

Press release: UK leads the charge in eradicating modern slavery

A new programme supporting Pakistan tackle child labour, has been launched by the UK government. The AAWAZ II programme, which has been launched by the UK's Department for International Development, will enable communities and support stronger government institutions in Pakistan so that they can better protect vulnerable groups.

Only 34% of children under the age of five years have birth certificates in Pakistan. Without this critical document, children go unprotected, they are invisible to many services and people are locked out of opportunities.

In partnership with UNICEF, DFID is funding a pioneering digital birth registration programme in Pakistan to tackle the challenge. DFID is also funding a pioneering child labour survey which will be used to identify the children most at risk and support the government to strengthen protection.

The Aawaz programme is part of the UK's work to lead the global fight against modern slavery, including at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) being held this week. The aim is to galvanise international action to eradicate modern slavery, and launching a range of projects to tackle child slavery across Africa and Asia.

The Secretary of State for International Development Penny Mordaunt announced new protections for vulnerable children at risk of falling prey to traffickers. The UK-backed project with UNICEF will provide up to 400,000 girls and boys in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan at risk of slavery with birth registration documents and other measures to shelter them from forced labour and underage marriage. Similarly, the UK will launch a £26 million package to tackle the worst forms of child labour through a major new programme across six Asian countries, including the AAWAZ II programme in Pakistan.

Speaking ahead of the meeting in New York, Ms Mordaunt said:

From the clothes we wear to the food we eat, the insidious virus of modern slavery is infiltrating all aspects of our daily life without us even realising. Not only does it have a huge cost to the global and the UK's economy, it is a shameful stain on our global conscience that must be eradicated for good.

No one nation can banish this borderless crime alone. The international community must collaborate to dismantle predatory trafficking networks, support victims, strengthen justice systems and create sustainable alternative livelihoods.

AAWAZ II will work with government and local communities and has a particular focus on the issue of modern slavery, to which marginalised groups are

extremely vulnerable. The programme aims to reach poor communities and vulnerable people across the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Punjab. It will build on the success of its predecessor, AAWAZ I: Voice and Accountability Programme.

Notes to the editors

- A year ago, the British Prime Minister launched a global Call to Action to eliminate the borderless scourge of forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking, while doubling the UK's aid spending on modern slavery to £150 million. Just one year on, 77 states have endorsed this Call to Action and the UK has gone above and beyond its original commitment, increasing UK aid support by over a third to £200 million, to tackle the root causes of slavery in key source and transit countries across Africa and Asia.
- The economic and social costs of modern slavery report estimates that it costs the UK up to £4.3 billion a year. Each instance of the crime is estimated to cost around £330,000, including the cost of support, lost earnings and law enforcement but most significantly the physical and emotional harms suffered by individuals, who are often exploited over months and sometimes years.
- As part of its spending increase, the UK will launch several programmes to tackle child slavery across Africa and Asia. This includes:
 - £10 million UK aid package to protect up to 400,000 boys and girls at risk of slavery in the Horn of Africa and along dangerous migratory routes in Sudan and Ethiopia. Partnering with UNICEF, UK support will provide birth registration services so children can legally prove their identity and be sheltered from forced labour, military service and underage marriage. Our support will also educate children against the perils of trafficking, assist social workers and help reintegrate victims back into society.
 - £12 million package to equip up to 400,000 vulnerable people in conflict ravaged parts of Africa with skills training and alternative livelihood opportunities. Our support will educate children on the disguised risks of trafficking, improve law enforcement and support conflict-affected families in countries such as the DRC.
 - £26 million aid package to tackle the worst forms of child labour through a major new programme across six Asian countries. Working in partnership with UNICEF, the International Labour Organisation and the IDS, UK support will reduce the vulnerability of children to bonded labour in hazardous industries like agriculture and clamp

down on children being trafficked into commercial sex work. Evidence-based interventions that tackle the drivers of child labour will be rolled out, such as social protection and cash transfer support for families affected.

- £5 million programme to scale up our work with the Government of Bangladesh to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in the country. Our support will help build an evidence base of what works and pilot innovative approaches to protect the most vulnerable, initially focusing on tea estates, domestic work and hazardous industrial work in Sylhet.

- The United Kingdom and the United States of America along with Canada, New Zealand and Australia will today announce they have agreed four new international principles which will provide a practical framework for governments to tackle human trafficking and modern slavery in global supply chains. This group of five countries will meet annually to coordinate their efforts.

More Information

For updates on the British High Commission and for more information on the Chevening Programme, please follow our social media channels:

Contact
British High Commission
Islamabad
tel. +92 51 2012000