

Wednesday, 17 August 2022

## High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism Public Consultation

### Governance and Multilateralism:

#### Countering contemporary forms of slavery (modern slavery), trafficking in persons, especially of women and children, and child labour.

- **What are the areas of global concern where governance improvements are most needed?**

Over 40 million people are in forms of modern slavery globally. Furthermore, the number of children engaged in child labour has risen to 160 million, an increase for the first time in two decades.

Compounded by the intersecting crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, and the triple planetary crisis, deepening existing inequalities and fueling greater challenges, the rates of modern slavery, trafficking in persons and child labour are expected to increase.

Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 calls for “immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.” Additionally, Sustainable Development Goal 5.2 calls to “eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.” Finally, Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 calls to “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.”

To achieve these SDG Target Indicators, it is crucial for Member States, in partnership and collaboration with all stakeholders, including, *inter alia*, the private sector, civil society, youth, media, and academia to increase and intensify efforts to eliminate modern slavery, trafficking in persons and child labour in all their forms.

It must be acknowledged that modern slavery, trafficking in persons and child labour are structural issues, deeply rooted in the socio-economic and political fabrics of our global societies and systems. This means that Member States must intensify efforts to implement, achieve and realize present priorities and international instruments, including addressing the root causes

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enabling these practices (including, *inter alia*, poverty, gender inequalities, corruption, conflict, climate change and unsustainable production and consumption).

Therefore, this points to a crucial need for greater global governance, multilateralism and internationally coordinated, multistakeholder and intergenerational collective action. We must recognise, acknowledge and act upon the urgent need to significantly upscale efforts to counter modern slavery, trafficking in persons and child labour in all their forms, through these collaborative approaches.

- **What governance improvements could be achieved?**

It is important to not overlook or understate the progress that has been achieved with regard to global governance to counter modern slavery, trafficking in persons and child labour.

We must recognise the important role played by the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons in the United Nations system. The ongoing efforts of its member entities to respond to trafficking in persons are appreciated. This is a valuable model of governance that fosters collaboration and partnership across the UN system.

However, the Inter-Agency Coordination Group consists of Member States only. We propose that a new UN-system-wide governance structure is formed, through the development of a High-Level Advisory Board, and Commission on Contemporary forms of Slavery and Trafficking in Persons.

These new governance structures can build on and expand the membership of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group, to include more stakeholders, including, *inter alia*, youth, civil society, Member States, the Special Rapporteurs on Contemporary forms of slavery and Trafficking in persons especially women and children, the private sector, academics, media, survivors and people with lived experiences in efforts and decision making, at all levels.

We further call on the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, to create a United Nations Youth Advisory Group on Contemporary forms of Slavery and Trafficking in Persons, that will act as a formal, independent, high-level youth advisory body and governance mechanism to the United Nations Executive Office of the Secretary-General, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, to provide support for existing and future efforts, structures, instruments, and mechanisms, and for recommending further actions to stakeholders to facilitate greater

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progress in countering contemporary forms of slavery and trafficking in persons. We recommend that this group is formed based on and building upon the modalities of the Secretary General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change.

- **How could the international community seek more equity, fairness, and effectiveness in multilateral decision-making?**
  1. *Commit* to the full respect of the human rights of survivors of trafficking in persons, and, recognizing their roles as agents of change in the global fight against trafficking in persons, acknowledging the need to incorporate their perspective and experience in all efforts to prevent, suppress and counter trafficking in persons, commit to centre the full, effective, and meaningful engagement, participation and inclusion of survivors in all efforts and decision-making to counter trafficking in persons, as co-leaders, co-creators, and co-owners, at all levels.
  2. *Reaffirm, in the strongest terms possible*, the value and role of youth in countering trafficking in persons, and in this regard, commit to centre the full, effective, meaningful and substantive engagement, participation and leadership of youth in efforts and decision-making to counter trafficking in persons, as co-leaders, co-creators and co-owners, at all levels.
  3. *Commit* to including young leaders who are working to counter trafficking in persons on official Member State Delegations across all relevant forums, summits, processes and procedures.