

BREAK THE CHAIN

Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking
and Forced Labour Youth Project

COMMUNIQUE



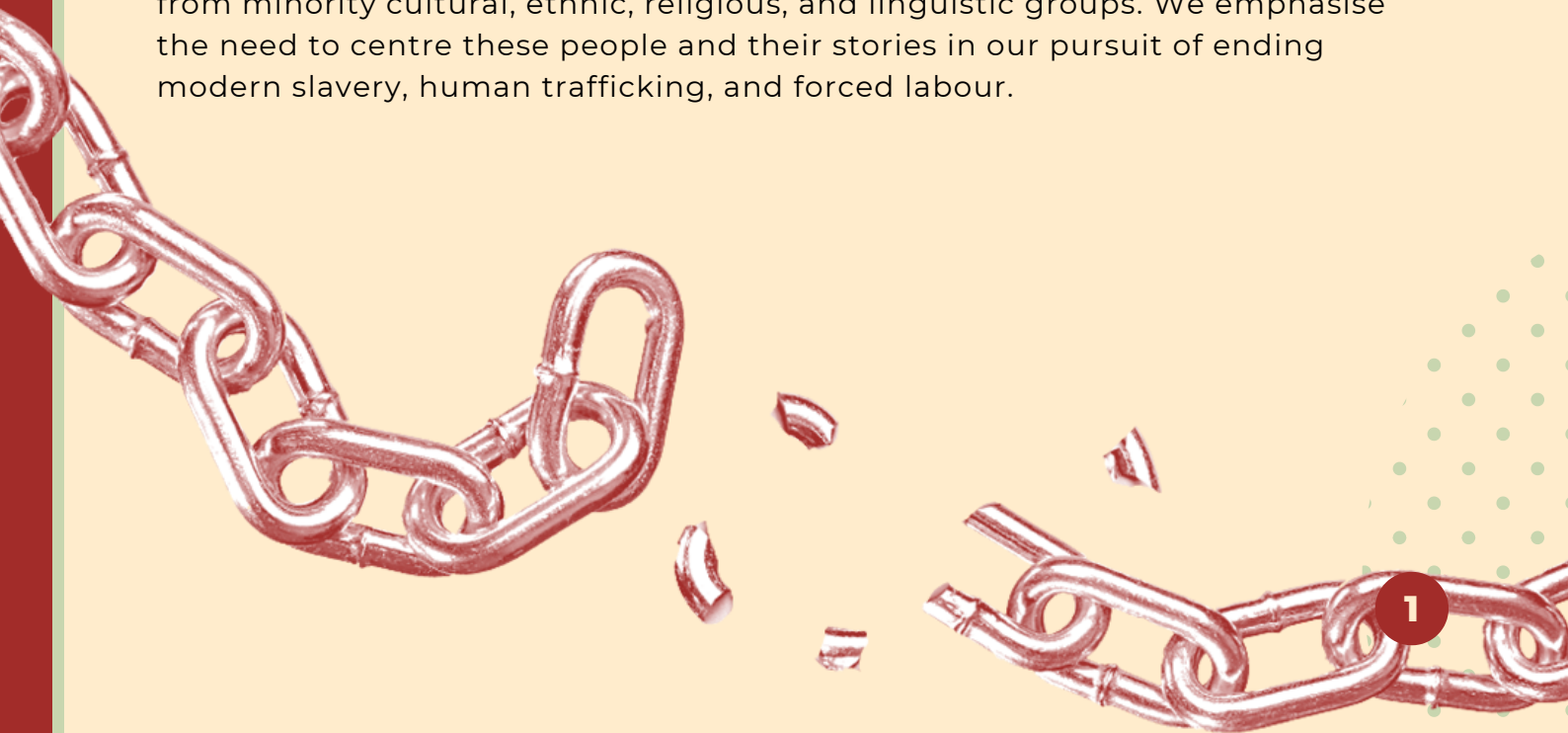
BREAK THE CHAIN COMMUNIQUE

We, the Delegates of the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Youth Partnerships' Break The Chain, convened for the first-ever Break The Chain programme from January 30 to February 28, 2021. As young people aged 18 to 29, we represent the emerging leaders of our region on issues of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.

