Advancing Sustainable Development Goal 8.7:  
Civil Society Statement of Principles and Goals

SDG 8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms

The signatory organizations:

Deploring the persistence of 40 million people trapped in slavery, including 25 million in forced labour and 15 million in forced marriage, as well as 72.5 million children in hazardous labour.

Applauding the adoption of SDG 8.7, which calls for the eradication of human slavery, forced labour, human trafficking; and worst forms of child labour (WFCL);

Supporting the attainment of related Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 5.2 (eliminating violence against women and girls); SDG 5.3 (eliminating harmful practices); SDG 16.2 (ending abuse, exploitation and trafficking of children); and SDG 10.7 (orderly, safe and responsible migration);

Sharing the aspiration of accelerating progress towards SDG 8.7;

Recognizing that advancing SDG 8.7 requires a multi-sectoral approach, including the indispensable contribution of civil society;

Calling for substantive and constructive collaboration among all the sectors participating in Alliance 8.7;

Building on the collective experience and expertise possessed by civil society;

Agree upon the following Statement of Principles and Goals:

I. Civil Society
Civil society organizations (CSO) are entrusted with resources to serve the public and must therefore abide by the highest standards of conduct. The credibility of civil society as an advocate on behalf of those afflicted by slavery, forced labour and trafficking in persons (TIP) is predicated on sustaining trust.

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A. **Governance**
CSOs must have in place an independent governing body that holds their leadership to account for effectively serving the organizational mission and adherence to high ethical standards.

B. **Transparency and integrity**
CSOs must openly report to concerned stakeholders, using appropriate measures, progress and obstacles in meeting their goals and require that all employees, contractors, consultants and other agents act with honesty and transparency.

C. **Finance**
CSOs must act as the good faith stewards of the financial and other material resources entrusted to them, using them solely for the purposes intended by contributors and for the benefit of the populations they serve. Appropriate safeguards and transparent reporting must be in place to ensure all resources are used in accordance with applicable laws and that there is accountability to stakeholders.

D. **Build Community**
CSOs must seek to optimize collaboration so as to make best use of limited resources, avoid duplication of effort, share learning, foster innovation, pursue shared policy goals, resolve conflicts and engage in mutual protection where CSOs are under threat.

E. **Equitable and effective management of personnel**
CSOs devoted to ending the exploitation of workers must also engage in good labour practices consistent with international conventions and national laws, including good human resources management practices, fair treatment of employees, gender equity and support for diversity.

F. **Cultural Competence and Respect**
CSOs must demonstrate understanding of and respect for the diversity of communities and cultures they serve, striving to empower at-risk and marginalized populations vulnerable to slavery and WFCL, while also sustaining adherence to widely recognized human rights established by international conventions.

G. **Respect for Survivor Leadership and Voice**
CSOs must respect the privacy and dignity of human trafficking, slavery and WFCL survivors and honour their leadership roles and unique knowledge. CSOs must stand in solidarity with survivors and ensure that their experiences are at the heart

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H. Develop and Uphold Standards of Practice
CSOs must base their programs on sound social science research; seek the development and promulgation of evidence-based standards of practice; rigorously monitor and evaluate their programs; forthrightly acknowledge knowledge gaps; support methodologically sound research; and, transparently share research findings and practical experiences that can advance the theory and practice of efforts to eradicate slavery, and WFCL.

I. Equal Concern for All Victims and Survivors
CSOs must be responsive, without prejudice, to the full spectrum of TIP, forced labour, worst forms of child labour, forced marriage and slavery victims and survivors, insisting on equal protection without regard to considerations of type of exploitation experienced, race, religion, gender, ethnicity, immigration status or sexual orientation.

J. Protection of CSOs under Threat
CSOs must collaborate to safeguard the political, legal, social and physical space to carry out their mission of advancing progress towards SDG 8.7 and collectively resist improper efforts to curtail their efforts.

K. Contribution to National Plans of Action
CSOs must actively contribute to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national plans of action, ensuring that their efforts complement those of government and other sectors.

II. Government
Governments must lead in the effort to achieve SDG 8.7, while appropriately engaging the full array of concerned stakeholders to yield the greatest impact with the most efficient use of available resources. Civil society therefore calls upon national governments to fulfill their obligations under the relevant international conventions and protocols, including:

A. Establishing and Implementing an Effective National Plan of Action
In collaboration with key stakeholders, governments must develop, adopt and implement a comprehensive national plan of action for accelerating progress towards SDG 8.7, including linkages to other sectors that have an impact on slavery and WFCL. The national plan of action must establish an empowered interagency and inter-sectoral coordinating body; engage provincial and local governments; include mechanisms for regular stakeholder input; and, require periodic, public

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reviews of progress, including reporting to the international community. The national plan of action must address all of the items in this Section II.

