

# Catalyst Briefing Sheet for MPs: Slavery

## Who We Are section

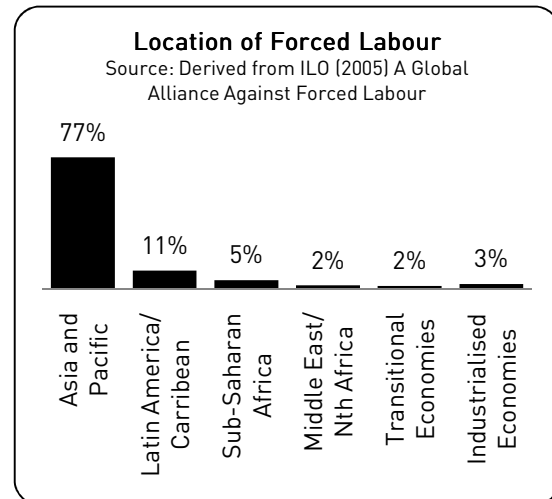
### The Problem

#### Up to 27 Million People Are Trapped in Slavery

Across the world between 13 and 27 million people are trapped in slavery<sup>i</sup>. The US State Department estimates that 800,000 victims are trafficked across international borders every year, with millions more enslaved in their own countries<sup>ii</sup>.

- In west Africa 284,000 children are estimated to be involved in hazardous work on cocoa farms, including children who have been trafficked.<sup>iii</sup>
- In Brazil up to 50,000 slaves labour on sugar plantations, dig and smelt iron ore, clear brush for cattle farms, and produce charcoal.<sup>iv</sup>
- In Nepal around 2.5 million slaves work in quarries, cottage factories, brick kilns, carpet looms, and the sex trade.<sup>v</sup>
- In India 8-10 million people are enslaved, including more than 100,000 children locked in tiny, dusty rooms to make rugs that are exported to the world.<sup>vi</sup>
- 14,500-17,500 people are trafficked into the US each year and enslaved in agriculture, sweatshops, the sex trade and domestic services.<sup>vii</sup>
- In Australia up to 1,000 women are enslaved in the sex industry.<sup>viii</sup>

As the chart to the right shows, the majority of the world's 13-27 million victims are found in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia therefore should see this as an issue we should be engaged with.



#### Slave Produced Goods are Finding Their Way To Australia

In his book *Ending Slavery* (2007) internationally recognised expert on the global slave trade, Kevin Bales, writes:

*"The list of slave touched products is long, so long that all of us are likely buying, eating, or wearing something that has slavery in it. We can point to documented cases of slavery in the production of cocoa, cotton, sugar, timber, beef, tomatoes, lettuce, apples and other fruit, shrimp and other fish products, coffee, iron, steel, gold, tin, diamonds and other gemstones, jewelry and bangles, shoes, sporting goods, clothing, fireworks, rope, rugs and carpets, rice, bricks, and on and on."*

This means that unless internationally sourced products are certified slave-free there is a significant possibility that forced labour has been involved somewhere in the supply chain. Two examples show how easily this occurs:

- In 2006 Ford Motor Co, US, suspended imports of pig iron from one of its Brazilian suppliers after slavery was revealed in the production processes<sup>ix</sup>.

- Members of the Fair Labor Association (these include Nike, Adidas and Umbro) agree to enforce a code of conduct requiring their suppliers to comply with key labour laws, including refusal to use child and forced labour. Each year a sample of suppliers are audited by the FLA to check compliance. Despite this process the 2007 FLA annual report indicates that for the 147 factories audited in 2006-7 61 instances of non-compliance were found on forced labour and 49 instances on child labour<sup>x</sup>.

## **What We Are Doing**

### **Promoting Fairtrade**

We are promoting Fairtrade products in our churches and communities. Products bearing the FAIRTRADE label are certified free of slave labour and worst forms of child labour. By guaranteeing developing world producers a fair price, improved trading relationships and access to affordable credit Fairtrade also addresses the poverty that drives the use of child and forced labour.

### **Lobbying Chocolate Companies**

Over 70% of the world's cocoa is sourced from west Africa where forced labour and worst forms of child labour have been documented. We are joining in the *Stop the Traffik* campaign calling on chocolate companies to use Fairtrade certified cocoa. Since the Stop the Traffik campaign began, Cadbury have committed to using Fairtrade certified cocoa for their entire dairy milk range by Easter and Mars has committed to source all its cocoa from Rainforest Alliance certified farms by 2020.

