

UK STATEMENT – HUMANITARIAN ISSUES – SESSION 7

Mr/Madam Moderator

We align ourselves fully with the statement made by Belgium on behalf of the EU and its Member States and would like to add a few national remarks.

Human trafficking is part of the reality of modern slavery, with 45.8 million people being held in all forms of slavery and servitude worldwide and 21 million subject to forced or compulsory labour.

Tackling human trafficking is a high priority for the UK. Our 2015 Modern Slavery Act gave our law enforcement agencies the tools and powers they need to tackle these appalling crimes, to ensure perpetrators face severe penalties, and to ensure victims get the protection and support they need.

In January of this year we became we became the third country to ratify the International Labour Organization's protocol to the Forced Labour Convention. We worked for the establishment of UN Global Goal, 8.7, which commits countries to "take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking.

In July the UK Prime Minister pledged £33.5m of funding from our development budget to prevent slavery in countries from which we know victims are regularly trafficked to the UK.

In further recognition of the scale of this issue, and the need for a global response, speaking to the UN General Assembly this week, our Prime Minister underlined the need for international cooperation to bring to justice criminals who traffic our fellow human beings into lives of slavery and servitude.

Speaking to leaders, representatives of international organisations and experts, the Prime Minister argued that, just as we have stepped up international co-operation to crackdown on other aspects of international organised crime, we need a similar co-ordinated effort to eradicate modern slavery.

Her and our recommendation therefore stems from this, that states and practitioners work together to develop a model national response based upon:

- strong law enforcement action and legislative framework
- reducing vulnerability and supporting victims
- tackling transparency in supply chains
- and effective international cooperation

There can be no room for complacency - we must do more. The OSCE has an important role to play in the international community's response; we look to exchanges such as today's help to strengthen international norms.