



ALLIANCE

Regional brief for Africa

**2017 GLOBAL ESTIMATES OF
MODERN SLAVERY AND CHILD LABOUR**

Introduction

In 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 17 interrelated goals and 169 associated targets to guide global development. SDG Target 8.7 calls on governments to:

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 2016 Global Estimates of Child Labour¹ and 2016 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery² chart how far we must still travel to honour these commitments. This brief summarises key results from the global estimates for the Africa region. It also addresses the main regional policy priorities on the road to the 2025 date for ending child labour and the 2030 date for eradicating modern slavery.

Child labour: main facts and challenges

Table 1

Key statistics: child labour

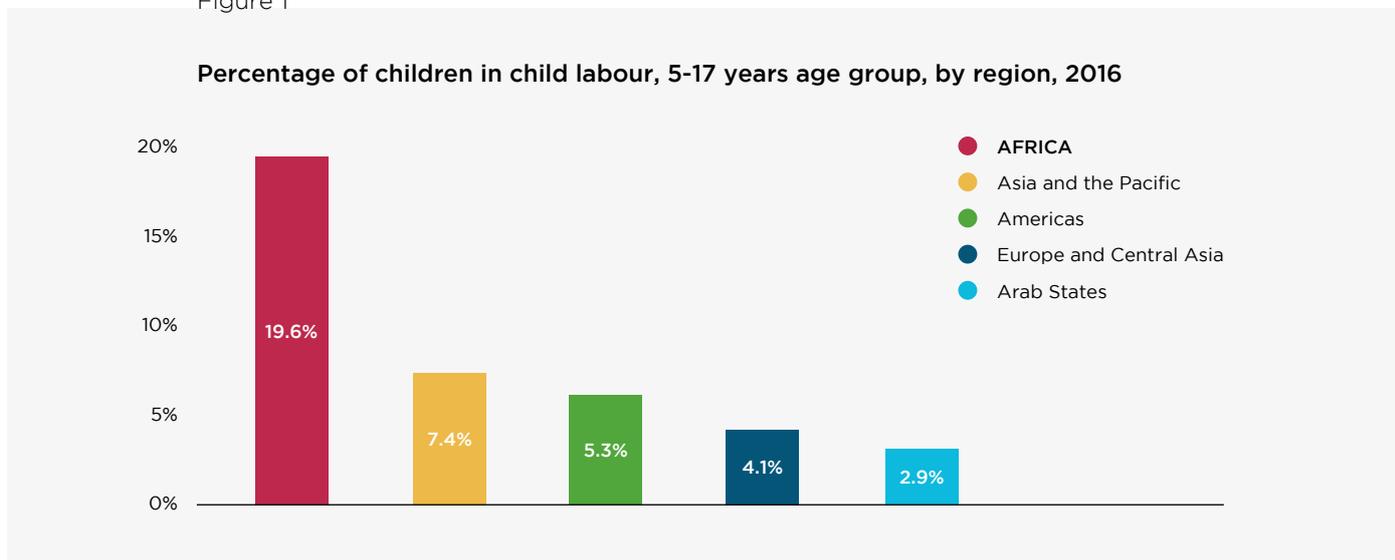
Number (000s) and percentage of children in child labour and hazardous work, by age range, Africa region, 2016

	Children in child labour		Children in hazardous work	
	Number (000s)	%	Number (000s)	%
World	151 622	9.6	72 525	4.6
Africa, total	72 113	19.6	31 538	8.6
Africa, age	5-11	42 547	12 948	6.0
	12-14	18 928	7 953	10.0
	15-17	10 638	10 638	14.5

The definition of child labour is underscored by the two ILO Conventions 138 and 182. According to the articles of the conventions, child labour is defined as a sub-set of working children. It includes all children in the age cohort 5-11 years who are working; all children between the ages of 12-14 years, who are performing work not considered as light work and working more than 14 hours a week; and all those in the 15-17 years group whose work may be deemed hazardous.

Accordingly, what the estimates show is that one-fifth of all African children are involved in child labour, a proportion more than twice as high as in any other region (Fig. 1). Nine per cent of African children are in hazardous work, again highest of all the world's regions. In absolute terms, 72.1 million African children are estimated to be in child labour and 31.5 million in hazardous work.

