



## **Joint Submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls for the Thematic Report on “Prostitution and Violence Against Women and Girls”**

### **COVER NOTE**

*CREA and the Global Health Justice Partnership of the Yale Law School and the Yale School of Public Health provide this submission as part of the call for input to inform the thematic report on “prostitution and violence against women and girls” to be presented by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls to the UN Human Rights Council at its 56th session in June 2024.\**

*This submission addresses a range of questions in the Call for Input, focusing on three critical areas for the Special Rapporteur’s goals of better understanding the context for violence faced by women and girls in the sex trades, and approaches and actions that States can take to effectively protect women and girls from all forms of violence in line with international human rights law. First, we highlight the diversity and rights of persons involved in the sex sector, and the importance of formulating analyses and recommendations regarding the frameworks regulating anti-trafficking interventions, and the selling and buying of sex, with attention to all persons impacted, in line with a human rights approach. We then address the importance of precise statements of international law to effectively guide state action and not produce negative rights implications. We clarify several points of law before highlighting how precise analysis in this area will ensure that the final report aligns with other human rights bodies and experts, and facilitates the full development of rights for people in the sex trades. Finally, we address shortcomings in some anti-trafficking research and analysis, and present the existing credible research on violence against people in the sex trades and its insights.*

*Our submission, as follows, is informed by interviews with sex worker collectives in Bangladesh, Kenya and Uganda on the most common forms of violence they face, the impact of punitive laws and the conflation of sex work and trafficking, strategies they use to reduce violence, specific challenges faced by LGBTQ sex workers, what options are available for sex workers who wish to leave sex work, and ways that the international community can demonstrate meaningful solidarity. We include summaries of these conversations as appendices, along with an annotated guide to the Palermo Protocol, and express our gratitude to all involved in those discussions. We would also like to thank Hailey Davis, a student who assisted with compiling relevant research.*

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\* CREA, <https://creaworld.org/>; Global Health Justice Partnership of the Yale Law School and the Yale School of Public Health, <https://law.yale.edu/ghjp>.

## **Attention to the Diversity and Rights of All Persons in the Sex Sector**

This section provides information for questions 2, 9, 11, 12 and 13. People of all genders are involved in the sex trades, with differences in clients, work conditions, and marginalization shaped by the type(s) of sex work performed, and gender, sexuality, race, place, migration status, etc.<sup>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</sup> Exposure to police, client or other violence, and to legal regulation, also varies widely across street-based sex work, work in hotels, brothels, from home or online.<sup>6, 7</sup>

We recognize that the Special Rapporteur's mandate relates specifically to women and girls. However, we note that under a rights-based approach, the Special Rapporteur should formulate analyses and recommendations regarding the frameworks regulating anti-trafficking interventions, and the selling and buying of sex, with attention to the diverse persons impacted.

Violations can arise when anti-trafficking interventions ignore the rights and diversity of persons in sex work. For example, 'diversion' programs in the U.S. often target only women as 'trafficking victims' ironically *coercing* participation in services (the condition for avoiding fines or jail).<sup>8</sup> Like other forced rehabilitation programs,<sup>9, 18</sup> they are ineffective because they ignore the needs and self-determination of participants, but even their limited assistance (when voluntary) is unavailable to people who are non-hetero women. Raid and rescue operations also usually target 'sex trafficked' women or girls, These have been shown to rarely identify trafficking victims; instead often leading to the abuse, arrest and detention of those allegedly rescued. Raids often target communities based on stereotypes, for example focusing on migrants in the US, or on local caste, class, ethnicity and gendered stereotypes globally.<sup>10, 11, 12</sup> Such interventions displace evidence-based responses to the full range of people subjected to all forms of trafficking.

Attention is also needed to the range of laws that differentially expose diverse sex workers to police contact and violence. Sex workers with disabilities or who use drugs, among others, have particular service needs rendered invisible by criminalization.<sup>13</sup> Street-based sex workers, and sex work establishments, are particularly exposed to police selectively enforcing (sometimes sex-work-specific) public nuisance laws,<sup>1, 3, 12, 14</sup> or licensing laws,<sup>15</sup> which also legitimize violence from the general public.<sup>1, 2, 16, 74</sup> Laws, such as SESTA/FOSTA in the U.S., limiting use of online platforms for advertising sexual services have pushed sex workers, particularly trans women of color, into street-based work and increased exposure to arrest and violence.<sup>1, 2, 17</sup> Limited protections exist for gender-based online harm, such as blackmail using information from online profiles:<sup>18</sup> non-gender-normative persons are even more exposed, with officials unwilling to intervene to protect their rights or even identities.

LGBTQ sex workers are exposed to laws penalizing same-sex activity, non-normative gender expression or public morality offenses,<sup>1, 2</sup> which may impact organizations' safety.<sup>13, 18, 73</sup> Where sex work is legalized, trans sex workers are de facto criminalized if registration requires costly gender affirmation processes.<sup>4</sup> Sex workers may also face laws criminalizing (risk of) HIV transmission,<sup>19</sup> or be subject to, or not report, violence due to their migration status.<sup>20</sup> Under-18s selling sex (who have a distinct status under international law, including as trafficked persons) additionally face coercive services or 'protective' detention under 'Safe Harbor' laws, while status offenses, or mandatory reporting laws and consent or marriage requirements for sexual and reproductive health services can limit access to necessary care.<sup>21</sup>

## The Importance of Precise Statements of International Law

This section provides information for questions 6, 8, 9, and 13. We are concerned that the Call for Input selectively and misleadingly cites international authorities, conflating sources of law on trafficking and sex work. As law serves to express values as well as guide state action, this selectivity can skew understanding; it may preclude the inclusion of important data and analysis, producing negative rights implications for the diversity of persons in the sex sector, whether by coercion, circumstance or choice.

For example, the language “prostitution is incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person” is from the (non-binding) Preamble to the 1949 Convention.<sup>22</sup> The Convention sits in an unclear status: some hold its limited ratification and weak monitoring capacity make it unusable or obsolete;<sup>23, 24, 25, 26</sup> many international law scholars and anti-trafficking advocates maintain that it has been superseded by the 2000 Palermo Protocol.<sup>27,28</sup> Previous mandate holders rejected the 1949 Convention as lacking both a rights approach and a regard for women as independent rights holders, and providing little actual protection or remedies for trafficking-related human rights violations.<sup>25, 28, 29</sup>

Effective responses to trafficking require that UN mechanisms and states, consistent with almost three decades of human rights work, distinguish sex work and trafficking, and work to identify the conditions putting persons at risk of trafficking.<sup>25, 26, 28, 30</sup> Conflating the two allows manipulation of data (see below) and blurs lines between them.<sup>31</sup> While the 1949 Convention equates only (and all) “prostitution” with trafficking, the Protocol makes clear that trafficking engages all labor sectors and names “*the exploitation of the prostitution of others*” as a purpose that can amount to trafficking if two other elements are also met. Far from a “key element for the crime of trafficking,”<sup>32</sup> “prostitution” is at most a *context* for *one* possible purpose of ‘trafficking’. The Protocol does not require criminalizing sex work: states parties must criminalize coercive, fraudulent, or abuse of authority to move/hold persons in any sector.<sup>33</sup> CEDAW contains comparable wording,<sup>34</sup> and similarly qualified references distinguish it from per se harm across the VAW Declaration,<sup>35</sup> the Beijing Platform of Action,<sup>12, 36</sup> and treaties on war crimes and/or crimes against humanity.<sup>37</sup>

