



# Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

New Delhi, India. London, UK. Accra, Ghana

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*NGO with Special Consultative Status with the Economic & Social Council of the United Nations*

## **42nd Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council**

### **Item 3: Clustered interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and the Working Group on use of mercenaries**

#### **Oral Statement delivered by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative**

**Monday, 9 September 2019**

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President.

I am representing Homes of Hope Fiji and the Vanuatu Human Rights Coalition and I am making this statement on behalf of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. We welcome the report presented by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery which highlights current and future challenges. We are in agreement with the Special Rapporteur that more must be done to create a collaborative and strategic effort towards fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 that is also survivor-informed and victim-centred.

We recognise the importance of safety nets for survivors of contemporary forms of slavery. We advocate and promote a safety net of equipped families, communities and faith-based networks, which have the knowledge, skills and strategies to foster a safe and protective environment especially in areas identified as high risk. An increased dissemination of modern slavery awareness campaigns among such networks is an important preventative measure. Civil society is key to engaging with these grassroots networks and we wish to highlight the lack of financial support for civil society operating in Fiji and Vanuatu.

We also welcome the Special Rapporteur's call for a shared global framework for coordinated action towards target 8.7. A collaborative approach in prevention, protection and prosecution must be multipronged. We hope that the Special Rapporteur will call for frameworks that place importance on trauma informed care which trains and sensitizes service providers and primary carers to avoid re-traumatisation of survivors and that support an environment which enables survivors to speak up and break the culture of silence.

Furthermore, any comprehensive anti-slavery framework must include the existence of a reporting mechanism and referral pathway for survivors, training for first responders and judiciary officials, collaboration with banks to monitor transactions and an effort to reduce waiting periods for repatriation, as well as for cases to be tried.

We hope that the Special Rapporteur continues her call for a strong coordination and data sharing approach.

I thank you, Mr. Vice-President.