



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

Strategy

Born to live in freedom

- Strategy to strengthen development efforts to combat
modern slavery (2021-2025)



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This is 2020. Centuries have passed since the end of the transatlantic slave trade. Yet, more than 40.3 million people remain victims of modern slavery. Five in every 1,000 people in the world. Victims are often the most vulnerable in our societies. Those suffering multiple forms of discrimination – women, children, indigenous peoples, people of African descent, and persons with disabilities. Modern slavery is a blight in our world that we must eradicate.

UN DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL
AMINA J. MOHAMMED¹



Executive summary

Modern slavery deprives people of their fundamental right to freedom and undermines sustainable development. There are roughly 40 million victims of modern slavery in the world today. Although the problem is more prevalent in certain places, cases of modern slavery can be found in all countries and in almost all sectors. Domestic work, construction, manufacturing, agriculture and fisheries sectors have the highest incidence of modern slavery. More than 70 % of the victims worldwide are women.

The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating the situation for vulnerable people and increasing their risk of exploitation. Unemployment has risen in most countries. It is likely that the loss of jobs and incomes has led many people to accept poorer working conditions or forced them into debt in order to survive. Although COVID-19 is taking a toll on everyone, it is women who are bearing the brunt of the economic and social impacts of the pandemic.

The main objective of the new strategy is to promote a more coherent development policy approach designed to prevent people from being recruited to, remaining in, or returning to modern slavery. Women and girls are especially vulnerable to modern slavery, and it is

therefore crucial to integrate women's rights and gender equality when required. Even though the majority of modern slavery victims are women, we must not forget that men and boys are also subject to exploitation, especially, in the construction, fisheries and agriculture sectors.

Efforts to combat modern slavery – Norway's approach

Norway will strengthen its efforts to combat modern slavery in both the short and long term by focusing on three key areas:

- immediate action to mitigate impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- long-term international efforts to address drivers of modern slavery and strengthen the response
- efforts to close knowledge gaps

Norway is already providing development assistance to reduce the risk and address the drivers of modern slavery, but in the time ahead Norway will strengthen its efforts to combat modern slavery by directing greater attention to selected priority areas.



There is a need for more evidence-based and victim-centred data, analysis and research.

Norway will promote universal access to high-quality, basic education, including in crisis and conflict situations. It is particularly important to follow up girls aged 11–18 in poor countries to ensure that they resume their schooling after the pandemic is over, to reduce the risk of child labour and child marriage for this vulnerable group.

Migrants and refugees make up another vulnerable group. The UNESCO Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants is an important initiative to allow them to continue studies or have access to the labour market.

Adolescents and adults who receive vocational training are less at risk of being subjected to forced labour and child labour and ultimately have better opportunities to find decent work. Vocational training can also be offered to individuals who are, or have been, victims of modern slavery. The need for this will be substantial in the wake of the pandemic. It is essential that efforts also target the unemployed, who are at risk of becoming victims of modern slavery.

Corruption plays an important role in facilitating modern slavery. Norway is at the forefront of efforts to ensure that developing countries establish sound taxation systems and step up their work to combat corruption and illicit financial flows. Moving forward, it will be impor-

tant to raise awareness of the links between, and the consequences of, tax evasion, corruption, illicit financial flows and modern slavery, as well as to promote international action to prevent and combat illicit financial flows and thus also modern slavery.

There is widespread illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing globally. This can in turn lead to corruption, money laundering, drug trafficking, tax evasion, human trafficking and modern slavery. Efforts to combat modern slavery in the global fisheries industry will be continued.

Crises and deprivation can force people into slavery. The social safety net can help to prevent this. Norwegian support for social safety measures, such as school meals, will be stepped up in the wake of the pandemic. This will help to combat modern slavery.

Reliable basic data and analysis are required to understand the extent, causes and consequences of modern slavery. There is a need for more evidence-based and victim-centred data, analysis and research. No one knows what the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be. There is a need to learn more about which groups are most vulnerable to exploitation during and after a pandemic and the reasons why, as well as which measures can most effectively counter such vulnerability. Partners

In order to promote an effective, long-term response, Norway is seeking to strengthen cooperation with partners who are actively working to combat modern slavery. This includes both partners and pathfinder countries in Alliance 8.7.²

Civil society organisations that have strong support and credibility at country level and a good understanding of the local context are well placed to achieve

results and reach those who are most affected. Cooperation with civil society organisations must therefore be strengthened.

Norway is a major donor to the multilateral system and contributes to a number of thematic funds and initiatives. Where relevant, Norway will encourage multilateral actors to incorporate efforts to combat modern slavery in their funds, programmes and projects.



² Alliance 8.7 is a global partnership of stakeholders who are committed to achieving Target 8.7 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Pathfinder countries are countries that have submitted a formal expression of interest to the Alliance, including a commitment to strengthen efforts to abolish modern slavery in accordance with SDG 8.7.

THE GOVERNMENT WILL:

Immediate action (several of these action points will also be part of Norway's more long-term efforts):

- cooperate with civil society actors, multilateral organisations and authorities to enable children to catch up on lost schooling, under accelerated learning programmes designed to prevent children and young people from dropping out of school permanently and becoming victims to modern slavery as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- strengthen efforts targeting girls aged 11–18, which is the group that is most at risk of not resuming schooling after the pandemic;
- give priority to ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the post-COVID recovery ('build back better').

Long-term efforts:

- maintain support for the UNESCO Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants, and promote the further development of this concept;
- focus on promoting inclusive education and efforts to enhance the capacity of schools to protect children and young people who are at risk of becoming victims of modern slavery because they are living in crisis and conflict situations;

- continue to work to combat modern slavery in the global fisheries industry;
- work to prevent modern slavery and safeguard vulnerable groups by increasing support for efforts to strengthen social safety nets, including measures such as school meals;
- analyse the need for vocational training in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and target efforts towards the unemployed, including illiterate adults;
- raise awareness of the links between, and the consequences of, tax evasion, corruption, illicit financial flows and modern slavery, as well as promote international action to prevent and combat illicit financial flows and thus also modern slavery;
- on the basis of compiled data and research, consider introducing measures that will reduce the risk of women and children, in particular, from being subjected to various forms of coercion, such as forced surrogacy.

Efforts to close knowledge gaps:

- provide support for knowledge-based analysis of the impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups and the risk of modern slavery, viewed from the perspective of the victims and survivors of modern slavery;

- give priority to research on measures to mitigate the risk of modern slavery, with a particular focus on measures that are most effective for safeguarding women and girls;
- work to enhance understanding of modern slavery among Norwegian academic and research communities, for example through systematic use of framework agreements.
- continue and strengthen cooperation with the Alliance 8.7 global partnership, where the International Labour Organization (ILO) serves as Secretariat.

Cooperation with partners:

- strengthen the efforts of Norway's civil society partners to combat modern slavery, particularly partners working at the local level that can provide direct assistance to victims and survivors;
- strengthen cooperation with OECD countries on action and priorities in connection with the fight against modern slavery or related areas in developing countries;
- address challenges relating to human trafficking, forced labour, child labour and forced marriage in Norway's dialogue and cooperation with pathfinder countries that are also partner countries in Norway's development cooperation;
- where relevant, encourage multilateral actors to incorporate efforts to combat modern slavery in their funds, programmes and projects, and work to promote the inclusion of such efforts in national and international strategic plans;

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