

Committee: Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee (GA3)

Topic: Embracing technological advancements in combating modern slavery

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Position: Co-Chair

Personal Introduction

Dear Delegates,

My name is Daphne Raptis and I am an 11th grade IB Y1 student at ACS Athens. It is a true privilege to be serving as one of the Co-Chairs of the Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian Committee in CSMUN 2025. Through my rich experiences in MUN I have come to realise that it is not only an extracurricular, but a platform where I can grow on an intellectual level, as well as a personal one. I hope to be able to share the confidence, knowledge, and passion that these indispensable experiences have taught me.

In the upcoming conference, we will be tackling the topic of: “Embracing technological advancements in combating modern slavery”. We live in a society where innumerable still endure the harsh reality of forced labour, trafficking, exploitation, and abuse; however, as our world continues to advance technologically, it can be used effectively and responsibly to counter these pressing issues.

This study guide will delve into the key aspects of the issue, background information, major countries, organisations and alliances, previous attempts to solve the problem, and possible solutions. I encourage you to use it as a core tool for deeper research, critical thought, and innovative thinking.

If you have any questions, concerns, or if you simply want to introduce yourself, please feel free to email me at the email shown below.

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Warm regards,

Daphne Raptis.

Topic Introduction

Across the globe there has been significant efforts and progress made towards improving human rights conditions. Nonetheless, modern slavery continues to be challenged as a growing crisis. The tens of millions of people globally who are victims of this issue are situated in both developed and developing countries and are subjected to forced labour, human trafficking, and exploitation. This abusive system is commonly disguised under hidden supply chains, domestic work, agriculture, and construction industries.

Modern slavery is a clear and direct violation of fundamental human rights, such as, the right to liberty, security, fair working conditions, and freedom from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. In the majority of these cases, victims are not given legal recognition and they are often exposed to threats and debt bondage. In circumstances such as forced marriages and commercial sex trade, women and children are severely impacted.

With continuous technological advancements, ranging from artificial intelligence and blockchain to mobile applications and social media, the potential to use technology to address modern slavery proliferates. However, technological advancements inevitably force the rise of both benefits and ethical implications and bias. NGOs and businesses are developing elements including AI, blockchain, and mobile applications in order to detect, prevent, and track the various aspects of modern slavery. On the other hand, due to the implication of these technological advancements, traffickers are exploiting encrypted communication and social media platforms in order to control victims in anonymity.

The United Nations has been at the forefront of this by calling upon all member states to take immediate and effective action in pursuit of eliminating modern slavery and child labour by 2030. The Global Compact for Migration and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol) is fundamental to combating this issue by cementing protection for victims' actions.

“Free Will in the Age of Artificial Intelligence”, the theme of the conference is directly connected to this crucial topic. Advancing technology has the potential to be a powerful weapon against destructive exploitative systems, however it is without doubt that it also raises critical risks regarding

surveillance, digital autonomy, and digital security. As delegates, you are invited to dive into how we can embrace technological progress whilst safeguarding society against the ethical implications and risks involved in the digital world.

Definition of key concepts

Modern Slavery

The condition of being forced by threats or violence to work for little or no pay, and of having no power to control what work you do or where you do it.¹

Human Trafficking

The crime of buying and selling people, or making money from work they are forced to do, such as sex work.²

Forced Labour

The use of prisoners as unpaid workers³

Debt Bondage

Debt bondage is the pledge of a person's services as security for the repayment for a debt or other obligation. It is also referred to as debt slavery, bonded labour, or peonage.⁴

¹ "Modern Slavery." *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/modern-slavery?q=Modern+Slavery>. Accessed June 2025.

² "Human Trafficking." *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/human-trafficking?q=Human+Trafficking>. Accessed June 2025.

³ "Forced Labour." *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/forced-labour?q=Forced+Labour>. Accessed June 2025.

