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## To effect its abolition: ending slavery in our lifetimes

As soon as ever I had arrived thus far in my investigation of the slave trade ... [I] determined that I would never rest till I had effected its abolition.

William Wilberforce, 1789

Slavery is ripe for extinction. By ending it, we can achieve in our lifetimes something that makes landing on the moon seem a minor historical footnote. However, there is no simple solution to stopping slavery in every country or village. Ending slavery in America and the UK will be different to ending slavery in India, Ghana or Thailand. It is integrated into the local as well as the global economy, and every country will need to build a unique set of responses. Japan, for example, has the resources it needs to eradicate slavery very quickly inside the country, but has an extreme shortage of political will. Poor countries may have the best will in the world, but not enough money to take on the slaveholders.

But around the world, slaves are being liberated. And each time a slave comes to freedom, we learn another lesson about how slavery can end. By understanding the social, cultural, political, economic and sometimes religious packaging that is wrapped around slavery in different countries, we can adapt general patterns to each unique setting.

### **The state of the struggle**

If there was ever a tipping-point where we might end slavery, it is now. Many of the great obstacles faced by abolitionists of the past

have already been removed. Firstly, the moral argument is already won; every country condemns slavery, and no ethnic majority or powerful religious group argues that slavery is desirable or acceptable. The second advantage for today's abolitionists is that there is no economic argument to be won. The monetary value of slavery in the world economy is very small and slave-based revenues flow to support not national economies or trans-national industries, but small-scale criminal networks. The end of slavery threatens no country's livelihood, and the cost of ending slavery is just a fraction of the amount that freed slaves will pump into economies.

The third great advantage is that there is no legal argument to be won. For the most part, the necessary national and international laws are already on the books. Around the world some of these laws need updating and expanding and some need their penalties increasing, but nowhere on earth is slavery legal. Bringing an end to slavery requires the political will to enforce laws, not campaigns to make new ones. As John Miller explained in 2004, while working as Director of the TIP Office at the US State Department, "our struggle is easier than the one facing the nineteenth-century abolitionists. We do not have to violate laws to help the victims as the early abolitionists did."

The laws against slavery in every country, the lack of any large vested economic interest, and a growing acceptance of human rights, mean slavery can be ended when the public and governments make it a priority. And we might also take heart from the fact that while 27 million is the largest number of individuals ever enslaved at one time, it is the smallest ever proportion of the global population to be in slavery.

The major obstacles to beginning the process of eradication are lack of awareness and lack of resources. Significant portions of the global population do not know or believe that slavery exists, including large numbers of policy makers and law enforcement officials who should be at the front line of response. To combat slavery we need to better understand its scope and disseminate this information. This means, firstly, a commitment to data collection and analysis. In the US, by early 2008, the CIA, the State Department, the Justice

Department and other agencies had been collecting and organizing information on slavery for almost 10 years – and not sharing it. International agencies like Interpol and the UN have large-scale trafficking databases that they don't share either. If this problem were a health issue, epidemiologists would be combining every data set available to crack it. But information about slavery has not been shared between agencies or made widely available to the public. As we gather data and test strategies, we need to form networks capable of collective thinking focused on ending slavery. Consensus has to be reached on key elements of analysis and orientation. Anti-slavery groups need to join together and cooperate, forming a wider movement with a shared identity. Successful strategies should be proactively offered to the world as an “open-source” program, and grass-roots movements need to identify organizations and entities that are capable of influencing the wider political and economic determinants of slavery. When slavery is linked to exports and products, they need to join with industry. When international pressure could help tip government policies, they need to work with the UN. And governments need to quantify results. In the US, for example, the government has been handing out money to anti-slavery programs since the passage of the TVPA, but with little accountability. One sure way to determine the success or failure of the current war on slavery is through an independent, structured program of monitoring and regular evaluation.

Beyond knowledge-gathering and networking across agencies and groups, we need a greater awareness among the general public. This would lead to increased pressure on politicians to adequately fund anti-slavery efforts. The US government, for example, spent \$200 million in 2006 to fight human trafficking and slavery. Compare that to the \$12 billion spent on federal drug enforcement in the same year. With so little spent to fight slavery it is not surprising that estimated detection and conviction rates rarely exceed one percent of the estimated existing slavery cases. Even those parts of the government that do work actively against slavery do so on a shoestring. The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement is charged with stopping slave-made goods flowing into the country, but is given very few

agents to identify these goods. The agents cannot begin to investigate more than a tiny fraction of possible cases.

