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Emma Thompson: Rise in Human Trafficking

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Human trafficking is on the rise, but making sure girls receive birth certificates can make it more difficult, Emma Thompson said Tuesday.



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British Oscar winning actress Emma Thompson holds up the agenda of the Vienna Forum to fight Human Trafficking at a preview news conference in Vienna, on Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2008. The conference on human trafficking will start on Wednesday. (AP Photo/Lilli Strauss)

"It's increasing big, big, big time - it's the third largest shadow economy in the world," the 47-year-old actress-screenwriter told reporters.

A United Nations human trafficking forum begins Wednesday. Thompson is part of the Emma Thompson Foundation, a Britain-based group that helps rebuild the lives of victims.

She warned it was much easier to buy and sell people - especially women.

"In many, many countries in the world, girls simply aren't registered at birth, and they get used - and I know that because I've spoken to lots of them," she said.

She said human trafficking had increased exponentially over the past decade and was becoming fantastically sophisticated.

Sometimes traffickers are neighbors, uncles, brothers - even fiancés, families and daughters of their own, Thompson said.

"All the stories are different - but mostly they involve trust and the breaking of someone's trust," said Thompson for "Sense and Sensibility" and a best actress Oscar for "Howards End."

The U.N. gathering expects to draw more than a thousand experts, legislators, law enforcement teams, NGOs, organizations and trafficking victims from more than 100 countries.

On the Net:

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:

<http://www.unodc.org/>

Helen Bamber Foundation:

<http://www.helenbamber.org/index.html>"><http://www.helenbamber.org/index.html>

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