⁴ "Debt Bondage." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debt_bondage#:~:text=Debt%20bondage%2C%20also%20known%20as,debt%20to%20demand%20services%20indefinitely. Accessed June 2025.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use or study of computer systems or machines that have some of the qualities that the human brain has, such as the ability to interpret and produce language in a way that seems human, recognise or create images, solve problems, and learn from data supplied to them.⁵

Blockchain

A system used to make a digital record of all the occasions a cryptocurrency (= a digital currency such as bitcoin) is bought or sold, and that is constantly growing as more blocks are added.⁶

Encrypted

To change electronic information or signals into a secret code (= system of letters, numbers, or symbols) that people cannot understand or use on normal equipment.⁷

Social Media Exploitation

The use of social media platforms by traffickers to recruit, deceive, control, or exploit victims of modern slavery.⁸

Background Information

Overview of Modern Slavery

In circumstances where one is being exploited and thus trapped in situations due to threats, violence, deception, or abuse of power they are categorised under what is defined as modern slavery. Following a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2021 alone approximately 50 million people internationally were living under modern slavery. Under this umbrella, 28 million

⁵ "Artificial Intelligence." *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/artificial-intelligence>. Accessed June 2025.

⁶ "Blockchain." *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/blockchain?q=Blockchain>. Accessed June 2025.

⁷ "Encrypted." *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/encrypt?q=Encrypted+>. Accessed June 2025.

⁸ "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Addressing Human Trafficking." *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/glotip.html>. Accessed June 2025.

were subjected to forced labour and 22 million were in forced marriages. Women and children comprise 71% of the victims of modern slavery, mostly an outcome of gender-based discrimination, poverty, and increased vulnerability to exploitation in the labour force.⁹

At its core, this pressing issue lies in systematic challenges, including a lack of education, increased conflict, and inactive law enforcement. These issues manifest a dangerous environment where minorities are at high risk of exploitation. The consequences of this create a severe and lasting impact on communities and individuals, who must endure physical and mental trauma and economic instability. Additionally, modern slavery hinders global development and the journey towards an equal and just society. Instead, it disrupts labour markets, deepens gaps between underprivileged groups, and exacerbates criminal networks. For this reason, it is imperative that modern slavery is combatted.

The Benefits and Risks of Using Technology to Address Modern Slavery

Digital innovation has paved the way for tackling modern slavery, simultaneously it can also serve as a factor that facilitates it. On the one hand, in pursuit of improving supply chain transparency, identifying trafficking patterns, and offering workers with tools for reporting and addressing abuse, AI, blockchain, and mobile applications are actively being used by NGOs, governments, and businesses. Blockchain assists with tracing products throughout all stages of production, reducing the chances of forced labour being hidden in supply chains. Apps including Just Good Work and Apprise assist with educating migrant workers and enable anonymous communication with support services. Moreover, AI is capable of scanning online job postings, migration trends, and social media content to detect signals of modern slavery. However, it must be acknowledged that in regions where access to the internet or digital devices is limited, the reach and effectiveness of these technological solutions are limited, leaving many vulnerable populations without critical support. For this reason, these technologies need to be made with this obstacle in mind.

On the other hand, traffickers can use this technology to their advantage and exploit it. They can manipulate social media to recruit victims through deception, encrypted communication, and cryptocurrencies that can aid with partaking in untraceable financial transactions. Once victims are

⁹ Walk Free. Global Slavery Index: Global Findings, 2023, www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/global-findings/. Accessed June 2025.

targeted they are carefully controlled and manipulated through encrypted messages, thus making it challenging for authorities to detect suspicious behaviour. This allows traffickers to act on an international scale without being caught. Moreover, the use of cryptocurrencies allow untraceable financial transactions, making traffickers' actions more seamless. According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), it has become increasingly challenging to identify traffickers' activities and enforce anti-trafficking laws due to an amplified use of digital platforms.¹⁰

Global Response

In response, global frameworks have been implemented to prevent trafficking and safeguard stronger protection for victims, such efforts include the Palermo Protocol (2000). This critical UN treaty encourages nations to criminalise human trafficking and at its core, it promotes international cooperation. Furthermore, Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 urges all nations to take urgent action and effectively end modern slavery by 2030. Recently, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has collaborated with governments and tech companies in efforts of developing AI- powered tools that efficiently detect trafficking trends online. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has assisted with the rise of digital reporting systems that allow real-time alerts on labour violations in global supply chains. Additionally, the UN Human Rights Council has urged for the imperative need for higher ethical standards in the use of AI, ensuring that technologies used to fight exploitation do not violate rights, reinforce inequality, or strengthen the issue at hand.¹¹

| Date | Description of the event |
|-------------------------|--|
| <u>15 November 2000</u> | The Palermo Protocol is adopted by the UN General Assembly to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking ¹² |

¹⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Addressing Human Trafficking, 2022, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/glotip.html.

