

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

WORKING SESSION 14: Humanitarian issues and other commitments, including combating trafficking in human beings, refugees and displaced persons, persons at risk of displacement

I will start with recommendations:

- That all OSCE participating States demonstrate their commitment to Ending Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking by joining the UN Call to Action, launched last year by our Prime Minister and the UN Secretary General;
- That within the OSCE we focus on implementing existing commitments, looking to ODIHR and the Office of the SR for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings for technical support and capacity building, and using the OSCE platform to share best practice and lessons learned. ODIHR's National Referral Mechanism Handbook, once completed, is an example of a practical tool to support states and civil society in our efforts to tackle modern slavery and ensure a survivor centred approach.

Modern Slavery, including trafficking in human beings, is one of the greatest human rights abuses of our time. Ending this is a top priority for the UK Government, and we are addressing the issue within the UK and internationally.

The UK's 2015 Modern Slavery Act provides the legislative structure for a strong and comprehensive response. We have learned that to tackle this crime we need a coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach, bringing together expertise from government, law enforcement, civil society and business. We are not complacent. The UK Home Secretary recently announced a review of the Modern Slavery Act to ensure that it fully reflects the changing nature and scale of the threat facing us today.

A global crime such as modern slavery requires a global response. It exists in all societies, and does not respect borders or jurisdictions. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets an ambitious target: to fully eradicate modern slavery, forced labour, human trafficking, and the worst forms of child labour. Frankly, we are not on target to reach this. The UK believes that a concerted, joined up international effort is needed. States, international organisations and civil society need to come together to confront this issue, to identify and prosecute the traffickers and offenders and bring them to justice, to address the core challenges which drive the trade, and to protect the vulnerable and the victims

Twelve months ago, in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, our Prime Minister and the United Nations Secretary-General launched the Call to Action to end Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. It signalled strong political intent that countries would not tolerate slavery domestically, and would work together and with others to bring about a step change internationally. At the UN General Assembly next Monday, our Secretary of State for International Development will host a meeting "stepping up action to end forced labour, modern

slavery and human trafficking” focusing on implementation of the Call to Action so far and next steps.

Over 74 countries have now endorsed this Call to Action, and the number continues to rise. I encourage other States to sign up, and make clear their determination to rid the world of this heinous crime. OSCE states can send a strong signal to the rest of the world that we can lead the fight against modern slavery in all its aspects. Working together we can make a difference.