

No country can eliminate modern slavery alone

Hello everyone, and thank you to the President of the General Assembly for this opportunity to discuss the Global Plan for Action.

When new global estimates on modern slavery are published, it will make for difficult reading.

The pandemic has had a devastatingly disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable and those already victim to modern slavery.

More critically than ever we must make immediate and lasting progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 to eradicate this scourge by 2030.

No one nation can do this alone.

In 2017, the UK led the Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

Over 90 countries have endorsed that Call to Action, taking a range of steps, and – crucially – collaborating internationally with others.

The UK continues to look for opportunities to collaborate, with governments, businesses, and survivors. It will take us all to end this menace.

For example, under our Presidency, the leaders of the G7 committed to tackling forced labour global supply chains.

Last month, G7 Trade ministers discussed steps to eradicate forced labour, protect victims and improve global supply chain transparency.

Meanwhile our efforts continue earnestly at home.

The UK is strengthening our already world-leading Modern Slavery Act.

A key focus is to increase transparency in supply chains. We were the first country globally to require businesses to report on tackling modern slavery in their operations and global supply chains.

Other landmark provisions include extending the reporting requirement to public bodies with a turnover of more than £36 million, as well as mandating that organisations publish their statements on the government registry.

We will introduce financial penalties for non-compliance under the Modern Slavery Act.

We also became the first country to publish our own statement, and later this year we will publish individual statements for ministerial departments.

Looking ahead, the UK wants to make sure we continue to respond effectively

to these terrible crimes.

For that reason, we are reviewing our modern slavery strategy now, and will publish a new strategy in Spring 2022.

I would like finish by paying tribute to the survivors of modern slavery, forced labour and human trafficking.

I urge you all to listen carefully to the most vulnerable in our societies, and to come together regionally and internationally to ensure this generation of victims is the last.

Thank you.