



Leaving no-one behind

**Guidance for policymakers, donors
and business leaders to ensure
that responses to Covid-19 reach
victims of modern slavery and
people vulnerable to slavery**

Executive summary

Covid-19 has the potential to negatively affect everyone, but it does not affect everyone equally.

Poor people are more sharply affected by Covid-19 than people who are rich.

They have limited options for social distancing, poor access to hygiene and sanitation facilities and to health care. Poor people have little to no savings, assets or government safety nets and insecure work contracts don't allow them to work from home. Due to all of these factors, poor people are likely to bear a higher mortality rate than more affluent portions of society.

Poor people who are enslaved or vulnerable to slavery are amongst the most marginalised individuals and communities in the world. The social and economic disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic are compounding the risks they face.

At the same time, traffickers and exploitative employers have the potential to act with impunity in a context where change is rapid and governments may be struggling to respond.

With the effects on the global economy, the Covid-19 crisis is leading to widespread unemployment, and means that major sections of the global population are at greater risk of exploitation in forced labour and other forms of modern slavery. Extreme economic distress brings with it increased slavery risks as families find themselves with limited choices and must take considerable risks to support their own survival.

Even temporary decisions by global businesses to halt or slow down operations lead to large-scale lay offs in industries such as garment manufacturing in South and South East Asia which result in mass unemployment. With 55%¹ of people in slavery because they are working to pay off predatory debts (imposed upon them by people who aim to exploit them), these lay offs threaten an increase in debt bondage in regions where it is already endemic.

Any response to Covid-19, therefore, must be designed to specifically reach and benefit the 40 million people in slavery, in addition to the increased numbers of people now vulnerable to slavery. These people are often unreached by much government development policy and funds, and have been over-looked and excluded in past emergencies.

Anti-Slavery International has over 180 years of experience fighting slavery, sometimes through times of severe crisis. Our experience shows that the voices, knowledge and perspective of people affected by slavery should be at the centre of both the immediate and long-term responses to Covid-19. This ensures that any response is inclusive, effective and will contribute to a world where everyone, everywhere is free from slavery.

1 Global Slavery Index, <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/2018/findings/regional-analysis/asia-and-the-pacific/>, 2018

Immediate measures:

Support during and after Covid-19 that includes and protects people in, and vulnerable to, slavery

Immediately there is a need for:

- **Inclusion:** support during Covid-19, including medical treatment, testing and social assistance, must be communicated and provided in a way that is accessible to all including people and communities affected by, and vulnerable to slavery.
- **Protection:** social and financial support, equivalent to the living wage in each country for all workers who have lost their income due to the crisis. Ensure that support reaches and protects migrant, informal and undocumented workers. Business to undertake human rights due diligence to protect all workers in supply chains, ensuring business actions do not cause increased vulnerabilities for workers. This includes by honouring contracts. Governments must continue workplace labour inspections during Covid-19.
- **Mitigation:** suitable victim protection and support, including identification, that is not disrupted due to Covid-19. Suspend immigration enforcement including immigration detention for the duration of the crisis.

Long-term measures:

Build resilience and prevent an increase in slavery

As the crisis begins to pass, there is a need to:

- **Build resilience:** consider the continuum of labour exploitation² when supporting people affected by Covid-19 physically and economically. This means considering the needs of people already enslaved as well as those increasingly more vulnerable to exploitation. As the crisis begins to pass there is a need to build back better and create economies and communities that value everyone, everywhere.
- **Prevention:** provide all people with long-term social protection that ensures minimum wages that meet living needs, and for protections to reach migrant and informal workers. This should be combined with major efforts by governments to reduce debt-bondage by cancelling debts and providing direct cash transfers to people in, and vulnerable to, slavery.
- **Business responsibility:** ensure that buyer-supplier relationships enable the respect of workers' rights, including that pricing covers full production costs such as the living wage and benefits to all workers. Governments must introduce mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence laws to hold companies responsible for preventing abuses within their supply chains.

2 Skrivankova, K., (2010) 'Between decent work and forced labour: examining the continuum of exploitation', p.17 - 21

Introduction

Those who are enslaved or vulnerable to slavery are already amongst the most impoverished and marginalised individuals and communities on earth. Hence the impact of this global pandemic is falling upon them with greater force than most.

Slavery affects over 40 million³ people directly and many more live in precarious situations, making them vulnerable to deception, coercion and modern slavery.