This programme comes at a time of extraordinary uncertainty. As we continue to face the devastating impacts of COVID-19 across the ASEAN-Australia region, we have an opportunity to prioritise both vulnerable groups and new perspectives in our solutions to modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.

No single entity alone can end modern slavery across Southeast Asia and Australia; its eradication will require governments, civil society, academia and business coming together to make human-centred, informed, and collaborative decisions.

Any response to modern slavery must recognise the disproportionate impact these issues have upon vulnerable groups such as women, youth, migrant workers, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, Indigenous and First Nations peoples, LGBTQIA+ people, people with disabilities, and people from minority cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups. We emphasise the need to centre these people and their stories in our pursuit of ending modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.



We, the Delegates, call on regional leaders across government, the private sector, academia, and civil society to:

1.

Equip young people to be leaders on issues of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.

Public policy thinkers are increasingly prioritising the voices of affected people and communities when designing policy solutions. Young people account for a significant proportion of victims of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour in our region. Children alone represent 25% of all victims of forced labour (ILO, 2016). To adequately engage with the unique vulnerabilities and risks young people face, stakeholders in the field need to work with young leaders when designing their regional approaches.

We call on leaders to:

- Commit to policy co-design with young people, whereby young people are given meaningful opportunities to contribute to regional solution-building.
- Ensure dedicated youth representation in mechanisms that facilitate policy dialogue, especially at the Bali Process Government and Business Forum.
- Ensure aid and development spending through bodies such as the ASEAN-Australia Counter-Trafficking Initiative has a strong focus on young people.
- Invest in youth champions that can advocate for youth perspectives to be included in business solutions.
- Fund opportunities for youth-led initiatives specifically aimed at addressing the risk of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour to young people on a local, national and regional level.
- Provide specialised mentoring for youth with expertise and demonstrated participation in issues of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.

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2.

Raise community awareness about modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.

Many communities lack knowledge about the prevalence, risk factors, and signs of labour exploitation. Lack of awareness, coupled with varying (and often amorphous) national and international definitions of exploitation, create difficulties with identifying and addressing modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour practices. We can only start to comprehensively challenge, prevent, and end exploitative practices by raising awareness within our local and regional communities.

We call on leaders to:

- Recognise that modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour are regional issues and frame community awareness-raising efforts in such a way that promotes regional consciousness.
- Adopt clear and consistent definitions of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour across sectors and countries to assist in identifying exploitative labour practices.
- Empower at-risk communities to lead policy discussions, so as to promote nuanced, locally informed, and dynamic understandings of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.
- Promote and fund research that identifies best practice solutions to ending modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.

3.

Improve education on labour rights across the region.

Unfortunately, many members of our regional community lack knowledge of their rights as workers, leading to heightened risks of exploitation. There is a strong need to ensure that all people are aware of their rights when entering employment, both domestically and internationally, in order to better identify and prevent cases of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.

We call on leaders to:

- Work across sectors to develop community-based programmes that educate workers on their labour rights and signs of exploitative practices (including awareness around legal work hours, working conditions, work parameters, leave, and health and safety).
- Incorporate education about labour rights into school curriculums across the region.
- Develop best practice company standards for the hiring of workers which explicitly include worker's rights and responsibilities.
- Recognise the importance of mitigating risks-to-people rather than risks-to-business, develop legislative frameworks which incentivise risks-to-people as a KPI and requirement in supply chains. Ensure that educational resources for workers are accessible, including to those with low literacy levels and are available in locally appropriate and diverse languages.
- Elevate the voices of workers, particularly young workers, and protect the right to have meaningful input in the workplace, as stated in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 1998, Article 2(a).

