New Collaboration in the Global Effort to Fight Modern Slavery

(15 NOVEMBER 2019 - NEW YORK/NOTTINGHAM) – A new collaboration to accelerate policy-focused research on modern slavery has been announced by the University of Nottingham’s Rights Lab and the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR). The collaboration brings together the world’s largest group of modern slavery researchers and a think tank within the UN system that has led the way on connecting anti-slavery research to policy.

The strategic cooperation between UNU-CPR and the Rights Lab aims to foster research innovation to accelerate and scale effective measures to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 8.7, in which 193 UN Member States committed to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate modern slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, and child labour.

Under this new strategic cooperation framework, UNU-CPR and the Rights Lab will collaborate to further strengthen and deepen content on Delta 8.7, the Knowledge Platform created by UNU-CPR as a contribution to Alliance 8.7, a global partnership focused on action to achieve SDG Target 8.7. It will also catalyse joint work on Code 8.7, a community of artificial intelligence (AI), computational science, and anti-slavery leaders working to develop AI-powered, survivor-informed solutions in the fight against modern slavery. This will include cooperating to develop an observation platform combining novel and non-standard data streams to help strengthen understanding of vulnerability to modern slavery and other related risks.

Other workstreams within the cooperation framework that are currently being explored include: anti-slavery legislation and policy; monitoring and evaluation of anti-slavery programme interventions; and business-facing analysis that builds on UNU-CPR’s work with the global financial sector to address modern slavery and human trafficking.

Dr James Cockayne, Director of the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, welcomed the announcement of the strategic cooperation framework, saying: “Meeting Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7 will require reducing the number of those directly affected by modern slavery and human trafficking by around 10,000 people per day. We can only do that if we focus on what works, and scale it rapidly through smart policy choices. I’m excited to see the research power of the Rights Lab combine with UNU-CPR’s knowledge of global policy processes and to be welcoming Rights Lab staff members as Visiting Fellows in New York on a rotating basis during 2019–20.”

Professor Zoe Trodd, Director of the Rights Lab, said: “We are thrilled to forge this relationship with United Nations University Centre for Policy Research. To achieve Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7 by 2030, we need the kind of global understanding that UNU-CPR has been advancing: work that sets modern slavery in a wide range of policy processes and drivers. Together we hope to accelerate a large-scale research agenda for fighting modern slavery: understand and use new data on what factors make people vulnerable or resilient to enslavement, and generate innovative solutions to address this global public policy
challenge. The Rights Lab team members are excited to join with a group of like-minded thought-leaders who are committed to combining rigorous empirical research and advocacy.”

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RIGHTS LAB

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The Rights Lab is a University of Nottingham Beacon of Excellence. We are the largest group of modern slavery scholars in the world, and home to the world’s leading academic experts on modern slavery. Our programmes focus on Data and Measurement, Survivors and Cultures, Communities and Society, Law and Policy, and Business and Economies. Our Modern Slavery Evidence Unit is the interface between the Rights Lab’s research base and modern slavery change agents in government, business and civil society in the UK and internationally. Follow the Rights Lab on Twitter.

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The United Nations University Centre for Policy Research in New York is an independent think tank within the UN system. UNU-CPR combines research excellence with deep knowledge of the multilateral system to generate innovative solutions to current and future global public policy challenges. Its Modern Slavery Programme fosters research innovation to accelerate understanding of what works to achieve Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7, and partners with like-minded organizations to accelerate and scale anti-slavery efforts. Follow UNU-CPR, Delta 8.7 and Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking on Twitter.