Over 40 million people caught in modern slavery, 152 million in child labour – UN

19 September 2017 – More than 40 million people around the world were victims of modern slavery – forced labour and forced marriage – in 2016, a United Nations study has found, revealing the true scale of such practices that disproportionately affect women and girls.

Global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage show that among the victims, about 25 million were in forced labour, and 15 million were in forced marriage.

Of the total, almost 29 million – or 71 per cent – are women and girls. Women represent 99 per cent of victims of forced labour in the commercial sex industry and 84 per cent of people in forced marriage.

The study was prepared jointly by the UN International Labour Organization (ILO) and Walk Free Foundation, in partnership with the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM).

A separate ILO study, Global estimates of child labour: Results and trends, 2012-2016, confirmed that about 152 million children, aged between 5 and 17, were subject to child labour.

Child labour remains concentrated primarily in agriculture, at 70.9 per cent. Almost one in five child labourers, or 17.1 per cent, work in the services sector while 11.9 per cent of child labourers work in industry.

“The world won’t be in a position to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals unless we dramatically increase our efforts to fight these scourges,” said ILO Director-General Guy Ryder.

“These new global estimates can help shape and develop interventions to prevent both forced labour and child labour,” he added.