Symposium: Tomorrow's Slavery, Today
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21 October 2019

On 9 September 2019, the UN Special Rapporteur for Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Ms Urmila Bhoola, presented her report, *Current and emerging forms of slavery*, to the UN Human Rights Council. In the report, the Special Rapporteur outlines the present drivers of contemporary forms of slavery and how they are expected to change in the future. She also assesses the state of current anti-slavery efforts and provides an evidence-based framework for how they can improve and accelerate.

In this Symposium, the Special Rapporteur provides an overview of her report and reiterates its most important takeaways. Delta 8.7 invited Ms Nat Paul from the National Survivor Network, Dr Laura Gauer Bermudez and Sindhu Sagar from the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) and Dr Katarina Schwarz from the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham to reflect on and respond to the Special Rapporteur's report and introduction. The Special Rapporteur, in turn, responded to their contributions.

An Introduction to Tomorrow's Slavery Today
Urmila Bhoola, United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences
21 October 2019

Addressing Modern Slavery's Root Causes
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25 October 2019

Symposium: An Introduction to Tomorrow's Slavery, Today

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On 9 September 2019, I presented my report, *Current and emerging forms of slavery*, to the UN Human Rights Council in the role of Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. The report reflects on lessons learned from my six years in the role, the current contours of modern slavery, and how they may shift in years ahead, underline drawing from over 20 submissions from a global call for inputs.

The report offers evidence-based reflection on how contemporary forms of slavery may evolve in the near future and it also critically assesses anti-slavery efforts. The Delta 8.7 Symposium that this short summary of my report kicks off aims to foster discussion on these important themes. Is today's anti-slavery well positioned to deal with tomorrow's slavery?

Tomorrow's challenges for today's anti-slavery measures

For a discussion of tomorrow's slavery landscape to be something other than mere speculation, it must be rooted in evidence. In my report, I look at what we currently know about the sources of vulnerability to slavery, and then consider how these may change or how they may be exacerbated.

Our understanding of where and why contemporary forms of slavery manifest is improving, through use of new statistical methods, such as sentinel surveillance, network scale-up methods and multiple systems estimation (MSE).[1] Recent research and modelling has begun to identify vulnerability and risk factors, which include age, gender, income, employment status, education level, health and other factors relating to social isolation.[2]

This research helps us understand how slavery may change in the years ahead. The report considers several factors, relating to the future of work, demographic trends and migration, economic changes, environmental change and other emerging trends.

Slavery risk factors in the labour market, such as informality and casualization, will increase. Sixty per cent of the world's working population is already in informal work.[3] Increasing automation and the rise of the "gig economy" through digital platforms may increase this number, and worker vulnerability.[4] The impact will be significant in developing countries, where 85.6 per cent of the 25.6 million young people entering the labour market by 2030 will be located.[5] A deficit of traditional jobs in those places will fuel migration, increasing also the vulnerability to trafficking in persons.[6]

These risks will play out differently in different places. In Asia, for example, economic growth and urbanization may generate jobs, including for migrants, but we have seen that work in construction and the infrastructure sector is often not decent but exploitative . In many places,

the differential impact of climate change on value-chains, livelihoods and households will increase vulnerability to contemporary forms of slavery, as people may be forced to take on exploitative jobs. By 2050, approximately 5 billion people will reside in areas where the climate "will exceed historical bounds of variability,"[7] potentially driving competition for scarce resources among producers, compelling them to drive down labour costs.[8]

Technological and institutional change are also important to factor in. Cybertechnologies, "voluntourism" and the emergence of for-profit orphanages are all leading to new forms of trafficking and exploitation.[9] And there are indications that enslavement is resurging in armed conflict: not only as a means of recruitment but also as an instrument of ideological subjugation and terror.

Finally, in societies where there is a persistent gender imbalance, there will be an increased risk of forced marriage and sexual slavery. Long-term displacement will also likely lead to a rise in servile forms of marriage, further increasing female participation in vulnerable domestic work and forced labour.[10]

Anti-slavery efforts today

Being the main duty bearers, the actions of Member States remain central to the struggle to eradicate contemporary forms of slavery. There is good and bad news here. To date, forty States have ratified the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention (P029). Governments are taking legislative action, including in previously neglected areas: Estonia, Morocco, New Zealand and Spain, for example, are implementing criminal justice measures to address forced marriage.[11] Forty countries have initiated efforts to exclude modern slavery from public and private supply chains, and there is growing attention to the role of the financial sector in excluding these risks from financial markets – notably the Liechtenstein Initiative for Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking.

