

UN.GIFT Progress Update

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Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, applauded UN.GIFT and called on all to “take action to prevent any more victims from having their dreams of a better future turn into nightmares of exploitation and servitude” (address to the Houses of Parliament, Westminster, May 2007).

The Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) was launched on 26 March 2007. The date marked 200 years since the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

UN.GIFT was launched following a grant made available by the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. It is managed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

UN.GIFT’s mission is to mobilize state and non-state actors to eradicate human trafficking by:

1. Reducing both the vulnerability of potential victims and the demand for exploitation in all its forms;
2. Ensuring adequate protection and support to those who fall victim; and
3. Supporting the prosecution of criminals involved, all the while respecting the fundamental human rights of all persons.

In carrying out its mission, UN.GIFT aims to:

1. [Increase knowledge on human trafficking;](#)
2. [Increase awareness on human trafficking;](#)
3. [Build capacity of state and non-state actors through effective rights-based responses; and](#)
4. [Foster partnerships for joint action against human trafficking.](#)

Since its launch, UN.GIFT has achieved progress on all four accounts.

Increasing knowledge on human trafficking

The clandestine nature of human trafficking makes gathering of information and data a significant challenge. Data is collected by different actors, including criminal justice agencies, victim support structures and international organizations, yet not necessarily centralized nor harmonized. It is dispersed across several sub-national institutions, collected in different forms and obtained through different methodologies within countries and across regions.

UN.GIFT aims to improve and expand the information available on human trafficking in order to support countries formulate appropriate policies and design effective anti-trafficking strategies. [\[Read More\]](#)

Increasing awareness on human trafficking

The UN.GIFT Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking, held from 13-15 February 2008, aimed to raise awareness, facilitate cooperation and foster partnerships.

The Forum gathered over 1,600 participants from across the world, with over 130 countries represented: 41% of participants were government officials, 19% came from civil society organizations, 15% from international organizations, 9% were parliamentarians, 9% were from the media, 4% from academia, and 3% from the private sector. [\[Read More\]](#)

Building capacity of state and non-state actors

The Vienna Forum enabled the sharing of experiences and good practices amongst its participants. The recommendations from the 28 different sessions have been compiled into a [Conference Report](#) (PDF).

Building on the results of the Forum, and at the request of Member States, the President of the UN General Assembly (GA) held a **thematic debate on human trafficking** in June 2008. The debate underscored that one of the fundamental pre-requisites to successful anti-trafficking efforts is the widest possible collaboration among Member States, relevant international organizations, civil society and the private sector. Despite ongoing efforts, there is still a need to promote cross-border cooperation. Moreover, coordination structures must be strengthened to ensure a comprehensive response. [\[Read More\]](#)

Fostering partnerships for joint action against human trafficking

The establishment of the Women Leaders' Council (WLC) at the Vienna Forum is an illustration of the types of innovative partnerships encouraged by UN.GIFT. The WLC focuses on raising awareness on human trafficking through events, public information materials and outreach, influencing government anti-human trafficking policies, and strengthening



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collaborative efforts. The WLC has successfully engaged dedicated women from different backgrounds – business, politics, art, civil society, international organizations - who have committed themselves to eradicating human trafficking and joining efforts in this endeavour. [\[Read More\]](#)

1 Increasing knowledge on human trafficking

The clandestine nature of human trafficking makes gathering of information and data a significant challenge. Data is collected by different actors, including criminal justice agencies, victim support structures and international organizations, yet not necessarily centralized nor harmonized. It is dispersed across several sub-national institutions, collected in different forms and obtained through different methodologies within countries and across regions.

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Within UN.GIFT's framework and in cooperation with IOM, ILO, OSCE, and UNDP field offices, in April 2007 UNODC began a major **data collection exercise** based on official information available at the national level. The research focuses on the countries' legislative and administrative frameworks; the criminal justice response (i.e. number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions conducted against traffickers); and the services provided to victims (i.e. number of victims identified and assisted by the competent authorities and the profile of offenders and victims).

Data collection covering 130 countries was concluded in June 2008 and a global analytical report will be published by the end of 2008.

Meanwhile, based on the preliminary findings, a paper on **information gaps and limitations in crime and criminal justice data** was discussed during the Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking, held in February 2008 (session "Quantifying Human Trafficking").

During the Forum, UN.GIFT also published a **multi-agency synopsis** on the mandates and research activities of 15 international organizations working on combating human trafficking. All reports are available to the general public on the UN.GIFT website (www.ungift.org).