¹¹ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. *Procurement and Deployment of Artificial Intelligence Must Be Aligned with Human Rights Standards*. 25 June 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/06/procurement-and-deployment-artificial-intelligence-must-be-aligned-human>.

¹² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. 15 Nov. 2000, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html.

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|--------------------------|--|
| <u>22 January 2013</u> | Launch of SDG Agenda Drafting: The initial consultations for the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 8.7 addressing the elimination of modern slavery. ¹³ |
| <u>26 March 2015</u> | United Kingdom Modern Slavery Act is employed: requires companies to track their pursuit towards preventing slavery in their supply chains ¹⁴ |
| <u>25 September 2015</u> | Adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 8.7 directly urged for the eradication of forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking, and child labour by 2030. ¹⁵ |
| <u>September 2016</u> | Launch of Alliance 8.7: The International Labour Organization (ILO) launched Alliance 8.7. ¹⁶ |
| <u>October 2017</u> | Launch of the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS): Supported by US and UK governments, GFEMS funds technological innovations to disrupt trafficking networks. ¹⁷ |
| <u>December 2021</u> | Launch of Apprise App: It assists first responders check if at-risk workers are being exploited, abused, or manipulated. ¹⁸ |

¹³ United Nations. "New Open Working Group to Propose Sustainable Development Goals for Action by General Assembly's Sixty-Eighth Session." UN Press, 22 Jan. 2013, <https://press.un.org/en/2013/ga11339.doc.htm>.

¹⁴ United Kingdom Home Office. Modern Slavery Bill Collection. 10 June 2014. GOV.UK, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/modern-slavery-bill>.

¹⁵ United Nations. "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." United Nations Sustainable Development, 25 Sept. 2015,

¹⁶ International Labour Organization. Alliance 8.7: Global Partnership to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Child Labour. <https://www.alliance87.org/about/>.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of State. Program to End Modern Slavery (PEMS). July 2021, www.state.gov/external-content/evaluation-of-program-to-end-modern-slavery-pems-pdf/.

¹⁸ "SAP Global Partner Launches Apprise Initiative to Speed & Automate Digital Transformation." PR

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|--------------------------|--|
| <u>December 23, 2021</u> | Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Passed: The United States enforced this act in order to prevent the importation of goods connected to Xinjiang unless these items were proven not to be made with forced labor. ¹⁹ |
| <u>12 September 2022</u> | International Labour Organization Global Estimates Report: The ILO, IOM, and Walk Free Foundation reported that 50 million victims of modern slavery globally ²⁰ |
| <u>November 2024</u> | UNODC Releases Toolkit on AI and Human Trafficking: The UNODC published guidelines on using artificial intelligence in order to detect and prevent trafficking whilst simultaneously tackling ethical concerns. ²¹ |
| <u>5 November 2024</u> | International Labour Organization Blockchain Pilots: In order to amplify transparency and prevent forced labour the ILO initiated trialling blockchain-based tools in supply chains in Southeast Asia's clothing and textile sector. ²² |

Newsire, 20 Dec. 2021,
<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/sap-global-partner-launches-apprise-initiative-to-speed--automate-digital-transformation-301438371.html>.

¹⁹Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA)." U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2021,
<https://www.cbp.gov/trade/forced-labor/UFLPA>.

²⁰ "50 Million People Worldwide in Modern Slavery." International Labour Organization, 12 Sept. 2022,
<https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/50-million-people-worldwide-modern-slavery-0>.

²¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons: Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings. United Nations, 2008,
<https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/HT-toolkit-en.pdf>.