Government funding of anti-slavery efforts has increased considerably. Between 2003 and 2013, 30 OECD countries provisioned more than $4 billion in official development assistance to combat the contemporary forms of exploitation now outlined in Goal 8.7.[12] And there has been a proliferation of international coordination efforts, from the Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, to Alliance 8.7.

Yet a key question remains. What does all this activity add up to? Are our measures "effective", as Target 8.7 demands, and with the current level of efforts, will contemporary forms of slavery be eliminated by 2030? Will all forms of child labour be eradicated by 2025 as SDG Target 8.7 requests all States to do?

Are we adopting effective measures?

The international community's ability to identify effective measures is limited by the paucity of comparable programme and policy-level monitoring and evaluation.[13] Nonetheless, the traits of effectiveness have begun to be identified.[14]

First, effective measures must address vulnerabilities at the local level, while also operating at scale, to address global drivers.[15] Second, there is increasing emphasis on multi-stakeholder partnerships to tackle what is a multifaceted issue requiring concerted, strategic solutions.[16] Third, there is a growing recognition that policies and programmes should include survivors as agents of change. Fourth, there is an expanding view that successful interventions work with market mechanisms. Under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, businesses are required to uphold their duties to respect human rights through due diligence, as well as use of leverage and provision of remedy for harms to which business is connected. And fifth, the potency of tech as an amplifier of anti-slavery efforts is now increasingly recognized.[17]

In addition, my report also suggests that there is growing consensus around what is missing from current anti-slavery efforts, and the gaps which need to filled to achieve progress in eradicating slavery in compliance with SDG Target 8.7.

While slavery is illegal in most countries there is a real and persistent impunity gap, especially in areas where the reach of the State is limited, or the rule of law is compromised. Greater effort by States is necessary to hold each other accountable, especially when States are themselves implicated in exploitation.[18]

Data collection and analysis has also been a challenge due to the hidden nature of contemporary forms of slavery, insufficient allocation of resources and the lack of shared typologies and collection methodologies. Current prevalence estimation approaches operate at a high level and tend to overlook differences in vulnerability at the local and sectoral level.[19] However, new research has suggested indicators for assessing what works to achieve SDG Target 8.7 in specific regions and countries.[20]

Resources allocated to support anti-slavery efforts have been limited, especially in comparison to the $150 billion in annual criminal profits ILO estimates are generated solely from forced labour. Resources spent on combating efforts need not match profits 1:1. However, spending can be better coordinated and strategically allocated, and other forms of funding, such as access to public procurement and investment contracts, can be utilized as leverage to reward slavery-preventing business practices.[21]

Perhaps most problematically, at present there is no shared understanding of either the resources available or what exactly is needed to tackle contemporary forms of slavery. We have no shared strategy for achieving SDG Target 8.7. Nor are there mechanisms or a guiding framework for stakeholders to coordinate action to ensure resources are used where they are needed and can have the most impact.

Towards solutions

My report concludes by suggesting an approach to combat contemporary forms of slavery that is grounded in six fundamental characteristics. It must be: systematic, scientific, strategic, sustainable, survivor-informed and smart.

First, since slavery results from how our global political, social, and economic systems function, tackling it requires changing fundamental aspects of how those systems operate. We must think and work at a more systemic level, harnessing existing social, financial, trade and public health infrastructure to support anti-slavery efforts.[22] Top-down responses, such as criminal justice measures, must be conjoined with efforts to strengthen local capacity and to empower vulnerable populations, including through unions and workers organizations.

Second, policies and programmes must be scientifically grounded to ensure effectiveness. Without evidence as to the nature and prevalence of gaps or specific indicators to measure impact, efforts are not likely to address real problems. or have significant impact.

Third, efforts must be more strategic and coordinated. Member States could develop a global framework for action through, for instance, agreeing on relevant ODA reporting codes or using Alliance 8.7 to develop a shared strategy to achieve Target 8.7. The Alliance has yet to develop a shared strategy for allocating resources, for instance identifying more Pathfinder countries based on potential impact in areas where slavery is more prevalent.