Figure 1



The estimates also show:

Progress against child labour appears to have stalled in Africa. Child labour went up in Sub-Saharan Africa over 2012 to 2016 period (Fig. 2), in contrast to continued progress elsewhere in the world, and despite the targeted policies implemented by African governments to combat child labour. The Africa region has also been among those most affected by situations of state fragility and crisis, which in turn heighten the risk of child labour (see below).

Figure 2

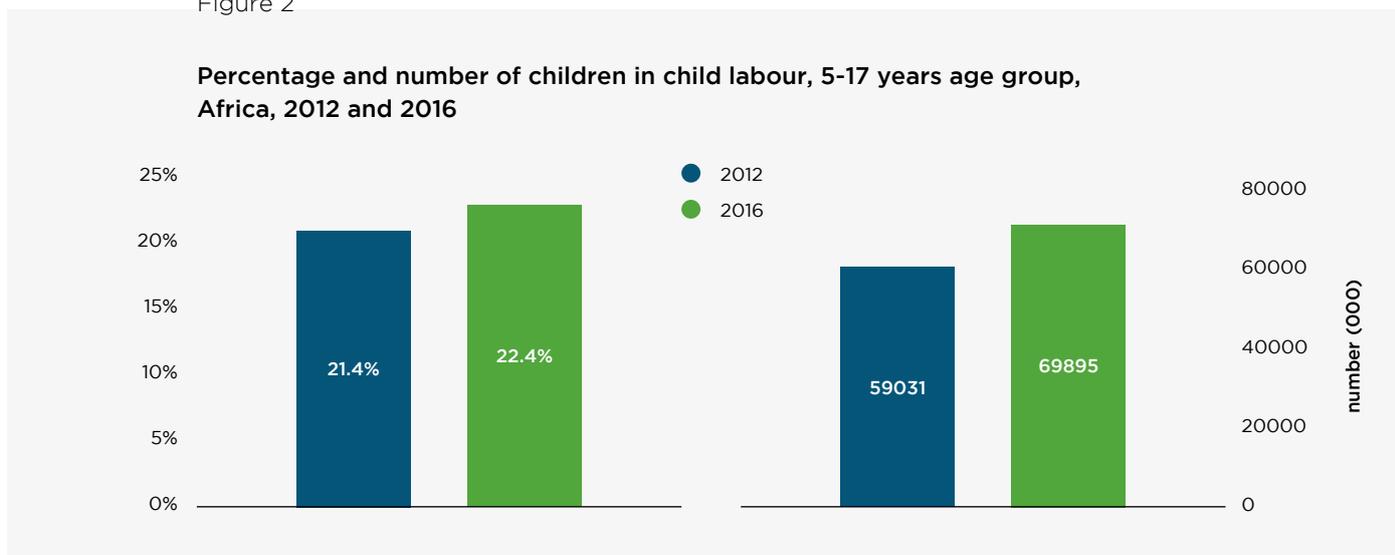


Figure 3

Percentage distribution and number (000s) of children in child labour, by branch of economic activity, Africa, 2016

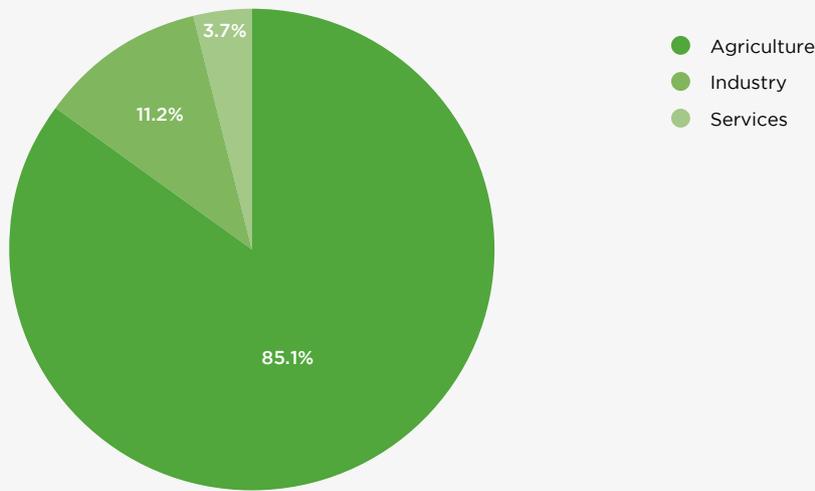
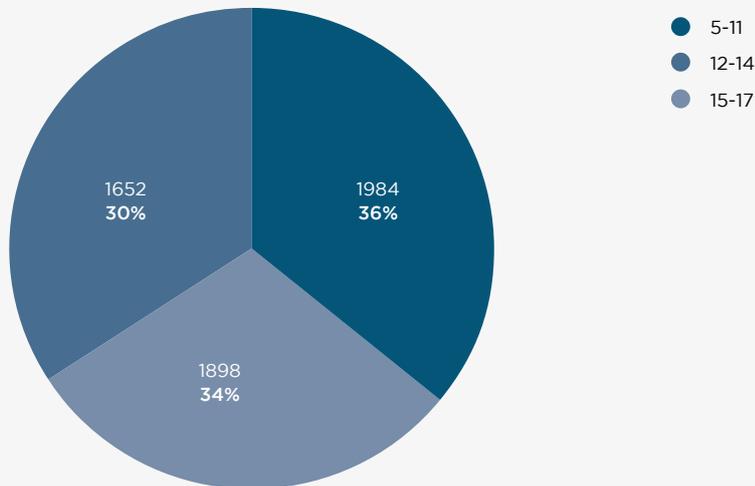