B. Evidence-based interventions
The national plan of action must encompass a comprehensive set of evidence-based interventions addressing the full array of context-specific determinants of slavery and WFCL. The formulation, monitoring and evaluation of the interventions must be based on international, national and local research carried out in accordance with international standards. Data and lessons learned must be shared within and across nations.

C. Survivor Leadership and Voice
Slavery and WFCL survivors have a unique and indispensable role to play in informing and shaping national plans of action. Governments must therefore ensure that survivor voices are prominent and that there is adequate protection and support for survivor inclusion in policy development and oversight.

D. Survivor Care and Protection
National plans must ensure that survivors of slavery receive the comprehensive, evidence-based care and services they need, with appropriate adaptation to the needs of the diverse populations affected by slavery and WFCL; that there is rigorous monitoring and evaluation of survivor care programs; and, that programs adapt in response research finds and evolving best practices.

E. Protections for Civil Society
Civil society is critical to development and implementation of any national plan for reducing slavery and WFCL. Governments must therefore be engaged in an open, productive and candid dialogue with non-governmental organizations. Governments must ensure respect for the protections for civil society embedded in international law, including freedom of association, assembly, expression, communication, and cooperation, as well as the rights to seek and secure resources and operate without unwarranted state interference. National governments have a positive duty to ensure civil society organizations can operate in accordance with the foregoing principles.

F. Addressing Vulnerability and Inclusion of All At-Risk Populations
Slavery and WFCL are rooted in vulnerability, including extremes of poverty, inability to assert human rights, lack of access to essential social and economic services and failures to extend the protection of the law to all people and communities. Slavery and WFCL are profoundly linked to discrimination rooted in gender biases and marginalizing ethnic, religious, tribal and other groups. National plans must address

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these basic injustices and anti-slavery programs must be adapted to the diverse needs of at-risk people and communities.

G. Accountability for Perpetrators
Governments must adopt and support legal responses that hold perpetrators accountable and help deter forced labour, commercial sexual exploitation, debt bondage, forced marriage, human trafficking, WFCL and other slavery and slavery-like practices. This includes adequate financing and support for policing and prosecution of all forms of slavery and WFCL; enforcement of penalties commensurate with that imposed for other serious crimes; implementation of policies for civil restitution for survivors; legal relief for persons convicted of crimes committed under compulsion while in a condition of slavery; effective screening measures to identify slavery and WFCL victims; accountability for government agents complicit in perpetuating slavery and WFCL; and, support for policing and prosecution of financial crimes associated with slavery and WFCL, such as money laundering for traffickers. Governments should also consider mechanisms that allow for the alternative of community-based reconciliation with perpetrators making bona fide efforts at reform.

H. Adequate, Effective and Efficient Resource Allocation
Governments must ensure that national plans receive adequate financial support and that funds are rationally allocated among the elements of a national plan, including, but not limited to, prevention, protection and care for survivors, prosecution, research and knowledge sharing, crisis response, partnership building, and funding innovative solutions. Funding must be allocated and/or renewed for programs that demonstrate evidence-based solutions, achieve impact at scale, do not duplicate existing efforts and support productive partnerships among government, civil society and business actors, including financial support for nongovernmental organizations. Where appropriate, national governments must join regional and global efforts to address issues that transcend borders.

I. Full Range of Government Policies
Governments can use their broad array of legitimate powers to promote behaviors and incentives that discourage slavery and WFCL. These include refusing to purchase goods and services from companies that are complicit in slavery or WFCL or fail to make good faith efforts to remove slavery and WFCL from their supply chains; refusing importation of goods made with slave or hazardous child labour; requiring transparency and accountability from businesses; and, divesting from any companies that fail to take appropriate measures to prevent exploitation of their employees or in their supply chains. Governments can also foster a supportive environment for the anti-slavery and child labour movement by upholding labour

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rights as defined by the core labour standards of the International Labour Organization.

