

A Plan To End Slavery

It is widely recognised that to end slavery requires actions that prevent slavery occurring, prosecute traffickers, and protect victims. In his book *Ending Slavery* (University of California 2007), Kevin Bales outlines a plan to bring these together in a way they could end slavery in 25 years. A brief summary of the plan and actions the Australian Government should take are given below.

1. Create a global movement of people who are aware of slavery, demand action, and support frontline slave liberation and rehabilitation groups.

Australia should implement a public education campaign within Australia that highlights the reality and extent of slavery in the world today and the Government's plan to play a leading role in combating the global slave trade.

The Australian aid program currently has the following anti-trafficking programs:

- Asia Regional Trafficking in Human Persons Project (\$21 million dollars from 2006-2011). Aims to build law enforcement capacity in Thailand, Laos PDR, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia;
- Return and Reintegration of Trafficking Victims from Australia to Thailand (US\$327,000 from 2006- 2008). Aims to improve the capacity of agencies and NGOs to assist in the care and rehabilitation of Thai victims of trafficking repatriated from Australia;
- UNICEF's Sixth Country Program for Children (CPC VI) in the Philippines – Children in Need of Special Protection component (US\$2.3 million from 2005- 2009). Aims to build capacity of caregivers working with at-risk children;
- The Australia-China Human Rights Technical Cooperation Program (\$8 million since 1997, with \$453,270 to anti-trafficking components). Trains officials and community workers in practical methods to combat trafficking of women and children.

Australia's aid programs focus primarily on China and South East Asian countries. Similar programs should be extended to South Asian countries, especially India. Funding should also be given for NGO's involved in advocacy for victims of trafficking in order to build grassroots demand for effective law enforcement.

2. All governments to make and implement effective plans to prevent slavery, prosecute traffickers and protect victims. These plans should include: whole of Government efforts coordinated by an anti-slavery ambassador; revision of ineffective laws; specialist tasking and training of law enforcement officials; tasking and training of labour inspectors; regulation of agencies that help people find work overseas; and education of vulnerable groups.

In 2004 Australia announced the Australian Government's Action Plan To Eradicate Trafficking in Human Persons. This included many positive measures including appointment of an Australian Federal Police Taskforce on trafficking, participation in the regional Bali Process to combat trafficking, and revision of protection measures for victims. The plan is however diminished by subordinating measures that protect victims to actions that prosecute traffickers. Protection offered to victims of trafficking extends only to their usefulness as witnesses in criminal proceedings. The Australian Government should change this by creating a new visa available to all victims of trafficking. This visa should provide all victims of trafficking with a right to

temporary residency for at least 6 months and the option to apply for permanent status on humanitarian grounds. Italy and the United States both have models that could be considered.

Through the Bali Process Australia has engaged in a substantial effort to help Governments in our region build their capacity to combat trafficking. Nonetheless, given the majority of slavery victims are found in our region, Australia should take further responsibility for leading the region in eliminating slavery. Australia should initiate a high level diplomatic effort to see all countries in the region adopt and effectively implement the UN Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. This initiative should include: discussions at ministerial level on trafficking both within and across border; the appointment of an Ambassador for Human Trafficking to coordinate Australia's regional anti-trafficking efforts and liaise with neighbour countries; a focus on trafficking within borders of countries in our region as well as trafficking across borders; and the offer of substantial funding and technical assistance to developing countries in the region.

- 3. Harness the power of international bodies, especially the UN, World Bank and World Trade Organisation. At present the UN Protocol on Trafficking in Persons is not fully implemented even by signatory countries. A UN Rapporteur on Slavery exists but the office could be significantly upgraded by appointment of a UN Special Representative on Slavery. The Special Representative should focus the international community on the problem of slavery and coordinate global anti-trafficking efforts that includes a review of current conventions and strategies. Likewise the UN inspections mandate should be extended to slavery. This would enable the international community to be vastly more effective in working to see the UN Protocol on Trafficking effectively applied by signatory nations. The World Bank should require antislavery measures be included in projects it funds, and a recognition of slavery should be included within the workings of the World Trade Organisation and an independent WTO department focused on slavery and labour issues be created.**

Australia should champion the appointment of a Special Representative on Slavery and the extension of the inspections mandate to slavery. As a significant nation in the region where slavery is most prevalent, with a strong record on trafficking, and with strong ties to the US, Europe, and Asia, Australia is well placed to take the lead in this.

- 4. Identify slavery in the global product chain and work with industry to eliminate it from the supply chain.**

Australia should establish a unit within the Department of Trade that is tasked to identify slavery in the supply chain of goods imported into Australia and work with Australian industry to develop and implement effective plans to remove slavery from the supply chain. Incentives (which could be both financial and non-financial) should be created to encourage industry to participate.

- 5. Reduce the vulnerability of people to slavery by ending poverty.**

Australia should lift its aid budget to at least 0.7% of national income by no later than 2015, and should immediately outline a plan for annual incremental increases that will see this target achieved. Australia should urgently carry through on the 2007 election promise to make the Millennium Development Goals the guiding framework for the Australian aid program and ensure that Australia meets its 'fair share' commitments for achieving each of the Millennium Development Goals.