

Beat: Local

PROMOTING RIGHTS CENTRAL TO STRATEGY FOR ENDING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

ERADICATING -MODERN-DAY SLAVERY-

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USPA NEWS - Following are United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's remarks at the high-level event 'In Stronger Partnership and Coordination to Stop Human Trafficking: Eradicating Modern-Day Slavery through Sustainable Development', in New York on February 9, 2016 :

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I thank the Government of Belarus, the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, as well as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for organizing this high-level event on human trafficking.

The purpose of today's meeting is to strengthen partnerships and coordination. We are determined to stop human trafficking. We are committed to eradicate modern-day slavery through sustainable development.

Unity of action is essential. This pressing issue, along with its criminal kin "migrant smuggling" touches many concerns raging across the world. Today, more than 60 million women, children and men are fleeing conflict, escaping wars, or seeking a better life. Yet, as they make their journey, many are being coerced into exploitation. Thousands are dying on sea and on land at the hands of callous smugglers.

Far too many are women and children. Europol [European Police Office] recently found that as many as 10,000 vulnerable children travelling to Europe have simply disappeared. Some may be hiding in plain sight. Others are held in darkness.

In Central America, children on the move continue to be vulnerable to abduction, abuse and exploitation along their treacherous trek. South-East Asia is another tragic source, transit and destination for migrant smuggling. No region is immune. Indeed, we have identified victims from 152 different citizenships in 124 countries across the world.

We must end the suffering of all victims of trafficking, including those subjected to slavery, servitude, forced labour or bonded labour. Each one deserves protection and support. Each one deserves justice and opportunity.

The promotion of human rights is central to our strategy. I urge all Member States to ratify and fully implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I urge your full support for the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

Let us also work together to share information and block criminal safe havens. I welcome action by the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, as well as the growing work of the Security Council in examining trafficking in conflict situations. I salute the efforts of UNODC, led by Yury Fedotov, and other members of the United Nations family, including the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking.

In September, we will convene a high-level summit on 'Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants'. Our aim is to enhance coherence and build alliances to confront these issues head-on. More regular, safe and legal pathways are an essential

component of our ambition. So is greater responsibility sharing to provide protection to those in need. As we do, we must follow the strategy laid out in the Global Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking. With solid partnerships and a clear approach, we can ensure the criminals are brought to justice.

The 2030 Agenda promises “more peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence”^[7]. Let us make the most of this opportunity and work together for a world of universal respect for equality and non-discrimination; a world where the rights of all, regardless of national and social origin, can be protected, respected and fulfilled; a world of justice and accountability where human trafficking and smuggling, slavery, servitude, forced labour and bonded labour are no more.

Let us make good on our pledge to leave no one behind and build a life of dignity for all. Thank you.

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