Where the Protocol notes that ‘consent’ of a trafficking victim is irrelevant (not a defense), it is when listed *means* (e.g., fraud) are established or the person is under 18.<sup>27, 38</sup> UNODC guidance, issued in part because many states and non-state actors confused or misrepresented ‘consent as irrelevant’ (echoing the 1949 Convention), underscores moreover that “exploitative conditions alone are insufficient to establish trafficking.”<sup>39, 40</sup>

Separate analysis regarding under-18s is crucial, as distinct provisions apply in the context of trafficking.<sup>27, 41, 42</sup> Efforts to support the rights of trafficked under-18s must comport with other rights under the CRC, and the CRC Committee’s non-criminalization approach.<sup>43, 44</sup> Disaggregated data is key for understanding conditions giving rise to harms across ages.

Precise analysis is essential so that the final report does not undermine the development of the full range of human rights of person in sex sectors (to freedom from violence, work, health, migrate, etc.).<sup>12, 40, 45</sup> Relatedly, it will ensure consistency with other human rights bodies and experts recognizing sex workers as rights bearers,<sup>46, 49</sup> that conflating sex work and trafficking leads to inappropriate responses, failing both sex workers and trafficking victims in realizing

rights,<sup>47, 48</sup> and distinguishing between sex work and trafficking to provide nuanced analysis of the laws and conditions leading to rights violations.<sup>28, 40, 47, 49, 50</sup> The International Commission of Jurists emphasizes that the exchange of sexual services for money between consenting adults, and related third party conduct, may not be criminalized absent coercion, force, abuse of authority or fraud, under a human rights-based approach to criminal law.<sup>51</sup>

We are concerned with the focus on the 1949 Convention and Palermo Protocol, to the exclusion of a broader human rights framework: both are crime (and migration) control documents.<sup>24</sup> Commentators note the 1949 Convention's view that movement for prostitution is "trafficking" stems from colonial powers' desire to control women's movement,<sup>52</sup> and it definitionally cannot provide rights for persons trafficked across sectors.<sup>23, 24, 25, 26</sup> The Palermo Protocol, fifty year later, also provides a limited set of rights protections. Moreover, the lack of a clearly defined set of practices ('exploitation') at its center and persistent state confusion about its obligations, make it an unreliable metric for collecting documentation.<sup>23, 24, 26</sup>

Further engagement with *all* human rights treaties is essential. The CRC and CEDAW are key but not sole sources of rights. CEDAW's general recommendations, read together with other treaties' guarantees of movement, due process, etc. can help ensure States see protection against discrimination of women in its fullest, rights-enhancing way.<sup>40, 49</sup> In particular, the report can call attention to CEDAW's intersectional analysis, especially in violations against persons with intersex conditions, trans women and gender fluid persons, including as trafficked,<sup>53</sup> and reporting by countries that have decriminalized or legalized sex work.

### **Credible Research, and Shortcoming in Research†**

This section provides information for questions 1, 4, 5, 9 and 13. Attention to existing credible research, along with careful scrutiny of methodological or other limitations in research, is critical for the full understanding of how women and girls in the sex trades are exposed to violence, and to guide States' most effective and rights promoting responses.

There are serious analytic and methodological flaws present in some anti-trafficking work, e.g., sampling bias, graphic anecdotes as evidence of trends without other data, ignoring adverse data.<sup>23, 54</sup> Notably, "[s]tatistics in the trafficking field are notoriously unreliable, unsubstantiated figures often recycled and accepted as true..."<sup>23</sup> Clear figures are unobtainable because countries and organizations define trafficking differently, with some including smuggling, illegal migration, and "prostitution" in their figures.<sup>23</sup>

Clear-eyed assessment of all evidence is essential because much current analysis eschews careful use of empirical research (i.e., differentiating correlation and causation)<sup>55</sup> for stock narratives following traditional gender roles and sexual morality, or anxieties around male sexual exploitation of women or lost childhood innocence. These narratives are used to justify ineffective and/or harmful criminal legal or "rescue" efforts, contradicting the findings of leading

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† This section builds on, and shares coauthors with, an open letter written in 2015 to Amnesty International members, section directors, and board members expressing support for the resolution requesting "the International Board to adopt a policy that seeks attainment of the highest possible protection of the human rights of sex workers, through measures that include the decriminalisation of sex work." <https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/area/center/ghjp/documents/letterdecriminalizationsexwork.pdf>

global health and human rights researchers.<sup>56, 57, 58, 73</sup> For example, ideas that sex work is inherently exploitative fixate on a preconceived female “seller” and male “buyer” in an extreme power dynamic, ignoring sex worker diversity,<sup>59</sup> differential marginalization associated with status/criminalization,<sup>6, 60</sup> and dynamics related to migration, markets, etc.<sup>40</sup> Sex workers may experience varied situations over time, from consensually traded sex to violence and trafficking. Credible research is important for correctly identifying when and how this occurs.

The primacy of anecdotal evidence is also notable.<sup>58</sup> Victim testimony is an important call to public attention and rights protection, but just one form of evidence.<sup>61</sup> Rigorous qualitative and quantitative research methodologies can make visible differently situated people, “identify and document patterns across populations, communities, and regions...,”<sup>62</sup> and support the promotion of rights across diverse experiences.

Existing credible research on violence against people in the sex trades reveals how law and policies *actually* function. Sex workers globally face physical, psychological and sexual violence from state agents, people posing as clients, and through anti-trafficking efforts, medical institutions, and armed conflict.<sup>13, 18, 45, 47, 63, 64, 65, 73, 74</sup> The criminalization of trading sex engenders poor labor conditions, and violence by state agents during arrest, detention, and/or deportation.<sup>45, 66</sup> Police may not protect sex workers from private citizens.<sup>67</sup> Sex workers’ reports of violence are often not taken seriously, leading to impunity,<sup>13, 18, 68</sup> and they are often forced to identify as ‘trafficking victims’ to avoid penalization or access services.<sup>45, 66, 69, 71</sup> Criminalization limits sex workers’ access to health and other services,<sup>13, 18, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74</sup> while mandatory or coerced HIV/STI testing and treatment are a specific form of violence.<sup>45, 64</sup>

There is limited data on under-18s selling sex, but research indicates experiences including exploitation but also meaningful decision-making,<sup>21, 40</sup> in which criminalization, including of selling sex, facilitates increased harm,<sup>75</sup> and limited access to sexual health services, including due to fear of police and anti-trafficking policies. Raid and rescue efforts targeting under-18s often lead to lengthy detention in centers where violence is common.<sup>21, 40</sup>

Existing credible research refutes the End Demand claim that removing criminal penalties for selling sex removes criminalization harms for sellers.<sup>76</sup> Rather removal leads to increased violence from state agents and clients, as continued surveillance, policing and prosecution of clients drives transactional sex underground, reducing sex workers’ ability to negotiate safety, and maintains police contact and excuses for harmful interactions with sex workers, as sex workers are witnesses, arrested under alternative charges or police are tasked with referring them to services.<sup>71, 77</sup> It also reduces access to post-violence services.<sup>78</sup>