Contemporary manifestations of slavery can include:

- bonded labour in the brick kilns and fields of South Asia;
- children forced to beg on the streets of West Africa;
- migrant workers in debt bondage working in foreign countries;
- domestic workers, often migrants, in almost every city of the world, including in the UK, frequently confined to poor living conditions and abusive working environments in their employers' homes;
- whole families born into slavery in West Africa;
- women and girls trafficking for sexual exploitation, both on streets and in brothels and massage parlours across the world.

Slavery flourishes in places and **situations where communities are comparatively poor** and, where the state and its **laws already fail to protect these vulnerable individuals and communities**. Those who are enslaved are typically from **socially and politically marginalised groups**, such as Dalits and Adavasi in South Asia, people of slave descent in West Africa, migrants and poor women and girls across the world. Their rights are routinely flouted even when there is no economic and public health emergency.

Over a period of three weeks Anti-Slavery International has collated the experience of our partners and allies in anti-slavery movements around the world to obtain a rapid assessment of the likely impact of Covid-19 on those vulnerable to, or currently in, slavery.

This paper first outlines what we are seeing in relation to the poverty and discriminatory variables and the protections afforded vulnerable people. Section two outlines recommendations for policymakers, funders and businesses.

These insights are based on the rapid assessments across the anti-slavery movement and as Anti-Slavery International collects additional information from its collaborators, further updates will be published.

Anti-Slavery International, Free the Slaves and the Freedom from Slavery Forum are fielding information across grassroots organisations to support further advocacy on tackling slavery during and after Covid-19. We urge those involved in anti-slavery efforts to respond to this simple questionnaire: **Click here for the humanitarian response questionnaire.**

3 ILO (2017) 'Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: forced labour and forced marriage'. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf. p.5

Section one:

What we are seeing

Covid-19 is having a notable negative impact in five distinct but interlinked areas related to slavery and human trafficking:

- **Those in slavery are facing new and increasing risks** and abuses
- Economic disruption is **increasing vulnerability to forced labour of poor individuals** and communities to slavery
- **Worsening discrimination**
- Increased **risks for migrant workers**
- **Anti-slavery efforts are being disrupted**

The following report considers each issue in turn, based on information across Anti-Slavery International's partners and collaborators. This is followed, in section two, by a set of short term and longer term recommendations.

Victims of slavery and exploitation face new abuses and risks

Mauritania

The lockdown in Mauritania has left the Haratine, a highly marginalised ethnic group, and other poor communities extremely vulnerable. In Mauritania whole families are routinely born into slavery and are owned by their 'masters'⁴.

Many thousands do not have the possibility of confining themselves to private homes as they live in tents or makeshift shelters on the outskirts of towns, in highly crowded slums. There is obviously no possibility of 'working from home' – they need to travel outside to work and get money. But people found outside are being punished by the police.

Many wealthy families have started to fire their domestic workers, or to oblige them to be confined within their own homes to avoid travelling. For most domestic workers this leaves them in an impossible situation: to be unemployed and starve, or to stay with their employer and continue work, but leave their families alone without resources.

Similarly, people in slavery might be 'let go' as it is impractical for masters to keep them all confined within their homes. They particularly have no incentive to keep their slaves if they are not able to send them out to herd animals or work on land. This offers the possibility of a shift in social relations – a wave of people leaving their masters. It also leaves those survivors of slavery much more exposed to extreme poverty, starvation and illness. Finding alternative work in this context, when most businesses and activities have closed, will be near impossible.

4 Anti-Slavery International, <https://www.antislavery.org/what-we-do/mauritania/>

The challenges of self-isolation, social distancing and satisfactory hygiene are particularly difficult for enslaved people and many vulnerable communities living in slums, on the streets, or in refugee and displaced persons camps.

Shared facilities in the UK, such as asylum accommodation housing trafficked people, or immigration removal centres, also pose this challenge for their residents. Some support providers report insufficient equipment for cleaning shared areas and a lack of resources to survivors of trafficking in the context of a pandemic shutdown. For survivors not in safe houses, the loss of regular contact with professionals increases isolation and increases their vulnerability,

In the UK the pandemic also makes reaching people at-risk of exploitation and trafficking more difficult. For children and young people in the current situation, social isolation may increase their vulnerability to grooming.

In the past, Anti-Slavery has highlighted the issue of forced child begging in the Qur'anic schools of West Africa⁵.

With the restrictions arising from Covid-19 many children are now confined to these schools and subject to increased abuse and punishment because they are not bringing income into the schools from their begging.

