



**ECOSOC
Partnership
Forum**

2025

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2025 ECOSOC Partnership Forum Side Event

Leveraging Social Finance to Combat Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking

February 4, 2025 | 09:00am – 10:15am EST | Hybrid: UNDP HQ in New York &
Virtual

Organized by: UNDP Sustainable Finance Hub, FAST Initiative, and the
Permanent Mission of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the United Nations in
New York

Background on the event

Modern slavery affects approximately 50 million people worldwide, generating USD 236 billion annually in illegal profits. Recognizing the role of the financial sector in disrupting these exploitative systems, the UNDP FAST Initiative, in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein, convened a high-level roundtable on Social Finance during the 2025 ECOSOC Partnership Forum. The event brought together experts from the public and private sectors to discuss how social finance can drive systemic change, support survivors of human trafficking, and promote inclusive financial systems that prevent exploitation.

Key Issues Discussed

- The critical role of financial inclusion in reducing vulnerabilities that lead to modern slavery and human trafficking.
- The need for tailored financial services to help survivors overcome employment barriers, such as criminal records and lack of education.
- The importance of long-term, flexible funding models that do not require excessive documentation, ensuring unrestricted cash support for survivors.
- The impact of responsible financial systems in addressing the economic factors that drive exploitation.
- The role of technology in financial services to reach disenfranchised populations while preventing misuse by traffickers.
- The necessity of cross-sector collaboration between governments, financial institutions, and civil society to create sustainable financial solutions.
- How institutional investors and private sector donors can lead efforts in creating just and ethical financial systems.
- How digitization and government-to-person payments can improve access to financial services but also pose risks if unregulated.

Key Recommendations for Action

- Enhance financial inclusion initiatives by expanding access to banking and credit for vulnerable populations.
- Develop flexible, long-term funding mechanisms that provide unrestricted cash support to survivors for economic reintegration.
- Increase private sector engagement in financing solutions that prevent exploitation and promote economic empowerment.
- Encourage financial institutions to integrate human rights due diligence into investment decisions and risk management frameworks.
- Foster multi-stakeholder partnerships to scale up social finance solutions and ensure sustainable impact across different sectors.
- Strengthen regulatory frameworks to mitigate risks associated with digital finance platforms and AI-driven financial services.

The event reinforced that leveraging social finance is essential to addressing the root causes of modern slavery and human trafficking. By strengthening financial systems, ensuring ethical investment practices, and fostering collaboration, the financial sector can play a transformative role in eradicating exploitation and empowering survivors.