**Submission received from Pourakhi Nepal**

1. Is there evidence of modern technology (e.g., platforms including social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, websites, applications, artificial intelligence, the dark web) being used to recruit and subject people to contemporary forms of slavery in your country?  If so, please provide details in relation to:
   1. Specific technology being used

There is evidence of modern technology being used to facilitate and perpetrate human trafficking and contemporary forms of slavery worldwide. Traffickers and exploiters use various technologies such as social media platforms, websites, and mobile are being used to send fake information, advertise, and communicate with potential victims in Nepal. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have been used by traffickers to trap victims with false promises of employment or education opportunities in Nepal. Once potential victims are identified, traffickers use these platforms to monitor and control their activities and movements. Messaging apps like WhatsApp and Imo are also used to communicate with victims and coordinate their exploitation.

* 1. Profiles of victims (age, sex, gender identity/sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, migration status, socio-economic status, race and any other status)

Victims of modern slavery and human trafficking come from a wide range of backgrounds and demographics. They may be men, women, or children of any age, gender identity/sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, migration status, socio-economic status, and race. However, some groups are more vulnerable to being targeted and exploited than others. For example, women and children are often at a higher risk of being trafficked and subjected to forced labor and sexual exploitation. People who are living in poverty or have limited economic opportunities may also be at a higher risk of being trafficked, as they may be more likely to accept offers of work that turn out to be exploitative. Migrants are also at a higher risk of being trafficked and exploited, particularly if they are undocumented or have limited legal protections. The construction, agriculture, and domestic work industries have been identified as high-risk areas for labor exploitation.

* 1. Profiles of exploiters (e.g. criminal organisations, human traffickers, private businesses/employers, public authorities or others)

Human traffickers are among the primary exploiters of people subjected to contemporary forms of slavery. Employers also are involved in exploiting workers, particularly in industries such as construction, agriculture, and domestic work, where labor standards are lax or poorly enforced. Public authorities also are involved in perpetrating or enabling contemporary forms of slavery. For example, corrupt officials facilitate the movement of trafficked individuals across borders, or turn a blind eye to exploitative working conditions.

* 1. Manifestations of exploitation (e.g. forced/child labour, debt bondage, domestic servitude, online/offline commercial sexual exploitation of adults, forced/child marriage and criminal exploitation)

Forced labor is a common manifestation of exploitation that can be facilitated by technology. This includes the use of social media to recruit workers with false promises of good wages and working conditions, only to trap them in exploitative situations where they are forced to work long hours, underpaid or unpaid, and subjected to physical and emotional abuse. Debt bondage is another form of exploitation that has been facilitated by technology. Workers are recruited through online job postings or social media platforms. This debt can be used as a tool to control and exploit workers, who are forced to work long hours to repay their debt.

Domestic slavery is another form of exploitation that is being facilitated by technology, with domestic workers often recruited through online job postings or social media platforms and are subjected to long working hours, low pay, and poor living conditions, and isolated from their families and communities, making it difficult to seek help or escape their situation. Forced marriage is another form of exploitation that is being facilitated by technology. In some cases, individuals may be forced or coerced into a marriage against their will, and may be subjected to domestic servitude or other forms of exploitation within the marriage.

1. Are there examples of positive measures (legislative, administrative, institutional and others) taken by your Government to prevent modern technology from bei ng used to facilitate contemporary forms of slavery? If so, please provide details.

The Government of Nepal has taken several measures to prevent modern technology from being used to facilitate contemporary forms of slavery. Nepal has enacted several laws to address human trafficking and forced labor, including the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, 2064 (2008) and the Foreign Employment Act, 2064 (2007) to provide for criminal penalties for those engaged in trafficking or forced labor, and establish mechanisms for victim protection and support. The Government of Nepal has established several programs to provide support to victims of human trafficking and forced labor, including shelters and rehabilitation centers. The Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens has also established a toll-free hotline to provide assistance to victims.

Nepal has signed several international treaties and conventions related to human trafficking and forced labor, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000), and the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) of the International Labour Organization.

The NHRC is an independent constitutional body established in Nepal to protect and promote human rights and has taken various steps to prevent human trafficking and forced labor, including conducting investigations into cases of trafficking, raising awareness among the public, and advocating for policy and legal reforms. The Nepal Police and other law enforcement agencies have increased efforts to combat human trafficking and forced labor, including through the creation of specialized units to investigate these crimes.

These measures are crucial in preventing modern technology from being used to facilitate contemporary forms of slavery, and in ensuring the protection and support of victims of exploitation. However, challenges remain in effectively implementing and enforcing these measures, and in addressing the root causes of human trafficking and forced labor in Nepal.

1. Are there examples of positive measures taken by technology companies to prevent their technologies and platforms from being used to facilitate contemporary forms of slavery?  If so, please provide details, which may include proactive identification and reporting of exploitative contents, activities and perpetrators, creation of robust monitoring and oversight mechanisms, closing down/removing technologies, platforms and contents used to recruit and exploit victims, awareness-raising and/or warning among users of technologies, and collaboration with public authorities and non-governmental stakeholders?