Fourth, anti-slavery efforts must be integrated into broader sustainable development activities within the framework of the 2030 agenda. There are close connections between successful anti-slavery efforts and broader interventions to achieve sustainable development, poverty eradication, on dimensions ranging from education outcomes to social protection to women's empowerment and gender equality to productivity gains. The established global development infrastructure, including the multilateral financing institutions, UN country teams and regional development banks and economic commissions, are notably absent from today's anti-slavery efforts. That is a problem.

Fifth, survivors must be at the centre of anti-slavery efforts and their own voices must be heard. There have been important initiatives in some countries focused on supporting victims and putting victim-support frameworks on a legislative footing, but as a whole their agency and expertise remains under-valued, under-compensated and under-developed.

Sixth and finally, anti-slavery efforts can be fine-tuned and enhanced through the use of new technological innovations, such as artificial intelligence, satellites, and machine learning. Code 8.7, an initiative bringing together anti-slavery leaders and actors in computational science and AI, may offer an avenue for promoting the collaboration needed to explore these possibilities.

Most importantly, technology applications must be guided by human rights principles and standards, such as the Worker Engagement Supported by Technology (WEST) Principles.

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[2] Jacqueline Joudo Larsen and Pablo Diego-Rossel, "Modelling the Risk of Modern Slavery", *SSRN Electronic Journal,* 2018. See also Submission of Government of Malta; Walk Free.
[3] ILO, "Informality and non-standard forms of employment", paper prepared for the G20 Employment Working Group (Buenos Aires, 20–22 February 2018).
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[10] Claire Healy, *Targeting Vulnerabilities: The Impact of the Syrian War and Refugee Situation on Trafficking in Persons – A Study of Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq* (Vienna, International Centre for Migration Policy Development, 2015).

 [11] Walk Free Foundation, *Measurement, Action, Freedom. An Independent Assessment of Government Progress Towards Achieving UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.7* (Minderoo Foundation, 2019).

[12] Kelly Gleason and James Cockayne, *Official Development Assistance and SDG Target 8.7: Measuring Aid to Address Forced Labour, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Child Labour* (New York, Delta 8.7 and United Nations University, 2018).

[13] Global Fund to End Modern Slavery submission., p. 1; Tech Against Trafficking submission, p. 3.

[14] Pauline Oosterhoff et al., "Modern slavery prevention and responses in South Asia: An evidence map" Report of the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (London, 2018); Katharine Bryant and Bernadette Joudo, "Promising practices: what works? A review of interventions to combat modern day slavery", Walk Free Foundation, 2018; METIP.

[15] Freedom Fund, *Unlocking what works: How community-based interventions are ending bonded labour in India* (London & New York, 2019).

[16] See www.alliance87.org/.

[17] United Nations University, Code 8.7 Symposium: Using Computational Science and AI to End Modern Slavery (New York, 19–20 February 2019).

[18] Philippa Webb and Rosana Garciandia, "State responsibility for modern slavery: uncovering and bridging the gap", *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, vol. 68, Issue 3 (July 2019). See also Monash Trafficking and Slavery Research Group submission, p. 2.

[19] National Survivor Network submission.

[20] Walk Free Foundation, *Measurement, Action, Freedom*.

[21] Global Fund to End Modern Slavery submission, p. 3; James Cockayne, *Innovation for Inclusion: Using Digital Technology to Increase Financial Agency and Prevent Modern Slavery*, Secretariat Briefing Paper 3, Financial Sector Commission on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (United Nations University, 2019).

[22] HEAL Trafficking and Ethical Trading Initiative submissions.

Symposium: Addressing Modern Slavery's Root Causes
Nat Paul, Policy Advocacy Chair, National Survivor Network
Jess Torres, Co-Chair, National Survivor Network
22 October 2019

We would first like to thank the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Urmila Bhoola, for her efforts in compiling the data into this report.

The indication of vulnerabilities fueled by the future of work, demographic trends and migration, economic changes, environmental changes and other trends is a relevant point for assessing current forms of trafficking, as well as future potential changes. The report notes that 60% of the world's labour force currently works in the informal sector, which is a critical indicator of susceptibility to trafficking. Particularly, the proliferation of "gig economies"

through digital platforms may further perpetuate isolation and marginalization. In order to address human trafficking, we must focus on the core marginalization that drives the risk of being trafficked.