4.

Increase collaboration across sectors.

While recent years have seen a rise in intersectoral collaboration, there is still a need for more robust collaboration between all sectors.

Governments, business, and non-governmental organisations must collaborate to establish a complete prevention and justice response to modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.

We call on leaders to:

- Develop avenues for ongoing collaboration across different sectors, including business, government, academia, not-for-profit, and the media, to utilise their unique insights and generate comprehensive policy decisions and initiatives.

- Encourage regionally focused discussions and solutions, emphasising the centrality of region-wide collaboration and cooperation in comprehensively addressing the issue.
- Recognise that the region's diversity of social, political, economic, geographical, religious, and political circumstances serves to strengthen, rather than hinder, multidisciplinary collaboration.
- Proactively identify and address any real or perceived barriers that may limit effective engagement across the region, particularly when faced with diverse circumstances and risk factors.
- Promote opportunities for youth to develop networks and initiatives across the region and across different sectors.
- Provide community resource mapping of civil society and relevant government bodies to facilitate more efficient and effective collaboration on these issues.

5.

Focus increased ASEAN-Australia collaboration efforts on building solutions that extend beyond a security-informed approach.

Though cases of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour manifest themselves uniquely in different countries, they remain a fundamentally transnational problem that can only be tackled through regional efforts. Though we have seen a growth in regional forums and initiatives, more needs to be done to create cohesive, comprehensive, and locally informed regional approaches that move beyond employing a security lens to tackle these issues.

We call on leaders to:

- Recognise that modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour are not solely security issues, and that these challenges cannot be solved by independent nations alone and must instead be met by regional efforts.
- Strengthen existing avenues for collaboration between ASEAN countries and Australia to tackle the increasingly transnational and shifting nature of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.

- Create platforms for new and innovative forms of collaboration between ASEAN and Australia, focusing on youth, at-risk, and marginalised voices.
- Promote a variety of rights-based approaches rather than solely security-led solutions when tackling transnational labour exploitation.
- Develop regional initiatives to tackle the growing use of digital mediums to perpetrate forms of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.
- Strengthen networks of domestic and international institutions across the region through capacity-building and facilitating greater information-sharing on issues and solutions.

6.

Prioritise victim-centred responses to incidents of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.

We call on leaders to:

- Strengthen access to remediation and access to justice for victims of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour.
- Review and amend existing laws and regulations to ensure the centring of victims within all justice responses.
- Enhance referral mechanisms across the region, including the creation of national referral hotlines and reporting mechanisms.
- Strengthen both state and non-state-based case-management mechanisms that emerge from effective reporting and referral processes.
- Develop and strengthen victim support and reintegration mechanisms.
- Push for the legalisation of undocumented workers and the recognition of migrant workers under national laws.

CONCLUSION

Modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour can only be tackled through joint, sustained efforts from all sectors, countries, and peoples in our region. We are proud to be the first batch of Break the Chain delegates - brought together from across the ASEAN-Australia region to discuss issues of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour. However, this programme is only one of very few opportunities for young people to engage with established partners and stakeholders on issues of labour exploitation.

Given the disproportionate impact that issues of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour have upon youth, young people must be heard when working to address it. This includes prioritising youth voices and perspectives in local, national, and regional discussions, and engaging us in the design of solutions. We believe that youth-led and locally informed initiatives will allow the ASEAN-Australia region to better understand, respond to, and prevent issues of modern slavery, human trafficking, forced labour moving forward.

We thank all those who have supported the Break the Chain programme thus far, and we look forward to the continuation of our collaboration and working relationships with partners and stakeholders across the region.



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Thank you to our Sponsors and Partners for all your support to the Break the Chain: Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Forced Labour Youth Project.

Thank you for supporting us to give this opportunity to 38 passionate young leaders across Southeast Asia and Australia.