In January 2008, also under the auspices of UN.GIFT, IOM held an expert group discussion on **Developing New Approaches to the Study of Human Trafficking** with 20 leading researchers from across the world. They assessed the current state of trafficking research, identified current knowledge gaps, shared innovative research and data collection methods and discussed evaluation and assessment of counter-trafficking programmes.

Regional events

Throughout 2007 and leading up to the Vienna Forum, a number of events took place around the world to raise awareness on the many geographic and thematic dimensions of human trafficking. An understanding of this multi-dimensional nature is fundamental to designing and implementing adequate response measures at the regional and national levels, including drafting new legislation and action plans.

All events aimed to identify the technical assistance required to support countries in the implementation of the UN anti-trafficking Protocol.

The first UN.GIFT regional event was held in Uganda, in June 2007, where the elements of a regional action plan including prevention, legislative measures and law enforcement techniques were elaborated. As a follow up to the event, a regional workshop in Dar es Salaam was held in July 2008, attended by representatives of Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. A regional action plan was developed and is being finalised to be adopted by Eastern Africa police chiefs at the end of August 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In Brazil, the regional event focused on the challenges faced in the implementation of the country's action plan developed by a multi-stakeholder task-force composed of government and civil society representatives. In particular, reference was made to the challenge of ensuring effective implementation of such action plans in countries with federative structures.

In Thailand, the regional event focused on criminal justice responses to trafficking. Under the leadership of the Government of Thailand and with the support from the Government of Australia, experts looked at the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of trafficking cases in the framework of international standards and emerging good practices.

In South Africa, a major event took place with religious leaders from around the world to propose measures that the religious community can support to combat trafficking. In the Cape Town Declaration, the religious leaders committed themselves to promoting a rights-based plan of action with practical cost-effective strategies and needs-based programmes to both combat trafficking and support victims.

In India, new partnerships were forged with the private sector, media and artists on how to raise awareness on human trafficking, and since the conference, various initiatives have taken place. The conference also led to the Delhi Declaration which recognises the need to identify inter- and intra-state origin, transit and destination routes for trafficking for forced labour, and to prevent child labour together with industries, trade unions and employers' associations. UNDP, ILO and UNICEF also contributed to this initiative.

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In Cote d'Ivoire, the regional conference addressed conflict and post-conflict zones, focusing on child trafficking for their exploitation in armed conflict. Among the recommendations was the setting up of a trust fund for child victims. A financial contribution from the Government of Canada enabled the roll-out of a regional pilot project to implement the event's recommendations.

Since the launch of UN.GIFT, members of the UN.GIFT Steering Committee and other partners have led other important initiatives. The OSCE and Government of Lithuania, in cooperation with UNODC, organized a joint event in which attending OSCE member countries discussed common strategies to prevent trafficking. The event emphasized the role of the media in prevention efforts and encouraged other partners - the business community and education institutions in particular - to become involved.

In Turkey, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs chaired the conference on "Trafficking in Human Beings in the Black Sea Region" to identify ways of improving cooperation between law enforcement and NGOs for the referral of victims of trafficking. The conference took place within the context of the Budapest Process and was co-organized by the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and UNODC.

The League of Arab States led an event in Egypt to review the status of Arab anti-trafficking legislation. Some progress was noted in the review and drafting of legislation as well as in the provision of assistance to victims. A regional action plan was also discussed.

In Kyrgyzstan, the OSCE and the Government of Kyrgyzstan, with cooperation from UNODC, led a round table aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and coordination amongst stakeholders in Central Asia and other CIS participating States (Belarus, Moldova, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine).

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2 Increasing awareness on human trafficking

The UN.GIFT Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking, held from 13-15 February 2008, aimed to raise awareness, facilitate cooperation and foster partnerships.

The Forum gathered over 1,600 participants from across the world, with over 130 countries represented: 41% of participants were government officials, 19% came from civil society organizations, 15% from international organizations, 9% were parliamentarians, 9% were from the media, 4% from academia, and 3% from the private sector.

Among the speakers, 25% were from international organizations, 20% were from civil society organizations, 19% from government institutions, 12% from the private sector, 9% from academia, and 2% from the media.

The day before the Forum, over 190 parliamentarians from around the world gathered at the Austrian Parliament to discuss the role of parliaments in fighting human trafficking. The Parliamentary Forum, organized in partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), encouraged members of parliament to discuss concrete measures and good practices.

