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Top UN Official Calls for Greater Efforts to Fight Human Trafficking

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The head of the United Nations anti-crime agency has urged governments, businesses and civil society to boost their efforts to combat human trafficking, including by increasing awareness of the problem and providing greater

resources to tackle it.

"Let us build on the momentum generated here to ensure that people's lives will not be for sale," Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (<http://www.unodc.org>), said yesterday at the end of the Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking.

The three-day gathering brought together 1,400 experts, legislators, law enforcement teams, business leaders, non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives and trafficking victims from 116 countries.

The conference also drew the participation of celebrities and public figures such as Egypt's First Lady Suzanne Mubarak, Academy Award-winning British actress Emma Thompson, and international pop star Ricky Martin, who joined the outcry against the global scourge.

Calling the Forum "just the beginning of a process," Mr. Costa called for practical measures to prevent trafficking, such as self-certification by businesses to take slave-made products off the shelves and developing new technology to monitor human trafficking routes.

He also proposed the tracking and blocking of credit card payments for internet human trafficking transactions and codes of conduct to

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Stressing the need to strengthen partnerships among governments, businesses and civil society in the fight against trafficking, the Executive Director hailed the launch during the Forum of the Women Leaders' Council. The group brings together political figures, diplomats, trade union representatives, business leaders and entertainers from around the world to work together to tackle the problem and help the victims.

The Forum was convened by the UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT), an initiative launched by UNODC and several UN partners last year to bring governments, the private sector, academia, civil society and the media together to combat a practice that is viewed as modern-day slavery.

Source: United Nations

judythpiazza@newsblaze.com

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