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Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery
Testimony of Gary Haugen, International Justice Mission
Before the
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
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Thank you for this opportunity to testify, Chairman Corker. My name is Gary Haugen, and I am the President of International Justice Mission (IJM). We are grateful that you have chosen to make the issue of global slavery one of your top priorities.

As you know, slavery is a crime that inflicts great suffering on tens of millions of victims every year. It takes many forms, including forced sexual exploitation, exploitative labor, domestic servitude, and debt bondage. But all forms of slavery, past and present, share certain characteristics.

First, slavery is unspeakably violent. Over the past fifteen years, International Justice Mission has investigated thousands of cases of slavery and worked with local authorities to rescue tens of thousands of children, men and women. In virtually every case, perpetrators use violence and the threat of violence to terrorize victims into submission and servitude. IJM's clients have experienced kidnapping, brutal beatings, sexual assault and gang rape, mutilation, humiliation, and starvation. Many of our clients report that slave owners and managers will go to great lengths to track down escaped slaves and bring them back to the facility to be beaten or whipped in front of the other slaves to sow terror and docility.

Second, slavery is an economically-motivated crime. This orgy of violence and abuse that factory managers, labor recruiters, brothel owners, and crew bosses inflict on the vulnerable is for a very specific purpose. It is for the purpose of generating profits for the abusers. The simple economic model of reducing labor costs to virtually nothing by coercing labor generates upwards of \$150 billion in profits.

A conversation between my staff and a Ghanaian slave owner illustrates this simple calculation. IJM's team was conducting a prevalence study of child labor slavery on Lake Volta in Ghana recently. The team asked a fisherman who had several young child slaves on his boat why he didn't use older children for the dangerous and back-breaking work. He answered without hesitation: "Older kids eat too much. And they start to have their own ideas. The young kids are much easier to control."

A third common characteristic of present day and historic slavery is that in all cases there is a perpetrator. Human beings do not naturally or willingly offer up their bodies and their labor for the abusive enrichment of another. In all cases, slavery occurs when vulnerable people are

preyed upon by others possessing slightly more power than they do. Vulnerability alone does not enslave; it requires an enslaver.

One characteristic that modern day slavery does *not* share with historic slavery is its legal status. During the 400 years of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, slavery was legal. It was legal in the U.S. from earliest Colonial days to its legal abolition in 1865. Today, in contrast, slavery is legal virtually nowhere in the world. Yet there are more human beings in slavery today than at any previous time in history.

The first half of the abolition agenda -- outlawing the crime of slavery has been accomplished. The second half of the abolition agenda – making these laws meaningful to slavery’s victims – has barely been attempted.

According to the latest State Department Trafficking in Persons Report, the governments of the 3 countries reported to have the most number of slaves (totaling over 19.5 million, or over half the world’s slaves) reported zero convictions in anti-trafficking cases in 2013. Zero.

The obvious question for the Committee is this: Why are laws against slavery so seldom enforced?

In our work, IJM has found that anti-slavery or anti-trafficking laws are not enforced because the victims are poor and powerless and have little access to judicial institutions. Perpetrators, in contrast, frequently have ties to local authorities. In some cases, local police are paid by local traffickers to look the other way or are actively complicit in the crime. The overwhelming failure of effective law enforcement against trafficking and slavery has persuaded many policy makers that it is simply impossible for police to change. They have simply given up on the dream of making the protection of law real for poor people. Thus the bulk of U.S. anti-trafficking assistance is for programs to prevent the crime by making the victim less vulnerable. Tens of millions of dollars have been spent in public education programs to teach poor communities about the risks of trafficking and slavery. Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent on education, health and job creation in hopes of insulating potential victims from exploitation and abuse.

Education, health and income generation programs are valuable in their own right. But these funds have not had a measurable impact on slavery. Why? Because they do not affect the behavior of the central player in every situation of enslavement and exploitation: the perpetrator. Perpetrators of trafficking, slavery, and debt bondage, whether they are unscrupulous labor recruiters in Qatar, brothel owners in Southeast Asia, or pimps in the U.S. have one thing in common. They are making money from the subjugation of others. If they are not at risk for going to jail for their crime, they will go to whatever village, slum, city or state in the world to find the poor and the vulnerable. But they will stop even trying to enslave the poor if they are afraid of going to jail.

Consider Ghana, a lower-middle income, democratic nation that has had robust economic growth for the past five years. Ghana is a favored partner of the World Bank, whose current grants, loans, and credits total \$3.49 billion. The U.S. Government is a generous donor, as well, providing \$154 million for health and development last year.