Anti-Slavery has received reports that the increased demand for masks, gloves and personal protective equipment (PPE) has led to increased use of forced labour in their production in the US, China and Malaysia. The crisis may also be leading to the relaxation of rules about purchasing these products from suppliers who are suspected of forced labour. Higher risks of exploitation are also emerging in agriculture, an industry with already high rates of forced labour, as food production remains a global priority.

In short, the Covid-19 crisis will provide particular business opportunities to some manufacturers who are expanding their operations with forced labour. This type of choice – prioritising immediate humanitarian concerns over ongoing slavery ones – is common in humanitarian response.

5 Anti-Slavery International, <https://www.antislavery.org/ending-forced-child-begging/>

Increasing vulnerability to slavery

Economic disruption in India⁶

At the end of March, India declared a nation-wide lockdown in response to the threat of the Covid-19.

In some villages, market stall holders are being given time to sell food. In other villages there is a total ban on selling.

Wheat is ready for harvest, but likely to rot with rains due and insufficient numbers of labourers to harvest it. Many agricultural migrant workers have seen wages drop by a third since last year. Handloom weavers have no work. Trucks are stopping the transport of goods.

The government of India has deposited two months' advance pension for the elderly. However, the elderly cannot get to the banks to withdraw it.

Covid-19 has led to a sudden and extreme economic disruption across the planet. The sorts of disruptions to the rural Indian economy described above could produce widespread hunger in months to come.

Anti-Slavery has observed that situations of acute economic distress, including humanitarian emergencies, bring with them increased risks. For example, families will be pressed into bonded labour for survival. Hence food shortages and loss of incomes arising from Covid-19 could, similarly, lead to families taking desperate measures for their survival.

Elsewhere, the lockdowns to try to halt the spread of the virus, have led to mass layoffs as many global brands have cancelled orders and factories have been required to shut down.

The garment industry has been particularly affected, with workers in countries reliant

on the garment industry at considerable risk of increased poverty: by late March over one million workers in Bangladesh had been laid off or temporarily suspended. Similar crises are being experienced by workers across South and Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, India, Myanmar and Vietnam.

Unemployment on this scale, even if only temporary, will shrink incomes for the workers and their families. This in turn, will lead to increases in household debt, particularly in places where debt is already endemic, due to poverty.

Mass unemployment, high debt and little government safety net creates opportunities for traffickers, as well as business owners. They can cover their financial losses suffered during the crisis, by exploiting the cheap labour of people who have suffered sudden unemployment, once global demand resumes.

Worsening discrimination

Migrant workers in India and Nepal⁷

Every year around nine million workers move from rural areas to urban cities in India to search for work within construction and manufacturing. The majority seasonal migrants in India, around 81.6%, are from scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes. That is, they are from communities who routinely suffer abuse and discrimination by other members of society.

This is a hugely important workforce for the Indian economy. For example, the construction sector makes up around 9% of India's GDP and employs 55 million daily-wage workers, many of them migrants. Those migrant workers who were able to afford to go home reported that transport and bus companies have increased prices by 2.5 times.

Many reported that migrant workers returning to their home villages were socially isolated by locking them in school rooms with soaring temperatures. They reported growing stigma, tension and division in communities. As returnees to Indian and Nepali villages many are deemed to be 'bringing the disease with them'. It was also reported that communities sometimes called for returnees to be asked to leave their villages. In short, Covid-19 has exacerbated caste-based prejudices across India.

Individuals without ration cards are not receiving anything to eat. The Indian government has promised they will not be forgotten and has advised them to go to the nearest police station for food. However, people report that the police are not welcoming of returned migrants and the rest of the village continues to shun them.

The cold welcome that migrant workers have received comes on top of particular hazards that they will have encountered in the course of their journeys home, particularly if stuck at borders or other bottlenecks where the risk of infection surges given the reduced possibilities of social distancing and sanitation. The return of migrants, whose remittances have been so crucial to family survival, will also put additional pressure on family finances and reduce social distancing space, and increase infection risks.

In many parts of South Asia, Dalits are regarded as "ritually impure" and are excluded by threat of violence from access to water sources and other community resources used by dominant castes in the community.⁸ This creates specific and considerable problems when improved hygiene practices are essential to mitigate the spread of a pandemic. In the medium term, caste prejudice is likely to be reinforced and has the potential to be used as a basis for, and a justification of, slavery.