During the week of the Vienna Forum, 5,000 visitors attended Emma Thompson's "Journey Against Sex Trafficking", a unique art installation that maps the journey of a trafficking victim. The interactive exhibition is based on a real-life story of young women who leaves her home country in search of a better life but is deceived and coerced by traffickers and forced to work in the sex industry.

Around 150 journalists attended the Vienna Forum which was covered by 250 media outlets worldwide, resulting in more than 6,000 separate reports in print, broadcast and online. Some of the in-depth reports were covered by Newsweek, Al Jazeera, the BBC, the South China Morning Post, and TVRI Indonesia.

Newsweek featured a comment piece on behalf of Emma Thompson for the 'Turning Point' section. This was published in the USA and in the international editions of the magazine, which have a combined readership of over four million people. The South China Morning Post article "End of Line: more women who flee poverty in northeast China are becoming trapped in a world of exploitation in Europe" featured interviews with ILO and UNODC.

The New Times (Rwanda) published "Human Trafficking on the increase in Eastern Africa" and TV5 France produced a "Human Trafficking Report" by reporter Armelle Charrier, incorporating much of the footage provided by UN.GIFT and shots from the Vienna Forum.

UN.GIFT awareness raising efforts were not only concentrated around the Vienna Forum. In September 2007, the film "Trade" was premiered at the UN Headquarters in New York. The UN Secretary-General attended together with the film producers, director and actors.

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In India, UN.GIFT commissioned a seven-minute film entitled "One Life, No Price" to sensitize people on human trafficking and galvanize support against it. The film was produced by Prajwala, an NGO working on trafficking issues. A two-minute clip of the film was incorporated in the mainstream feature film "Welcome", produced by Base Industries Ltd., and showcasing major names such as Akshay Kumar and Dairina Kaif. The film has been screened in over 1,100 theatres globally.

In Nepal, celebrities and journalists came together in Kathmandu to map out a plan of action for the involvement of popular culture in the fight against human trafficking. Several Public Service Announcements (PSA) were recorded and are now being used as awareness raising tools.

In May 2008, UN.GIFT also supported a World Bank Symposium and Exhibition entitled "Borderless Captivity: Exploitation and Human Trafficking." The symposium panel included the Vice President of the World Bank's Human Development Network, the Director of the Ricky Martin Foundation, Benjamin Skinner, author of the book "A Crime So Monstrous: Face to Face With Modern Day Slavery", and the Representative of the UNODC New York Office.

A dedicated UN.GIFT website has been launched to support advocacy efforts (www.ungift.org). Its content includes publications from all Steering Committee members and regular stories on human trafficking activities around the world. On average, the website receives 6,000 to 7,000 unique viewers per month, with the exception of February 2008 when the website reached 15,000 unique visitors.

The "Unaware" and Emma Thompson PSAs produced by UN.GIFT are being aired by CNN, Al Jazeera and Deutsche Welle. Between February and June 2008, Al Jazeera reported 150 airings of the 30-second version of the "Unaware" PSA and more than 300 airings of the 60-second version. Discussions are underway with France 24 and other broadcasters to produce multi-lingual versions of the "Unaware" PSA to broaden its outreach.

As a spin-off of UN.GIFT advocacy efforts, a virtual community group entitled "Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking" is live on Facebook. The group has now over 1,800 subscribers, demonstrating how individuals can join forces to support this cause.

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3 Building capacity of state and non-state actors

The Vienna Forum enabled the sharing of experiences and good practices amongst its participants. The recommendations from the 28 different sessions have been compiled into a [Conference Report](#) (PDF).

Building on the results of the Forum, and at the request of Member States, the President of the UN General Assembly (GA) held a **thematic debate on human trafficking** in June 2008. The debate underscored that one of the fundamental pre-requisites to successful anti-trafficking efforts is the widest possible collaboration among Member States, relevant international organizations, civil society and the private sector. Despite ongoing efforts, there is still a need to promote cross-border cooperation. Moreover, coordination structures must be strengthened to ensure a comprehensive response.

As stated in the [summary of the GA debate](#) (PDF), "several speakers called for the development of a United Nations strategy or global plan of action to combat human trafficking, facilitated by the General Assembly, in order to provide a balanced, coherent, comprehensive and results-oriented framework. It was argued that this would ensure an effective international regime against trafficking in persons for the implementation of common commitments and coordination of partnerships among the different stakeholders. It was further recommended that discussions should continue, involving government and non-governmental stakeholders, with a view to adopt the strategy at a special session of the United Nations General Assembly".