Public awareness would also increase pressure on politicians to support a series of steps toward ending slavery. Some of these steps are small. For example, the next Peace Corps appropriation bill in the US Congress could include a line announcing that in the next intake there will be a call for volunteers who want to work on the liberation and reintegration of slaves. Other steps are larger. World Health Organization strategies need to be re-focused through a slavery lens, as do government policies on debt relief, law enforcement and military cooperation with other countries. Foreign aid should be thought through with an anti-slavery focus, some of it targeting the underlying economic desperation that engenders slavery. Trade policies should reflect the idea that slave-made goods are taboo on the world market, and trade financing could be linked to demonstrable efforts to remove slavery from local as well as international markets. Rich countries should devote the necessary diplomatic and financial resources to make the end of slavery a global priority. Some of these resources should be directed to the global South to support the enforcement of local laws against slavery and the establishment of sustainable lives for ex-slaves.

Building an effective international alliance against slavery requires both local and global action. From local police to the UN, from individual consumers to CEOs, we all have a role to play in ending slavery.

## **The role of the UN and governments**

At the international level, existing patterns of research, policy, diplomacy and outreach should be transferred to ending slavery. The UN is one of the best possible organizations to fight slavery, and the Security Council, the organization's decision-making body, needs to take the lead. If the five permanent members of the Council (Britain, China, Russia, France and the US) commit to ending slavery, the UN and its many agencies could lead the way.

Firstly, the Secretary-General should appoint a Special Representative for Slavery and Human Trafficking. The Special Representative should be charged with preparing for a meeting of the Security Council concentrating on modern slavery, and the permanent members should contribute funds and resources to ensure that the Special Representative can really attack slavery worldwide. Secondly, the Security Council should appoint a committee of experts to review the existing conventions on slavery and recommend how to unify and clarify them, as well as coordinate and improve the UN's programmatic response to slavery. Sometimes the improved response will build on existing mechanisms. For example, the UN could adapt its existing strategy for reducing and then eliminating corruption. In the developing world, police and local governments often need a radical shakeup to get rid of deep-seated corruption. The UN has assembled a good anti-corruption team that gets very little publicity but has been successful in a number of countries.

Finally, just as the UN Security Council sends out weapons inspectors, so it should send out slavery inspectors. Most countries in the world have ratified the various UN anti-slavery conventions, and independent, objective inspectors should be deployed to countries to identify and help correct any loopholes in the enforcement of their own laws and their international commitments. The Security Council should establish a commission to determine how the existing UN inspection mandate could be applied to slavery.

At the government level, each country needs an anti-slavery plan. Brazil shows what can happen when a government takes a stand. In early 2003 the president of Brazil set up a commission to end slavery. Laws were strengthened and more money was given to anti-slavery squads. In 2003, close to 5000 people were rescued from slavery by Special Mobile Inspection Groups; by 2005 another 7000 had been rescued. More than \$3 million was given to liberated slaves to help them get back on their feet. A company or person caught using slaves is put on an official "dirty list," and in addition to prosecution and imprisonment, that company or person is excluded from receiving any sort of government permits, grants, loans, or credits.

Since a large proportion of slaves in Brazil work where land is being developed (ranching, deforestation, agriculture, and logging in the Amazon and other remote areas), the denial of government benefits to slave-using companies can drive them out of business.

Every government should build a national plan to end slavery within its borders. They could do this by bringing together all relevant existing government agencies, and appointing an anti-slavery ambassador charged with coordinating their efforts and actively involving the local anti-slavery organizations in their countries that are closest to the problem. The ambassador should be charged with leading the development of a national plan which outlines everything that will be required (including what help will be needed from other countries and groups) to stop all forms of slavery. National leaders must be committed to this plan if it is to be effective. And, of course, the plan needs to be followed up with action. Having a national plan helps focus government agencies' efforts and gives constituents of that country a means of holding their government accountable.

Around the world, each government's plan would include different details. For example, in the US, the plan should include fairness in the visa program. There are blatant inequalities in the award of visas for workers entering the US. A 19-year-old French or British girl coming as an *au pair* receives a J-1 visa and with it, monitoring, orientation programs, a guaranteed salary, and money for education. Meanwhile, a 19-year-old Cameroonian girl coming for the same job receives the lower-level B-1 visa, and a quick visual inspection at the airport. There is no record made of her US address, no monitoring, no guaranteed salary, nothing to prevent her from becoming enslaved.

Another detail in the US plan should be labor rights. When it was passed in the 1930s, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) brought fair working conditions to millions of workers in America. Yet two categories were excluded, largely due to pressure from Southern congressmen: farm workers and domestics. These two groups are still denied the rights enjoyed by all other workers. The provisions and protections of the NLRA should be immediately

extended to cover them, or else they will continue to be more susceptible to enslavement than other workers in America. Another detail should be the elimination of slave labor from government contracts. The federal government must definitively renounce the use of forced labor in its works, and monitor and punish any contractors who directly or through sub-contractors use tax dollars to enable human trafficking and slavery. It should set up an independent inspectorate to watch over such contracts, and make those contracts transparent.

