

## Discussion Menu

### Discussion Appetisers:

#### What is your favourite seafood?

Recall and share your best ever seafood meal

- Do you know where your seafood comes from?

#### Where do your ideas about freedom come from?

There are more slaves in the world now than any point of human history! Do you think we should accept that or do something about it?

- How important is freedom to you?
- What would you do to keep your freedoms?
- How important is it to you that other people have freedom?
- What would you do to help other people have their freedom?

### Discussion Entrée:

#### How important are fair wages?

Economic policies in the richer countries have resulted in manufacturing and a lot of labour intensive agriculture and seafood production going to developing countries that have cheap labour. This is so these products can be bought cheaper in these wealthier countries. Labour laws exist in rich countries because the culture values fair wages. How important is it to apply our values of fair wages to the products we buy from overseas like seafood?

#### What would you do?

Suppose you had if a relative or friend who was in a desperate situation and went looking for a job that would help them and their family out of really difficult financial situation. They find themselves with a debt to an agent or boat-owner in return for getting a job on a fish boat. They are overworked, under-paid, their debt (because of interest charges) increases, they are locked up whenever their boat comes ashore to stop them from escaping before their debt is paid. They are physically and psychologically abused. This is the 'short' story of how people get trapped in slavery in the overseas fishing industry.

### Discussion Main Course:

#### What do you think slavery is?

Definitions of modern-day slavery are mainly taken from the [1956 UN supplementary convention](#), which says:

"debt bondage, serfdom, forced marriage and the delivery of a child for the exploitation of that child are all slavery-like practices and require criminalisation and abolishment"

The [1930 Forced Labour Convention](#) defines forced labour as

"all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily".

As contemporary systems of slavery have evolved, new definitions, including trafficking and distinguishing child slavery from child labour, have developed. Some of the forms of slavery are:

1. Bonded labour: people become bonded labourers after falling into debt and being forced to work for free in an attempt to repay it. Many will never pay off their loans, and debt can be passed down through the generations.
2. Forced labour: where people are forced to work, usually with no payment, through violence or intimidation. Many find themselves trapped, often in a foreign country with no papers, and unable to leave.
3. Descent-based slavery: where people are born into slavery because their families belong to a class of "slaves" within a society. The status of "slave" passes from mother to child.
4. Trafficking: the transport or trade of people from one area to another and into conditions of slavery.
5. Child slavery: children are in slavery as domestic workers, forced labour - in, for example, the cocoa, cotton and fisheries industries - trafficked for labour and sexual exploitation, and used as child soldiers.
6. Early and forced marriage: women continue to be married without consent, often while still girls, and forced into sexual and domestic servitude.

Rate these from bad to worst and explain why you gave these ratings.  
What would it take for you to do something about these?

### **A story to discuss**

Pranh from Myanmar was enslaved on a fishing boat in Thailand and did not step on land for 17 years. How do you think that impacts a person?

Most slavery victims are poor, but not all poor people are in slavery. Often, people do not know their rights and accept forced or bonded labour and exploitation not knowing the risks they are taking. Migrant workers from Myanmar travel to places like Thailand because of the poverty at home. They are not educated and don't know their rights and the risks they are vulnerable to. So many have been trapped in parts of the fishing industry there. It means they can produce seafood cheaply. We can buy cheaper seafood because of this slavery.

Someone is in slavery in fishing if they are:

- forced to work on a boat or processing factory - through mental or physical threat or threat to those they care for
- owned or controlled by an 'employer' / boat captain, usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse;
- dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property' or labour asset
- physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement on a boat or in a factory

How would you cope in that situation?

What are you prepared to do to prevent this?

Our power in richer countries is in what we buy! Choosing what we buy and asking companies we buy from to show they have taken steps like third party certification that they are most likely slave free – comes from the power and freedom that we have. What could help us to use this power?

One of the things you can do when you buy seafood is ask if the seller knows if the supply chain is free from slavery. How difficult would it be for you to ask that of your seafood supplier?

### **Desserts**

What would you like to see on the label of imported and domestic overseas seafood to help you be more comfortable when buying it?

- A. Just where it came from?
- B. Who the overseas supplying company is?
- C. An internationally recognised third party standard or certification showing steps have been taken to end labour abuse and exploitation like slavery?
- D. Don't really care?

What would you like to say to seafood companies that are trying to eliminate slavery from their supply chains? Send us an email at [australia@stophetraffik.com.au](mailto:australia@stophetraffik.com.au) and we will pass it on and post it on social media.