J. **International Collaboration and Support**
   Human trafficking is frequently a transnational crime requiring collaboration between governments. Government must develop and/or implement protocols that provide for cooperative efforts to prevent human trafficking; intelligence sharing; interdiction of trafficking across borders; cooperation in identifying, apprehending and holding accountable perpetrators; and protecting the human rights of victims and survivors, including voluntary repatriation with appropriate safeguards and prohibiting the arrest and prosecution victims. Governments must comply with international standards and conventions that reduce slavery and WFCL, as well as vulnerability to slavery and WFCL. Financial and technical support must be provided by wealthier countries to countries that are making good faith efforts to address slavery but lack the means to enact national plans of action. Progress towards SDG 8.7 must be integrated into the diplomatic engagement between and among countries as a matter of priority.

### III. Business

Of the 25 million people in forced labour, 16 million are in the private economy, with domestic work, construction, manufacturing, agriculture and fishing accounting for more than two-thirds (68%) of the total. Another 4 million are subjected to forced labour by governments. The active cooperation of business is therefore essential to the eradication of forced labour and WFCL. While much of hazardous child labour consists of work within the family, especially on family farms, approximately 13.5 million children are engaged in hazardous work in the industrial sector. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and Principles and Recommended Practices for Confronting Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery developed by the Interfaith Center of Corporate Responsibility serve as the basis for civil society’s call to the businesses community:

A. **Compliance with Laws and Policies Against Forced Labour and WFCL**
   National governments have a responsibility to ensure that businesses adhere to human rights laws and principles, including laws aimed at reducing slavery and WFCL, both within their jurisdictions and in the extraterritorial operations of companies based in their country. Businesses are responsible for compliance with such laws and for instituting supportive policies and practices throughout their operations.

B. **State Enterprises Free from Forced Labour and WFCL**
   National governments must ensure that businesses in which the government has an
interest or which are partially or wholly controlled by the government are free of forced labour, commercial sexual exploitation and all forms of slavery, including WFCL.

C. **Government Procurement Prohibiting Goods and Services Made with Forced Labour or WFCL**

   National governments must use their purchasing power to encourage businesses from which they purchase goods and services to act aggressively to root out forced labour and WFCL in both their operations and supply chains. Businesses that are negligent in or complicit with forced labour and/or WFCL must be barred from government procurement until appropriate remedial action is taken.

D. **Trade Policy Discouraging Forced Labour and WFCL**

   Governments must adopt and businesses must support policies that prohibit export and import of goods and services produced with forced labour or WFCL and creating incentives for businesses that adhere to best practices.

E. **Respect for Labour Rights and Worker Organizations**

   Slavery and WFCL are the far end of a continuum of labour abuse and denial of labour rights. A broader context of support for labour rights is conducive to the eradication of slavery and WFCL. Businesses have a responsibility to comply with the core labour standards adopted the International Labour Organization, including freedom of association, right to collective bargaining, elimination of forced labour, abolition of child labour, and elimination of discrimination.

F. **Business Policies and Practices Against Sex Trafficking**

   Businesses must adopt policies and practices that are consistent with the Luxor Implementation Guidelines for the Athens Ethical Principles, which address sex trafficking, and the ECPAT Code of Conduct for preventing sexual exploitation of children.

G. **Business Policies and Practices Against Forced Labour**

   Businesses must adopt policies and practices aimed at eradicating forced labour and WFCL in their supply chains, including, but not limited to a prohibition of recruitment fees charged to workers; holding suppliers accountable for eliminating forced labour and WFCL in their production processes; conducting regular, rigorous audits of labour practices; ensuring that workers and other stakeholders have unfettered access to effective grievance mechanisms; and, negotiating fair prices that do not create incentives for forced labour.

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H. **Demonstrable Impact**
Businesses should take all necessary steps to rigorously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their policies against forced labour and WFCL, using both qualitative and quantitative methods and indicators.

I. **Transparency**
Businesses must make available for public inspection their policies and practices with regard to the elimination of forced labour and WFCL in their operations and suppliers, the results of all assessments of progress in eliminating forced labour and WFCL, and any remedial measures instituted in response to deficiencies and lessons learned.

J. **Accountability and Remediation**
Business must have in place policies and practices that provide appropriate remedies for individuals and groups that have been victimized by forced labour and WFCL in the course of business operation. These remedial measures must be undertaken with labour and civil society organizations to ensure appropriate representation of labour voices and delivery of needed services to the affected workers.

