

## Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)

### 48th Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

#### Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences

Oral Statement delivered by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)

Friday, 17 September 2021

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) thanks the Special Rapporteur for his report on the nexus between displacement and contemporary forms of slavery.

Within the Commonwealth, 73% of States do not have policies in place for asylum seekers to access basic support and protection, and 58% do not have systems to register internally displaced persons. **States must urgently ratify international instruments that protect displaced persons and facilitate access to decent work.** By ensuring that displaced persons are not criminalised, discriminated against, deported, or detained, States can protect this vulnerable group from slavery not only in legislation, but in practice.

We welcome the Special Rapporteur's recognition of natural disasters as crises that exacerbate vulnerability and **call on States to prioritise international cooperation to fight climate change, support vulnerable small states, and fund infrastructure and rebuilding projects in affected areas.**

We also appreciate the Special Rapporteur's emphasis on the vulnerabilities of displaced women and girls. Amid growing incidents of gender-based violence due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **States need to establish and raise awareness of confidential and accessible complaint and referral systems, especially within displacement camps.**

Lastly, we applaud and extend the Special Rapporteur's **call to see displaced persons not as a burden, but as rights holders with the potential to actively contribute to the economy.** By increasing access to labour and social protections, States and other actors can make essential strides towards the eradication of contemporary forms of slavery.

Thank you.