There is also no convincing evidence to support End Demand claims that the legalization or decriminalization of sex work will ‘increase’ trafficking into the sex sector.<sup>40, 79</sup> The legal status of work is just one part of a complex landscape of factors engendering vulnerability to trafficking, across sectors, including coercion, harsh border controls, and police corruption.<sup>80</sup> Available statistics are unreliable due to variable definitions and the lack of social science research meaningfully comparing trafficking, as defined in international law, with the conditions of sex work under criminalization, decriminalization, legalization, etc.<sup>81</sup>

In fact, evidence shows that sex work decriminalization is, along with rights-based anti-trafficking laws, important for efforts against trafficking into the sex sector, because workers

and clients can report suspected cases without fear of arrest.<sup>82</sup> Further, improved conditions for cooperation with authorities, and the ability of non-criminalized workers to claim labor and other rights,<sup>83</sup> make violence and exploitation more visible, facilitating identification of trafficked persons.<sup>73, 84</sup>

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## **APPENDIX II: SUMMARIES OF INTERVIEWS**

**AWAC (Alliance of Women Advocating for Change, Uganda)**  
**awacuganda.org**

Common forms of violence faced by sex worker members: in our community, sex workers encounter various forms of violence, each deeply rooted in societal structures and prejudices. These include:

- ✓ Stigma and discrimination: this pervasive issue is fueled by external factors such as cultural norms, religious beliefs, and the criminalization of sex work.
- ✓ Structural violence: sex workers often face economic barriers, being denied the opportunity to earn a livelihood due to societal biases and legal restrictions.
- ✓ Exploitation by authorities: incidents of police taking advantage of their authority during the arrest of sex workers, subjecting them to rape. Similarly, clients may exploit sex workers knowing that the law does not adequately protect them.
- ✓ Psychological violence: sex workers endure various forms of psychological trauma, including arrest, physical violence, and eviction from their communities. The normalization of violence makes them vulnerable, with instances of public approval for those violating their rights.
- ✓ Financial exploitation: a significant portion of a sex worker's income goes into various forms of taxation, including police fees and work certificates. Dependents of sex workers also contribute to financial pressures, leading to subtle forms of violence.
- ✓ Murders and manipulation of evidence: cases of sex worker homicides often involve tampering with evidence, and the lack of public outcry exacerbates the issue. The violence is not merely against sex workers but is facilitated by societal structures.
- ✓ Marginalization of structurally excluded sex workers: individuals with disabilities among sex workers face sexual abuse for instance those hard of hearing, and without adequate representation of sign language interpreters, reporting such incidents becomes an additional challenge.
- ✓ Abolitionist perspectives: certain groups aim to eliminate sex work, but it's crucial to recognize that the violence stems from systemic structures rather than the nature of sex work itself.

**Impact of conflating sex workers with victims of trafficking:** the conflation of sex workers with victims of trafficking has profound consequences, often overlooked or underestimated. This confusion leads to:

- ✓ Targeting of sex workers: when society fails to distinguish between consensual sex work and trafficking, those engaged in sex work become susceptible to violence. The misperception that all sex workers are victims creates an environment where discrimination and harm thrive.
- ✓ Potential for increased trafficking: paradoxically, by conflating these distinct realities, there's a risk of inadvertently creating conditions conducive to increased trafficking. The conflation narrative may inadvertently attract those with exploitative intentions, as the lines between consensual sex work and forced exploitation blur.
- ✓ Manipulation by anti-human rights groups: conflation serves the interests of anti-human rights groups seeking to confuse both the public and sex workers themselves. By obscuring the differences, these groups can manipulate perceptions and advance agendas that may undermine the rights and agency of sex workers.

- ✓ **Impact on liberties:** victims of trafficking often face severe limitations on personal liberties, with their choices restricted. It's crucial to emphasize that sex workers, by contrast, have the agency to decide whom they meet and engage with intimately. Failing to recognize this distinction perpetuates harmful stereotypes and hinders efforts to protect the rights of sex workers.
- ✓ **Environmental context:** understanding the nuanced environments in which sex work and trafficking occur is essential. While trafficking victims are often subjected to coercion and lack autonomy, sex workers make consensual choices and should not be subjected to the same level of societal condemnation or legal penalties.
- ✓ **Choice and autonomy:** acknowledging that sex workers have the agency to make decisions for themselves is pivotal. Unlike victims of trafficking, sex workers have the freedom to exercise choice regarding their clients and the nature of their work.

In summary, clarifying the distinctions between sex work and trafficking is imperative to protect the rights of sex workers, prevent violence, and ensure a more nuanced understanding of these complex issues. Conflating the two not only perpetuates harmful stereotypes but also hinders efforts to address the unique challenges faced by each group.

**Impact of punitive laws on the lives of sex workers:** the repercussions of punitive laws on sex workers extend far beyond legal consequences, profoundly affecting their lives in several ways:

- ✓ **Systemic exclusion:** punitive laws are deeply embedded in societal structures, resulting in the systemic exclusion of a specific group of people – sex workers. While other economic activities enjoy the freedom of trade, sex work is stigmatized and criminalized, creating a disparity that marginalizes this group. In contrast, activities like male bodybuilding, though also utilizing the body, are not subjected to the same moral judgments.
- ✓ **Loss of agency and empowerment:** punitive laws strip sex workers of their agency to make choices about whom to engage with and the terms of their work. When society dictates whom one can be intimate with and under what conditions, it disempowers individuals and subjects them to control, eroding the fundamental right to autonomy.
- ✓ **Restricted access to essential services:** punitive laws force sex workers into the shadows, limiting their ability to access crucial services such as STI tests and healthcare. This not only jeopardizes their health but also hinders them from fulfilling their responsibilities to themselves and their clients in a safe manner.
- ✓ **Legal barriers to justice:** the legal constraints imposed by punitive laws make it difficult for sex workers to seek justice when they face abuse or exploitation. These laws create a confined space, restricting their ability to navigate the legal system and access the protection that should be afforded to every individual.
- ✓ **Social protection challenges:** the punitive nature of these laws confines sex workers to a marginalized space, making it challenging for them to access social protection measures. They are often denied the safeguards and support that other members of society receive, leaving them vulnerable to various forms of harm.
- ✓ **Health vulnerabilities and unsafe practices:** punitive laws contribute to increased health vulnerabilities among sex workers. The inability to access safe healthcare services may lead them to resort to unsafe practices, including unsafe abortions, putting their lives at risk.

In essence, punitive laws not only perpetuate societal stigma but also create an environment that endangers the well-being and rights of sex workers. It is imperative to reconsider these laws to



foster an inclusive, rights-based approach that respects the autonomy and dignity of individuals engaged in sex work.