There have been some positive measures taken by technology companies to prevent their technologies and platforms from being used to facilitate contemporary forms of slavery in Nepal. Social media companies such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have implemented measures to identify and remove content related to human trafficking and exploitation. Technology companies have collaborated with NGOs and law enforcement agencies to identify and respond to cases of human trafficking and exploitation

Some technology companies have launched awareness-raising campaigns to educate their users about the risks of human trafficking and exploitation. While these measures are important, there is still a need for stronger collaboration between technology companies, NGOs, and law enforcement agencies to prevent modern technology from being used to facilitate contemporary forms of slavery in Nepal. There is also a need for greater transparency and accountability from technology companies in their efforts to prevent human trafficking and exploitation on their platforms.

1. Are there examples of positive measures taken by technology companies to promote access to protection, justice and remedies for victims?  How do they cooperate with other relevant stakeholders in this regard?

There are some examples of positive measures taken by technology companies to promote access to protection, justice, and remedies for victims of human trafficking and exploitation in Nepal. Technology companies have partnered with NGOs working to combat human trafficking and exploitation to provide support and resources to victims. Technology companies have provided training and capacity-building programs to NGOs and law enforcement agencies working to combat human trafficking and exploitation. Technology companies have helped to raise awareness about human trafficking and exploitation and support efforts to combat these crimes.

1. Are there examples of positive measures taken by civil society organisations and other non-governmental stakeholders in preventing modern technology from being used to facilitate contemporary forms of slavery? If so, please provide details.

Yes, there are several examples of positive measures taken by civil society organizations (CSOs) and other non-governmental stakeholders in Nepal to prevent modern technology from being used to facilitate contemporary forms of slavery. CSOs have conducted awareness-raising campaigns to educate the public about the risks of trafficking and exploitation through social media and other digital platforms aim to increase awareness of the dangers of online exploitation and empower individuals to protect themselves and others from such risks. CSOs have provided capacity-building training to law enforcement agencies, government officials, and other stakeholders on the use of technology to prevent and combat human trafficking and exploitation. CSOs have collaborated with technology companies to develop tools and strategies to prevent online exploitation. CSOs have provided support services to victims of trafficking and exploitation, including legal aid, counseling, and rehabilitation services. Many of these services are provided through digital platforms, enabling victims to access support and resources online.

1. What are remaining challenges in preventing modern technology from being used to facilitate contemporary forms of slavery?

Despite the positive measures taken by the government, technology companies, and civil society organizations, there are still several challenges in preventing modern technology from being used to facilitate contemporary forms of slavery in Nepal.

The government and civil society organizations often lack the resources necessary to effectively prevent and combat human trafficking and exploitation through modern technology. Many stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies and civil society organizations, lack the technical expertise necessary to effectively combat trafficking and exploitation through modern technology.

There is often a lack of coordination and collaboration among stakeholders involved in preventing and combating trafficking and exploitation through modern technology. The legal frameworks in place to address human trafficking and exploitation through modern technology may be inadequate, outdated, or not fully enforced.

The rapidly evolving nature of technology can make it difficult for stakeholders to keep up with new forms of exploitation and develop effective prevention and response strategies.

1. What practical recommendations would you propose for Governments and technology companies to overcome these challenges?

There are several practical recommendations that could help governments and technology companies to overcome the challenges in preventing modern technology from being used to facilitate contemporary forms of slavery in Nepal. Governments should increase resources dedicated to preventing and combating human trafficking and exploitation through modern technology.

Governments, law enforcement agencies, and civil society organizations should invest in developing technical expertise to effectively combat human trafficking and exploitation through modern technology.

Governments should review and update their legal frameworks to ensure they are adequate to address modern forms of exploitation. Governments, civil society organizations, and technology companies should foster collaboration to prevent and combat human trafficking and exploitation through modern technology.

1. Is there evidence of modern technology (e.g. applications, artificial intelligence and blockchain technology) being used to prevent contemporary forms of slavery? If so, please provide details.

As per our experience, we have not found any evidence of modern technology (e.g. applications, artificial intelligence and blockchain technology) being used to prevent contemporary forms of slavery in Nepal.

1. What are the existing limitations and challenges in using such technologies, and what recommendations do you have to overcome them?

In general, there are some limitations and challenges to using technology in this field. In many parts of Nepal, there are still issues with internet connectivity and access to technology, which limits the reach of any technology-based interventions. The cost of developing and implementing technology-based solutions can be high, making them less accessible to smaller organizations or those with limited budgets. The use of technology often involves the collection and storage of sensitive data, which can be vulnerable to cyber-attacks and breaches. Developing and implementing technology-based solutions requires specialized technical expertise, which may not be readily available.

The following recommendations should be considered too overcome these challenges;

Collaboration between government, civil society organizations, and the private sector can help to leverage resources and expertise to overcome challenges related to access, cost, and technical expertise. Providing training and support to local organizations and communities on the use of technology can help to build their capacity and increase the reach of technology-based interventions. Any technology-based solution should be developed with strong data privacy and security measures in place, and regular audits and reviews should be conducted to ensure compliance. Open-source technology can be a cost-effective solution that can be adapted to local needs and contexts. This approach can also foster collaboration and innovation among different stakeholders.