K. **Sector-wide efforts**
Businesses should support and join efforts within their and/or across business sectors to encourage the formulation, adoption and full implementation of business policies and practices that reduce forced labour and WFCL, including educational programs, joint research, advocacy for anti-slavery government policies; incentives for businesses adhering to high standards; and, sanctions for those violating anti-slavery policies and practices.

**IV. Worker Organizations and Trade Unions**

Worker organizations, including trade unions, are a bulwark against forced labor and WFCL. A fundamental purpose of worker organizations, including unions, is to protect and advance core labour rights and promote decent work as defined by the ILO. The right of workers to organize, join unions, represent themselves in their workplaces, have agency and a voice in their workplace is among the best ways to eliminate forced labor and WFCL. The persistence of forced labor and WFCL is an affront to labour rights. It also undermines the broader effort to advance workers economic, political and social rights by creating illicit channels of free labour that are forced to work under extremely arduous and exploitative conditions. Both the mission and the interests of worker organizations are advanced.

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through their contribution to advancing SDG 8.7. Key actions for worker organizations, including trade unions, are as follows:

A. **Promoting the relevant ILO conventions**
   ILO Conventions 29 and 105, the Protocol and Recommendation of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention (P029; R203), and Convention 182 create the internationally accepted legal barriers to forced labour and WFCL. Worker organizations, especially trade unions, can make an important contribution to SDG 8.7 through systematic and continuing advocacy with governments to abide by these conventions, monitoring government compliance, and engaging businesses to abide by the conventions. This promotion of the ILO conventions should include educating key stakeholders, such as labor inspectors, immigration officials, police, parliamentarians, and social service agencies about the realities of forced labour and WFCL.

B. **Raising Awareness Among Worker Organization Members**
   Union members and members of worker organizations may not be well versed in the problems of forced labour and WFCL. Educating the membership of unions and worker organizations is an important role for their leaders. Encouraging members to be fully aware and engaged, monitor their workplaces, act as whistleblowers, and support active measures by the organization can add critical voices and an important political constituency.

C. **Organizing and Educating Vulnerable Workers**
   The historic role of unions in educating and organizing vulnerable workers is of special salience to at-risk groups, such as informal economy and migrant workers. By educating at-risk workers about their rights, learning from workers about the conditions they face, mobilizing and organizing workers into unions, engaging in collective bargaining to ensure fair workplaces, and serving as their advocate, unions play a critical role in preventing, detecting and publicizing forced labor and WFCL, as well as holding perpetrators accountable.

D. **Intervention and Assistance for Victims**
   Union and worker organization contact with at-risk workers will likely lead to uncovering instance of forced labour and WFCL. Unions and worker organizations can play a vital role in removing workers from such situations, appropriately documenting these cases, and serving as advocates for survivors to secure essential support services, including legal, medical and psychological care, restitution, police protection, training and other social services. Union legal aid centers play an important role in helping survivors secure remedies such as back wages and other forms of owed compensation. Worker organizations should bring such cases to the

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attention of appropriate authorities, such as labor inspectors and police (when it is safe to do so), and encourage assertive action to hold perpetrators accountable and change exploitative practices.

**Monitoring, Recruitment and Employment Agencies**

Exploitative recruitment and employment agencies are a major conduit for forced labor, debt bondage and WFCL. Union and worker organization members and their families often have close links to communities vulnerable to exploitation. Unions and worker organizations can play a critical role by advocating for appropriate government regulation of recruitment and employment agencies, including an absolute ban on recruitment fees to workers, monitoring compliance with laws and regulations in the vulnerable communities, and holding businesses/employers accountable for unethical recruitment practices, in accordance with the ILO Principles and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment.

**Commitment**

We, the undersigned organizations, are fully committed to participating constructively in Alliance 8.7 and advancing the eradication of slavery and WFCL as called for in SDG 8.7 and other forms of egregious human rights violations addressed by related Sustainable Development Goals. This Civil Society Statement of Principles and Goal has been developed as the basis for fruitful dialogue with other sectors and in the expectation that common ground can be found. We pledge to abide by the principles enunciated for civil society so that we make our maximum contribution and to evaluate our own adherence to those principles. In that same spirit, we urge governments, businesses, worker organizations, and multilateral organizations to support the principles set forth in this Statement, all of which are grounded in established international conventions and laws. We call upon the ILO, other concerned multilateral organizations, governments, businesses and worker organizations to engage with civil society as a full and equal partner in shaping a future free of forced labour and WFCL.

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