Further in relation to gig economies and the informal sector, we must contend with the ethics around hiring survivor contractors and not compensating them as employees. They are hired contract to contract, and have to provide their own healthcare, daycare and taxes with no benefits from an official employer. This lack of access to employee benefits leads to more marginalization and risks institutionalized poverty. This is also prevalent on gig-based driving platforms where employees pay for their own gas, car insurance, and other necessary expenses without the benefit of company-provided liability and maintenance of vehicles—essentially creating vulnerabilities that are at the expense of "employees".

The report also indicates that 85.6% of the 25.6 million young people entering the labour market by 2030 will reside in developing countries. We know from scientific data that as the climate continues to change, it will fuel mass migration. We know a growing population with diminishing resources will similarly continue to fuel migration. Increasing migration, in turn, perpetuates vulnerabilities to trafficking, which are further exacerbated by heightening violence and destabilization of entire regions due to conflict and war.

Addressing the impacts on human lives as the globe continues to adjust to climate crisis and lack of resources will become imperative to sustain life—including our anti-trafficking initiatives. The cost of disaster relief and services will only continue to increase. In order for societies to better address these crises, a fundamental shift in global thinking is urgently needed.

These risk factors need to be examined from different directions to weigh their full potential impacts on societies at large. For instance, with rising ocean levels and salinized farmlands along once coastal regions, with sinking cities and lost land—forced migration will only continue to rise. The way we assess needs and distribute vital resources must be changed systematically to address the known impacts on vast numbers of people, especially those who are most vulnerable. Through improved access to more relevant data assessing the impacts of human trafficking globally, we can continue to adjust our efforts in accordance with that knowledge. The report's recommendations outline an attainable approach for how anti-slavery efforts can improve and accelerate. Starting with effective measures to address vulnerabilities at the local level and the global level is imperative. No one nation or region can address this issue alone, and the development of not only regional task forces and coalitions but also unified global initiatives will be pertinent to contemplating the need for refuge during a time of growing instability from climate crisis.

It is crucial to listen to and bring in survivors who have the lived experiences of being trafficked to inform better responses to trafficking. In fact, this should be the first step in anti-slavery

responses: learning from the lived experiences and assessing best practices from the perspectives of those to whom these efforts are directed.

We need to encourage an ethical business model that reduces the adverse impact on people and the planet and forgoes reliance on cheaper models for quick profits. Instead, we need businesses that foster sustainable models of meaningful engagement. Our finite planet cannot sustain growth for the sheer sake of growth. Efforts to address this problem must be based on sound evidence of what the issues are and how and why they manifest rather than rely on visceral responses that may simplify what are complex phenomena.

The fundamental change necessary in our approach to tackling human trafficking is not the amount of money we spend, but the ways in which we spend that money. Rather than focusing our investments into programmes and services like legal aid, social services, or other programming in the same vein, we could potentially invest in lives. For example, we can combat human trafficking through a community approach, bringing in the local resources to change policing systems and institutions and to invest in community support. Imagine if we invested in education, childcare and healthcare. The long-term benefits would outweigh the short-term costs, and actually empower survivors and potential victims.

We must be cautious of the preconceived biases and stigmas perpetuated by interventionist approaches that leave underlying structural drivers, such as social and economic marginalization, unaddressed. The interventionist models of "rescue" needs to be addressed, since it can in some cases simply fuel supply. The lack of financial stability and fundamental marginalization that perpetuate trafficking must be remedied. We must also reckon with the assumption that refugees and asylum seekers are somehow complicit in their own vulnerability to trafficking. We need a fundamental shift in the way we view borders, and who is and is not eligible for refuge within them.

The conversations about what trafficking is and how to address it need to become far more nuanced. We cannot arrest our way out of this problem.

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Symposium: Contending with the Legal Status Quo: Why Evidence is Central to Anti-Slavery Action

Katarina Schwarz, Rights Lab Associate Director and Assistant Professor of Antislavery Law and Policy, University of Nottingham
23 October 2019

The prohibition against slavery is one of the few globally accepted and recognized norms of international law with universal application—that applies to every State irrespective of specific treaty commitments or political beliefs. While the language of human rights, recognition of refugees, and requirements for labour market regulation (among many other relevant issues) may be contested, slavery's prohibition stands as a shared universal commitment. Virtually all of the 193 UN Member States have also made a series of explicit commitments to combat and eradicate slavery and related forms of exploitation. In principle, therefore, every State recognizes the absolute unacceptability of slavery, and is committed to eradicating it in all its forms. However, eradicating slavery in practice has never been a simple affair.

