



**ALLIANCE**

# Frequently Asked Questions

**2016 GLOBAL ESTIMATES  
OF MODERN SLAVERY**

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# A. Background and partnership

## **Why are global estimates necessary?**

Accurate and reliable data is a vital tool in tackling complex social challenges. Not only does it raise awareness about specific issues, but it enables policy makers to take strategic decisions based on evidence, guide implementation to tackle bottlenecks and development partners to address funding gaps.

## **Why are these new estimates produced under Alliance 8.7?**

The 2016 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery are presented as a contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Target 8.7, which calls for immediate and effective measures to end forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking, as well as child labour in all its forms. It is intended to inform policy making and implementation for achieving the target.

The collaborative development of this estimate is an integral and necessary part of Alliance 8.7, a global partnership involving governments, workers' and employers' organisations, UN agencies, regional organisations, partners for development, private enterprises, civil society organizations, academia, experts, the media and others, supporting the attainment of SDG Target 8.7.

The 2016 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery has been developed by the International Labour Organization and the Walk Free Foundation, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration. The Global Estimates also benefited from consultations with UN partner agencies, in particular the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and external experts.

The 2016 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery were released on 19 September 2017 along with the 2016 Global Estimates of Child Labour. The collective package of global estimates is known as the 2017 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery and Child Labour.

## **When were the previous global estimates of modern slavery released?**

This is the first Global Estimate of Modern Slavery, and was produced by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation (WFF), in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Previously, the ILO had produced two Global Estimates of Forced Labour in 2005 and 2012. The WFF produces

the Global Slavery Index, which provides an estimate of modern slavery, country by country. Previous editions were released in 2013, 2014 and 2016, with the next edition due for release in 2018.

This collaboration constitutes a major step forward in the estimation of modern slavery, drawing for the first time on an extensive set of national surveys.

## B. Terminology and methodology

### What is modern slavery?

The term “**modern slavery**” has not been defined by any international instrument. For the purposes of producing the 2016 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, “modern slavery” is being used as an umbrella term for two situations: forced labour and forced marriage.

The term “**forced or compulsory labour**” is defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), Article 2.1, as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily”. It implies the use of deception or coercion, either by the state and public agencies, or by private individuals and enterprises, to force people to enter work or service against their will, to work in conditions they did not accept and to prevent them from leaving the job by using any form of punishment or threat of penalty.

“**Forced marriage**” refers to situations where persons have been forced to marry without their consent. A marriage can be forced through a range of different mechanisms, including physical, emotional or financial duress; deception by family members, the spouse or others; or the use of force or threats or severe pressure. The 1956 United Nations Convention on slavery and slavery-like practices covers various mechanisms of forced marriage, as institutions and practices similar to slavery.

### What are the data sources?

The estimate draws on the strongest data available globally including:

- Surveys undertaken jointly by ILO and Walk Free Foundation between 2014 and 2016 in 48 countries. These surveys build on the respective experience of both organisations to understand the scale of modern slavery. The surveys involved face to face interviews, with people around the globe, in 53 languages.

- Data from IOM's victim assistance database.
- Information from the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations relating to State-imposed forced labour.

## What is the methodology?

Modern slavery is largely hidden and therefore difficult to measure. In recent years, there has been significant investment and considerable improvements made in the methodology to measure this crime, including through better survey methodologies.

For the first time -randomly sampled- nationally representative survey data on prevalence of forced labour and forced marriage has been made available for more than 50 countries. Taken together with other pre-existing data, such as the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) database on assisted victims of trafficking, the data provide a solid foundation for the new estimate of modern slavery.

The forced labour exploitation and forced marriage estimates are based on an extrapolation from the national survey data. The estimate of forced sexual exploitation uses both the survey data and IOM database of assisted victims of trafficking.

Information and data from the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations were used to build the estimate of State-imposed forced labour.

The detailed concepts and statistical definitions are referred to in the Annex of the report *Global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage* as well as the separate publication *Methodology of the global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage*.

