



Press Statement

Commonwealth 8.7 Network Celebrates World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

For Immediate Release

May 21, 2024, London: The Commonwealth 8.7 Network proudly joins the global community in celebrating the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. This important day highlights the richness of the world's cultures and the essential role of intercultural dialogue in achieving peace and sustainable development.

As a dedicated coalition working to tackle modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour (including child labour), the Commonwealth 8.7 Network recognises the intersection of cultural diversity with human rights and labour issues.

"Embracing cultural diversity means not only appreciating the varied ways of life and traditions, but also intensifying our efforts to ensure that these differences are respected and become a source of inspiration, strength and recovery, and not division," stated Vera Belazelkoska of Ulula, Chair of the Management Committee, Commonwealth 8.7 Network.

This year's theme, "Cultural Diversity: The Road to Resilience and Recovery," underscores the importance of cultural inclusivity in bolstering societal resilience and promoting recovery in the face of global challenges.

Modern slavery and human trafficking have a cultural dimension. People affected by modern slavery often face barriers to accessing the support they need as a result of limited understanding among service providers of their respective cultures, language, beliefs, and gender norms. The Commonwealth 8.7 Network is committed to taking action against slavery-like practices and encourages governments to bridge the cultural gap by collaborating with diverse communities to develop culturally sensitive solutions, strengthening law enforcement with cultural competency training, and collecting data to understand the impacts across cultures. This includes creating safe spaces for the survivors of modern slavery to express their cultural norms in a context where they are being supported through aftercare programmes.

"We are committed to ensuring that our fight against all forms of modern slavery including forced labour, child labour and human trafficking in the Commonwealth respects and incorporates local cultural contexts, which is crucial for effective and lasting solutions," added Winnie Mutevu of HAART Kenya, Member 8.7 Network's Communication and Capacity Building Working Group.

As the Commonwealth represents a third of the global population, its engagement in the fight against human trafficking is essential. Addressing this problem, with an inclusive approach that respects cultural diversity is key to achieving peace, stability, and sustainable development for all.

We invite organisations, individuals, and other stakeholders to commit to promoting cultural diversity and dialogue in programmes and practices. *"By working together, we leverage our unique experiences to build more inclusive communities that respect human rights and celebrate cultural diversity, achieving the goals of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions"*, said Stephen Morse of Unchained Solutions, Chair of the 8.7 Network's Communication and Capacity Building Working Group.

The Commonwealth 8.7 Network is an international member-driven network made up of 105 local civil society organisations that share a common vision to eradicate modern slavery, forced labour including child labour, and human trafficking as outlined by Target 8.7 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

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Contact:

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)

Secretariat to the Commonwealth 8.7 Network

Email: 8.7network@humanrightsinitiative.org

Website: <https://www.commonwealth-87.org>