Figure 4

Percentage distribution and number (000s) of children in child labour, by age group, Africa, 2016



Agriculture predominates. Agriculture accounts for 85 per cent of all child labour and for 61.4 million children in absolute terms. Child labour in agriculture relates primarily to subsistence and commercial farming and livestock herding; most is unpaid and takes place within the family unit. Of the remaining children in child labour, 8.1 million (11 per cent) are found in the services sector and 2.7 million (4 per cent) are found in industry.

Young children form the largest group of those in child labour. The age breakdown of children in child labour indicate that 59 per cent of all those in child labour are in the 5-11 years age bracket, 26 per cent are aged 12-14 years and 15 per cent fall into the

15-17 years age range. This age profile of child labour in Africa is much “younger” than elsewhere. Children in the youngest age bracket also constitute the largest group in hazardous work in Africa. The group of very young African children facing hazardous work conditions directly endangering their health, safety and moral development is of special concern.

Modern slavery: main facts and challenges

Table 2

Key statistics: modern slavery

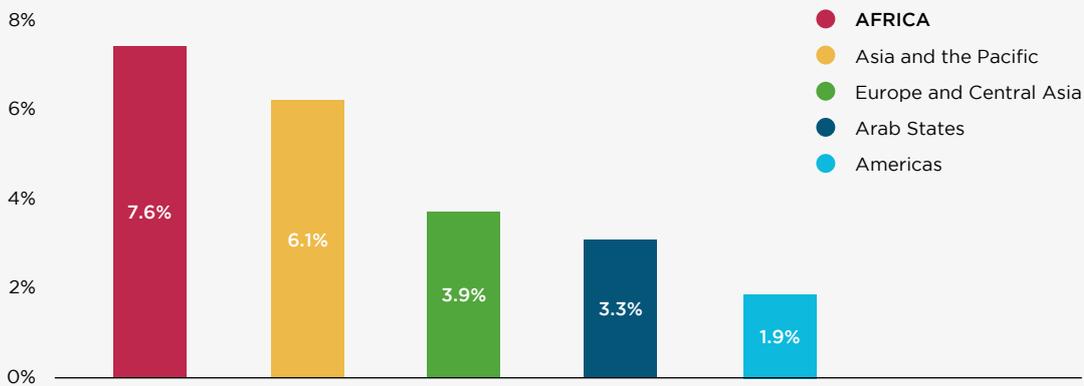
Number (000s) and prevalence (per 1,000) of persons in modern slavery, by age, sex and category, Africa region, 2016

		(a) Forced labour	(b) Forced marriage	(a&b) MODERN SLAVERY	
World	No. (000s)	24 850	15 442	40 293	
	Prev. (‰)	3.4	2.1	5.4	
Africa, total	No. (000s)	3 420	5 820	9 240	
	Prev. (‰)	2.8	4.8	7.6	
Africa, age	Children	No. (000s)	511	1 483	1 994
		Prev. (‰)	0.9	2.6	3.5
	Adults	No. (000s)	2 906	4 335	7 241
		Prev. (‰)	4.5	6.8	11.3
Africa, sex	Male	No. (000s)	1 890	815	2 705
		Prev. (‰)	3.1	1.3	4.4
	Female	No. (000s)	1 514	5 003	6 517
		Prev. (‰)	2.5	8.2	10.7