New evidence is already bringing the focus on the gaps between national law and its implementation into new light. The persistent impunity gap within States' legal systems is undoubtedly a critical issue in the anti-slavery of both today and tomorrow. However, focus on this gap often overlooks the question of whether the necessary law has been set up, and presumes that slavery is already illegal in most (if not all) of the world's countries. New global evidence proves otherwise. The [Antislavery Legislation Database](#) reveals that States' efforts to domesticate their international anti-slavery obligations through national legislation are far from complete. In fact, almost half of all 193 UN Member States (47%) appear not to have legal provisions criminalizing slavery or the slave trade. Comprehensive review of global evidence displaces the assumption of universal illegality in this case, with important implications for anti-slavery action. Likewise, with regard to related practices such as forced labour, servitude and the four institutions and practices similar to slavery, States' domestic implementation of their international obligations to prohibit and criminalize exploitative practices are far from universally satisfied. Focusing on the realities of the status quo (identified through robust research in line with the Special Rapporteur's emphasis on a scientific approach), rather than dominant presumptions, has the potential to shift anti-slavery priorities in meaningful ways.

By creating a foundation of robust evidence, anti-slavery action can be tailored to the real operational context, rather than resting on presumptions. It also enables a more nuanced engagement with the impact of a wide variety of different factors on anti-slavery efforts. The complex realities of slavery make realizing global commitments to eradicate extreme forms of exploitation more difficult in practice than in principle. Slavery occurs at the intersections of an array of different factors—not all of which experience the same consensus in the international arena that the prohibition of slavery claims. Approaches to the regulation of labour markets and corporations, acceptance and affordance of rights to displaced and migrating persons, responses to climate change, and policies concerning other current and emerging trends identified in the [Special Rapporteur's thematic report](#) underpin vulnerabilities to exploitation. Multiple Sustainable Development Goal challenges coalesce in many different combinations in the [narratives of people who have experienced slavery and related exploitation](#).

Acknowledging the complexity of slavery, and its interrelatedness with a range of critical contemporary challenges, is now a common observation. The related suggestion that anti-slavery efforts ought to integrate various mechanisms and frameworks into a holistic agenda is a natural progression. Yet, the nature and contours of the various intersections and the way these might be addressed effectively remains to be settled. In short: the "what" has become clearer, but the specifics of the "how" remain opaque. This is particularly acute in contexts where legal mechanisms and approaches are discordant rather than harmonic. Balancing interests of different issues, including various SDG Targets as well as areas of policy concern, involves trade-offs as well as synergies. These tensions must be navigated in order to achieve a systematic anti-slavery agenda.

Evidence-based anti-slavery action is not only about looking forward to the anti-slavery of tomorrow, but also about questioning the foundations and presumptions of anti-slavery today. The sheer scale of the challenge at hand requires that a scientific, evidence-driven approach be adopted across policy, programming and evaluation practice in anti-slavery. However, in many instances, the evidence base that would support scientific, systematic, strategic and sustainable anti-slavery is incomplete, and the methods required to determine "what works" at the scale needed are still under development. It is therefore the need for **deep collaboration between data and evidence** (i.e., research experts and the full range of anti-slavery actors) that sits at the heart of meaningful change in global anti-slavery towards achieving SDG Target 8.7.

The [Walk Free Foundation's global anti-slavery metrics](#), Delta 8.7's progress towards **robust evidence** across a significant cross-section of States, and [the Rights Lab's](#) development of new methods, databases and analysis tools to support systematic and scientifically robust action, and other large-scale efforts to build the global anti-slavery evidence base, are crucial for the evolution of anti-slavery. At times, these scientific efforts must return to the fundamental assumptions of the anti-slavery movement—providing a new perspective on past and present action, problems and gaps, as well as appropriate and effective responses and solutions. Evidence-based anti-slavery action is not only about looking forward to the anti-slavery of tomorrow, but also about questioning the foundations and presumptions of anti-slavery today.

