

**Transcript of the PM's speech**  
**Opening of the exhibition**  
**Upper Waiting Hall, House of Commons**  
**22 April 2013**

Thank you very much.

First of all I want to thank Peter, Frank, and perhaps, if you don't mind above all, Anthony for hosting this today. Anthony has demonstrated that if you really care about an issue, if you are prepared to fight obsessed about an issue, you can make it a front line issue, previously as a Back Bencher MP, but now as an ex-MP you can still show real passion and get things done. So thank you.

And also this is the right place to do it, here in Parliament. It was here that the great debates about slavery were held all those years ago and it is right we are having this debate again today.

I tell you about when my eyes were open to this issue, because I was one of those naïve people who thought Wilberforce he fixed all of that, abolished slavery, we sorted that out and the British navy played the role and job was done. Then as a Back Bencher MP I was walking through Trafalgar square one lunch time, those days I still had time to do those sorts of things, I bumped into Emma Thompson who was running an absolutely brilliant exhibition against human trafficking. It was a series of containers, and you walked into the first one, and then the second and then the third, and you saw the journey that someone who was trafficked took when they came to this country and the fact so often they would end up in the sex trade handcuffed to a bed and, basically, a slave. And that was what opened my eyes to the scale of this problem, to the scale of this challenge and I've been determined that this Government is going to have a more joint up approach, as Peter said that we do.

Now you gave me three things (Frank Field) and you gave me two things (Anthony Steen), I cannot work out do they overlap and that's a total of five, but let me tell you what I think are the two things that we need to do. First of all we need some honesty in this debate. When we talk about trafficking it sounds like an industry, it sounds like a semi-legitimate industry, it isn't.

It is modern day slavery and we need to call it modern day slavery. That I think is the first thing. The second thing along with honesty is action. And I think many of the actions you've talked about are appropriate. I think it goes through every organization in our country, because the truth is we won't sort this out, unless we recognize what is really going on in our country. So that means we have to train police officers, and they are now being trained in recognizing the signs of modern day slavery. We need to make sure it has in the National Crime Agency a proper priority and it will do as a massive organized international criminal conspiracy that can be cracked down on. We need to make sure that all the agencies are talking to each other, whether it is social services, whether it is the health department, whether it is our hospitals, whether it is our care homes. All these organizations have to properly speak to each other. I recognize that, that means Government has got to be more coordinated, so I will certainly take up your suggestion. We do have these Inter-Ministerial Groups and I do find that if I chair one it has the miraculous affect that people actually turn up. Sometimes, even more, if I threaten to chair another one, they go back to their Departments and they do the things they promised to do at the original meeting. So I am very happy to do that. But you have my word that this Government will call it modern day slavery and then take the set of practical actions across Government that are necessary to wipe out this evil trade that is affecting so many in our country. And it is worth, as Anthony said, to think of all the different forms of modern day slavery: the cannabis farms, the sex trade, the people brought over to claim benefits for people who don't exist and are used to fuel all sorts of criminal gangs. This modern day slavery comes in many forms, in many ways, and we have to have a really concerted approach to crush it, to stamp it out and to make sure that we look at the rights of those who are affected and take a criminal approach to those who are the traffickers and, as I said above all, to call it what it is – slavery.

But above all, congratulations to all of you for putting on this exhibition here, in the Mother of Parliament. It's the right place for it to be. I very much look forward to seeing the exhibition, to meeting those who've been caught up in this appalling trade and to leading the Government that will help stamp it out. Thank you.