But while the details might be different from country to county, all government plans should include at least three elements: education, law enforcement, and rehabilitation. One of the best guards against slavery is education. Many people are enslaved through deception. "Recruiters" hold out the chance of a good job to the economically desperate just long enough to take control of their lives. Women in the brothels of Europe, men in the slums of Brazil, girls in the villages of Northern Thailand, and boys in the carpet looms of India, all repeat this story.

Against this deception a little education goes a long way. For example, one organization frees young Nepalese women from brothels in India then arranges for them to visit villages to talk about their experiences. After hearing their stories, the parents who were ready to believe the lies of the recruiter, the girls who once yearned for jobs in the big city, the local elders who were bribed by the con-men, are all less likely to be tricked again. For the girls especially, meeting someone much like themselves who faces the death sentence of AIDS is an awakening.

If education is one key to the fight against slavery, we are hardly taking advantage of its power. The group in Nepal sends out its workers, and the IOM carries out public awareness campaigns for young women in Eastern Europe, but literally millions of people at risk are not being reached. The response to the need for public education is piecemeal and reactive. Great sums are spent developing educational campaigns against teen pregnancy or drug use, but who measures the best way to educate against slavery? Governments need to run advertising and education campaigns against slavery and

trafficking in the same way they would confront a public health crisis. Public awareness campaigns aimed at potential victims of enslavement should reflect local cultures and be transmitted in appropriate languages.

Alongside this education effort, governments need better training and more funding for law enforcement. Though laws against slavery exist, they are not enforced, in part because only the smallest fraction of police, in almost every country, has been trained to identify slavery and trafficking. Even in the US, where the government spends more on law enforcement than any other country, only a handful of police departments have anyone assigned to human trafficking and slavery and very few officers have been trained to recognize slaves. If the police in the US and other countries are to be more effective, they need an intense and comprehensive nationwide training program. Training should include those federal agencies involved in fighting slavery, and it should be planned for other workers that are particularly likely to come into contact with slaves: nurses and other medical staff, public health and labor inspectors, and social workers.

Beyond this training, dedicated anti-slavery enforcement teams should be assembled in countries around the world. Brazil is showing how dedicated anti-slavery teams can radically increase the number of people coming to freedom, and this success is occurring with teams that are ill-equipped, under-powered, under-trained, and relatively unsupported by the legal system. A small expansion of the American “War on Drugs” program to include anti-slavery police could make a world of difference. Each year, the US hands out billions of dollars in funds and equipment to other countries as part of this “War on Drugs.” Helicopters, aircraft, four-wheelers, training, and salaries, are all supplied for use against drug producers and traffickers. Expanding this program to include anti-slavery police would increase the economic cost of enslaving others and the likelihood of punishment, to the point that slaveholding would cease to be viable.

Governments need to effectively decriminalize and rehabilitate freed slaves. In many countries, freed slaves are treated as illegal aliens or second-class citizens – kept poor and powerless within an

informal apartheid system. In some languages, there is a special and demeaning name for ex-slaves. And as they decriminalize the victims of slavery and trafficking, governments need to provide support. In developed countries, it is the role of governments to provide physical and mental health services, language training, and legal and employment counseling to survivors of slavery, taking into account the special needs of children. Governments don't have to take on all these jobs alone; in the US most of the support given to freed slaves is through experienced service-providers who receive state funds to run their programs.

For the millions of slaves alive today, emancipation is not enough. While it is true that the process of rehabilitation is not well studied, we know that it is essential to sustained freedom. When bonded laborers have been freed in India but given no support to rebuild their lives, some slide back into slavery. Incredibly, some even return to slavery by choice. On the other hand, anti-slavery groups in India have seen that when children are equipped with skills and education, they return to their villages feeling empowered and committed to ending child slavery. These children often become village leaders. The adults come to rely on them because they may be the only people in the village who can read and write, and because they show no fear in confronting landlords or local police.

## **The role of non-profits and community-based freedom**

The example and influence of a single rehabilitated slave can dramatically alter a whole village. They become agents of change, helping their villages to become slave-proof. And this possibility of altering a whole village points to another important element in the process of ending slavery: community-based freedom. In the developing world, this may be the best strategy of all. Rescuing individual slaves can leave the slave-based businesses intact, but when a whole community drives out the slave-takers and slaveholders, freedom is locked in place. Successful community-based solutions need to be scaled up as much as possible.

The chain of cause and effect that leads to communities being able to throw off slavery often starts with a charity, a foundation, or some other grant-making body. The activists and community workers who provide the seeds for liberation are unlikely to have the

## KEY RESOURCES FOR FOSTERING FREEDOM

### Reliable funding

Indigenous anti-slavery groups need the same stability that they are helping ex-slave communities to build. This doesn't need to be a huge amount of money, just funding that can be counted on. Liberation can be immediate for individuals, but for communities it often takes time. People in slavery live with a great deal of insecurity. Anti-slavery groups must be reliable in everything they do with the communities they support; they can't run out of money in the middle of a liberation.

