Report to: Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery

Contemporary forms of slavery include but is not limited to traditional slavery, forced labour, debt bondage, serfdom, children working in slavery or slavery-like conditions, domestic servitude, sexual slavery, and servile forms of marriage.

**Key questions and Answers**

Q1. Are trade union rights, as protected by ILO Conventions Nos. 87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise) and 98 (Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining), recognized in domestic legislative frameworks in your country? If so, please provide details including provision for remedies in case of breaches.

**Ans:** Yes, in Ghana, the above rights, Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise (FOA) and Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining (ROCB), are recognised in the Labour Law/Act, 2003 (Act 651). These are respectively specified for in Part XI (section 79) and Part XII (section 99) of Act 651. Regarding FOA, there are no provisions for remedies if there is a denial of workers to freely associate or organize/join trade unions especially at the level of the enterprise/workplace before the other process at the Labour Department (to be performed by the Chief Labour Officer). However, subsection 9 of section 99 of Part XII of Act 651 had a provision for remedies if ROCB is denied, and also for FOA at the point where the processes have gotten to or are being handled by the Chief Labour Officer.

Q2. Have workers’ organisations in your country played a role in preventing workers from being subjected to contemporary forms of slavery, or helping victims to move out of exploitative situations? If so, please provide details.

**Ans:** Workers organizations especially the TUC Ghana and its affiliate unions have played many roles to address workers being subjected to modern slavery and exploitations. For instance, the General Agriculture Workers Union (GAWU) of TUC has been involved in child labour issues and worked at the policy level with state agencies and ministries with focus in the Cocoa and Fishing sectors. In the fishing sector, GAWU’s work has led to the rescue and rehabilitation of many children involved in child labour along the Volta Lake (some to the point of attaining University education). The union has produced a video documentary to educate and sensitise people. Their work has led to the unionization of workers in the sector. On the other hand, the TUC and its affiliates have also advocated and campaign to promote the ratification of relevant ILO conventions including Convention 189 and Convention 190 (which ratification campaign was launched on February 21, 2024). Though Convention 189 is yet to be ratified, TUC’s advocacy efforts has led to the enactment of the Labour (Domestic Workers) Regulation, 2020 (LI 2408) which has formalised domestic work for adequate protection of workers.

The TUC in 2022 carried out a ‘’Mapping of Modern Slavery and Child Labour in targeted Sectors in Ghana’’ and subsequently developed a ‘’Manual on Forced Labour and Modern Slavery- A Guide for Trade Union Education”. This is being implemented involving the training/capacity building of union leaders, organisers, and shop stewards. In addition, the anti-human trafficking units of the Ghana Police Service and Ghana Immigration Service, Labour Inspectors of the Labour Department of the Ministry of Employment & Labour Relations and other relevant state agencies were trained. This is to enable an understanding of the issues, identification, reporting and initiation of preventive mechanisms against modern slavery and exploitations at workplaces.

The TUC has also implemented strategies including research, advocacy, policy formulation and initiatives (e,g the launch of the Migrant Recruitment Advisor in Ghana in April, 2022) to promote good labour migration governance that will enable the promotion and protection of migrant workers rights.

Q3. Please provide any positive examples of collaboration or coordination with the following entities in preventing contemporary forms of slavery and protecting vulnerable workers and victims:

**Ans:** The TUC, especially at the Steering Committee on Child Labour in Ghana level, has collaborated with the Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection, the Ministry of Employment & Labour Relations, Labour Department, the Ghana Police Service and the Commission for Human Rights & Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) on Child Labour issues. Under the LO-Norway Modern Slavery Project has also collaborated with Action Aid Ghana as well as invited relevant stakeholders including employers’ organisations, the media especially during the regional consultations on the forced labour project implementation. TUC is currently collaborating with the ITUC and the ILO on a number of projects including the ILO 8.7 Accelerator Lap project, Phase III of the ILO Integrated Programme on Fair Recruitment (FAIR) in Ghana and the ITUC Migrant Recruitment Advisor project. All these have onward collaboration with other relevant actors working to address forced labour and promotion of decent work.

Q4. Are there workers’ organisations dedicated to organizing and defending the rights of workers in certain sectors with higher risks of labour and/or sexual exploitation (e.g. agriculture, fishing, construction, services including hospitality, manufacturing, domestic work, and non-standard forms of employment) or at-risk populations (e.g. indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees, minorities, older workers, workers with disabilities and informal workers) in your country?

**Ans**: Yes. The General Agriculture Workers’ Union (GAWU) focus is in agriculture & fishing sectors, the Union of Informal Workers Association (UNIWA) focus in domestic and non-standard employments sectors; the Construction, Building and Material Workers Union (CBMWU) focus is in construction sector; the Maritime & Dockworkers Union (MDU) and National Union of Seamen, Ports and Allied Workers (NUSPAW) focus is in fishing sector as well as the Union of Industry, Commerce,& Finance & (UNICOF) and Industrial & Commercial Workers Union (ICU) in hospitality and manufacturing sectors.

The MDU and NUSPAW, under the ILO 8.7 Accelerator Lap project, are rolling out interventions to address decent work deficits including forced labour in the fishing/maritime sectors. On March 20, 2024, a Trade Union Policy for Decent Work in the fishing sector was launched to usher in the roll out of interventions by the two unions. The two unions are also implementing interventions including reaching out to workers to sensitize and collect reviews/surveys for the Migrants Recruitment Advisor (MRA) to produce a country report for advocacy in addressing unfair recruitment practices that land workers in abuses and exploitations.

Q5. If any, please describe challenges or limitations experienced by workers’ organisations in your country to prevent contemporary forms of slavery and protect victims.

**Ans:** The key challenges workers’ organizations faced in Ghana in their work to prevent modern forms of slavery include the following:

* Low knowledge, awareness and education on modern forms of slavery
* High informality and unemployment are a fertile ground for various forms of modern slavery including human trafficking, forced labour and exploitations
* In practice, there is no recognition of the FOA and rights to organize in some sectors. On number of times, workers employment has been terminated for trying to form/join unions.
* There is also lack of effective cooperation/coordination from some State/non-State actors
* Other challenges include inadequate or lack of resources and expertise/capacity to engage and carry out interventions including wider sensitization, monitoring and organizing unorganized sectors to give workers voice, representation and services.

Q6. What practical recommendations would you make to concerned stakeholders (including Governments, businesses/employers’ organisations, anti-slavery and civil society actors, international organisations and others) to enable workers’ organizations (including centres and federations) to more effectively prevent and address contemporary forms of slavery?

* Adoption & implementation of strategies such as policies on forced labour or provisions in CAs at workplaces or in organizations
* Leverage on the media for wider and sustained sensitization to address the knowledge/awareness gaps, and empower workers via training to identify and report.
* Collaborative/joint campaigns to promote the speedy ratification and national implementation of related ILO instruments in Ghana.
* Enhanced capacity and resources for trade unions to facilitate the reach out to and organizing of sectors with high risk of forced labour and exploitation. This will enable unions to effectively defend and promote the rights of workers in such sectors through representation and delivery of tailored services.

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