### **Strategies employed by sex workers to mitigate violence:**

Sex workers implement diverse strategies to reduce the incidence of violence, fostering a safer working environment amidst potential threats from clients, law enforcement officials, and police officers:

- ✓ **Promoting social dialogues:** facilitating open conversations involving police, brothel owners, and local leaders serves as a crucial strategy. By engaging in constructive dialogue, sex workers strengthen their working communities, humanizing their experiences and shedding light on the challenges they face. This approach aims to foster understanding and empathy among various stakeholders.
- ✓ **Community-led interventions:** creative community interventions play a pivotal role in reducing violence. Initiatives such as establishing drop-in centers accessible to the public for services like safe abortions contribute not only to the well-being of sex workers but also impact the broader community. By showcasing the positive aspects of their work, sex workers aim to reshape societal perspectives and garner support.
- ✓ **Collective organizing and savings:** sex workers unite through organized groups, collectively saving resources and leveraging their collective strength. Notably, the group has achieved significant milestones, saving 600,000,000 USH, acquiring land and challenging societal mindsets. Through these efforts, the AWAC group sex workers empower themselves economically and socially, reducing instances of violations.
- ✓ **Intersectionality and Inclusivity:** recognizing and addressing intersectionalities within the sex worker community is a progressive strategy. By acknowledging the existence of sex workers with disabilities or those who inject drugs, and providing a safe and inclusive space, the community becomes more resilient and better equipped to face external challenges. High-level national dialogues, including diverse perspectives, contribute to a more comprehensive understanding.
- ✓ **Publication of sex worker content:** sex workers actively participate in shaping public narratives by publishing content that reflects their experiences. This strategy aims to educate the public about the language and realities of sex work. By engaging with different categories of sex workers based on identity and the unique challenges they face, the community seeks to dismantle stereotypes and promote a nuanced understanding of their lives.

These multifaceted strategies not only contribute to the safety and well-being of sex workers but also challenge societal norms, fostering a more inclusive and empathetic environment.

**Options for sex workers seeking to transition away from sex work:** sex workers seeking to transition away from their current profession have several options, reflecting their desire for personal growth, financial stability, and alternative livelihoods:

- ✓ **Education and family support:** many sex workers prioritize education for their children, recognizing the importance of providing them with opportunities. Additionally, supporting and caring for their families is a common focus, as sex workers actively contribute to their well-being.
- ✓ **Skill development for diversified income:** recognizing that every job has a finite span, at AWAC we opt for skill development programs. By acquiring new skills, sw's broaden their employment options and increase their chances of successful transition. For instance,

individuals like Janefer have returned to school and participated in economic empowerment initiatives, enabling her to exit sex work.

- ✓ **Saving and investment:** understanding that leaving sex work is a choice, some sex workers strategically plan their departure. They save and invest their earnings for future financial security. Discussions around life transitions, such as menopause, old age, or simply a desire for a different path, guide their financial planning and decision-making. AWAC organizes conversations around money, saving, investing and aging.
- ✓ **Personal empowerment programs:** AWAC engages in personal empowerment programs as another avenue for sex workers looking to transition. These programs focus on building self-esteem, enhancing skills, and fostering a sense of independence. As individuals gain confidence, they may feel better equipped to explore alternative career paths.
- ✓ **Strategic planning for the future:** there are sex workers who view sex work as a temporary phase, sex workers engage in strategic planning for their future. This involves setting goals, both short-term and long-term, to facilitate a smooth exit from the profession. This approach emphasizes the importance of proactive decision-making and preparing for life beyond sex work.

These options reflect the agency and resilience of sex workers who seek alternative paths. By focusing on education, skill development, savings, personal empowerment, and strategic planning, sex workers can navigate a transition away from sex work and embrace new opportunities for personal and professional growth. This does not mean that all sex workers want to transition out of sex work, those who chose to stay, stay.

**Challenges and threats faced by LGBTQI sex workers in Uganda following the implementation of the Anti-Homosexuality Act:** The enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act in Uganda has intensified the challenges and threats confronted by LGBTQI sex workers, manifesting in various distressing ways:

- ✓ **Physical attacks and forced displacement:** LGBTQI sex workers have become targets of violent attacks, compelling some to relocate from their homes for safety. The hostility has disrupted their lives and heightened the risk of harm.
- ✓ **Financial constraints:** Bank restrictions on their project accounts impede LGBTQI sex workers' ability to access funds, hindering institutional operations and financial sustainability.
- ✓ **Reduced access to health services:** our LGBTQI community is experiencing a decline in accessing essential health services, evident in a decrease in Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) refills. Some resort to coded helpline communication to seek assistance discreetly.
- ✓ **Violence, office closures, and mob justice:** instances of office closures and arson have been reported, accompanied by mob justice leading to injuries and loss of lives within the LGBTQI community. Public transportation, such as boda boda (motorcycle) rides, has become fraught with hostility and aggression.
- ✓ **Discrimination in service provision:** AWAC, provides support to LBQTI individuals and SW as an drop-in centre where they can re-fill their prep and other services, now as an org they are facing discrimination, including threats from their landlady. They made attempts to purchase the property when she threatened to sell but this was thwarted by refusal to sell by her, showcasing the pervasive prejudice.
- ✓ **Betrayal by partners and donors:** Partnerships and support from donors have been severed, with some donors retracting statements or demanding removal when faced with the Act's repercussions. The withdrawal of expected assistance exacerbates the challenges faced by LGBTQI sex workers.

- ✓ **Threats of violence:** LGBTQI sex workers live under constant threats of physical harm and arson, instilling fear and a sense of vulnerability.
- ✓ **Increased stigma and discrimination:** the Anti-Homosexuality Act has intensified societal stigma and discrimination, affecting relationships with families, leading to night-time arrests, homelessness, and isolation.
- ✓ **Displacement to refugee settlements:** escaping the hostile environment, some LGBTQI sex workers have sought refuge in settlements, further exacerbating their vulnerability.
- ✓ **Mental health implications:** The cumulative impact of these challenges has contributed to widespread depression and psychological distress among LGBTQI sex workers, underscoring the urgent need for mental health support.
- ✓ **Children left vulnerable:** As a consequence, children within the LGBTQI and sex worker community are left without proper care, facing homelessness and abandonment.

Understanding the multifaceted challenges arising from the Anti-Homosexuality Act is crucial in advocating for the rights, safety, and well-being of LGBTQ sex workers in Uganda.

**Demonstrating meaningful solidarity with sex workers facing violence in Kenya/Uganda - international community action:** to express genuine solidarity with sex workers facing violence in Kenya, the international community can play a crucial role through the following avenues:

**So far in Uganda this is what has happened AWAC has engaged in round table dialogues and collaboration with key stakeholders:** facilitate inclusive round table discussions involving influential stakeholders such as PEPFAR, Uganda Key Pops, and representatives from the Ministry of Health and Justice, including the Resident District Commission (resident representative in the district). By engaging these entities, efforts have been directed towards curbing violence against sex workers.