This evidence-based approach should be conceptualized as encompassing not only the findings generated from traditional academic and research centres in isolation, but the knowledge, experiences, and critical insights of survivors, as well as survivor-informed and survivor-led scholarship. This is an issue of efficacy as well as ethics; without the leadership of those who have lived experience of slavery and related exploitation (as well as members of effected communities in the variety of different contexts in which anti-slavery efforts are conducted), the anti-slavery evidence-base and methodologies remain critically limited.

Evidence and action are not, at present, consistently intertwined. Gaps persist between data and research communities and anti-slavery practitioners and policymakers, inhibiting communication flows in all directions. A hugely significant development in this regard, has been

the emergence of symbiotic, inter-institutional collaborations between policymakers, data specialists, NGOs and methods innovators that even move beyond the model of information exchange to the co-development of action agendas aimed at propelling anti-slavery to the next level. New units focused specifically on this communication function are an important bridge between these sometimes disperse communities, facilitating engagement, and use of research, as well as producing responsive research that meets the needs of the anti-slavery movement. The Rights Lab's Modern Slavery Evidence Unit and the UKRI Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre are a significant step in this direction.

The obligation to combat slavery (in principle) is the subject of global consensus. The need for a systematic, scientific, strategic, sustainable, survivor-informed and smart approach is clearly articulated. *How* this is to be achieved is more ambiguous but can be determined through collaboration and scientific endeavour. To make anti-slavery more effective, and make slavery a tractable problem, the starting point should be robust conclusions drawn from rigorous study, informed and led by survivors and taken up as a matter of necessity.

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Symposium: Building an Effective Movement to Reduce Modern Slavery: Evidence, Innovation and Coordination
Laura Gauer Bermudez, Director of Evidence and Learning, the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery
Sindhu Sagar, Senior Evidence and Learning Associate, the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery
24 October 2019

The UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Ms Urmila Bhoola, recently presented her report on current and emerging forms of slavery to the UN Human Rights Council. This extensively researched report is a comprehensive and thoughtful overview on the issue of modern slavery including the efforts required to catalyse a global anti-slavery movement in the era of global migration, urbanization, informality of employment, climate and conflict displacement and rapid technological advances.

In response to the Special Rapporteur's report and introduction to this Delta 8.7 symposium, the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (hereafter GFEMS or "the Fund") reflects on three underlying themes of the report that resonate with the strategic direction of the Fund—Evidence, Innovation and Coordination.

Evidence – Data on the scale and scope of modern slavery is critical, and this need is prominently featured throughout the report. As a complement to the work of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Minderoo Foundation's Walk Free Initiative, there is a demand for additional efforts at prevalence estimation with a particular emphasis on sub-national geographies and industry-specific insights. Such data will help tailor interventions in a more nuanced and evidence-informed manner. There is also a need for investment in intervention effectiveness research to understand what is working to reduce modern slavery in various contexts. Simultaneously, evidence on the effectiveness of risk reduction and resilience approaches would add value to the sector, in tandem with efforts at analysing prevalence reduction. Understanding these needs, GFEMS has made evidence a central component of our approach, including tailored prevalence estimation and multi-pronged evaluative efforts that offer actionable insights for key stakeholders.

However, as a sector, we must address the limited pool of researchers actively engaging on modern slavery in order to support the continuous production of rigorous evidence. It is imperative that we reach out to multiple disciplines, drawing on the skillsets of economists, computer scientists, public health professionals and social scientists to partake in prevalence and intervention effectiveness research. At the same time, we must cultivate the next generation of researchers on modern slavery, expanding outreach to students and junior faculty in academia and other research-oriented institutions across the globe.

Innovation – The report reflects perceptively on the evolution of modern slavery, imploring the anti-slavery community to question whether we are best situated to effectively address the issue. Given the scale and complexity of the problem, efforts to reduce modern slavery require not just strategic and evidence-informed approaches but also the aid of modern digital technological innovations.

For instance, in addition to prevalence research that draws upon academic approaches, there is also a need for further design and scaling of innovative techniques to detect risk of slavery in supply chains. Predictive modelling and technologies that amplify worker voice are two elements of supply chain risk identification that can provide companies an entry point to the more comprehensive work of risk mitigation and worker remedy. GFEMS is positioned to both seed and scale innovations in the private sector, not only to help companies comply with recent legislative mandates on supply chain transparency but to work with businesses, in earnest, to ensure decent work at all levels of their supply chain.

