

**THE VIENNA FORUM TO FIGHT HUMAN TRAFFICKING
13-15 February 2008**

Vienna, Austria

AIDE MEMOIRE

**SPECIAL EVENT: THE ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY IN
THE FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

BACKGROUND

The Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking to be held at United Nations Headquarters in Vienna from 13 to 15 February 2008 will focus on the three overriding themes of vulnerability, impact and action. It will offer plenary sessions and a series of panels and workshops on different aspects of the three themes.

This event is part of the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT). The Global Initiative aims to mobilize state and non-state actors to eradicate human trafficking by i) reducing the vulnerability of potential victims and the demand for exploitation in all its forms; ii) ensuring adequate protection and support to those who do fall victim, and iii) supporting the efficient prosecution of the criminals involved, while respecting the fundamental human rights of all persons.

UN.GIFT is part of a wide partnership by the UN-System and other international and regional organizations (ILO, IOM, OSCE, OHCHR, UNICEF, UNODC). These organizations, which form part of UN.GIFT Steering Committee, are responsible for the organization of the panels and workshops of The Vienna Forum.

The special event is organized by IOM, in close collaboration with key partners.

CONTEXT

In many parts of the world, religious organizations have denounced trafficking in persons as a serious offence against human dignity and have taken the initiative to protect and assist persons, particularly women and children, who fall prey to traffickers and/or who experience severe forms of exploitation.

As leaders and points of reference, religious personnel, regardless of creed or denomination, have an important role to play in raising public awareness of the trafficking phenomenon within local communities, providing direct assistance and support to trafficked persons and exploited and vulnerable migrants, and coordinating anti-trafficking interventions. In some regions, this has occurred to great effect, while in others, a lack of cooperation between diverse religious organizations, and/or between lay and religious organizations and personnel, has lessened the impact of important anti-trafficking interventions.

To further encourage the involvement of religious organizations in anti-trafficking efforts, interfaith understanding and cooperation, and cooperation between religious and lay personnel, this special event will bring together members of a number of religious communities to discuss key themes.

OBJECTIVES

This special event will bring together members of a number of different religious communities who have been active in advocating against human trafficking and providing support to victims. Speakers will share and discuss: a) the basis in their religion for fighting human trafficking; b) why and how members and representatives of religious communities can be in a privileged position to contribute to the prevention of human trafficking and assist trafficked individuals; and c) some useful experiences that can help participants to understand the elements that may positively or negatively influence collaboration between diverse religious organizations, and between religious and lay organisations.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

1. A concise statement will be elaborated on the strategic role of both men and women of all the main religious denominations involved;
2. A summary of panel discussions will be prepared and incorporated into the overall final report of the Vienna Forum;
3. Cooperation between different religious and lay organisations will be strengthened.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The special event will consist of a single session, which will take place on the 13th of February, from 14:30 until 17:00.

The event will be chaired and moderated by an expert who has worked extensively with religious communities in the field of human trafficking. Six or seven members and representatives of a variety of religious communities will speak and interact with each other for the first hour and a half, with the final 30 minutes available to participants to ask questions or provide comments.

The chair will offer a summary of the discussions at the end of the session, and secure a general consensus for the summary to be adopted as the official record of the panel session.

THEMES

The following themes will be addressed:

- The religious basis for fighting against human trafficking;
- The privileged position of religious communities in prevention and protection;

- Possible common obstacles to effective partnerships.

PARTICIPANTS

Approximately 150/200 participants are expected, including government officials, parliamentarians, representatives of the private sector, civil society, academia and international organizations.

Moderator: Stefano Volpicelli, IOM (Italy)

Speakers:

- Maria Ulfa Anshor, Fatayat (Indonesia)
- HR Vasile Ciobanu (Moldova)
- Rabbi Levi Lauer (Israel)
- Imam Yahya Pallavicini (Italy)
- Lisa Thompson, Salvation Army (USA) tbc
- Sister Colleen Wilkinson (South Africa)

Rapporteur: Venerable Claude d'Estree

WORKING LANGUAGE

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in English, French, Spanish, Russian, and Mandarin Chinese. One of the speakers, Ms. Anshor from Indonesia, will have an English/Bahasa interpreter provided by IOM.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Faryal Shah

Division: Migration Management Services Department

Organization: International Organization for Migration

E-mail: avrctmms@iom.int