

## Expert Panel on the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

### Behind Closed Doors: How to Identify and Assist Victims of Domestic Servitude

30 November 2018, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm, Salle IX, Palais des Nations

Organized by the UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery



*Photograph by Vlad Sokhin, Restavek Freedom Foundation*

### Background

Each year, [the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery](#) (UN Slavery Fund) convenes an Expert Panel to mark the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery.

This year, the Expert Panel will focus on rehabilitation and redress for victims of domestic servitude, building on the most recent [thematic report](#) of the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery on the impact of slavery and servitude on migrant domestic workers. The report found that the multiple human rights violations suffered by domestic workers remain largely overlooked. The Special Rapporteur further highlighted that there is a need for effective measures to guarantee victims' rights to protection, assistance and redress.

The Expert Panel “Rehabilitation for Victims of Domestic Servitude” will take place on 30 November in Geneva, Switzerland. It will feature victims of this contemporary form of slavery, as well as professionals providing assistance in different countries, relaying their experience acquired on the ground with the crucial support of the Slavery Fund. The event will be open to State Representatives, civil society and the media, and will include an inter-active segment of questions and answers. Interpretation in English, French and Spanish will be provided. *The Expert Panel will be preceded by a closed working session between panellists, the Fund’s Trustees and Secretariat members to share knowledge on the multiple dimensions of a victim-centred approach to rehabilitation of domestic workers in servitude.*

## Context

Recent estimates indicate that there are 70 million domestic workers employed by households worldwide (ILO 2018). Several projects supported by the Slavery Fund throughout the world assist victims of domestic servitude. The Slavery Fund’s partner organizations have observed that domestic servitude has serious short-term, as well as long-term consequences on the individuals, their families and communities. Victims are usually exposed to multiple violations and abuses, including: physical and social isolation; restriction of movement; psychological, physical and sexual violence; intimidation and threats; retention of identity documents by the employer; withholding of wages; abusive working and living conditions and excessive overtime. Progress has been made in the identification, care, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims. However, millions remain trapped in slavery-like conditions, with an ever-increasing number of migrants being pushed into domestic servitude.

## UN Slavery Fund

The Slavery Fund provides support to victims of contemporary forms of slavery through partner organisations providing medical, psychological, legal, and social assistance to victims in all regions of the world. Established in 1991 by a General Assembly [resolution](#), the Slavery Fund has achieved over the years tangible impact on the ground and has empowered many victims and actors in their fight against contemporary forms of slavery. The Fund contributes to achieve Sustainable Development Goals target #8.7 on the eradication of forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking.

## Objectives

Building on the findings of the recent thematic report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery on the impact of slavery and servitude on migrant domestic workers, the Expert Panel seeks to raise awareness about the prevalence of domestic servitude, the value of assistance for victims and the key role of the Slavery Fund. Victims, experts and practitioners from different regions will share their testimonies and experiences, in particular on:

- Specific needs and challenges faced by victims of domestic servitude;
- The right of victims of domestic servitude to rehabilitation and redress;
- Lessons learned, good practices and innovative methodologies to identify, rehabilitate, integrate and empower victims of domestic servitude.

## Programme

<i>Time</i>	<i>Panellist</i>
11:00 – 11:05	Opening by the Chairperson of the UN Trust Fund for Contemporary Slavery
11:05 – 11:10	Video on article 4 (prohibition of slavery) Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)
11:10 – 11:15	Moderator: H.E. Ms. Sally Mansfield, Ambassador of Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations
11:15 – 11:22	Testimony: Ms. Rosemyrtha M. Innocent, survivor of domestic servitude assisted by Restavek Freedom Foundation (Haiti)
11:22 – 11:29	Video message by Ms. Urmila Bhoola, UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of Slavery, including its causes and consequences
11:29 – 11:36	Ms. Roslyn Phillips, Rural Development Program Director, Restavek Freedom Foundation (Haiti)
11:36 – 11:43	Mr. George Leonard Sayi, Field Coordinator, The Tanzania Domestic Workers Coalition (Tanzania), partner of Anti-Slavery International
11:43 – 11:50	Ms. Meytal Russo, Caregivers Field Coordinator, Kav LaOved Workers' Hotline (Israel)
11:50 – 11:55	Ms. Benedicte Lavaud Legendre, Jurist and Founding Member of RUELLE (France)
11:55 – 12:30	Questions and Answers
12:30	Refreshments, courtesy of the Australia Permanent Mission

## Invited participants

- Permanent Missions
- NGO practitioners
- Specialised Agencies
- UN Special Rapporteurs and Treaty Bodies experts
- Trade Unions and workers organisations
- Other Geneva-based civil society organizations
- Media