## What regions are covered?

Disaggregated estimates are provided for five world regions: Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Americas, and Europe and Central Asia. These regions are defined in accordance with the regional classification system employed by the ILO STATISTICS department.

# C. Results

## How many people are trapped in modern slavery?

An estimated 40.3 million people were living in modern slavery at any moment in time in 2016. This amounts to 5.4 victims of modern slavery for every thousand people in the

world. 73 per cent of the victims of modern slavery were female, and one in four victims were children. Forced labour accounted for 24.9 million people, while 15.4 million were in forced marriage.

## **How many people are trapped in forced labour?**

An estimated 24.9 million people were in forced labour at any moment in time in 2016. Of this group, 16 million people were in forced labour exploitation in the private sector such as domestic work, construction or agriculture, 4.8 million persons were in forced sexual exploitation, and just over four million persons were in forced labour imposed by state authorities

## **How many people are trapped in forced marriage?**

An estimated minimum of 15.4 million people were living in situations of forced marriage in 2016, and of this total, 6.5 million cases had occurred between 2012 and 2016.

## **Who are the victims of modern slavery?**

Modern slavery affects all population groups, young and old, male and female. But some groups are more vulnerable than others.

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by modern slavery, accounting for 28.7 million, or 71% of the total. More precisely, women represent 99 per cent of victims of forced labour in the commercial sex industry, 58 per cent in forced labour in other sectors, 40 per cent of forced labour imposed by authorities and 84 per cent of victims of forced marriages.

One in four victims of modern slavery were children. Some 37 per cent, or 5.7 million of those forced to marry were children. Children represented 18 per cent of those subjected to forced labour exploitation, 21 per cent of the victims of commercial sexual exploitation and 7 per cent of those forced to work by state authorities.

## **Who are the victims of forced labour?**

An estimated 16 million people were in forced labour in the private economy in 2016; 9.2 million (57.6 per cent) were female while 6.8 million (42.4 per cent) were male.

## **What is the importance of debt bondage?**

More than half of these 16 million men and women in forced labour exploitation were bonded labourers (51 per cent), where debt is used to forcibly obtain labour. The pro-

portion of debt bondage as part of forced labour rises above 70 per cent for adults in agriculture, domestic work and manufacturing.

## **What forms of coercion were forced labour victims subjected to?**

Most victims of forced labour suffered multiple forms of coercion from employers or recruiters. Nearly one quarter of people (24 per cent) had their wages withheld, or were prevented from leaving by threats of non-payment of due wages. Threats of violence account for 17 per cent, acts of physical violence for 16%, and threats against family for 12% of cases. For women, 7 per cent of victims reported acts of sexual violence.

## **In which industries is forced labour found?**

Among cases where the type of work was known, the largest share of adults in forced labour were domestic workers, almost a quarter of the total. This was followed by the construction (18 per cent), manufacturing (15 per cent), and agriculture and fishing (11 per cent) sectors. With the exception of domestic work, the proportion of men is greater than of women in sectors involving manual labour. One quarter of male victims of forced labour were exploited in the construction sector (25 per cent), followed by 21 per cent in manufacturing, 16 per cent in domestic work and 13 per cent in agriculture and fishing. Over one third of female victims of forced labour were exploited for domestic work (36 per cent), followed by 21 per cent in accommodation and food services, and 11 per cent in the wholesale and retail trade sector.

## **Who are the victims of forced sexual exploitation?**

In 2016, an estimated 4.8 million men, women and children were victims of forced commercial sexual exploitation at any point in time. The vast majority of victims (99 per cent) were women and girls. Children represented 21 per cent of the victims. More than seven out of 10 victims in the world were to be found in the Asia and the Pacific region. This was followed by the Europe and Central Asia region (14 per cent), Africa (8 per cent), the Americas (4 per cent), and the Arab States (1 per cent).

## **Who are the victims of forced labour imposed by state authorities?**

An estimated 4 million people were in state-imposed forced labour in 2016. These people were citizens recruited by their state authorities to participate in agriculture work or construction for purposes of economic development (2.5 million), young military conscripts forced to perform work which is not of military nature (600,000 people), citizens, male or female, forced to perform communal services which were not decided by their community and do not benefit them (325,000), or compulsory prison labour exacted for the benefit of private individuals, companies or associations (560,000).

