

Thank you Mr Mayor

Mr Mayor whilst I am delighted to be moving this Notice of Motion, I am saddened that the world still suffers from Slavery, Trafficking and child prostitution.

Mr Mayor, William Wilberforce is a name that is synonymous with anti-slavery. In 1807, led by Wilberforce, an Act for the abolition of the slave trade was passed by Parliament. In 1833, the Slavery Abolition Act was passed. It then begs the question of why are we here this evening talking about slavery, more than 200 years after the abolition of the slave trade?

Mr Mayor, it is a very sad fact that slavery and trafficking are still far too common an occurrence. A frightening statistic is that there are estimated to be more than 27 million slaves in the world today. One in eight of those trapped in slavery are in Europe, and at least 10,000 of them are here in the United Kingdom. Mr Mayor we do not see slaves sweeping the streets or working in the fields. The fact that the problem is not as visible as it was in the time of William Wilberforce does not mean that it is not as important or as serious today as it was then.

Mr Mayor the three most lucrative criminal activities in the world are those associated with narcotics and with firearms, and the trafficking of humans. The first two criminal activities are well documented and huge sums of money are quite rightly invested in catching the criminals involved, and it is therefore imperative that we continue to invest sufficient resources in our fight against this unacceptable slave trade.

Lets look at some of the most recent statistics: Between April 2009 and March 2010, there were 706 victims of human trafficking identified, with the majority of those victims coming from Nigeria, China and Vietnam. 74% of the referrals made have been female, 24% have been minors.

According to the Home Affairs Select Committee Report, *'The Trade in Human Beings'*. Around 800,000 people are trafficked per year world-wide, 100,000 into and within the EU. About 8,000 women work in off-street prostitution in London alone, 80 per cent of whom are foreign nationals.

Mr Mayor each year it is estimated 330 child victims will be trafficked into the UK, every year about 60 per cent of suspected child victims in local authority care go missing and are not subsequently found. Between 2004 and December 2008, 92 people were convicted of sex trafficking and four for labour trafficking. Each sex trafficker earns on average £500 - £1000 per woman per week, and sadly there are only 100 to 300 prosecutions for trafficking across the EU each year.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that there are at least 12.3 million adults and children in forced labour, bonded labour, and commercial sexual servitude at any given time. Of these victims, the ILO estimates that at least 1.39 million are victims of commercial sexual servitude, both transnational and within countries. According to the ILO, 56 percent of all forced labour victims are women and girls. And according to the ILO, globally there are at least 2.45 million people in forced labour as a result of trafficking.

So Mr Mayor where are all those slaves, and whom does this affect? In the United Kingdom, the main victims are women and children. They are often tricked into coming to this country, usually with a promise of some sort of job. When they arrive here, they are often locked up and forced into the sex trade.

Mr Mayor there are many documented examples of this, and one in particular is about a 14-year-old Kenyan girl who had been trafficked into this country by a middle-aged white man on a passport that did not bear her name and did not have her picture on it. She was taken to Liverpool, locked in a house and forced to have sex with numerous men. Luckily, she escaped after a few days and was helped by a national charity. She was one of the lucky ones, if you can call it lucky to endure what she had to. She managed to escape, but how many girls don't. How many girls are locked in houses such as those? Even if there were just one, that would be one too many, but sadly there is not just one; there are thousands.

There are some great organisations working with trafficked victims, including ECPAT UK, (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) the POPPY project, the Human Trafficking Foundation, and many more, they do fantastic work with trafficked victims, and without all these support organisations and networks the vulnerable victims would be left to fend for themselves. It is clear that whilst slavery, trafficking and child prostitution remains their work must not stop.

Mr Mayor, So what can be done to end trafficking? I believe that making the public more aware of the issue is a great first step, but simply people do not know the scale of this issue.

Mr Mayor, that is why today the 18th of October the UK will celebrate, that is if celebrate is the right word, anti-slavery day for the first time, this is as a result of Anti-slavery Day Act 2010, an ACT that received its Royal Assent earlier this year

In the Act 'modern-day slavery' is defined as:

- Trafficking for sexual exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Trafficking for forced labour
- Domestic servitude

The purpose of Anti-Slavery day is to acknowledge that modern-day slavery is taking the place of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and that millions of men, women and children continue to be victims of modern-day slavery. Moreover, it seeks to raise awareness amongst young people and others of the dangers and consequences of modern-day slavery and human trafficking, promoting a proactive message to prevent such practices.

Mr Mayor, Anti-slavery day will set out what we all hope will be the beginning of the end of slavery in the United Kingdom, Europe and hopefully the World and it will make the public aware of just how serious a problem slavery still is.

Mr Mayor, only last week during a debate in the HOC the Minister for Immigration Damian Green stated that “Combating Human Trafficking’ is a priority for the Coalition Government and he informed the House that the Government intend to produce a new strategy on combating human trafficking, which includes dealing with the sources of trafficking, strengthening of the immigration system to make trafficking much more difficult, the creation of a National Crime Agency to deal with the traffickers, and better systems to provide care and protection for the victims.”

Mr Mayor, The UK must become a country that is not worth the traffickers using. Traffickers are interested only in money, and it is estimated they make £3 billion a year in Europe from selling people into slavery. We need to make it so difficult for them that they do not want to try to operate here. Trafficking must stop, but it will stop only with the help of everyone-here, across the nation, the EU and the world.

Mr Mayor William Wilberforce did not pass the legislation to abolish the slave trade and to abolish slavery for political gain or to achieve votes; he realised there was a fundamental problem that needed to be addressed; we must do the same today and every day until slavery and trafficking is stopped once and for all.

Mr Mayor, it is sad that I have to stand here tonight and admit that we as a nation have failed William Wilberforce. After 200 years, the slave trade is still very much alive. In 200 years' time, I do not want people here, or anywhere in the world to have to admit that they are ashamed that they have failed in what we are trying to achieve. Today, the first anti-slavery day must mark the start of the end of modern-day slavery, not only in our country, but right across the world. However Mr Mayor until that day comes we must work closely with Government and our partners to provide support, care and protection for victims of trafficking.

Mr Mayor I commend this Notice of Motion to Council