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FROM THE ANGLICAN CENTRE IN ROME

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MAJOR FAITH INITIATIVE TO COMBAT SLAVERY

For the first time in their history, people drawn from the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion have joined forces to combat modern slavery and human-trafficking. Pope Francis and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby have personally given their backing to the newly-formed Global Freedom Network. The agreement to help eradicate an injustice affecting up to 29million people was co-signed on March 17th by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See, Archbishop Sir David Moxon, the Chancellor of the Pontifical Academies of Science and Social Science, Bishop Sanchez Sorondo and Mr Andrew Forrest, the founder of the large international philanthropic anti-slavery organisation from Perth, Western Australia "Walk Free". The network has the resources it needs to carry out a five year plan.

As Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome, Archbishop David Moxon has been closely involved in the negotiations which have brought about this landmark in church cooperation. He says –
"Human slavery is a plague on a vast scale in many countries across the world today. This situation is not improving but is probably deteriorating. To quote Pope Francis, 'We must unite our efforts to free the victims and stop this increasingly aggressive crime which threatens not only individuals but the basic values of society.' Today representatives from our Churches have made an agreement to act together: one Church, one world – God's world – where everyone can walk free."

Archbishop Moxon said that the Anglican Centre in Rome would support this new network in every way and would integrate its own time and energy into the cause as an example of practical mission-based ecumenism, where Anglicans and Roman Catholics working in good faith together with many others, will coordinate their efforts to challenge one of the world's worst evils and greatest forms of suffering. Mission would drive ecumenism in this way: "We will find that as we walk together on the pathway of Justice, that our talking together will improve, and on this Emmaus journey we will meet the risen Christ who falls in step between us. This Christ is not divided, so neither will we be. The Emmaus journey led to a deep and abiding communion when Christ was recognised in the midst."

The Global Freedom Network has some of its earliest roots in the deep concerns about modern slavery shared when Archbishop Justin Welby visited Pope Francis in June 2013, followed by a conference held at the Vatican in early November on the initiative of Pope Francis, the Pontifical Academies of Science and Social Science (PASS). Bishop Sanchez Sorondo, Mr Andrew Forrest, John McCarthy, Australian Ambassador to the Holy See, Archbishop David and Antonia Stampalija, a faith-based strategic planner from Western Australia, helped facilitate the process that led to the Network being created. The Revd Rachel Carnegie, co-director of the Anglican Alliance network, is a member of the new Global Freedom Network Council. The Network has a Muslim representative partner on its Council and will seek to include other faiths over time, as there needs to be a multi-faith approach to this multi-national tragedy.

It is estimated that between 12 and 27 million people worldwide are enslaved into forced labour and sexual exploitation. Each year, about 2 million people are victims of sexual trafficking, 60% of whom are

girls. Human organ trafficking is rife: annually around 20,000 people are forced or deceived into giving up an organ (liver, kidney, pancreas, cornea, lung, even the heart).

MORE FROM

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