**The international community can:**

- ✓ **Endorsement and amplification of statements:** support the statements issued by the Ministry of Justice, endorsing their significance in addressing the challenges faced by sex workers. This collective backing adds weight to the pursuit of justice and protection.
- ✓ **Media engagement and press statements:** utilize various media platforms to disseminate press statements that highlight the evidence of violence against sex workers. Increased visibility in the media not only raises awareness but also catalyzes discussions that can lead to effective strategies for intervention.
- ✓ **Emergency support:** provide emergency support within the country to address immediate needs resulting from violence against sex workers. This can include medical, legal, and logistical assistance to ensure swift responses to crises.
- ✓ **Integration programs:** address the root causes of sex work by focusing on integration programs. Recognize the prevalence of young girls entering the industry and implement initiatives that offer alternatives to transactional sex, promoting education and economic empowerment.
- ✓ **Amplify voices and support:** elevate the voices of sex workers by actively supporting and amplifying their narratives. Acknowledging their experiences is critical for generating empathy and understanding.
- ✓ **Advocacy for decriminalization of sex work:** advocate for the decriminalization of sex work, recognizing that this step would eliminate structural and punitive laws that contribute to the vulnerability of sex workers in the eyes of the law.

- ✓ **Recognition of femicide as a critical concern:** treat every case of femicide, including that of sex workers, with the seriousness it deserves. Recognizing femicide as a critical factor from the outset ensures prompt and thorough investigations into any woman's death.

By actively engaging in these initiatives, the international community can contribute significantly to addressing the challenges faced by sex workers in Kenya and promoting a safer, more supportive environment.

## Coastal Sex Workers Alliance (COSWA, Kenya)

### [individual names to not be mentioned- only the collective's]

#### 1. Most common forms of violence faced by sex workers:

At least 34% of sex workers have reported that they have been violated in their lifetime. The forms of violence include rape, intimate partner violence, violence by the police (especially when they try to report violence), violence amongst sex workers (for e.g., competition regarding clients in the same zone), violence from family members (stigma against their work), violence from landlords once they come to know of their work (can be thrown out or charged exorbitant rates).

Forced motherhood among young female sex workers (between 18-24 years): they are often unable to access abortion services due to stigma, high costs. They may be threatened by the person impregnating them: with violence or with the withdrawal of financial support they may currently be giving.

Coercion: they are coerced to provide sex services. This coercion is amplified because of criminalization. For example, police officers arbitrarily arrest sex workers and can coerce them for unprotected sex in order to evade arrest.

Psychological violence: they are constantly persecuted by community members, excluded from participating in social events (even within the human rights movements).

#### 2. How does conflation with victims of trafficking impact sex workers?

Trafficking has been used for a long time to criminalize sex workers. Policy makers routinely link sex work to trafficking to justify criminal laws. The misconception that sex work is trafficking contributes to criminalization of sex work, stigma and discrimination against sex workers. It has led to illegal raids in brothels and leads to politicization of the bodies of sex workers, and sex work in itself.

Sex workers are unable to gain public support for decriminalization because the anti-rights movement has convinced so many institutions that sex work per se is trafficking.

Policy makers tend to believe that all sex workers are forced to do sex work. This contributes to undermining of sex workers' rights, especially their right to bodily autonomy.

Rather than identifying those who have been trafficked and need support, sex workers' are the main focus. The lens of trafficking diverts a country's priorities: more on punishment than on supporting safe working conditions for sex workers, protection from murder, rape and arbitrary arrest. They address symptoms rather than addressing the real problem.

#### 3. What is the impact of punitive laws on the lives of sex workers?

The primary impact is the undermining of sex worker led movements. We organize in fear. We are not sure of our safety as sex worker activists. We have to work under the banner of HIV/AIDS and STIs.

Criminalization coupled with stigma through religion and social norms prevents full realization of fundamental rights such as the freedom of association, social protection etc.

Punitive laws undermine our access to health and legal services. Sex workers are often asking to bring their partner to the hospital by healthcare workers, especially when it comes to SRHR. They may shy away from seeking health services and opt for over the counter medication.

They are unable to bring up their issues in public spaces and have to do sensitization amongst themselves and a select number of policy makers.

Sex work is a woman's rights issue, but the punitive laws prevent it from being included in that banner.

Criminalization has also led to victim blaming and shaming. When sex workers are murdered or violated, we are asked why we do sex work instead of trying to hold accountable those who committed the violence. It contributes to attacks against sex workers.

4. What strategies do sex workers use to reduce violence? (e.g. violence from clients, from law enforcement officials, from police officers)

As COSWA, they teach their sex workers through know your rights campaigns, safety sessions, sharing documentation, capacity building, research on violence they face etc. They have an advocacy officer who ensures that violations are documented, there is a response and there is follow up.

An impactful strategy used by their collective is police sensitization in every project. This ensures that police officers are aware of their issues, maintain a constant dialogue and this has led to a reduction of arbitrary arrests in various regions.

Police officers and healthcare workers get shuffled a lot, so it can be helpful for a sex worker collective based in another city to carry on this engagement.

They have been able to build partnerships with important institutions such as social service and healthcare. They encourage sex workers to collectivize in groups and this increases their reach at the grassroots level and ensures that sex workers are meaningfully engaged in designing interventions and sex worker led advocacy initiatives.

5. What options are available to sex workers who wish to leave sex work?

Many sex workers run their businesses alongside sex work.

Through their program on economic empowerment, sex workers are encouraged to start businesses and learn from each other's strategies. In case a sex worker is unable to earn well enough through sex work, we encourage them to explore different strategies to earn.

When people under 18 years come to us, we encourage them to start businesses and introduce them to women collectives for support.

6. What specific challenges or threats do LGBTQ sex workers face in Uganda with the enactment of this law (the Anti-homosexuality Act)?

The anti-homosexuality bill has contributed to a rise in the anti-rights movement. LGBTIQ led organizations and human rights organizations are being attacked. In Uganda, we saw the closure of so many LGBTIQ led organizations. In Kenya, many organizations were threatened and they had to undertake extreme security measures. Those who are visibly queer are at more of a threat.

One of our members was holding her child's hand in the market and there were public chants calling for her to be killed.

Many people were evicted from their homes and forced to leave their family members in order to not endanger them.

The law has impacted discussions in Kenya regarding whether they should have a similar law.

Sex worker led organizations are also worried for their safety- especially when their names and faces are linked to their work online and their identity can be traced.

7. How can the international community demonstrate meaningful solidarity with sex workers facing violence in Kenya? What support or visibility do you need?

We need people to speak up and give call for actions to their governments, policy makers regarding these harmful laws.

If movements are not funded, there is no way for us to continue our work.

They can show solidarity by continuing direct support to sex worker led movements. We have the capacity- we can design and lead our own programs.

They need to amplify our work with their networks to give it more visibility.



## Kisumu Sex Worker Alliance, Kenya (KISWA)

### 1. Most common forms of violence faced by sex workers

Most common form of violence faced by sex workers is physical violence- by clients and the State. Since clients are aware that sex work is criminalized, they take advantage of that. Sex workers face beatings and may even be killed. Many university students are unable to collectivize and protest against such violence as they fear repercussions. The number of deaths are rising.

In Kisumu, a sex worker was recently butchered and put in a suitcase by a client.

Police officers often beat sex workers too.

Physical violence is often accompanied by sexual violence. Most sex workers agree to vaginal sex, but many clients insist on oral or anal sex, which was originally not consented too. Similarly, clients who originally agreed to use condoms, refuse to do so once they are in the room.

Sex workers are also vulnerable to gang rape, and avoid going to a client's house or a car for safety reasons.

For those who operate online, they are subject to blackmail. Most of their pictures, especially nude ones, are used for extortion. Those who blackmail include those who know sex workers' identities and their families.