7 Jan Sahas. (2020) 'Voices of the Invisible Citizens'.

8 Lazarus, J., (2015) 'Dalit Women and Water,' *WH2O: The Journal of Gender and Water*: Vol. 4 , Article 10. Available at: <https://repository.upenn.edu/wh2ojournal/vol4/iss1/10>

Increased risks to migrant workers

United Kingdom

Charities working with migrant domestic workers have shared reports of workers being dismissed by their employers, leaving them without accommodation or work and with no recourse to public funds. Others are being kept in the house they live and work with no time off and an increased workload.

There are many factors which can make it difficult for migrant workers to access rights, particularly if they are undocumented.

With more to lose than other workers, they are more likely to be pushed into working for unscrupulous employers or agencies willing to exploit their vulnerability⁹. Migrant workers are more often in debt-bondage, and experience many of the returnee issues as outlined in the section above.

When a migrant's visa limits them to particular work, finding new employment, following a sudden lay-off due to the crisis, may be extremely difficult. Migrants may get pushed into risky work situations where distancing and isolation are extremely difficult. These problems worsen as lockdowns are imposed or lengthened and access to benefits may be limited should they fall sick.

Undocumented migrants are likely the most vulnerable of all. Many are reticent about access to healthcare for fear of being reported to the authorities. In a public health crisis this reticence could have a dire impact on everybody.

9 Flynn, D., "Why are Migrants Vulnerable to Exploitation?", <https://www.ethicaltrade.org/blog/why-are-migrants-vulnerable-to-exploitation>. 2016.

Disrupting anti-slavery efforts

Mali

On April 5, Anti-Slavery received reports of attacks in Mali, on people who were trying to resist the slavery systems in the country. Many people were injured, including stab wounds and fingers cut off, but because of the Covid-19 lockdown, combined with prejudice this already discriminated against population, two days after the attack, still no help has been forthcoming from local police or government.

The lockdowns that have been imposed to slow the spread of Covid-19 have limited the work of anti-slavery organisations. For example, the schools for slavery vulnerable children and their families in Niger that Anti-Slavery has long supported have been shut down in response to the pandemic. This immediately means that the children who had been attending that school stop receiving school meals, risking increased hunger and placing additional financial

burdens on their families.

Access to education protects all children from forced marriage and child labour. So, if schools are shut alongside falling family incomes, child marriage and child labour are expected to increase as families seek desperate means to survive. A disrupted education also has a negative impact in the longer term and can lead to further poverty and vulnerability.

France

Refugee Women's Centre has reported that they are currently down to skeleton teams running a service for new arrivals. The government has stepped in to provide food for people living outside.

The community serviced by Refugee Women's Centre is living with very little access to sanitation, in a closely confined space, and they are being prevented from entering supermarkets. With less volunteer presence, communities have reported an increase in police violence against its members in recent weeks.

Slavery-eradication programmes which rely on community mobilisation are being severely disrupted. Grassroots organisations must restrict their activities, particularly

those activities which require travel or community gatherings and in countries where lockdowns are in operation.

Conclusions

In the short term we expect a higher death rate amongst enslaved and slavery vulnerable communities because:

- These people are more likely to contract the virus. They are often living in overcrowded situations making it hard to social distance and self-isolate. They often have poor underlying health, due to poor nutrition and extremely onerous work demands. They may not be able to understand or access health messages due to location, language and literacy barriers. Even if they can access health information, they may not have the money to buy soap or masks or any protective equipment to keep them safe.
- If individuals from enslaved and vulnerable communities get ill, they are less likely to be able to access sanitation, or get medical help as they may not be permitted to do so or may lack documentation and resources. Due to ill health they may lose their home and source of income if they are no longer of use to their employer or 'master'. Where caste discrimination is rife, vulnerable people will be excluded from community water and sanitation supplies.

In the longer term we expect that more people will become vulnerable to slavery.

- As economies contract, borders are closed and employers lay off workers, there will be an increase in debt bondage. Desperation will make it more likely that people will have no option but to accept exploitative, hazardous or high risk working conditions.
- As parents' access to work decreases and particularly as schools are closed in many parts of the world, the risks of child exploitation, through child labour and trafficking for forced marriage or sexual exploitation increases.
- The dehumanisation that has been witnessed in South Asia, with migrants being cast as carriers of disease will reinforce caste prejudices, a fundamental basis for exploitation and enslavement across the sub-continent.

Section two:

Recommendations

Clear commitment, coordinated and targeted efforts from governments, civil society, investors and donors and business will support anti-slavery efforts to help protect people from the effects of Covid-19 and increase their resilience to exploitation.

The voices, knowledge and perspective of victims, survivors and people vulnerable to slavery should be at the centre of all immediate and long-term policy responses to Covid-19.