### Flexibility

Local anti-slavery groups need to respond to the needs of slave communities. To do that, local groups need funders that understand flexibility. Six months into a project, anti-slavery workers might realize that providing healthcare is good, but it is going to take micro-credit to get people out of slavery. The point of an anti-slavery movement is to move, always in the direction of ending slavery. If that means changing course from health care to micro-credit, then the funder that is supporting health care needs to allow a shift in focus and to support the direction not just the detail.

### Critical thinking

Overcoming slavery means being able to think critically and forcefully about how to get that job done. We need to improve the relationship between non-profit groups that ask for funding and non-profit groups and foundations (including governments) that supply funding. In the current system it is easy to replicate a culture of patronage. But what is really needed is for anti-slavery workers to identify the crucial blockage on the road to freedom. Big foundations need rules; giving away a lot of money requires them. Our challenge is to find the way to increase the level of understanding and trust between the workers on the ground and the funders in their offices, to the point that they work together and become faster, smarter, lighter, quicker, and more powerful than slaveholders.

resources to meet the expenses needed to get the work done. Given the almost total absence of governmental support for community-based anti-slavery work, it is important to consider the chain that goes from funder to anti-slavery worker to slave. To foster freedom in communities, funders and anti-slavery groups need to work together to achieve three key things: reliable funding, flexibility, and critical thinking.

Once this relationship is established between anti-slavery groups and their funders, grass-roots organizations and local and federal governments need to help provide ex-slaves with the essential ingredients of a sustainable future. If communities of ex-slaves are going to survive in freedom, they need certain guarantees.

## **SAFEGUARDING FREEDOM**

### **Immediate access to paid work**

Ideally this is income the ex-slaves generate themselves, doing jobs they know, rather than handouts. The sooner ex-slaves are working for themselves the sooner the community gains stability. Once paid work is underway, the next step is to diversify income, opening chances for ex-slaves to move into other types of work and broadening the economic base of the community as a whole.

### **Access to basic services**

Having a school means the children stay out of work today and build up human capital for tomorrow. A clinic within a reasonable distance means small illnesses don't become debilitating and simple vaccinations save lives. Access to clean water near the home will add hours of productivity to the lives of ex-slaves who could otherwise spend three or four hours each day hauling water. Planning for freedom has to include an audit of what services exist and which are needed.

### **Savings**

For the poor and vulnerable, assets can be the difference between a problem and a catastrophe. Slavery is often the result of having nothing to fall back on in a crisis, and so sliding into debt bondage. When a family has something in reserve, they have the resilience to bounce when they hit the next bump.

**SAFEGUARDING FREEDOM (cont.)****Land**

Building a sustainable community in freedom means sustaining the natural environment as well. Many ex-slaves make it clear that one of the first things they want to do in freedom is clear and plant a garden plot. Nutrition and health can make rapid gains with fresh vegetables and beans, and what is not eaten adds to a diversified income. Seeds and a hoe can make a big difference.

**The role of industries and consumers**

Just as anti-slavery groups, governments, and the UN all have a role to play in ending slavery, so too do industries and consumers. One solution for consumers is to buy Fair Trade products. Within the Fair Trade system, farmers are guaranteed a price for their crops. Once farms have been certified as having no slavery and child labor, and are using environmentally friendly farming methods, farmers can sell their crops to the Fair Trade buyers. The price is not determined by the world market, but is set at an agreed level that will provide a decent life for the farmers and their families. Fair Trade buyers distribute the products to wholesalers and retailers, and currently offer products from more than 40 countries, including chocolate, coffee, sugar, and clothing. The supply will increase as more consumers choose to support this way of ensuring a clean product chain. We can buy survivor-made goods, as well. Purchasing products made by survivors of slavery will work towards creating economic empowerment and moving survivors towards self-sufficiency.

We can also use our consumer power to ask companies to examine their supply chains. If companies and consumers work with anti-slavery groups, and everyone takes responsibility for the product chain, then slavery can be removed from the product at its source. The special challenge is to take the slavery out of the products without hurting the free farmers and workers at the same time. Boycotts are not the answer. Western boycotts of certain products

can make things worse by hurting the majority of farmers who don't use slaves, even pushing the families of honest farmers into the destitution that makes them vulnerable to enslavement.