## Who are the victims of forced marriage?

In 2016, an estimated 15.4 million people were living in a forced marriage; 6.5 million cases of forced marriage were recorded during the five-year period from 2012 to 2016, while the remainder had happened before, but still continued.

While men and boys can also be victims of forced marriage, most victims are women and girls (84 per cent). 37 per cent of the victims of forced marriages were below 18 at the time of the marriage. Among child victims, 44 per cent were forced to marry before the age of 15 years.

While noting the limits of data in key regions, particularly the Arab States, the data suggest that prevalence is highest in Africa (4.8 victims per 1,000 inhabitants), followed by Asia and the Pacific (2.0 victims per 1,000 inhabitants).

## Are all regions affected by modern slavery in the same way?

There are significant regional differences in the distribution of forced labour and modern slavery. Between 2012 and 2016, 62 per cent of victims of modern slavery were exploited in the Asia and Pacific region, followed by 23 per cent in the Africa region, and 9 per cent in Europe and Central Asia. The Asia and Pacific Region showed the highest number of victims for each form of modern slavery: 73 per cent of victims of forced sexual exploitation, 64 per cent of victims of forced labour, 69 per cent of those forced to work by state authorities, and 55 per cent of forced marriages.

If we look at percentages, the picture is different. Prevalence is highest in Africa with 7.6 victims of modern slavery for every thousand people. This is followed by Asia and the Pacific regions with 6.1 victims, Europe and Central Asia with 3.9 victims the Arab States with 3.3 and the Americas with 1.9 victims per thousand inhabitants.

However, far more research and survey work is required at the national level to provide a more comprehensive picture.

# D. The way forward

## What are some of the overarching policy priorities in the drive to rid the world of modern slavery?

Ending modern slavery will require a multi-faceted response that addresses the array of forces – economic, social, cultural and legal – that contribute to vulnerability and en-

able abuses. There can be no one-size-fits-all solution; responses need to be adapted to the very diverse environments in which modern slavery still occurs. It is nonetheless possible to identify some overarching policy priorities in the lead-up to 2030 from the global estimates and from experience to date.

- Extending labour and social rights in the formal and particularly in the informal economy – where modern slavery is most likely to occur – is needed to protect workers from exploitation.
- Stronger social protection systems, including social protection floors, are necessary to offset the vulnerabilities that can push people into modern slavery.
- Fair recruitment practices and improved migration governance are important strategies to prevent modern slavery and protect victims.
- The risk and typology of modern slavery is strongly influenced by sex, meaning that gender considerations have to be systematically integrated into policy responses. It is especially important that prevention and protection efforts reflect and prioritise the generally higher risk faced by females.
- Debt bondage is a widespread means of coercion and addressing its root causes, such as ..., is a necessary part of forced labour prevention.
- Improved victim identification is critical to extend protection to the majority of victims who are currently not properly identified or assisted. Children, who constitute 1 of every 4 modern slavery victims, are a particular priority in this context. ”

We know that much of modern slavery today occurs in contexts of state fragility, conflict and crisis, pointing to the need to address the risk of modern slavery as part of humanitarian actions.

Policies and measures in all of these priority areas should be evidence-based and informed by research and statistics on the specific profile of modern slavery in the countries concerned.

The complex, global and multi-dimensional phenomenon of modern slavery cannot be resolved by national governments or other national stakeholders alone. International cooperation and partnership will also be critical to accelerate progress to eliminate all forms of modern slavery worldwide.

## **How does the global estimate relate to the need for data at national level?**

The 2016 Global Estimates are a major step forward, but our information on modern slavery in all its dimensions is by no means complete. Additional surveys to inform national policies and further refinements to the methodology are needed. In the context of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians, the ILO is leading an effort to bring together practitioners working on the measurement of forced labour to identify the requirements for such an undertaking.“

In addition, ILO is working with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to develop a joint measurement framework and survey tools for estimating human trafficking for forced labour.