But a third of Ghana's children work, and neither economic growth nor foreign assistance protects thousands of them from actual enslavement in fishing, domestic servitude, artisanal gold mining, begging, and prostitution. Prevalence studies conducted by International Justice Mission (IJM) on Lake Volta over the past 18 months revealed that 60 percent of the children fishing on the lake were clearly slaves, bearing tell-tale signs of violence, depredation, and terror. Ghanaian law prohibits slavery, but slave owners and traffickers told IJM undercover investigators that they had no fear whatsoever of Ghana's anti-trafficking police, a force of 150 officers. They have little reason to: the unit does not own a boat and does not patrol Lake Volta. Fortunately, the Government of Ghana is committed to ending this scourge. With training and assistance, the anti-trafficking police unit is an excellent candidate for funding and technical assistance from the U.S. and other donors. Once it begins to rescue kids and apprehend perpetrators, child slavery prevalence will go down -- not because Ghana is less economically disadvantaged but because traffickers will respond to increasing prospects of apprehension, conviction and stiff jail terms. Fishing and other enterprises will have to hire -- and pay -- adult workers.

We've seen and measured the impact of professional law enforcement on the crime of child trafficking elsewhere. In 2007, IJM received a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to begin operations to reduce child sex trafficking in the Philippines second largest city of Cebu. With that support, IJM initiated collaboration with the Philippines National Police in the country's second largest city, Cebu, to rescue minor girls from sexual exploitation and apprehend perpetrators. IJM contracted with an independent criminal data collection firm to execute a baseline prevalence of commercial exploitation of minors in Cebu's substantial sex industry. Over the next three years, IJM and its PNP partners investigated hundreds of establishments, rescued over 225 victims of trafficking, and apprehended 77 suspected perpetrators. Because trafficking is a non-bail offense under Philippines law, those suspects remained in jail, many of their businesses shuttered. The independent investigators conducted a mid-term study and a final study at the end of the 4-year period. They found that the availability of minor girls had plummeted by 79 percent in Cebu.

International Justice Mission has also seen dramatic reduction in the prevalence of child prostitution elsewhere in Southeast Asia as a consequence of professional policing. In Cambodia, very young, prepubescent children were commonly available for sexual exploitation in the early 2000's. A Cambodian government study at the time estimated that 30 percent of those in prostitution were minor children. A decade later, professional policing by a well-trained and well-led anti-trafficking unit had transformed the sex industry in Cambodia. A prevalence study by IJM in late 2012 revealed no children under fifteen being sold for sex and very few minors age 15-17 in commercial sex venues.

Cambodia's transformation with regard to commercial sexual exploitation of children is noteworthy because broader human rights standards did not improve. Cambodia's government was not comprehensively transformed, and it is still a poor country. Change occurred because the government made a conscious political decision to enforce its own laws against child prostitution and proceeded to equip and empower the police anti-trafficking unit to do its job. Over 100 perpetrators of child trafficking were convicted and jailed. And Cambodia's criminal class responded with alacrity: they got out of the business of selling children.

IJM's experience working with local law enforcement has shown us that police *can* improve quite dramatically and are equal to the task of changing the calculations of those profiting from the sale of others. As we've seen in Southeast Asia, it is not necessary for police to apprehend every brothel owner, madam, pimp, or trafficker. A relatively small number of arrests, prosecutions, and convictions have a disproportionate impact on criminals who buy, sell, and exploit children.

The United States has led in the world wide fight against slavery, and is fortunate to have some excellent tools with which to do it. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and the establishment of the State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons have helped make the issue of slavery a top U.S. foreign policy concern. The annual Trafficking in Persons Report has been the catalyst for positive changes by governments on every continent, as has the leadership of many very fine American diplomats around the world.

We are grateful for Congress authorizing and funding an anti-trafficking innovation: Child Protection Compacts. We have seen what is possible in our own work when we partnered with local law enforcement in a collaborative casework model, and stayed in the fight with them. The Child Protection Compacts reflects this approach, and offers an opportunity to see real change in the prevalence of child trafficking in selected focus countries.

But even with the substantial diplomatic and financial resources the United States has offered over the past fifteen years, the global scourge of slavery requires a global response. IJM is very encouraged by discussions between the Senate, the executive branch, and representatives of the private sector about the creation of a new funding mechanism that would bring new resources to the fight. We look forward to working with you on this historic initiative.