²² International Labour Organization. New ILO Project Launched to Promote Compliance and Sustainability in South-East Asia. ILO, 5 Nov. 2024,
<https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/new-ilo-project-launched-promote-compliance-and-sustainability>.

Major countries, organisations and alliances

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has risen at the forefront in harnessing technology to combat modern slavery by taking a comprehensive approach towards this effort through legal frameworks, public accountability, and technological innovation. It supports this effort through government-backed platforms like the Modern Slavery Statement Registry and the Modern Slavery Innovation Fund. Both of these promote and advance digital solutions aimed at identifying and reducing exploitation within global supply chains. In addition, British companies are legally required to disclose measures taken to prevent slavery in their operations and supply chain, this is under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

United States

Tech-driven initiatives, including programmes such as the Tech Against Trafficking coalition, are supported by the US Department of Labor and the Department of State. The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act was passed by the United States in 2021, which essentially leverages data and supply chain tracing tools to bar products linked to forced labour from entering the American market. This initiative drove companies to cement their supply chain transparency in a manner which avoided connections to forced labour. It also amplified corporate accountability. Besides this, the United States plays a crucial role in the global fight against modern slavery by enforcing policies and frameworks that target exploitative practices.

India

On a global scale, India has the highest number of people who endure modern slavery. Due to this, it has taken initiative by partnering with NGOs and tech platforms in efforts to support labour rights through the use of mobile apps like Garm Sewa. Garm Sewa assists and guides garment workers to report abuse, learn and understand their rights, and access support. An NGO which demonstrates India's active battle against modern slavery is Praajak, which works to protect vulnerable age groups who are at risk of trafficking and labour exploitation. Praajak uses digital platforms to identify, track, and support victims of modern slavery across West Bengal. Moreover, India has partnered with the International Justice Mission (IJM) on digital case tracking systems that will help with monitoring

labour abuse. India's large-scale efforts reflect its recognition of modern slavery as a human rights crisis, which requires immediate systemic responses.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

As a leading international body for labour rights, the ILO enforces global standards and provides guidance to governments and organisations on eliminating modern slavery. The ILO completes a crucial aspect in cementing international standards to eliminate modern slavery. It launched Alliance 8.7, which is a global partnership that encourages collaboration with governments, private sector actors, and tech developers in pursuit of embracing digital tools for data collection, victim identification, and improving labour inspections. This alliance has driven increased international coordination and actionable commitments to combating forced labour, human trafficking, and child labour through technology-driven solutions.

Tech Against Trafficking (TAT)

TAT is a coalition between global technology companies, including Microsoft and Amazon. These companies support initiatives to advance achievable solutions like image recognition software, blockchain tools, and machine learning that is able to detect trafficking online. Through cross-industry collaboration, TAT manifests the increased participation of private sectors in global human rights initiatives.

The Freedom Fund

The Freedom Fund is an international NGO that funds frontline organisations using technology to tackle modern slavery in majorly affected regions like India, Nepal, and Ethiopia. It does so by tracking recruitment patterns and victim experiences by collecting digital surveys and using mapping tools. The Freedom Fund has partnered with 288 frontline organisations in order to effectively target its goal and thus it has directly impacted the lives of over 1.6 million people²³, demonstrating the power of local partnerships in achieving long-term protection for at-risk communities.

²³ The Freedom Fund. Impact. The Freedom Fund, <https://www.freedomfund.org/impact>

Previous attempts to solve the issue

Apprise App: Launched by United Nations University and Global Fund To End Modern Slavery

The Apprise App is a mobile application that was developed through a collaboration between the United Nations University Institute in Macau and the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery. It was specifically created to be used by frontline providers, where they conduct private, multilingual interviews with potentially exploited workers or at-risk workers. The app collects anonymised data and pinpoints potential forced labour. By embracing a multilingual aspect, the app overcomes language barriers that would previously hinder workers from speaking out. The app has been adopted in sectors such as fishing, manufacturing, and agriculture in Southeast Asia. Despite this, the app's potential is obstructed by limited access to digital infrastructure in rural areas and a need for widespread training.