Law enforcement officers often roam places frequented by sex workers in order to take bribes. These bribes are taken in the guise of 'security money'. Recently, sex workers took the videos of police officers taking bribes and shared them with senior officials.

Children of sex workers are also vulnerable to violence, particularly being 'defiled'. Clients of sex workers who visit their homes inflict violence on their children.

Young sex workers in the age range of 18-24 are vulnerable and unable to negotiate their pay. Clients often refuse to pay them money even after taking services.

### 2. Impact of punitive laws on the lives of sex workers

Punitive laws contribute to violence against sex workers. The existence of such laws enables violence against sex workers, as offenders know that sex workers have no forum of complaint.

Sex workers often hear that they 'cannot be raped' as sex work is a crime to begin with.

Section 155, Kenyan Penal Code criminalizes use of premises for sex work- yet the premise owner is rarely arrested, but sex workers are.

The presumption is that you deserve what is happening to you is valid, since your work is illegal.

If sex work is decriminalized and recognized as work, I do not think people would take advantage of us by filing criminal cases.

### 3. How does conflation with victims of trafficking impact sex workers?

Most people think that sex workers are coerced or forced to do sex work. They try to create awareness of how not everyone is coerced, and not everyone is moved from one point to another.

People who are trafficked may not even be trafficked by sex workers, which is the prevalent opinion.

Trafficking often occurs by family members such as aunts and uncles who claim that they will find young people employment. After being forced to do domestic work, these young people may run away and eventually do sex work. In such a case, they were not trafficked for sex work, but ended up doing sex work as that was the only alternative.

When old sex workers brought in young girls to sex work against their will for a commission, sex workers themselves cautioned against this and argued for the girls to be sent back.

#### 4. What strategies do sex workers use to reduce violence?

Sex worker organizations begin by sensitizing community members. They have meetings to discuss safety measures, how to be safe around clients, violence that they are vulnerable to.

For example, for street based sex workers, they have developed signals to alert each other of danger, they capture the number plate of vehicles, use strategies to ensure that clients are alone and not more than agreed to, use signals on their phone to alert each other.

They share what troublesome clients can look like in safety sessions with sex workers- as they cannot do sensitization with clients themselves.

They have had sessions with hot spot owners, bar owners, bouncers and boda boda (motorbike drivers), to ensure that clients and sex workers provide their phone number and identification so that they can be traced back.

They also insist that the client and sex worker leave rooms at the same time.

They regularly do sensitization sessions with police officers- in fact, every time a new police officer joins. Their aim is that sex workers should be able to file complaints without fear. The creation of gender desks at police stations has made it better to approach the station.

#### 5. What options are available for those who want to leave sex work?

We encourage sex workers to be economically stable and to ensure their savings. A lot of sex workers have built houses with their income, and when they wished to leave and return home, they have started businesses. Many sex workers have educated their children and re-located their children to safer places. After leaving sex work, their children support them.

When sex workers prepare for leaving the business in a decade or so, they counsel them on savings and link them with financial institutions for support. Sex workers need loans without stigma, so that they can start businesses once they retire.

In Kenya, there is a proposal for the amendment of the Penal Code. The bill was proposed by the Judiciary and recommends deletion of Sex 153-155 of the Penal Code which criminalized sex work. This bill will have to be approved by the Parliament.

Sex workers fear that alternative punishments/sentences will be introduced and rehabilitation will be forced. For instance, sex workers can be arrested and then sent to a rehabilitation centre instead of jail/do community service such as cleaning a particular area. Kenyan sex workers are closely following these developments, doing advocacy with sex worker collectives and will try their best to ensure that such rehabilitation is not proposed as an alternative punishment.

#### 6. Given the anti- homosexuality act in Uganda and the rising femicides in Kenya, what are the specific challenges faced by LGBTQ sex workers?

In Kenya, the stigma around LBQ identity prevents LBQ sex workers from coming out. They do not wish to identify as LBQ when doing sex work/at the hotspots. They suffer in silence because of the hostility they will face on account of their sexuality.

LBQ sex workers may miss on services that LBQ persons or sex workers are getting for the fear of identifying themselves publicly. For instance, in drop in centers, they receive limited services depending on how they identify. SRHR services are often provided to LBQ persons, but they may miss out on those if they only identify as sex workers. It is easier for sex workers to organize outreach programs, than for LBQ persons to do so.

7. How can the international community demonstrate meaningful solidarity with sex workers facing violence in Kenya? What support or visibility do you need?

They are currently engaging in advocacy in physical and online spaces to raise visibility for the femicides taking place in Kenya. They use Instagram and twitter to kickstart these conversations. Many feminists and activists have come together to organize a march at the end of January.



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## **Sex Worker Network of Bangladesh (SWNOB)**

### **Inputs from January 23, 2024**

#### **1. Most common forms of violence faced by sex workers**

In Bangladesh, sex workers are seen with a different lens. Because it is a Muslim country, sex is stigmatized. Sex workers face immense violence and we are unable to speak about our identity.

It is difficult for children of sex workers to attend schools. Sex workers do not get access to justice because they are ridiculed. Earlier sex workers could not go to public places, but now they are venturing out more.

Customers may often lie about the number of clients, and bring more clients than agreed to. They may be denied payment post sex. On demanding money, they risk physical violence.

Even though sex workers vote, they do not receive government services on an equal basis.

Street based sex workers face verbal harassment and bullying – even from rickshaw pullers. Even media persons approach them and take pictures of them without their consent. Media personnel threaten them and extort money.

The police officers routinely insult sex workers and mentally torture them. In the last 23 years, in Dhaka, 12 sex workers have died due to police atrocities.

The landlords of houses they live in on rent often threaten to throw them out without reason, even if they have children.

Eminent people including politicians have control over brothels- they can demand sex and threaten sex workers with violence.

Young female children risk torture and do not get access to health services.

Most sex workers suffer from various diseases due to lack of hospital access.

Thugs/goondas also extort sex workers and threaten them with violence if they do not pay.

When they are taken to court, they are routinely made to accept that they are offenders in trafficking cases and have to pay a fine, otherwise they will be detained in prison as an undertrial for a long time. In case they pay a bribe to police officers, they can avoid this process.

## 2. How does conflation with victims of trafficking impact sex workers?

The sex workers who have been involved in sex work for some time, can identify who are the victims of trafficking.

Many customers pretend to be friends to young girls and traffic them to another place. Whatever money they earn, is taken away by pimps. Young girls looking for love and affection are more vulnerable.

SWNOB believes that they must support sex workers who willingly do it. They do not encourage people to leave sex work, if they do not want to. Sex workers should be able to choose their profession.

Sex workers try to do their best to locate those who have been trafficked and to hold the perpetrators accountable. This becomes very hard when the person has been trafficked outside the country.

## 3. What is the impact of punitive laws on the lives of sex workers?

There are generic laws criminalizing public nuisance but they are used to only target sex workers, not others. For instance, someone smoking in public will never be criminalized under this law.

Many sex workers live on the street and do not have access to night shelters. They may face arrest and detention in a vagrancy home.

Metropolitan police officers can arrest people suspected of commission of an offence between sunset and sunrise. Sex workers have to hide at night in order to evade arrest. We are released from detention only if we admit to the crimes we are accused of.