The global estimates for 2016 indicate that there were a total of over 9.2 million victims of modern slavery³ in Africa on any given day in 2016. This translates into a prevalence of 7.6 per 1,000 persons, highest of any region in the world (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Prevalence of modern slavery, by region, 2016

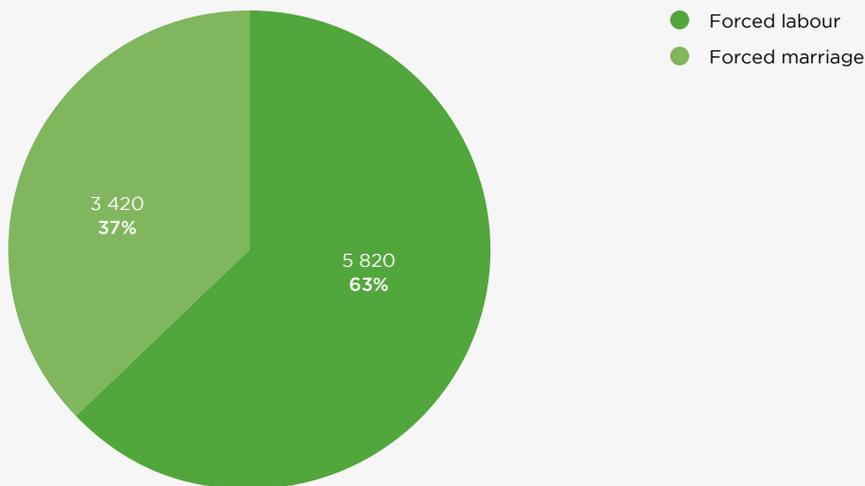


The estimates also show:

The largest share of those in modern slavery were victims of forced labour. About two-thirds (63 per cent) of the total were victims of forced labour⁴ (which covered three areas: forced labour imposed by private actors; forced sexual exploitation; and State-imposed forced labour) and 37 per cent were victims of forced marriage (Figure 6). The prevalence of forced marriage was highest of all the world's regions.

Figure 6

Percentage share and number (000s) in forced labour and forced marriage, Africa, 2016

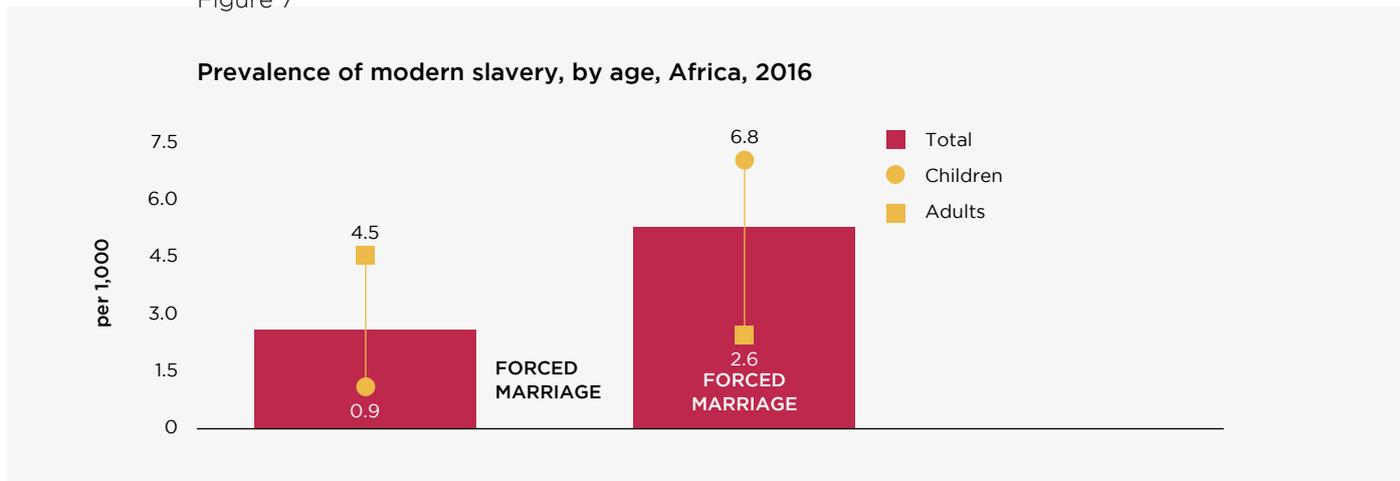


Many forced labour victims were in situations of debt bondage. Over half (54 per cent) of all victims of forced labour imposed by private actors in the Africa region were in debt bondage defined as being forced to work to repay a debt and not being able to leave. The share was especially high among those forced to work in agriculture, domes-

tic work, or manufacturing. It is likely that these figures reflect a mix of cases of both traditional forms of bonded labour and newer forms of debt bondage where recruitment fees and agency charges become the debt that binds.