Commitment and coordination from **Governments** to ensure that people in, or vulnerable to, slavery are protected from Covid-19 and its repercussions. Governments must ensure continued anti-slavery work during the global crisis to prevent people being exploited

Immediate

- All information about the disease and how people can remain safe from Covid-19 should be disseminated using methods and channels that purposefully reach the most marginalised.
- Do not use punitive measures in response to Covid-19 that would also purposefully limit people's human rights, especially those of marginalised people.
- Put in place emergency funding for support to ensure that people who have escaped slavery are safe, that access to support remains and prevents people becoming vulnerable to re-exploitation due to a lack of alternative livelihood options at this time.

- Ensure that access to testing, medical treatment and social assistance is delivered in a way that is accessible to people in, and vulnerable to, slavery. There should be equal access to healthcare and protection for migrant workers including migrant workers confined to their living quarters (for example in overcrowded shared dormitory spaces) during lockdown measures. There must be a clear separation between access to healthcare and social assistance, and immigration enforcement, including data sharing.
- Ensure that migrant workers can return home if they wish to. Governments should similarly ensure that their own citizens overseas are protected.
- Classify labour enforcement as key work during the Covid-19 crisis to ensure inspections of high-risk industries continue and ensuring both workers and inspectors are protected from the spread of Covid-19. Governments should uphold workers' rights in contracts and orders related to the procurement of PPE.
- Safety nets should apply to all workers (e.g. causal, gig economy, migrant workers including those who are undocumented and those with no access to social protections). The impact of the crisis on remittance-dependent households needs to be considered as part of these safety nets.
- Where national governments do not have the financial means to provide social protections to all workers, governments, public donors and financial institutions should provide support through debt relief and financial aid (see below).
- Suspend negative decisions on trafficking identification, asylum claims and visa extensions, as well as immigration enforcement, data collection for the purpose of immigration enforcement and immigration detention for the duration of the Covid-19 crisis.
- Provide government debt relief to countries which are hardest hit by coronavirus and do not have the financial means to provide adequate social protections to affected populations.

Medium / long term

- Ensure that the voices of survivors of slavery and people vulnerable to slavery are incorporated into the design of any programmes to ensure their sustainability during and after the current crisis.
- Cancel debts that serve to exploit people in debt bondage.
- Economic rescue packages and aid in the pandemic must lay the foundations for national governments to provide long-term social protections and ensure living wages for workers.
- Establish direct cash transfers to keep children at primary and secondary school, to prevent family debt that may arise as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Local and overseas development programmes should emphasise access to quality education for children vulnerable to slavery, and in order to eliminate discrimination that leads to exploitation.
- Governments, businesses and trade unions should work to eliminate slavery and exploitation in international supply chains through mature systems of industrial relations. Early evidence has shown that where workers have trade union representation during the Covid-19 crisis, working conditions that prevent increased vulnerabilities have been achieved.
- Introduce mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation and robust enforcement and sanctions to oblige companies and financial institutions to address the negative impacts of their global operations and supply chains, and to provide access to remedy for victims of modern slavery.
- Any bailouts to large businesses should include clear conditions that require companies to improve social responsibility, including by undertaking human rights due diligence.
- Exclude from public procurement any business which fails to conduct due diligence to prevent adverse human rights and environmental impacts, including failure to provide appropriate remedy to victims of previous adverse impacts.
- Visas for migrant workers should include access to public funds and social support including sick pay and healthcare. Workers must be given the option to change employer, join a union, access information about labour laws and provided support to enforce the terms of their work contracts.
- Ensure adequate government funding for proactive labour inspections.

Informed and comprehensive **grant-making from donors** to ensure that people in, or vulnerable to, slavery are protected during the Covid-19 crisis

Immediate

- Make financial aid available to countries who are, or have the potential to be, worst hit by the virus to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic.
- Provide additional emergency funds and non-financial support to organisations who are able to deliver support and services during lockdowns and as economies re-open. This is particularly important considering the role that local grassroots NGOs play in accessing the most marginalised.
- Aid provisions should include social and financial support for workers who have lost their income because of the virus, and which, long term, help establish strong social protections with ILO standards. Special attention should be made for this support to reach all types of workers, including migrant and informal workers.