The day before the thematic debate, UN.GIFT members - UNODC, IOM, ILO and OHCHR - together with UNITAR, UNFPA, and with the support from the MacArthur Foundation, hosted the seminar "Countering Human Trafficking: Partnerships for Protection and Capacity-Building". The event targeted Permanent Mission representatives although UN staff, civil society and private sector representatives also attended. The seminar considered issues stemming from the Vienna Forum and included a mock interview and trial on criminal justice responses against trafficking in persons, which was featured at the Vienna Forum.

Policies to prevent and combat trafficking in persons in conflict and post-conflict contexts

Following the UN.GIFT regional event in Western and Central Africa, a pilot project to strengthen national policy and institutional capacity to counter child trafficking in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, Liberia and Sierra Leone is underway thanks to a financial contribution by the Government of Canada.

The project supported a meeting in April in Freetown, Sierra Leone, to discuss policy change. Attending were members of national task forces from the four countries as well as senior experts from line ministries, NGO representatives and UN partners. In particular, the

meeting's objective was to turn relevant recommendations from the regional meeting into a realistic plan of action.

The discussions resulted in concrete action. National plans were developed with clearly defined responsibilities, existing and potential funding sources and timeframes. The national plans include legal reform measures that will be conducive to a more child protective environment.

In addition, normative gaps were identified, and corrective measures recommended for increased adherence and compliance with international criminal, human rights and humanitarian law, relevant for the protection of children in armed conflict and post-conflict situations.

The pilot project supports the establishment of an effective regional early warning network linking ECOWAS, national governments, UN agencies and NGOs. Child trafficking, illicit recruitment and exploitation of children in armed conflict are now among the 94 social, economic and political indicators to be monitored daily by ECOWAS's early warning network (ECOWARN) that spans the sub-region.

Parliamentarians active in the anti-human trafficking cause

In April 2008, over 1,500 parliamentarians gathered at the 118th IPU Statutory Assembly in South Africa. The Assembly's main topic for the general debate was the world's political, economic and social situation with the overall theme of "Pushing Back the Frontiers of Poverty." Human trafficking was one of the many important issues addressed.

In the Assembly's opening session, Mrs. Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian National Council and Member of UN.GIFT's Women Leader's Council, stated "the fight against human trafficking, one of the most cruel crimes of today's globalized world, is of utmost concern to me. Trafficking in persons affects thousands of individual lives worldwide. (...) Good governance and legislation are key elements in fighting and preventing human trafficking and protecting the victims. Inter-regional and international cooperation and joint action are equally important."

Building on its experience of developing model legislation, UNODC had drafted a handbook for parliamentarians which was first presented and discussed at the Parliamentary Forum during the Vienna Forum. The handbook is based on an analysis of the various provisions of the Trafficking Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as interpreted by the legislative guide and the OHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking.

Enriched by contributions from the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Council of Europe, the handbook also provides concrete examples of how parliaments around the world are tackling the problem.

At the April IPU Statutory Assembly, the revised version of the handbook was presented for further input and feedback. The finalized handbook will be presented at the next IPU Assembly meeting in Geneva to be held 13-15 October 2008.

Capacity building tools to combat trafficking in persons

UN.GIFT is also supporting capacity building of state and non-state actors by developing human trafficking tools for capacity development.

One such tool is the “**Law Enforcement First Aid Kit**” which was reviewed by experts at a meeting in May. The kit provides practical examples that sensitize law enforcement officers to the particularities of trafficking cases and victims (e.g. phenomenon, special investigative techniques, victim identification, interview, protection and assistance and impact of trauma). A final training product will follow which can be adapted to different regional and country realities. It will also be offered for inclusion in training programmes of national law enforcement training institutes.

ILO and UNICEF are leading the development of a training manual to help fight **child trafficking**. The manual combines a systematic training tool and a stand-alone resource for those who wish to strengthen their skills. It targets governments, workers' and employers' organizations, NGOs, and includes a facilitators' guide for trainers/facilitators. Among its features is a set of exercises aimed at familiarising end-users with the complexities of child-trafficking. Above all it seeks to demonstrate how different groups can work together to address the issue.