For example, in countries in Asia and Africa there may be two cotton farmers out of a hundred who use slaves. If consumers boycott cotton from India or Africa, then the farmers who don't use slaves, who make lower profits, will be the hardest hit by the boycott. They may lose their farms, their children will have to leave school to find work, and their families face debt bondage slavery. Meanwhile, the farmers who use slaves will be better able to survive the boycott since they have been making bigger profits, and they have another resource to fall back on: their slaves, who can be put to work at other jobs (denying those jobs to free workers) or even sold. The boycott may hurt the slaveholder, but it will hurt the free farmer much more.

Instead, anti-slavery activists propose that the best approach is to fight slavery where it is actually happening. That means stopping slavery on the farm, in the mine or in the workshop. To do that, everyone along the supply chain, from the farmer to the consumer, takes responsibility. A cotton t-shirt, for example, goes through many steps before it reaches the shop: harvested cotton goes from the farm to a cotton buyer; then to a cotton gin; raw cotton from the gin goes to a factory to be spun into thread; the thread goes to another factory to be woven into cloth; and the cloth is then shipped to be made into clothing. After the clothing is packaged, it is shipped to wholesalers; the wholesalers sell it to retailers; the retailers send it to shops where consumers buy it and take it home. Many of the steps along this supply chain take place in different countries, depending on where the t-shirt company and its subcontractors locate their factories.

Everyone at every step along the chain can decide that they won't allow slavery in their product. If they agree to work together it becomes much easier to send anti-slavery workers to the farms or garment factories where the slaves are being exploited. The Cocoa Protocol, described in chapter three, has shown that an industry working together with human rights groups, consumer groups, and

labor unions can remove slavery from the products we buy. Another example is the C.F. Martin Guitar Company, which has been working with environmental groups to ensure that the mahogany it needs for top-end guitars is harvested in a slave-free and sustainable way. Slaves are used for logging in the forests of Brazil, Peru, and other South American countries, and the company has been clear that they want to do whatever they can to clean up their supply chain. They understand the problem has to be solved in the logging camp.

Another good example of this approach is the Rugmark Foundation, an international charity established in 1994 that inspects and licenses carpet looms in South Asia. When carpet makers apply for a Rugmark license, they promise not to employ children under 14 years of age in the production of carpets and to pay adult weavers a minimum wage. In family carpet businesses, regular school attendance is required for children employed as helpers and only the loom-owner's children are permitted to work.

Carpet makers also promise to allow Rugmark's inspectors to examine their looms and workers at any time. The inspectors carry out random checks to see that the rules are being followed. If they meet these requirements, a license permits the carpet makers to put a Rugmark label, with a unique serial number, on their carpets so that every carpet can be traced all the way back to the loom where it was woven. Companies that import carpets to Europe and America pay about one percent of the cost of the carpet to Rugmark. This money supports schools and rehabilitation programs for children who have been freed from slavery in the carpet industry. In this way the former child slaves are safeguarded against being caught and enslaved again. Since 1995, Rugmark has certified more than 5.5 million carpets as slave-free, as of 2006, Rugmark inspectors had liberated more than 3000 children in India and Nepal.

This model needs to be fostered and extended to other industries whose products are tainted with slavery: sugar, cotton and clothing, fish and shrimp, iron and steel, wood, electronics, and many others. Governments can act as matchmakers between competing businesses and the anti-slavery movement in this process, and should actively

bring together stakeholders who will take on and clean up supply chains. And governments can further help industry to remove slavery from our products. For example, the US has a law that provides for the seizure of suspicious, or “hot,” goods, but only if they were made within the country. This means that if the Customs Service does not catch slave-made goods at the border, there is no second chance. The “hot goods” seizure law should be immediately extended to encompass all slave-made goods, regardless of the place of origin, so that they can be stopped and confiscated before they reach our homes.

## **The role of the individual**

Is there anything else the individual can do, beyond challenging industry to remove slavery from the supply chain? The answer is yes. While ending slavery means acting locally and globally, it means individual action, too, and there are steps that we can all take.

We can refuse to retire on the backs of slaves. If you have a retirement fund, tell your 401(k) or 403(b) manager that you do not want to profit from slavery. Ask that they not invest your money in companies that refuse to take responsibility for the slavery in their supply chains.

You can write to your Member of Parliament or Congressperson. Politicians tend not to respond to an issue without pressure from their constituency. Write or email your government representatives. Don’t assume they are familiar with the issue; tell them what you think they should know and encourage them to act. You might also write an OpEd column, or a letter to a newspaper or magazine, or start a blog.