While we have cited technological innovations, it should be noted that innovation does not always require technology, and technology is not always innovative. Rather, innovation is the introduction of a better idea or method as an alternative to the status quo—a process often driven by adapting techniques and learnings from other disciplines. Anti-slavery stakeholders should continuously engage across a diverse range of academic and technical sectors to catalyse idea generation, fitting those ideas to our needs and challenges.

Additionally, and undoubtedly most critical within the context of supporting innovative solutions, is the concept of worker and survivor voice. Aligned with the concepts of consultation and survivor perspective outlined in the report, it is imperative that proposed innovations be driven and designed by the needs and rights of vulnerable communities. GFEMS has adapted such consultative processes as an essential procedural step for all new partners, ensuring that those affected by proposed investments are meaningfully engaged from the outset of project design through to project completion.

Coordination – Further, GFEMS agrees that if the fight against modern slavery is to succeed, there is an urgent need to consolidate disjoint efforts. The report, referring to the views of GFEMS and the Pathfinder Initiative, rightly highlights the importance of consolidation and action by Alliance 8.7 stakeholders in coordination with governmental efforts.

There are several ways in which coordination may be improved. Firstly, mainstreaming anti-slavery issues within approaches to other Sustainable Development Goals may yield broader and more expedient impacts. Secondly, coordination between foreign assistance donors can enable a more targeted and less fragmented approach. As a Global Fund, GFEMS offers an avenue for such coordination, ensuring alignment with global priorities as well as host-country objectives. Thirdly, there is a need for coordinated action among private sector stakeholders and a willingness to step outside of non-disclosure agreements to offer transparency on what is working (and where challenges are faced) with respect to these issues of risk detection and worker remedy.

Lastly, echoing the Special Rapporteur's mention of systems thinking, the anti-slavery community would benefit from mapping and coordinating efforts through a systems lens. It is of critical importance to engage multiple components of a system to disrupt silos and draw out the underlying interconnectedness of our political, social, financial and economic operations. Aligned with this theory, GFEMS simultaneously funds interventions in three pillar areas: Effective Rule of Law, Business Engagement, and Sustained Freedom. The Fund's three pillar approach aspires to change the status quo by bringing private and public sector actors together in consortiums to collectively implement anti-slavery projects.

Systems thinking should also influence the anti-slavery research community, with thought given to developing research agendas that appreciate the complexity of contemporary forms of slavery, inquiring into the numerous drivers of modern slavery across multiple levels. To do so, there is likely opportunity for innovation through the adaptation of concepts and methods from the health systems literature.

In sum, GFEMS believes that a sustainable reduction in modern slavery is possible with the steadfast commitment of government, the private sector, and civil society. Drawing on the themes of the report and aligned with the Fund's strategic direction, we believe such commitments will most effectively counter modern slavery if they prioritize the generation and uptake of evidence, increase investment in innovation, and foster strategic coordination.

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Symposium: Tomorrow's Slavery, Today | A Response
Urmila Bhoola, United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences
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What the respondents to this dialogue have commonly noted is that the drivers of contemporary forms of slavery are varied, complex and continuously evolving as global economic, geopolitical, demographic, environmental and labour market factors change. It is also commonly asserted that measures to effectively tackle slavery require the input and collaboration of governments, international and local civil society organizations, researchers and businesses. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of consensus about the definitive solutions to eradicate contemporary forms of slavery. As my report—which drew on submissions by a number of civil society organizations and Member States—demonstrates, the contours of a more effective approach are however beginning to take substantive shape.

The contributors to this Symposium have offered a set of pertinent insights in response to my report which elucidate both the nature of the problems the anti-slavery movement faces and what we can continue and need to begin to do to achieve SDG Target 8.7 by 2030. Drawing on the submissions received in the compilation of my report, I will elaborate on three threads in particular in the present response: survivor leadership, technological innovation and business engagement.

Only on the basis of such a sound, evidence-based understanding of what the issues are can we devise effective solutions, which themselves must be continually subject to scrutiny and measurement.