4 Fostering partnerships for joint action against human trafficking

The establishment of the Women Leaders' Council (WLC) at the Vienna Forum is an illustration of the types of innovative partnerships encouraged by UN.GIFT. The WLC focuses on raising awareness on human trafficking through events, public information materials and outreach, influencing government anti-human trafficking policies, and strengthening collaborative efforts. The WLC has successfully engaged dedicated women from different backgrounds – business, politics, art, civil society, international organizations - who have committed themselves to eradicating human trafficking and joining efforts in this endeavour.

The Council is co-chaired by the Baroness Mary Goudie, Member of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom and Dr. Aleya Hammad, Founder and Board Member of the Suzanne Mubarak International Peace Movement.

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Public private partnerships

Recognized as one of the region's most pressing, uncertain and challenging issues, human trafficking was included as a "Hot Topic" session at the **World Economic Forum in the Middle East** (18-21 May).

The Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement (SMWIPM) was the lead organizer of the session and collaborated with UN.GIFT within the framework of the WLC.

A town-hall meeting entitled "Human Trafficking and Labour Exploitation" focused on good practices and success stories in eradicating trafficking for labour exploitation and included a voting segment on business incentives. The meeting illustrated efforts undertaken by the public and private sector to eliminate trafficking within their respective areas of influence.

With a 52% majority of votes, the voting segment determined "partnership with the media for public awareness campaign" to be one of the priority actions in fighting human trafficking for labour exploitation.

During the meeting, UNODC's Executive Director invited Suzanne Mubarak to jointly present a business leader of the year award to acknowledge entrepreneurial vision, creativity and contribution to the fight against trafficking. The award's announcement was welcomed by business and country representatives present.

As a follow up to the UN.GIFT South Asia event, the Ministry of Women and Child Development of the Government of India created a "**Think Tank**" to support public-private partnerships. The Think Tank includes representatives from the ministries of Home Affairs, Commerce and Industry, Labour and Tourism, along with UNODC and IOM.

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Representatives from the private sector include GAP Inc., Pacific Asia Tourism Agency, Brands Ethics Working Group, Orient Fashion, Apparel and Export Promotion Council of India, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Confederation of Indian Industries. The first meeting of this body took place on 23 July 2008.

To reduce vulnerability to trafficking, the Ministry of Women and Child Development and UNODC are also initiating pilot projects to provide vocational skills training to women and youth in high risk areas. The identification of districts where these projects will be implemented is underway. The initiative will involve local civil society and self help groups already working in government sponsored women's empowerment programmes.

A cooperation agreement is being formalized between UN.GIFT and **Stop the Traffik**, a global movement against human trafficking with more than 1,000 member organizations in 50 countries. The core areas of work will focus on awareness raising targeting youth and support to innovative grass root level projects. The objective is to provide education and vocational training to vulnerable groups to prevent human trafficking. Cooperation with Stop the Traffik will also involve the setting up of hotline numbers and facilitating better support services to victims.

Private sector engagement

In March 2008 in Sri Lanka, the garment, tourism and other private sector representatives held a round table to discuss strategies to collectively fight human trafficking. Attending were representatives from MAS Holdings Sri Lanka, Tran Asia Colombo, Grant McCann, Sri Lanka Tourism Board, and Microsoft. MAS Holdings Sri Lanka, one of the largest garment production companies, has agreed to spearhead an awareness raising programme focusing on female garment workers in the free trade zones.

Under UN.GIFT, UNODC in India is working with Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) to facilitate the development of a code of conduct for "Safe and Honourable Tourism". The code of conduct will form the basis for action by the travel and tourism industry to address issues of sex tourism and trafficking related to it, as well as paedophilia. A draft code of conduct has been prepared for discussion and finalisation.

Civil society engagement

In May 2008, SANLAAP, a development organization working against trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation, organized a South Asia consultation on human trafficking in Kolkatta. UNODC conducted an orientation session for NGO partners on developing corporate partnerships with a special focus on rehabilitation of trafficking victims and prevention programmes at the community level.

UN.GIFT has partnered with Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, an Indian-based NGO working in Jharkhand, to ensure that cases of victims of trafficking are given due process of law. In May 2008, the NGO facilitated public hearings with representatives from the National



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Commission for Women and other senior government officials. As a result of these hearings, over 300 cases have been taken up by the local administration and admitted into the formal judicial process.

In June 2008, UN.GIFT also supported non-profit Community Aid and Sponsorship Programme and Butterflies, a child rights NGO, to hold consultations on child trafficking for forced labour in India. The consultations have helped bring the issue to policy makers and recognised the good work carried out by NGOs promoting child rights.

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