

Mr. Mohamed Amersi Speech

October 2018

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: It is a real pleasure to be here today and such a privilege for my Foundation to support this ground-breaking gathering encompassing a remarkable alliance of visionaries and change-makers all wanting to make our globe a better place, by taking steps to eradicate all forms of modern-day slavery, especially in the beautiful sport!

Most of you have focused on Football so I will, with your permission, share my own perspectives on wider modern-day slavery based on the work that my Foundation does in this area.

Slavery is currently the second largest global criminal industry, -- narcotics trafficking currently remains the most profitable crime -- but it is the fastest growing crime and it's the greatest human rights issue of the modern-day era, causing widespread suffering to both adults and children. Modern day slavery is an umbrella term that covers all current forms of slave labor violations including forced labor, sex and organ trafficking, debt bondage, and child marriage and child soldiers. Over the past five years alone, 89 million people worldwide have experienced some form of modern slavery for time periods ranging from a few days to the entire five years. So, why does such a monumental human rights catastrophe go unnoticed by the masses? That's because it disproportionately affects the most marginalized and vulnerable members of our society.

Let me highlight some statistics: As recently reported by the International Labor Organization (ILO), Walk Free Foundation and the IMO,

- In 2016 an estimated **40.3 million** people were living in modern slavery at any point in time.
- **70-percent** of the 40.3 million slaves were women and girls.
- There are 5.4 victims of modern-day slavery for every 1,000 people in the world.
- Interestingly, the United States is the largest importer of at-risk slave made products, followed by Europe.

The above statistics are a gross underestimation since it is impossible to conduct surveys in areas where slavery thrives including major conflicts, highly repressive regimes and where there is a breakdown of institutional governance.

In the highest GDP countries, occurrence of modern slavery is also higher than previously thought. These are the countries that need to take the lead in addressing slavery crimes, against children and sports men and women, as they are better positioned to make an impact given their stronger laws and legal systems. Highly-developed countries and their supply chains must recognize that slavery that begins in one nation will inevitably cross over into their borders when slave-produced items and slaves are traded in the global

marketplace. But listening to the presentations today reminds me of bribes and corruption where because of complicated legal processes, forum shopping, lack of coordination, not much happens and the problem grows.

I believe that the international community cannot continue to be complacent, in the face of such serious crimes against humanity. It is not enough for our international authorities to be aware, and call for observance days. We must all increase our efforts to put words into practical action. Because like everything else, there is a big difference between having what it takes and doing what it takes! This is precisely the importance of today's gathering!

In conclusion, I am proud of my affiliation with Mission89 and today's initiative is a fantastic one and long overdue! The learnings from interacting with you all today will enable me and empower me to better fulfil my Trustee and advisory responsibilities of organizations involved in modern-day slavery such as the Satyarthi Foundation, the Human Thread Foundation, Unchain, the Vatican, the Church of England, the New Standards Institute, Gooseberry Planet, the British Academy doing ground breaking research, the Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and the UK Government through the PM, the Home Secretary and DFID. Indeed, I had the privilege of accompanying the DFID Secretary at UNGA 2 weeks ago in New York at an intimate round table with tech companies on how technology can positively tackle modern day slavery, especially with the use of mobile phone tracking, social media, blockchain and controlling the use of cryptocurrency Tomorrow I am at OYW...where for the first time, we will be focusing on child trafficking...where Kailash will address the youth to engage in peer to peer learning ...

Thank you!