Survivors should be at the centre of anti-slavery efforts as leaders and interlocutors. As Nat Paul and Jess Torres argue, survivor inclusion should be the first step in devising anti-slavery responses. This is both an ethical imperative and a question of efficacy without which anti-slavery efforts will be "critically limited". Initiatives, such as the Survivor Alliance and

the National Survivor Network, have played a pioneering role in amplifying and empowering survivor voices. No other stakeholders—no matter how committed and well-intentioned—can have the same "insights as survivors about slavery's impact on individuals and communities. Survivors are better placed to articulate what is required to enable their recovery and what can be done to prevent others from experiencing similar exploitation." Thus, supporting and investing in initiatives like the Survivor Alliance is necessary to ensure that survivors have a voice as rights-holders in decisions affecting them. They also need to be empowered and trained in order to acquire the requisite skills and tools to not only thrive in society but also to play a leading role in the anti-slavery movement. Anti-slavery interventions must include not only efforts to strengthen criminal justice responses but also to ensure effective provision of support and services for victims and survivors. Instead of a singular focus on rescue and prosecution, the underlying structural factors that constitute drivers to slavery, namely poverty, labour precarity and lack of legal protections for migrants, among others, should occupy centre stage.

My report also highlighted the central role technological innovations can play in delivering, fine-tuning and scaling anti-slavery efforts. Dr Laura Gauer Bermudez, for example, noted that "**technologies that amplify worker voice**" could be harnessed to better monitor risk throughout a business's supply chain. In their submission to my report preparation, Tech Against Trafficking similarly enumerated a variety of new smartphone applications that can now empower and educate vulnerable populations. Such innovation will require stakeholders to work closely to ensure novel technologies are effectively and ethically utilized, and are accessible to vulnerable populations, including in the global South. Given the dearth of funding and resources, information-sharing and collaboration on the development of and access to technological tools is highly pertinent. In fact, tech tools can be harnessed to address the wider fragmentation that currently plagues anti-slavery efforts, especially around resource allocation and knowledge-sharing. Tech solutions, however, cannot be solely depended on as a panacea but should rather "complement rather than displace other initiatives, especially grassroots and worker-led efforts." They should also be developed, tested, and adopted in consort and consultation with the populations they are meant to support and serve.

Relatedly, engagement with the private sector is paramount. Nat Paul and Jess Torres hone in on the underlying structural vulnerabilities that constitute drivers to slavery. As noted in my report, these include access to decent, formal employment that can sustain one's livelihood. Thus, the private sector plays an important role in not only eliminating risk in its supply and value chains but also in working with governments to ensure individuals have access to decent work for which they are fairly paid. And while there has been a marked increase in domestic transparency in supply chains (TISC) legislation, enforcement has neither been adequate nor effective, and "there is limited evidence to suggest that the legislation has produced meaningful changes in companies' behaviour on a large scale." Therefore, legal frameworks to regulate corporations should be enhanced by other enforcement and monitoring mechanisms, such as the "human rights due diligence approach adopted in France, customs provisions introduced in the USA and the creation of a 'Dirty List' for offending companies in Brazil." It is also vital that

businesses effectively implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and—once adopted—the legally binding instrument to *regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises*.

Public procurement is another growing but still insufficiently tapped [source of leverage](#) that can compel businesses to comply with human rights norms and standards and due diligence requirements. In addition to public-private partnerships, Gauer Bermudez rightly argues that stakeholders from the private sector must work conjointly and share information on what measures are effective to reduce risk and furnish remedies.

At the heart of the aforementioned foci and efforts is rigorous research that illuminates what Dr Katarina Schwarz referred to as "the realities of the status quo." Only on the basis of such a sound, evidence-based understanding of what the issues are can we devise effective solutions, which themselves must be continually subject to scrutiny and measurement. Closer engagements between various actors in the anti-slavery space—and beyond, as Gauer Bermudez pointedly suggests—is essential. This will not only link grassroots and local movements to regional and global efforts but will also ensure that efforts, whether in research, policy or programme design, are co-constitutive, based on dialogue and most importantly, responsive to the needs and experiences of survivors and potential victims.

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This article has been prepared by Urmila Bhoola as a contributor to Delta 8.7. As provided for in the Terms and Conditions of Use of Delta 8.7, the opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of UNU or its partners.