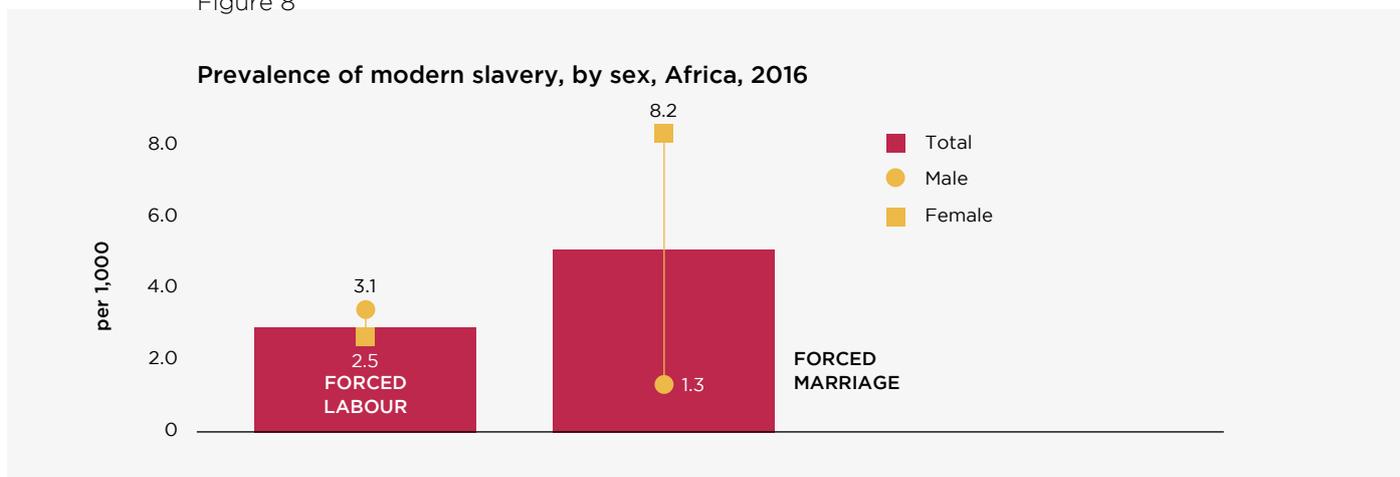
Modern slavery affected children as well as adults. Two million of the victims in the Africa region were children below the age of 18 years. Children were especially likely to be victims of forced marriage; a total of 1.5 million children were living in a situation of forced marriage in 2016, translating into a prevalence rate of 2.6 per 1,000 children (Fig. 7). Forced labour affected an additional 511,000 children, a figure that included children in commercial sexual exploitation.

Figure 7



The prevalence of modern slavery was much higher for females. There were 10.7 female victims per 1,000 compared to 4.4 male victims per 1,000. This overall gender gap masked an even larger gap between males and females in forced marriage (Fig. 8); female were more than six times more likely to be in a forced marriage. The prevalence of forced labour, by contrast, was slightly higher among males. There were also large gender-based differences in the means of coercion in forced labour; sexual violence, for example, was limited almost exclusively to female victims.

Figure 8



Policy priorities on the road to 2025 and 2030

Ending child labour and modern slavery will require a multi-faceted response that addresses the array of forces – economic, social, cultural and legal – that contribute to people’s vulnerability and enable abuses. Responses need to be adapted to the diverse environments in which child labour and modern slavery occur. Some overarching regional policy priorities emerging from the global estimates and a growing body of research and practical experience could focus on the following:

Expanding access to free, quality public education. Education helps break intergenerational cycles of poverty and provides a worthwhile alternative to child labour. Evidence also suggests that, alongside the development and enforcement of criminal laws, the promotion of the right to education helps to prevent forced marriage. There is an ongoing need for investment in what we know works in getting children out of work and into the classroom – and keeping them there.