We can all watch for signs of slavery in our communities. A domestic worker, a farm worker, someone in a shop, restaurant, factory, or someone in prostitution is likely to be enslaved if he or she:

- Is not free to change employers
- Has been assaulted or threatened for refusing to work

- Has been cheated and forced to pay off “debts” upon arrival in the US or the UK
- Has had his or her passport or other documents taken away
- Lacks proper identification
- Is unable to move freely or is being watched or followed
- Is under the control or constant supervision of another
- Is rarely allowed to speak freely
- Has an “interpreter” with them
- Lacks the means to support him/herself or control money, in spite of long hours at work
- Lacks contact with or is isolated from family and friends
- Lacks permanency in the community
- Has a constant appearance of fear, nervousness and/or apprehension
- Is afraid to talk in the presence of others
- Has unexplained injuries or is malnourished

There are many clues that a person is a slave. Some, such as confiscation of passports, debt bondage, and lack of control over earnings, tend to be revealed only during the course of careful investigation by victim advocates, service providers, and trained and sensitive police officers. Any of us, however, can pick up on other signs of enslavement. One is the presence of trauma – injuries, bruising – that might indicate a pattern of physical abuse. Untreated infections can also be a sign that a person is enslaved. Another possible indicator is a person’s demeanor. Does he or she appear fearful, reluctant to communicate, or generally withdrawn? A slave has been programmed to fear outside contact. They are likely to believe that the police are cruel and corrupt, and any connection with the outside world could result in jail or deportation. In many instances, the slaveholder has warned the victim that an attempt to escape or communicate with the authorities will mean injury or death to the victim’s family. In addition, slaves may be unable to answer very simple questions because of their isolation. They may not know what city they are in, their street address, or their phone number.

Slavery often comes to light because a member of the public sees something odd and speaks up. You could ask:

- Can you leave your job or situation if you want to?
- Can you come and go as you please?
- Have you been threatened for trying to leave?
- Have you been physically harmed in any way?
- What are your working or living conditions like?
- Where do you sleep and eat?
- Do you sleep in a bed, on a cot or on the floor?
- Have you ever been deprived of food, water, sleep or medical care?
- Do you have to ask permission to eat, sleep or go to the bathroom?
- Are there locks on your doors or windows so you cannot get out?
- Has anyone threatened your family?
- Has your identification or documentation been taken from you?
- Is anyone forcing you to do anything that you do not want to do?

Bus stations, train stations and service stations are logical places to look for slaves. Traffickers that exploit women in forced prostitution frequently transport their “girls” from city to city to avoid discovery. Some of them sell their victims’ services at train and bus stations and others are just passing through. And, since the vans transporting victims have to stop for gas, service stations are natural stop-offs for traffickers. Station attendants can look for large numbers of fearful people being guarded as they use the restrooms. These same restrooms are good places to display information, in several languages, offering immediate help to victims, in the form of the telephone numbers for local NGOs, police, and trafficking hotlines. Equally, anyone working in a hospital should be aware that a third party insisting on interpreting, or being present for conversations with a patient, is a sign of control that can indicate enslavement. The same is true if a person seems to be “guarded” by someone else when visiting hospitals or clinics. The fact that a trafficker or slaveholder brings in a victim for medical attention doesn’t imply concern for the person’s welfare; it could simply be motivated by the possibility of lost revenue.

One of the most insidious forms of slavery occurs right under everyone's noses: the enslavement of domestics and nannies. Enslaved domestics will have many of the warning signs: someone else holds their documents, and their movement and communication is restricted and controlled. Sometimes a neighbor will become aware that one person who lives nearby is only glimpsed occasionally and never seems to leave with the building's other residents. Individuals might consider joining or creating a Neighborhood Watch to better spot these signs of slavery. If there are already Neighborhood Watch groups in your community, make sure that slavery is included in their agenda. You can meet regularly, stay up to date on all slavery-related issues and developments, and create strategies for monitoring possible cases of slavery within the community. And you can arrange with local schools, colleges, and community centers to sponsor speakers who are professionals in the anti-slavery field.

You could get creative and design your own program. For example, a group of women in Florida are concentrating their efforts on feminine products. They are writing letters to the makers of Tampax, encouraging them to put an emergency hotline message on their packaging. This will let women know – in different languages – that if they're being held against their will, there is a 24-hour number they can call. The Florida women say they chose feminine products because women of all backgrounds and languages use them, and they use them in private, away from the eyes of their captors. Another example is a teacher who helped a group of 50 school-children in Kentucky to fund the rescue and rehabilitation of dozens of trafficked children abroad. As part of their service project, the students learned how to design a website, and to create brochures and slide shows on slavery to educate other students, business leaders and faith congregations. They also donated baby-sitting money and allowances, baked cookies and sold lemonade. In six weeks, they raised over \$28,000.

Everyone has skills to offer the anti-slavery movement. If you are skilled at organization, then you might consider bringing the idea of a slave-free city to your community. The process of slave-proofing a city may begin when someone raises the idea in a school, in a letter

to the local newspaper, or in his or her place of worship. When there is even a small group of people committed to ending slavery, they can find out which existing service providers (sometimes a shelter specifically for survivors of slavery, alternatively, homeless shelters, women's shelters and immigrant service organizations) are already equipped to help. They can learn about their work, and how they can best be supported. Local foundations can contribute leadership gifts and faith communities and clubs can hold fundraisers for the local social service provision groups.