### **Reviewing Ethical Sourcing Practises**

To eliminate forced labour in manufactured products companies need to have rigorously promoted and independently audited supply chains. We are part of a group of concerned Christians reviewing the ethical sourcing practises of major firms operating in Australia, with the intention of commending those with the best practises to our churches and communities.

## **What the Australian Government Is Doing**

The Australian Government is responding to trafficking internationally through:

- Being a signatory to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons and the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime;
- Funding the Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons Project (5 year \$21 million AusAid program, with a focus on law enforcement);

The Australian Government is responding to trafficking within Australia through:

- Roundtable on Trafficking (ongoing consultation with civil society bodies to discuss Government approaches to trafficking);
- Australian Federal Police Trafficking Unit;
- Funding of \$1 million over three years to four NGOs caring for victims of trafficking into Australia;
- Reformed the visa system to improve the levels of simplicity and care for people trafficked into Australia
- Communications Awareness Strategy to create awareness of trafficking among sex workers, their clients, and health workers.

Members of the Catalyst network would like to pass on their gratitude for the willingness of the Australian government in listening to our concerns about slavery. Of particular note are the recent reforms to the visa system for individuals trafficked into the country.

## **What else we would like the Australian Government to do**

### **To deal with trafficking internationally**

1. **Launch a new diplomatic effort** to encourage all countries in the Asia-Pacific region to become parties to international treaties related to people trafficking and exploited child labour. These treaties define trafficking (which allows for prosecution) and require signatories to take action to prevent trafficking, prosecute traffickers and protect victims.
2. **Provide funding to NGOs operating rescue and rehabilitation programs in high risk areas.** At present Australia funds programs to strengthen law enforcement around trafficking in developing countries and to return and rehabilitate people trafficked into Australia. Australia should also offer funding to NGOs involved in rescuing and rehabilitating victims of trafficking within poorer countries in our region. AusAid should be tasked to develop a funding proposal in dialogue with Australian NGOs working in this area.

### **To deal with trafficking in Australia**

1. **Fund an awareness campaign** (in dialogue and partnership with Australian NGOs) that lifts awareness among the Australian population of abusive child labour and forced labour in global product chains, thus lifting demand for slave-free certified products;
2. **Use Government procurement guidelines** to preference products bearing a slave-free certification (Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, Utz) or companies that have independently monitored ethical sourcing codes.

## **What We Are Asking You To Do**

1. Be aware of the global slave trade and build awareness among your constituents (eg articles in electorate newsletter, local newspapers, speeches at schools and other places);
2. Make your office a "Fairtrade community";
3. Write to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, Lindsay Tanner, passing on our desire for a review of Australian Government procurement guidelines. This review should ensure the Australian Government preferences goods that are ethically traded with regard to slave labour and abusive child labour;
4. Write to the Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance passing on our desire for AusAid funding for a community awareness campaign and for NGO's rescuing and rehabilitating slaves in our region;
5. Write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Smith, passing on our desire for a heightened diplomatic initiative around trafficking protocols;

6. Write to the Attorney General passing on thanks for reviews of the visa protocols for victims of trafficking into Australia.

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<sup>i</sup> Kevin Bales, (2007), *Ending Slavery* (University of California Press) provides an estimate of 27 million. The International Labour Organisation provided an intentionally conservative figure in its 2005 report *A Global Alliance Against Forced Labor*.

<sup>ii</sup> US State Department (2007), *Trafficking in Persons Report 2007*

<sup>iii</sup> International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, (2002), *Child Labor in the Cocoa Sector of West Africa*

<sup>iv</sup> Bales, *Ending Slavery* 118

<sup>v</sup> Bales, *Ending Slavery* 97-98

<sup>vi</sup> Bales, *Ending Slavery* 118

<sup>vii</sup> US State Department (2007), *Trafficking in Persons Report 2007*

<sup>viii</sup> Project Respect website (accessed Jan 25, 2008)

<sup>ix</sup> Smith and Voreacos, (2006), "The Secret World of Modern Slavery", [http://www.bloomberg.com/news/marketsmag/modern\\_slavery1.html](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/marketsmag/modern_slavery1.html)

<sup>x</sup> Fair Labor Association (2007), *Annual Report 2007*. Note the report does not indicate how many factories non-compliance was found in. For example, there may have been 61 instances of non-compliance spread across 10 factories.