

WORKING SESSION 11: HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AND OTHER COMMITMENTS - MODERN SLAVERY/TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

UK STATEMENT

We fully support the statement delivered by Belgium on behalf of the EU and its member states and would like to add some remarks in our national capacity.

One year ago the UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, spoke to the UN General Assembly about the need for a global response to the global problem of modern slavery, human trafficking and forced labour.

This year we will be launching a Call to Action, asking the international community to move from words to actions, putting the commitments made in the Sustainable Development Goals into practice.

Modern Slavery is a global challenge requiring a global response. We need enhanced cooperation on law enforcement to make sure those criminal gangs exploiting the most vulnerable in our societies are brought to justice. We need better mechanisms for protecting victims, both from slavery and the consequences of actions they may take as a result of their enslavement; we need to ensure our policies and practices put victims first.

We need to commit resources to make sure our capacity to respond is sufficient. The UK has committed £33.5m from our development budget and this week has committed to a substantial contribution to the Global Fund to End Slavery.

One of the most egregious aspects of Human Trafficking is the concept of individuals being bought and sold, traded like commodities, for financial profit. It is estimated that modern slavery is a business with an annual turnover of \$150 billion, bigger than the US banking sector, or the economies of many countries. If we are to tackle modern slavery we need better cooperation to tackle the flows of finance from human trafficking. The international

community has an opportunity to show how it can come together to be greater than the sum of its parts. The OSCE can bring its particular expertise to bear as part of that coordinated, coherent response.

As Chair of the Human Dimension Committee, we were pleased to work with our Norwegian and Kazakh colleagues to bring together the three OSCE subcommittees to discuss the challenges of combating trafficking in human beings and modern slavery. We will also be exploring this issue further in our side event on Wednesday lunchtime in meeting room 3, to which you are all invited.