Sex workers are routinely book under the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, as well as their clients.

The keeping of a brothel next to a temple or mosque is criminalized by law, so sex workers are always apprehensive of being arrested. We have seen instances of establishment of places of worship in order to evict sex workers and vacate brothels in order to capture the land.

The punitive laws applied against us are not very clear, and are selectively applied to target sex workers. The sex workers in brothels are subject to different laws and floating sex workers are subject to different ones.

Sex workers face threats for extortion and bribes, and if they do not comply, they face allegations of violating the law. For instance, a woman with a young child may be arrested and separated from her child.

Shelter homes are worse than jails for us. Sex workers become victims when they are confined to shelters. Sex workers are not considered to be human beings, unless their votes are being sought.

Transgender sex workers also face violence and we are afraid of the threats that they face to their lives due to stigma.

## 4. What strategies do sex workers use to reduce violence?

We try to talk to eminent persons and politicians whenever violence against a sex worker occurs, in order to ensure that the incident is not repeated.

We work with hospitals and the police so that we are alerted when violence occurs.

We try to negotiate with house owners who demand rent and threaten violence if they are not paid on time.

There is a great amount of one-one-advocacy in such cases.

We also do advocacy with different police stations, but it takes time to establish such relationships.

We offer treatment, legal support and counselling to those who face violence.

5. What options are available to sex workers who wish to leave sex work?

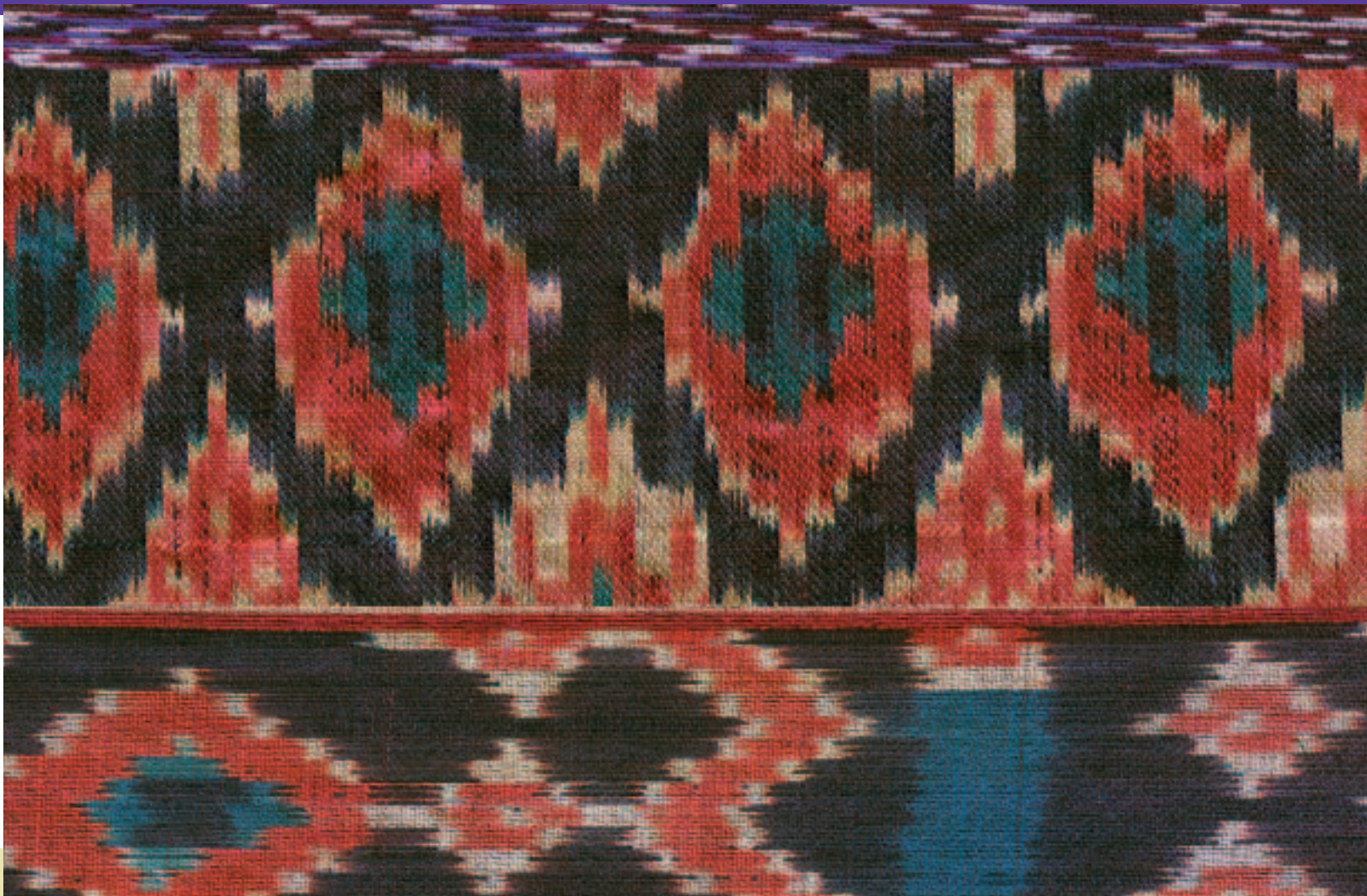
When sex workers do not want to do sex work anymore, we try our best to ensure their rehabilitation.

But unfortunately, the type of work given to sex workers leaving the profession is not dignified and does not pay much. If sex workers want to undertake businesses after leaving sex work, they require money which we cannot always provide. Sex workers have many dependents on them, so they may end up returning to sex work as the money they earn through tailoring may not be sufficient.

## **APPENDIX III: ANNOTATED PROTOCOL**



# ANNOTATED GUIDE TO **The Complete UN Trafficking Protocol**



*Partners for Justice*

*A tool to assist advocates in the  
development of a human rights framework for  
national anti-trafficking laws and policies*

# INTRODUCTION

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This Annotated Guide to the new UN Trafficking Protocol is a tool to assist advocates in the development of a human rights framework for national anti-trafficking laws and policies. In December 2000, the UN adopted international instruments to fight transnational organized crime and additional agreements or protocols to combat trafficking in persons, smuggling and firearms. The complete set of commitments made by governments regarding trafficking are found in the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime<sup>1</sup>, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children<sup>2</sup>, and the Interpretative Notes (*Travaux Préparatoires*)<sup>3</sup> to the Trafficking Protocol. Taken together, these three documents comprise the complete set of international obligations specifically addressing the trafficking of human beings.

However, the UN has not organized these three documents into one instrument, which forces readers to refer to the documents separately. This Annotated Guide solves this problem by combining the Trafficking Protocol, relevant portions of the Convention and the Interpretative Notes into one document. The text of Trafficking Protocol and relevant Convention provisions are contained in the main text while the Interpretative Notes (*Travaux Préparatoires*) are quoted in the footnotes. (Advocates are advised to read the entire Convention, however, as they may find additional provisions that are relevant in their national contexts.) Unofficial annotations to the Trafficking Protocol and the Convention are contained in the boxes.

