavery and the transformative solutions driving change, and aligned action that reaches the conditions allowing exploitation to persist.

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PRINCIPLE 1

Survivor Leadership

Survivor leaders shall be recognized as lived-experience experts and decision-makers, with protected, meaningful roles in shaping the movement's language, research, programs, advocacy, policy, funding, and ways of measuring success. Their engagement shall be guided by ethical protocols and robust safeguarding standards that prioritize their safety and well-being, and shall be supported through protection, fair compensation for expertise, mentoring and leadership opportunities, and access to essential services. Sharing experience is always a choice, and no one should have to recount harm to be heard and recognized as an expert.

Freedom is more than the absence of exploitation, as it requires safety, dignity, and agency. Progress must therefore be measured by whether survivors and affected communities experience greater safety, capacity to make decisions affecting their lives, and lasting access to their rights.

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PRINCIPLE 2

Narrative Integrity

Movement narratives shall describe modern slavery as a product of the systems and conditions that enable it to thrive, including those described in the preamble. Situating exploitation within these broader systemic structures does not diminish individual responsibility. Rather, it recognizes that those who exploit others operate within, manipulate, and benefit from systems that create and sustain the conditions that make abuse possible.

The way stories are told shall respect the dignity, choices, and agency of survivors, avoid dramatizing harm, protect privacy, and require informed consent. Language shall be clear, accurate, and recognized by survivors as truthful and respectful.

Communications and advocacy shall be based on evidence, lived experience, and continuous learning, and shall be updated when survivors and affected communities indicate that current approaches are not working.

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PRINCIPLE 3

Aligned and Accountable Solutions

Ending modern slavery requires long-term, aligned action across prevention, protection, justice, and remedy. Poorly coordinated efforts can increase harm. All institutions working to end modern slavery, whether public, private, or civil society, shall follow clear standards, survivor-informed processes, and ongoing review.

Prevention means expanding safe choices and reducing risk through labor rights enforcement, ethical recruitment, safe migration pathways, education, and child protection.

Prevention, protection, justice, and remedy are essential responsibilities that must be centered on survivors and trauma-informed.

Accountability shall reach everyone who profits from or enables exploitation through enforceable standards, open reporting, and effective complaint processes tested against real access to justice.

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PRINCIPLE 4

Shared Responsibility Across Sectors

Modern slavery is produced by conditions that reach across sectors, and no single actor can correct them alone. Responsibility for changing those conditions is shared, and each actor is accountable for the conditions within their reach.

Survivor leaders bring expertise the movement cannot generate any other way. Their knowledge belongs in the design of policy, programs, research, and communications as a matter of accuracy and urgency, and the commitments set out in Principle 1 apply to every actor named in this Principle.

Governments hold the mandate and the authority to organize and implement national responses, including legislation, policy, enforcement, access to justice, care and recovery support, and social protection. Coordination across departments strengthens what each of them can achieve.

Communities are where the conditions that produce exploitation are first visible and where the norms that sustain or resist it are formed. Community-led action contributes by recognizing local risk factors, circulating reliable information about recruitment, supporting people who have left exploitation, and sustaining the relationships that make exploitation harder to conceal. Communities hold knowledge of local conditions that no external assessment reproduces. Their capacity to act depends on resources, sustained support, and access to justice that often lie beyond their reach.

Civil society organizations shall expand their relationships with governments and business to include partnership alongside accountability, recognizing institutional mandates while working to address remaining gaps and sustaining independent analysis of whether responses are working.

Businesses shall conduct due diligence across their operations and supply chains, honor labor rights and regulations, and provide dignified working conditions and fair compensation.

Members of the public contribute by learning about protection gaps in their own communities, weighing the conditions under which goods and services are produced, taking part in local efforts to address risk factors, and taking political action that drives systemic responses.

Final Provisions

In signing this Declaration, we pledge to integrate these principles into our communications and responses to modern slavery, share power with survivor leaders, and work toward a world in which every person can live and work in safety and dignity.