The scale of modern slavery

According to the 2023 Global Slavery Index, an estimated 5.1 in every thousand people were in modern slavery in Zambia at any point in 2021. In other words, 94,000 people experienced forced labour or forced marriage in Zambia in 2021. In terms of prevalence of modern slavery, Zambia ranks 87th globally and 19th within Africa.
Modern slavery in Zambia
Global Slavery Index 2023
Country Snapshot

Vulnerability to modern slavery
How vulnerable a country’s people are to modern slavery is dependent on a range of factors which reflect the strength of governance, access to basic needs, inequality, disenfranchised groups, and effects of conflict. On a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 being the highest vulnerability, Zambia is rated as 58 and has below average vulnerability for the region. Vulnerability is highest in terms of disenfranchised groups.

Figure 3.
Vulnerability of Zambia to modern slavery by dimension, compared to the regional average

Government response to modern slavery
The government of Zambia scored 45 out of 100 in their response to modern slavery. This places the government’s response above the average regional response. Of the five areas of response assessed (milestones), the government has taken most action on addressing risk factors of modern slavery and the least action on addressing risk in government and business supply chains.

Figure 4.
Government of Zambia’s responses to modern slavery by milestone, compared with the regional average

Priority Recommendations for the government of Zambia
1. Increase the legal age of marriage for males and females to 18 years without exceptions.
2. Ensure support services are available for all victims of modern slavery, regardless of gender, age, nationality, or sexuality.
3. Remove laws or policies that prevent or make it difficult for workers to leave abusive employers without risking loss of their visa, deportation, and/or loss of security deposits.

For more information on modern slavery, visit the Global Slavery Index 2023 website.