

STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CHIEF OJO MADUEKWE, CFR, TO THE
UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO FIGHT
HUMAN TRAFFICKING (VIENNA FORUM), HELD FROM
13TH TO 15TH FEBRUARY 2008 IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA.

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I would like to congratulate Dr, Antonio Maria Costa, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and his able team for organizing the Vienna Forum on Human Trafficking. This is a confirmation of the Organization's (UNODC) determination to frustrate the evil network of traffickers.

2. Human Trafficking is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed through the concerted efforts of the International Community. It is a global scourge and a serious source of embarrassment and shame to the entire world. Human Trafficking has continued to occupy the front burner worldwide as issues of illegal migration continue to pose economic and security threats to developed and developing nations alike. It is therefore, a crime that requires collaboration amongst nations.

Mr. President,

3. The Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria wishes to associate itself with the laudable efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The UNGIFT was born out of a renewed commitment by world leaders in the battle against Human trafficking regarded as one of the most flagrant violations of human rights in the world today. Thus, the high rate of ratification of the protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, which has risen to 116 nations including Nigeria by the end of 2007, is an indication of

the determination of the global community to join forces together to eradicate human trafficking.

4. Nigeria ratified the United Nations Trans-National Organized Crime Convention and its supplementing protocol in 2000. To further underscore its commitment to the eradication of the demeaning human trafficking, the government also enacted a national legislation to domesticate the international convention known as Trafficking in persons(Prohibition) law Enforcement and Administrative Act, 2003 which became operational in July 2003, and was also amended in December 2005 to provide for the seizure and forfeiture of the assets of the convicted traffickers amongst others, and to establish a Victims' Trust Fund.

5. In May 2007, the National Agency for the Prohibition in Trafficking in Persons-(NAPTIP) an agency charged with human trafficking matters in Nigeria organized an International Conference on Trafficking in Persons with the sole aim of unearthing the root causes of the Human Trafficking scourge in Nigeria. In addition, Nigeria was involved in a multi-national cooperation effort aimed at sharing security information on trafficking and investigation procedures. Countries involved in the process were Netherlands, Nigeria (the only Africa country), United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Republic of Ireland, and the United States. There was simultaneous arrest in all these countries.

Mr. President,

6. My Government therefore, regards the UNGIFT as a call to action, reminding governments, civil society actors, the media, the business community and concerned individuals of their common commitment to fight trafficking in persons and that the battle cannot be fought or won alone. There must be concerted efforts by all stakeholders including countries of origin as well as transit and destination countries to eliminate this modern-day slavery.

7. Nigeria wishes to place on record its preparedness to work with the rest of the committed member states and signatories of the convention to fight this heinous crime against humanity.

Thank you.