FACTSHEET Q&A

What is modern slavery?

In 2013, modern slavery takes many forms, and is known by many names: slavery, forced labour or human trafficking.

'Slavery' refers to the condition of treating another person as if they were property – something to be bought, sold, traded or even destroyed.

'Forced labour' is a related but not identical concept, referring to work taken without consent, by threats or coercion.

'Human trafficking' is another related concept, referring to the process through which people are brought, through deception, threats or coercion, into slavery, forced labour or other forms of severe exploitation.

Whatever term is used, the significant characteristic of all forms of modern slavery is that it involves one person depriving another people of their freedom: their freedom to leave one job for another, their freedom to leave one workplace for another, their freedom to control their own body.

What is the Global Slavery Index?

The Global Slavery Index 2013 measures the size of the modern slavery problem, country by country. The Index provides a quantitative ranking of 162 countries around the world according to the estimated prevalence of slavery (that is, the estimated percentage of enslaved people in the national population at a point in time).

The Index is constructed from three quantitative indicators on prevalence:

• A composite estimate of the number of people in modern slavery in each country (this makes up the majority of the prevalence estimate, accounting for 95% of the total)

• A measure of the level of human trafficking to and from each country (accounts for 2.5%)

• A measure of the level of child and early marriage in each country (accounts for 2.5%)

The estimated percentage was generated internally by Walk Free, while data on human trafficking and child and early marriage is based on an analysis of pre-existing data from UNICEF and the US Trafficking in Persons report respectively. In addition to the global rankings, the report includes an analysis of the risk of modern slavery and an evaluation of government responses to the issue.

Why publish the Index?

The goal of the Index is to help fill information gaps and provide governments with up to date information on factors that will allow them to assess and improve the effectiveness of their responses to this issue. Without accurate information, we don't know where to focus efforts or what works best in eradicating modern slavery.

The Index is intended to serve governments by providing them with information that will help them to develop and enforce laws and policies to end modern forms of slavery and to build services that will help survivors of these crimes to recover and achieve productive and dignified lives. At the same time, it is necessary to be clear and objective about the risks and prevalence of modern slavery, and a country's ability to respond to these challenges. Our goal is that each country will achieve the lowest levels of prevalence and risk, and the highest levels of response. All countries that do so will be included in the top category of reporting.

How was the concept for the Index developed?

The Global Slavery Index was created in consultation with a panel of experts from international organizations, think tanks and academic institutions. The Index has been endorsed by individuals including Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Former Prime Ministers Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Julia Gillard; and leading philanthropists, Bill Gates, Sir Richard Branson and Mo Ibrahim, as well as academics, business leaders, and policy makers.

How do we assess risk of slavery and government responses?

The risk of slavery – a new area of research – analyses risk based on an assessment of 31 qualitative and quantitative indicators that reflect five key dimensions: a country's anti-slavery policies; a country's respect for human rights; a country's level of human and economic development; the stability of the government and the institutions of the country; and the level of discrimination against women in a country. All of these indicators are generated externally by respected sources and were selected by the research team on the basis of statistical testing for their relationship to the prevalence of slavery.

The evaluation of government responses to slavery analyses the strength of government responses, and includes country studies for 20 countries. These studies describe the problem, government responses, and action needed. Additional country studies are on the website. Future editions of the report will examine responses of all countries listed in the Index.

How do we estimate the number of people in modern slavery in each country?

Walk Free have produced estimates of the total number of people enslaved based on two areas of research:

A review of data on the public record (secondary source information) including published reports from governments, investigations of non-governmental and international organizations, and journalistic reports across all media. From the information gathered from secondary sources and analysis by the research team an estimate was made of the prevalence of slavery in each of the 162 countries.

Until recently the analysis of secondary sources was the only method available to estimate global slavery, but recent research has made possible an additional and different type of information –

information about prevalence gained through representative random sample surveys. This is the second type of information used in our estimate of prevalence.

These representative samples (meaning they are collected randomly and thus can reliably represent the larger population) yield a statistical estimate of the prevalence of modern slavery based on first-hand reports by individuals. Information gained in this way is superior to secondary sources, but is available for a limited number of countries.

And finally, because this type of information does not exist for many countries, the Index uses representative sample data to statistically extrapolate the prevalence of slavery for those countries that have not yet had random sample surveys.

Is the data new?

The data that underlies the Index was not collected specifically for the preparation of the Index but some of the data (notably the estimates of prevalence by country) had been compiled and estimated by the index's author, Kevin Bales, with Free the Slaves, prior to this Index.

What is new is the way the data is combined, and analysed for the first time ever in one single report in order to determine the estimate of prevalence in over 162 countries. The GSI allows us to have a global picture of the situation of modern slavery – something that has never been done before.

How often will the Index be published and will it be improved?

This is the first edition of the Global Slavery Index. Walk Free's aim is year-on-year improvement in our modern slavery estimate, through the expansion of representative sample surveys.

For the next edition of the GSI, we plan to include data on prevalence drawn from sample surveys in six countries: Cote d'Ivoire, Brazil, Nepal, Ethiopia, India and Thailand.

What is in the country studies?

The country studies in this report provide a short, succinct description and analysis of key aspects of the national responses to modern slavery. In this first year of the Index, it was not possible to cover all 162 countries. Accordingly, a decision had to be made about selecting a sub-set for special focus, and it was decided to focus on countries at the more extreme end of the slavery spectrum. Accordingly, the countries included are:

The ten countries with worst ranking on the GSI (Mauritania, Haiti, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Moldova, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Gabon; included in the body of this report);

The ten countries with the best ranking on the GSI (Iceland, Ireland, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, Finland, Denmark; included in the body of this report).

Additional country studies on some countries are available on the website.