Medium / long term

- Prioritise support to slavery vulnerable and slavery affected communities to eradicate the root causes of modern slavery.
- Focus strategies both on the effects of slavery (protection and prosecution) and also on the root causes of poverty, discrimination and weak laws to ensure that more and more people are prevented from being exploited in slavery.
- In places most affected by slavery, donors should invest in anti-slavery civil society to build its capacity to make slavery eradication a reality.
- Invest in research and pilots of Universal Basic Income.
- Slavery eradication requires multi-faceted approaches. Collaborate across the funding community to ensure a joined up response to ending modern slavery, and work towards rebuilding more just social and economic systems.

Global businesses must ensure protection for workers' health and work when investing in places where workers can easily become vulnerable to slavery

Immediate

- Follow WHO guidelines and recommendations to protect workers in workplaces from Covid-19, and monitor the implementation of these protections across all suppliers. Businesses in high demand sectors (food, PPE, warehousing and delivery) should ensure that workers are not exploited or put at risk. The current crisis cannot be used as an excuse for forced labour.
- Ensure prompt payments to suppliers, honour all existing contracts, and allow flexibility with no financial sanctions for delayed production timelines due to Covid-19. Businesses should provide a public commitment confirming these actions.
- Work collectively with suppliers, governments, trade unions and other credible workers' representatives to ensure all workers, including migrant, contract, homeworkers and other informal workers, receive financial, health and social support during Covid-19. This should include adequate compensation/ wages and sick pay, particularly in contexts where national social protections are insufficient for workers to support themselves and their families.

Medium / long term

- Work with trade unions and workers' organisations to support the creation of international or national financial aid packages to workers and small businesses. Where appropriate, businesses should be required to (re-)pay into these funds through an agreed-upon mechanism.
- Work with trade unions and credible workers' organisations to establish appropriate mechanisms to provide remedy to workers who were adversely impacted as a result of business failure to mitigate human rights impacts (caused by business actions) during the Covid-19 crisis.
- Systematically reform purchasing practices and underlying business models, to promote sustainable production and livelihoods. This includes reasonable deadlines and planning, fair payment schedules, and fully-costed pricing in order to enable suppliers to eliminate irresponsible outsourcing and pay workers the living wage, benefits and social protections.
- Continue to identify and prevent the risk of forced labour in their supply chains, including by carrying out targeted inspections of working conditions in sectors at high risk of labour exploitation and unsafe working conditions, ensuring that all workers are supported in accessing information and protective measures, support and redress. Businesses must not use any financial losses incurred during the Covid-19 crisis as an excuse for labour exploitation and forced labour.

The **international community** must ensure that the global response to Covid-19 is coordinated, based on human rights principles, and is inclusive of the needs of people affected by slavery


Immediate

- The United Nations and aid agencies must ensure that the situation of people affected by slavery, a group who are more acutely experiencing the impact of both Covid-19 and measures taken by governments, is taken into account and addressed in its response to the crisis.
- The United Nations and international diplomacy should encourage governments to ensure that national policy responses to Covid-19 reach people affected by slavery, and can be accessed in practice. Ensure these responses do not further marginalise, exclude or make people vulnerable.
- UN offices and humanitarian agencies on the ground, including UN country teams, should seek to engage and coordinate with survivors of slavery and local anti-slavery organisations and movements to ensure that their voices are heard and represented in policy responses, which also serves to reduce the risk of exclusive or negative unintended consequences.
- The Special Procedures, particularly the Special Rapporteur on Slavery and the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking, should provide clear guidance to States on ensuring the inclusion of this vulnerable group in Covid-19 response measures and mitigating the impact of disruption to anti-slavery efforts; respond robustly to violations; and seek to ensure that survivor voice is at the centre of policy response, supporting the anti-slavery movement.

Medium / long term

- A coordinated global response to mitigate against the likelihood that, across the world, the economic and labour market shock created by the Covid-19 pandemic will push greater numbers into labour exploitation, forced labour, trafficking and slavery, and threaten the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 8.7.¹⁰
- Responses led by the United Nations and the International Labour Organization, within the framework of Alliance 8.7, the multi-stakeholder partnership to achieve SDG Target 8.7, must incorporate the voices, knowledge and perspective of people affected by slavery at the centre.
- A coordinated multi-stakeholder global response, post the Covid-19 crisis, to encourage all governments to work towards achieving all SDGs and rebuilding more just social and economic systems.

10 Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 "Take 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." <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/economic-growth/>



Anti-Slavery International works in the UK and around the world to help provide freedom from slavery for everyone, everywhere.

The world's oldest human rights organisation, Anti-Slavery International works with people affected by slavery, governments, civil society and business to find and implement sustainable solutions to ensure people's freedom.

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