Pursuing community mobilization and sensitization In Africa, it is imperative to start the process at the grassroots level and to involve communities in awareness-raising on the long-term implications of child labour and lost childhoods. This is an area of concern, which could be taken up by civil society and the social partners, to ensure that the livelihoods concerns of the poor get represented in policy process. Participatory approaches are crucial in pursuing community-based sustainable development and in providing access and control to the marginalised populations.

Agriculture should be emphasised in policy Given the preponderance of child labour in agriculture, public policy needs to address root causes. Commensurately, attention should be given to alternative income generating opportunities for rural populations, which would enlarge opportunities for rural households to achieve a decent standard of living and hence, foster less reliance on children either as unpaid workers or as income earners. Public works programmes and rural industrialisation are viable options for tackling underemployment and unemployment, which would contribute to the realisation of decent work.

Extending social protection systems, including floors. Vulnerabilities associated with poverty, sudden job loss, natural disasters, economic crisis and other shocks can force households to resort to child labour as a coping mechanism. These shocks can also play a central role in pushing people into modern slavery. Social protection is critical to mitigating these vulnerabilities. Cash transfer schemes, public employment programmes, health protection, maternity protection, disability benefits, unemployment protection and income security in old age are all relevant in this regard, within well-designed social security systems.

Ensuring fair and effective migration governance. The global estimates show that a high percentage of all African victims of modern slavery are exploited outside their country of residence underscoring the link between migration and modern slavery in the region. A significant share of children in child labour are also migrants. The unique vulnera-

bilities faced by migrants should be addressed through broader reforms to migration governance designed to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks and social costs of migration.

Protecting vulnerable populations in situations of conflict and disaster. Fragile situations – characterized by income shocks, a breakdown in formal and family social support networks, displacement and disruptions in basic services provision – create an elevated risk of child labour and modern slavery. There is an urgent need to enhance responses to child labour and modern slavery among emergency-affected populations. Prevention and protection measures addressing child labour and modern slavery should be systematically included during all phases of humanitarian action. Tools are needed to rapidly assess risks of child labour and modern slavery in order to guide responses.

Addressing debt bondage. There is a very high prevalence of debt bondage as a means of coercion in Africa – more than half the victims of forced labour were in some form of debt bondage. These statistics also capture cases of child forced labour in which involve children working with or for their parents who are themselves in forced labour. A common example is child labour in the context of family-bonded agricultural work. The finding makes clear that prevention and protection policies must also tackle the roots of debt bondage and bonded labour systems. Debt bondage needs to be addressed as part of broader reforms.

Strengthening legislation and enforcement. The establishment of a legal architecture consistent with international legal standards relating to modern slavery and child labour remains a key priority in a number of African countries. It is important to ensure that relevant legislation apply to all workers, including those in the informal economy, where most forced labour and child labour occurs and where 60-80 per cent of the African workforce is found. Development of adequate enforcement capacities should be pursued. It is equally important to strengthen the administration of labour justice, to apply both sanctions for the offenders and remedies for the victims of modern slavery.

Building the evidence base. The regional-level information provided by the global estimates needs to be augmented by further research and data collection efforts on all dimensions of modern slavery at the *country level* to generate the country-specific evidence necessary for informed national policy responses. Information on child labour and modern slavery in the region is far from complete. In the areas of both child labour and modern slavery, there is also an ongoing need for information about the impact of policies and interventions in order to guide policy choices.

End notes

1. *Global estimates of child labour: Results and trends, 2012-2016*. International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva, 2017.
2. *Global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage*. International Labour Organization (ILO) and Walk Free Foundation, Geneva, 2017.
3. In the context of this report, modern slavery covers a set of specific legal concepts including forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, slavery and slavery like practices, and human trafficking. Although modern slavery is not defined in law, it is used an umbrella term that focuses attention on commonalities across these legal concepts. Essentially, it refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power. In order to make this set of complex legal concepts measurable, the Global Estimates focus on two key forms of modern slavery: forced labour and forced marriage.
4. Forced labour is defined by ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) as “all work or service that is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.” The global estimates of forced labour is based on three main categories of forced labour defined as follows: forced labour imposed by private agents for labour exploitation, including bonded labour, forced domestic work, and work imposed in the context of slavery or vestiges of slavery; forced sexual exploitation of adults, imposed by private agents for commercial sexual exploitation, and all forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children; and State-imposed forced labour, including work exacted by the public authorities, military or paramilitary, compulsory participation in public works, and forced prison labour.



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