Public awareness-raising can include articles in the local newspaper, reports on TV and radio, a proclamation by the city government, and special assemblies in schools. A committee, including members of the city council and local business leaders, can examine whether goods sold in the community have a high likelihood of being slave-made. And together with the existing service providers, the group can communicate its vision of a slave-free city with the City Council, the mayor, the police chief, religious leaders, teachers, the Boy Scouts, and the editors and managers of local newspapers, radio and TV stations. Every one of these community leaders, and others, will need an explanation of the plan to rid the community of slavery.

As many victims come from abroad, and enter the country with little or no capacity to speak English, language is a major issue. The ability to speak, read, and write English is important for survivors seeking to make a life in the UK or the US. If you have a language skill, talk to your local service provider about acting as an interpreter for intake interviews with the staff attorney or legal director. Or you could help anti-slavery and anti-trafficking organizations translate materials so that they can reach a greater number of people in slavery. If you can teach, consider teaching English as a second language to ex-slaves; the service provider may be able to set up classes or tutorials for you.

## **The cost of ending slavery**

Around the world today, slave liberators are like emergency aid workers fighting an epidemic. We can make sure they have the tools

they need by giving our time, effort and money. For every epidemic, research is needed, health policies have to change, the whole public health system of sewers, water treatment and hospitals has to be re-built. But someone needs to deliver the vaccine and the food *today*. And today there are slaves waiting to be freed. The organizations that liberate slaves know how to set slaves free and they know how to help freed slaves achieve autonomous lives and dignity. What they cannot do is mobilize funds that will help extend their work further.

Small-scale programs for liberation and rehabilitation, in a number of countries, have demonstrated that slavery can be eradicated from communities and regions at a relatively low cost. For example, debt bondage slavery in South Asia accounts for as many as 10 million of the world's slaves. If we can crack this form of slavery, millions of slaves will come to freedom. Programs for liberation and reintegration in Northern India are well developed and well tested. The total cost of bringing a family to freedom is around \$130 – which includes paying outreach workers, funding their transportation to rural villages, organizing and guaranteeing seed money, maintaining micro-credit unions, and running the local organization's office. In Ghana, the cost of liberating and rehabilitating a group of child slaves from the fishing industry is about \$400 per child.

Based on analysis of anti-slavery projects, an estimated cost of the enforcement and rehabilitation programs needed to eradicate slavery around the world is about \$15 billion over a 25-year period. Knowing what it will cost to end slavery in a country makes it possible to build an effective strategy for eradication with meaningful government participation. And while individuals can help slave liberators now, there is also a relatively painless way that governments can pay for the larger picture of a slave-free world: debt forgiveness.

European countries have made tremendous progress in debt forgiveness, removing the old debts whose servicing costs were bleeding poor countries dry. Since 1996 the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative, under which rich countries agreed to cancel \$110 billion in debt, has removed about \$30 billion of debt in 27 countries. This releases funds for real development. Tanzania

has used about \$80 million a year that otherwise would have serviced its debt to increase spending on schools and public education. Close to two million children are reported to have returned to school because of the debt relief.

On the other hand, many countries in the developing world continue to carry a significant amount of external or foreign debt to international banks and institutions like the International Monetary Fund. For example, in 2006 Brazil's foreign debt equaled about \$200 billion. Some of that debt is "overhang," loans contracted by the military dictatorship that controlled the country from 1964 to 1985. The Brazilian economy is relatively healthy but the country continues to have a deep divide between its rich and poor citizens, with many of the poor living in absolute destitution – a common contributing factor to enslavement. The debt Brazil services every year accounts for millions of dollars that could be spent on important programs to further stimulate the economy, like education.

So here is a simple first step: the US and the international banks should agree with the Brazilian and other governments a portion of the debt to be forgiven, on the condition that a percentage of the money that would have gone to debt service is applied, instead, to eradicating slavery. The cancellation of just \$500 million to \$1 billion in debt in a country like Brazil would free up significant funds for ending slavery. We already know that debt cancellation can save lives; it could also free slaves. And money spent on ending slavery is an investment, not a donation. Freed slaves know how to work, and they will quickly begin to build assets. They will also become what they have never been allowed to be – consumers who buy food, clothing and education for their children. In areas with extensive slavery, liberation leads to economic growth. Stable and sustainable freedom will pay for itself.

## **Looking backward, moving forward**

Cut away the disguises and the facts are simple: one person controls another through violence. Penetrate that violent control and the

slave becomes free. Help that slave gain autonomy and he or she remains free. And whether it is carrying one slave child to freedom, or crafting policies that free thousands, we have examples before us. Slaves have been coming to freedom for hundreds of years.