Just Good Work App (2020)

Just Good Work was designed by the social impact agency Fifty-Eight and it is a mobile application. Its goal is to empower migrant workers, it does so by providing clear and easily accessible information regarding ethical recruitment, contracts, wages, and worker rights. The app acts as a digital tool in the employment journey, where one can effectively find a safe and fair workplace. By receiving support from employers and governments, the application has been successfully employed in countries like Kenya and Malaysia. Just Good Work is a critical action towards providing workers with essential knowledge so that they can ultimately avoid becoming victims of trafficking or forced labour. The app has been successful in terms of being easy to use; however, it is highly dependent on internet access.

ILO's Use of Satellite Imaging and AI in Agriculture Monitoring (2021)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has partnered with other organisations in order to launch the use of satellite imaging and AI in efforts to thoroughly monitor regions at risk of forced labour, specifically in the agricultural sector. This initiative is a huge step towards identifying irregular labour trends through remote sensing. This system uses a blend of geospatial data and AI algorithms so that authorities can mark regions where labour exploitation is likely and subsequently allocate inspections in these areas. This innovative use of technology enhances early detection and resource

targeting, but its overall success depends on how well it is integrated with local enforcement efforts and follow-up inspections.

Possible solutions

Expand Access to Worker-Centred Digital Tools

In order to effectively prevent modern slavery a crucial step is providing vulnerable populations with the necessary knowledge and aid needed to recognise and escape an exploitative environment. Attempts such as Just Good Work and Garm Sewa support users by giving them key information on their legal rights, fair recruitment practices, safe migration, and access to help centres. These tools particularly empower migrant workers by allowing them to make educated decisions concerning employment abuse anonymously. These applications need to be accessible in a variety of languages, and should be easy to use so that they can be effective and widely accessible internationally. Those who are working towards developing such systems should prioritise developing them in a manner that allows them to work without fast internet and these systems should be available on basic, affordable phones. Furthermore, local governments should also get involved by assisting with sharing digital tools and systems through community centres and by installing them in the devices of workers. Partnerships between governments, NGOs, and the private sector would be beneficial in funding and localising these apps for a wide range of regions.

Develop and Regulate Ethical AI for Monitoring Exploitation

With the rise and development of Artificial Intelligence its deployment has proliferated. It is used to identify patterns of modern slavery by scanning large datasets. This provides huge potential for proactive intervention; however, AI systems could also introduce bias or infringe upon rights if left unmonitored. For example, migrant behaviour that is not substantially regulated can lead to racial profiling or unjust surveillance. In order to avoid these risks, governments should work towards conducting independent audits and human rights impact assessments prior to employing these technologies. They can work towards engaging interdisciplinary experts, such as ethicists, legal experts, and those who have experienced exploitation. This initiative would greatly aid with design AI systems that will address all necessary aspects of human trafficking and help ensure that such technologies are effective and equitable. In addition, establishing international ethical guidelines in

terms of AI in anti-slavery work is crucial when establishing transparent, explainable, and just technologies. These solutions should strategically and efficiently balance innovation with accountability, privacy, and justice in order to provide for the communities that they are designed to protect.

Mandate Transparent, Tech-Verified Supply Chains

When combating modern slavery, transparency within complex global supply chains is a key aspect and challenges, specifically in high risk industries. Traceability technologies such as blockchain, provide a solution by solidifying secure and tamper-proof records of each stage of the production process (eg, raw materials). By obliging corporations to embrace these tools, hidden exploitative practices can be surfaced. Policies should be designed to require companies to thoroughly check their supply chains and be fully transparent about the origin of their goods and how they are being produced. In the Global South governments and large organisations should offer aid to small and medium enterprises by providing technical training so these technologies can be adopted in an efficient and educated manner. Governments and international bodies should also be guided towards enforcing mandatory disclosure laws, in which companies who do not comply will face penalties such as fines, legal action, or restrictions on market access. Moreover, in international trade agreements digital traceability clauses should be incorporated, allowing companies to conduct business internationally in a just and ethical manner. Ultimately, by integrating transparency requirements technology can effectively be used to uphold human and digital rights, and not obstruct them.

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