

# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO ERADICATE MODERN-DAY SLAVERY

REPORT OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PRESIDENT

President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships April 2013





“Right now, there is a man on a boat, casting the net with his bleeding hands, knowing he deserves a better life, a life of dignity, but does not know whether anybody is paying attention. Right now, there is a woman, hunched over a sewing machine, glancing beyond the bars on the window, knowing if just given the chance, she might someday sell her own wares, but she does not think anybody is paying attention.

Right now, there is a young boy, in a brick factory, covered in dust, hauling his heavy load under a blazing sun, thinking if he could just go to school, he might know a different future, but he does not think anybody is paying attention. Right now, there is a girl, somewhere trapped in a brothel, crying herself to sleep again, and maybe daring to imagine that someday, just maybe, she might be treated not like a piece of property, but as a human being.

And so our message today, to them, is—to the millions around the world—we see you. We hear you. We insist on your dignity.

And we share your belief that if just given the chance, you will forge a life equal to your talents and worthy of your dreams.

Our fight against human trafficking is one of the great human rights causes of our time, and the United States will continue to lead it—in partnership with you.”

– **President Barack Obama,**  
Clinton Global Initiative,  
September 25th, 2012

## THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL RECOMMENDS THAT:

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**1.**

The Obama Administration lead the effort to elevate and bring to scale the fight against modern-day slavery at home and abroad;

**2.**

The Obama Administration lead the effort to eliminate slave labor in the purchase and consumption of goods and services;

**3.**

The federal government elevate anti-trafficking work at the agency level;

**4.**

The White House convene a National Summit to raise awareness and inspire action to combat modern-day slavery;

**5.**

The Obama Administration develop and announce a National Call to Action for civil society to increase and align efforts to eradicate modern-day slavery;

## 6.

The Obama Administration produce a toolkit on how religious and community-based organizations can learn more about and take steps to join the fight against trafficking;

## 7.

The Obama Administration work with the Ad Council to create a public awareness campaign on how to spot and report signs of trafficking;

## 8.

The Obama Administration designate the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) Hotline as the primary national human trafficking hotline promoted to the public;

## 9.

U.S. Embassies and USAID Missions work with civil society leaders to develop comprehensive strategies to combat human trafficking; and

## 10.

The Corporation for National and Community Service create a pilot partnership to place national service members in Mayors' and Governors' offices to help map and coordinate local responses to human trafficking.



## WE RECOMMEND THAT:

### 2. THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION LEAD THE EFFORT TO ELIMINATE SLAVE LABOR IN THE PURCHASE AND CONSUMPTION OF GOODS AND SERVICES.

We may not see it, but slavery touches each of our lives every single day. Whether it is the clothes we wear, the coffee we drink, the smart phones we use to communicate, or the food we put on our tables, most Americans do not know that many of the products they use or consume every day have been produced with trafficked or slave labor.

The U.S. Department of Labor has documented hundreds of different goods and raw materials, from cotton to silver and gold, from palm oil to harvested wheat and much more, that are produced with slave labor.<sup>11</sup>

Every member of our Council and an increasing number of Americans are asking: where can I find and purchase goods that are not produced with slave labor? Is there a way to identify companies that have eliminated slavery in their supply chains?

The short answer is no. Not yet.

The issue of labor trafficking has been one of the most complex and vexing identified in this report. Because of the complexity of the global economy and the size of the supply chains that companies use to produce goods, it is a challenge to track where and how slave labor occurs in the production of the everyday items and services.

There have been some promising efforts from those inside and outside the private sector to increase awareness and respond to the rampant problem of slave labor around the world. We have detailed some of the best examples in the side panel here.

We celebrate and applaud these efforts. However, because of the complexity and scale of the problem of slave labor, we believe there the federal government needs to lay out clear and fair guidelines for companies to monitor for and eliminate slavery in their supply chains and labor recruitment.