In fact, while there are differences between nineteenth-century chattel slavery and the new slavery of the global economy, history does inspire the modern debate. “When one takes on a challenge of modern day slavery, one benefits from the work of others, past and present,” explained John Miller in March 2003. Pointing to William Wilberforce, William Lloyd Garrison and the Underground Railroad, he concluded: “This struggle will not be short or easy. Wilberforce only succeeded in abolishing the nineteenth century slave trade after over 25 years. We will need his spirit and the spirit of our own nineteenth century abolitionists if we are to defeat this modern scourge.” The following year, in August 2004, Miller continued his theme. “The struggle will be a long one,” he acknowledged. “But so was the struggle ... of the American abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and Harriet Beecher Stowe ... We need their dedication and energy and patience.” The memory of “our abolitionist forebears,” he added, could be “a source of inspiration ... for those who join the new abolitionist movement.”

Today the world is inaugurating that new abolitionist movement. Though still in its infancy, it has made remarkable progress. During bicentennial celebrations of the 1807 and 1808 acts that abolished the British and American slave trades, officials not only looked to the past for inspiration but also acknowledged history’s unfinished work. As the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan put it in December 2006: “the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British colonies ... will be a powerful reminder of centuries of struggle and progress in combating slavery – but also of the fact that we still have not managed to eliminate it completely ... We must carry on the struggle ... Let us pledge to draw on the lessons of history to free our fellow human beings from slavery.” And in 2008, Miller was still summoning the memory of earlier abolitionists – asking, like Annan, that we finish their work. “We need hundreds of Wilberforces in more than a

hundred countries to finish the abolitionist revolution,” he explained. Two hundred years ago, the British Parliament and the American Congress outlawed the trans-Atlantic slave trade; now we might come together again in a global abolitionist movement and complete that work.

Amid celebrations of liberty in 1852, Frederick Douglass asked his audience the meaning of their commemoration: “What, to the American slave, is your Fourth of July?” Today we can adapt his question: what to the modern slave is this bicentennial? And we have the chance to answer that the meaning of the bicentennial is the final – the irrevocable – end of slavery.

- Trafficking in Human Beings – Learning from the European Experience” (Geneva: ILO, 2003), 7.
- p.16 “[forensic] examination must be carefully planned ...”: Djordie Alempijevic et al, “Forensic Medical Examination of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings,” *Torture* 17.2 (2007): 117–21 (118–9).
- p.16 “such analysis is helpful ...”: Ibid., 121.
- p.17 “Rescue and Restore Campaign”: see [www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking). Guidelines for interviews are available in Cathy Zimmerman and Charlotte Watts, “WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Interviewing Trafficked Women” (Geneva: WHO, 2003).
- p.17 PREVENT mnemonic: Willis and Levy, 1421.

## Chapter 8

- p.2 “our struggle is easier than ...”: John R. Miller, “Remarks at the Underground Railroad Freedom Center Dedication, Cincinnati, Ohio,” August 23, 2004, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).
- p.5 5000 people ... 7000: Bhavna Sharma, “Contemporary Forms of Slavery in Brazil” (London: ASI, 2006), 3.
- p.11 We can buy survivor-made goods ...: see [www.madebysurvivors.com](http://www.madebysurvivors.com).
- p.12 third good example of this method: Jean-Paul Sajhau, “Business Ethics in the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Industries: Codes of Conduct” (Geneva: ILO, 2000), sec. 5.
- p.13 5.5 million carpets ... 3000 children: Rugmark USA, “Annual Report” (New York: Rugmark, 2006), 4.
- p.15 Some possible questions you could ask: adapted from the US Department of Health and Human Services “Rescue and Restore” campaign. If you hear about or uncover what you think could be a trafficking situation, the best course is to call a trained professional. In the US, the Trafficking Information and Referral Toll-Free Hotline is open 24 hours, on 1-888-373-7888. You can also report trafficking crimes at the Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force Complaint Line, 1-888-428-7581. In the UK, call Crimestoppers at 0800-555-111.
- p.18 organizations that liberate slaves: Anti-slavery organizations are listed in appendix C of this book.

## 188 Endnotes

- p.18 \$130 ... \$400: These costs are from the current budgets of FTS and its grass-roots partners.
- pp.19–20 “When one takes on a challenge ... this modern scourge”: Miller, “Speech at Swearing-in as Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State and Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons,” March 4, 2003.
- p.20 “The struggle will be a long one ... new abolitionist movement”: Miller (2004).
- p.20 “the two-hundredth anniversary ... human beings from slavery”: Kofi Annan, “Information Release 54/06: The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, December 2, 2006” (Geneva: UN), 1.
- p.20 “We need hundreds of Wilberforces ...”: Miller, “Call It Slavery,” *The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer 2008: 52–6 (56).