



Statement
by

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Vienna Forum to Fight Human
Trafficking

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In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful

**Mr. President, Distinguished delegates,
ladies and gentlemen,**

Trafficking in persons, especially women and children, is a most heinous transnational organized crime, appropriately called as “modern slavery”. In fact, human trafficking is a major challenge to societies and governments all around the world; a challenge that violates human rights, mitigates the rule of law and undermines the safety and security of our societies.

Fighting trafficking in persons requires a coordinated holistic approach, taking into account all factors which may, in one way or another, contribute to or associated with it. States should adopt effective legislations, including measures to support and rehabilitate victims, on the one hand, and to prosecute and punish those involved in trafficking in human beings on the other hand, and to facilitate multilateral cooperation, e.g. mutual legal assistance and law enforcement cooperation. It should be noted that trafficking in persons follows the principle of demand and supply. The supply of human beings for prostitution, forced labor or removal of organs could not be stopped unless demand for them is controlled.

Given the facts above, my Delegation has the following comments to make:

1- Trafficking of human beings, especially women and children, is one of the most serious manifestation of organized crimes, extending beyond boundaries and jurisdictions. Therefore, Combating and preventing human trafficking requires integrated actions by all countries especially on areas such as; prevention, prosecution and protection.

2- Human trafficking is too complicated in nature and too diversified in form to be combated individually. In other words, international cooperation is essential for controlling the menace. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (especially women and children) can be appropriate legal instruments to draw the lines and define the ways and means of such cooperation.

3- Sexual exploitation, including child pornography and prostitution, has continued to be a major motivation for human trafficking.. Every day, more

and more women and children around the world are subjected to sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Therefore concerted action is needed at the local, national, regional and international levels to bring an end to this scourge. This will also need the consolidated efforts and cooperation of all governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the media, religious groups, and communities to tackle the menace.

4- Removal of and trafficking in human organs is another cruel and inhumane elements of trafficking in persons and needs to be taken very seriously. Trafficking in human organs is a crime that occurs in broad categories such as cases where traffickers force or deceive the victims into giving up an organ. Considering the serious health implications and the severe human rights violations of the vulnerable victims, it is essential that this issue gets the desired attention.

5- The root causes of human trafficking are various and often differ from one country to another. In search of a better life elsewhere, disadvantaged people are often drawn into the control of criminals who will take advantage of their situation and exploit them. Poverty, illiteracy, lack of employment opportunities, regional imbalance in development, increased need for 'cheap' labor in process of economic growth and a consistently expanding commercial sex industry, are some factors which can play a very significant role in increasing human trafficking and make millions of people vulnerable to various forms of exploitation and enslavement. One has to bear in mind that the status que is also the result of exploitation of natural and human resources of poor nations since decades ago.

After all, a careful in-depth study and diagnosis of the root causes of human trafficking shows that the more people of the world distance themselves from the humanitarian principles based on divine, moral, religious values and beliefs, the more we witness such shameful crimes. Misinterpretation and misperception of the notion "freedom", as a boundless right, has paved the way for such horrible crimes.

6- It is also imperative to bear in mind that the supply of human beings for prostitution, forced labor or removal of human organs could not effectively be suppressed unless demand for them is controlled. Given that, an active campaign at global level shall be developed in order to target demand side of the problem.

Mr. President,

The Islamic Republic of Iran takes trafficking in persons very seriously and is committed to prevent and suppress it. In addition to already existing national laws and regulations on fighting human trafficking, such as Islamic Penal Code and Iranian Passport Law, Trafficking in human beings to and/or from Iranian territory for the purposes of sexual exploitation and/or forced labor and/or removal of organs is criminalized in accordance with a specific law which was approved by the Parliament in 2004. Furthermore, extensive measures have been taken by related bodies including Iranian Welfare Organization to support victims and assist the vulnerable groups.

The adoption of this piece of legislation by the Iranian Parliament is expected not only to strengthen the domestic legal regime against human trafficking but also to prepare the legal base for some obligations on criminalizing the human trafficking which have also been stipulated by the UN protocol against Trafficking in Persons (especially women and children).

Very recently, the Islamic Republic of Iran joined the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography* on 26 September 2007. This Protocol provides an effective basis for international cooperation against child prostitution and child pornography as well as fighting the increasing use of internet for child pornography.

Mr. President,

A growing number of bilateral, regional and global agreements reflect the realization that transnational crime can be addressed effectively through law enforcement and judicial cooperation. The I.R of Iran at the regional level has signed several MOUs with different countries in fighting transnational organized crime, including human trafficking.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has made some regional contributions with the aim of combating human trafficking and illegal immigration. The quart-lateral consultation among Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and Greece has prepared a suitable ground for more cooperative and effective collaboration at the regional level. Moreover, at the First Meeting of the *Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Ministers for Interior*, titled "Security, Stability and Sustainable Development", which was held in Tehran in November 2006, participants agreed to exchange information and national reports for

benefiting their best practices and experiences in the field of combating human trafficking. The Meeting concluded to establish a data base on various legislative, administrative and judicial activities of ECO Members.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has also taken serious steps in implementing several projects on enhancing border control, in order to better control and fight transitional organized crimes including human trafficking.

Mr.President

Various forms of trafficking in human beings are committed across borders and cannot be addressed without joint international efforts and international cooperation. States must, therefore, turn to assist each other in the fight against human trafficking , especially women and children.

While laws, policies and programmes exist to counter the human trafficking, greater political will, more effective implementation measures, and adequate allocation of resources are needed to give effect to the spirit and letter of these laws, policies and programmes. Moreover, an active campaign at global level shall be developed and supported in order to target the menace. In this regard, a more coordinated inter-agency cooperation among related specialized UN bodies including ILO, UNICEF and UNODC is needed to make such an endeavor a success.

Thank you for your attention