With President Obama's release of the Executive Order to eliminate human trafficking in federal contracting, the U.S. Government will become a worldwide leader in taking steps to eliminate modern-day slavery from its own contracting and procurement practices. We applaud the Obama Administration for this bold step and encourage the Administration to robustly implement the Order.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, "The Department of Labor's List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor," <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/programs/ocft/pdf/2009tvpra.pdf>





As the Administration implements the Executive Order, we recommend building on that existing effort and bold commitment in the following ways:

1. Use the opportunity of implementation of the Executive Order to create a set of standards that companies, including those not currently contracting with the federal government, can use to measure themselves against and track progress in evaluating, monitoring, and ultimately eliminating forced labor from their supply chains and workforces;
2. Encourage companies that help verify business practices in related fields—whether environment, health and safety, or other labor standards—to include the Executive Order anti-slavery standards in their trainings and certifications; and
3. Promote these standards and certifications to the business community and the general public so that robust anti-trafficking compliance becomes just as important as adherence to anti-corruption rules or environmental standards.

All of these activities are necessary predicates to an ultimate goal: a way for consumers to be able to make informed purchasing decisions in the fight against modern-day slavery.

The U.S. Government has had good success with creating and promoting standards, such as the USDA Organic label or ENERGY STAR label, both developed and promoted by the government in collaboration with for-profit and non-profit leaders in the field. In each case, the government label of certification became a trusted brand and indicator in the field. Consumer demand for organics has shown double-digit growth for more than a decade,<sup>12</sup> and market share has grown 163 percent since the label launched in 2002.<sup>13</sup> After 20 years of hard work, the ENERGY STAR label has become one of the most recognized brands in the market today.

As faith and community leaders, representing tens of millions of Americans, we want a similar label, one that tells us that the people who make our goods are not trapped in slave labor. We know that pursuing this is far more complicated than testing energy efficiency or pesticide residue, but we believe it is a worthy goal.

If we are going to move toward a world free of slavery, the full resources, scale, expertise, and convening power of the federal government must be leveraged to build consensus around and promote standards for companies to eliminate slave labor.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, “USDA Accomplishments 2009-2012: Organic Agriculture,” <http://www.usda.gov/documents/Results-Organic-Agriculture.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Organic Trade Association, “U.S. Organic Industry Overview,” <http://www.ota.com/pics/documents/2011OrganicIndustrySurvey.pdf>

## EFFORTS TO COMBAT SLAVERY IN OUR FOOD AND PRODUCTS

One of the most successful and innovative programs we researched is the **Fair Food Program**, developed by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) and promoted in partnerships with T’ruah (formerly Rabbis for Human Rights North America) and the International Justice Mission, among others.

Slavery and other human rights abuses are an ongoing threat in U.S. tomato fields. Chief Assistant U.S. Attorney Douglas Molloy once called Florida’s tomato fields “ground zero” for modern-day slavery in the United States. Over the past 15 years, seven cases of forced labor slavery have been successfully prosecuted, resulting in more than 1,000 people freed from slavery in U.S. tomato fields.<sup>14</sup>

The Fair Food program, developed by tomato pickers themselves through CIW, establishes a zero tolerance policy for slavery, child labor, and serious sexual abuse on Florida’s tomato farms. Companies that join the Fair Food Program agree to pay a small price increase for fairly harvested tomatoes (1.5 cents more per pound) and promise to shift purchases to the Florida tomato growers who abide by these higher standards—and away from those who will not. Major fast food companies, like McDonalds and Subway, and supermarket chains Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s have already endorsed the Fair Food Program.

**Made In A Free World**, a non-profit organization working to end the system of slavery, partnered with the State Department to create SlaveryFootprint.org, an award-winning online platform that allows consumers to visualize their connection to modern-day slavery. Asking questions about your lifestyle, the site uses a complex algorithm to tell you how many slaves are responsible for the products you enjoy daily. The website provides a way for consumers to raise their collective voice to engage with companies and create the demand for products that are “made in a free world.” Millions of individuals from nearly every country in the world have signed on.

Made In A Free World is building a business community where success is not measured simply by compliance, but rather by engagement. They define engagement as gaining a firm understanding of an enterprise’s impact on global markets. Made In A Free World is working with companies to develop realistic and executable plans to mitigate the risks of those impacts.

As the Obama Administration seeks to implement the Executive Order to prevent slavery in government contracts and procurement, we encourage the Administration to look at the success of efforts like the Fair Food Program and Made In A Free World to inform their work.

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<sup>14</sup> International Justice Mission. “Recipe for Change.” IJM.org. <http://www.ijm.org/recipe-for-change>