All governments can sign the Convention and the Trafficking Protocol. However, only countries that sign the Convention can sign the Trafficking Protocol. As you will see in the list of signatory parties<sup>4</sup>, most but not all governments have signed both instruments. After ratifying the Convention and Trafficking Protocol, governments are obligated to adopt domestic laws implementing the Convention and the Trafficking Protocol. However, even prior to ratification, countries must not take actions that conflict with the purpose of the two instruments.

The Trafficking Protocol was developed within the UN Crime Commission, which is a law enforcement body, not a human rights body.<sup>5</sup> Its Vienna location also physically isolates its members from the human rights bodies, which are located in Geneva and New York. For these reasons, the Trafficking Protocol is primarily a law enforcement instrument. From the human rights perspective, it would have been preferable if an international instrument on trafficking had been created within a human rights body rather than in a law enforcement body. However, the

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<sup>1</sup> The Convention is found at [http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/Conventions/dcatoc/final\\_documents\\_2/](http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/Conventions/dcatoc/final_documents_2/).

<sup>2</sup> The Trafficking Protocol is found at [http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/Conventions/dcatoc/final\\_documents\\_2/](http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/Conventions/dcatoc/final_documents_2/). The Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea was negotiated at the same time and is at the same website.

<sup>3</sup> The Interpretative Notes (*Travaux Préparatoires*) (A/55/383/Add.1 Addendum) are found at [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/crime\\_cicp\\_convention\\_documents.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/crime_cicp_convention_documents.html).

<sup>4</sup> The list of signatories and ratifications is found at [http://www.odccp.org/crime\\_cicp\\_signatures.html](http://www.odccp.org/crime_cicp_signatures.html).

<sup>5</sup> Priority areas within the mandate of the UN Crime Commission are: international action to combat national and transnational crime, including organized crime, economic crime and money laundering; promoting the role of criminal law in protecting the environment; crime prevention in urban areas, including juvenile crime and violence; and improving the efficiency and fairness of criminal justice administration systems. For more information, go to [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/crime\\_cicp\\_commission.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/crime_cicp_commission.html).

impetus for developing a new international instrument arose out of the desire of governments to create a tool to combat the enormous growth of transnational organized crime. Therefore, the drafters created a strong law enforcement tool with comparatively weak language on human rights protections and victim assistance.

Members of the Human Rights Caucus, which consists of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world<sup>6</sup>, attended all of the negotiations for the new Trafficking Protocol. Its main goals were to ensure that the Trafficking Protocol (1) defines trafficking to include all trafficking into forced labor, slavery and servitude, no matter whether it is within or across a country's borders, and (2) recognizes the rights and meets the needs of trafficked persons. The first goal was accomplished to the extent possible in an international instrument. The Trafficking Protocol has a broad definition of trafficking and covers most international trafficking and some internal trafficking. The second goal was almost accomplished. Government delegates concentrated on creating a strong law enforcement instrument and many of them did not believe that human rights are appropriate in the Trafficking Protocol. Consequently, readers will notice that the law enforcement provisions in the Trafficking Protocol contain mandatory language, such as "states parties shall," while the protections and assistance provisions (see Protocol Articles 6 and 7 and Convention Articles 24 and 25) contain weaker terms, such as "in appropriate cases" and "to the extent possible."

Despite the weakness of the protection language, advocates can rely upon other international and regional human rights instruments<sup>7</sup> that obligate governments to protect the rights of trafficked persons. Information about which human rights and labor rights instruments governments have signed and ratified is available on the internet.<sup>8</sup> Governments are obligated by those instruments to protect the rights of trafficked persons *even if* they do not sign the Trafficking Protocol. Furthermore, article 14 ensures that nothing in the Trafficking Protocol or the Convention can undermine international obligations to protect human rights. Accordingly, the Trafficking Protocol only establishes certain minimum standards and must be supplemented by human rights obligations contained in international and regional human rights instruments. Anti-trafficking NGOs that work with, or advocate on behalf of, trafficked persons around the world have developed a document recommending practical measures governments can take to meet their international human rights obligations. These measures are contained in the "Human Rights

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<sup>6</sup> Members of the Human Rights Caucus: Global Rights (formerly International Human Rights Law Group), Foundation Against Trafficking in Women, Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, Asian Women's Human Rights Council, La Strada, Ban-Ying, Fundacion Esperanza, Foundation for Women, KOK-NGO Network Against Trafficking in Women, Women's Consortium of Nigeria, Women, Law & Development in Africa (Nigeria).

<sup>7</sup> For example, the UN Slavery Convention and the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, the UN International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the accompanying Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the International Labour Organization Conventions Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour No. C29 and the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 182, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the African Charter and Human and Peoples' Rights.

<sup>8</sup> The UN instruments are found at <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/intlinst.htm> and the International Labour Organization instruments are found at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp2.htm>. The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms is found at <http://www.echr.coe.int/Eng/BasicTexts.htm> and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights is found at [http://www.achpr.org/english/info/charter\\_en.html](http://www.achpr.org/english/info/charter_en.html).



Standards for the Treatment of Trafficked Persons.”<sup>9</sup> The Human Rights Standards document contains specific legal and policy measures governments can and should take to avoid re-victimizing trafficked persons and to promote and protect the rights of trafficked persons. Additionally, the High Commissioner for Human Rights has issued the “Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking,”<sup>10</sup> which includes many recommendations similar to those contained in the Human Rights Standards, as well as a significant number of additional recommendations. The Principles and Guidelines are contained in the Annex.

A strong and rights-based response to trafficking requires governments to (1) sign and ratify the Convention and the Trafficking Protocol, and (2) adopt domestic legislation implementing all provisions from the two instruments as well as the measures recommended in the Human Rights Standards and the Recommended Principles and Guidelines. A law enforcement response, by itself, may endanger trafficked persons and it often results in the immediate deportation or arrest and imprisonment of potential witnesses. An approach that treats victims as criminals or immigrants without rights also is responsible for causing trafficked persons to disappear into the underground or to return home without any support. At its worst, it may also lead to their re-trafficking.

On the other hand, a human rights-based response to trafficking empowers trafficked persons to become witnesses. It provides them with safety and offers justice. It enables former victims to regain control over their lives in a safe manner. Thus, ending the cycle of impunity for traffickers and violence requires the broad spectrum of rights-protective legal, economic and social measures contained in the Trafficking Protocol and the Human Rights Standards.

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<sup>9</sup> The Human Rights Standards is available in several languages at <http://www.globalrights.org> and at <http://www.gaatw.org/>.

<sup>10</sup> Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Economic and Social Council (United Nations E/2002/68/Add.1) May 20, 2002 (Also available in Spanish and French)  
<http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/TestFrame/caf3deb2b05d4f35c1256bf30051a003?Opendocument> .

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# **UN PROTOCOL TO PREVENT, SUPPRESS AND PUNISH TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, ESPECIALLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

*Together with*

## **THE UN CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME**

*(Relevant sections, as indicated in text)*

## **THE TRAVAUX PREPARATOIRES**

*(UN Interpretative Notes, in footnotes)*

## **ANNOTATIONS**

*(By Global Rights, in boxes)*

### **PREAMBLE**

*The States Parties to this Protocol,*

*Declaring* that effective action to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children, requires a comprehensive international approach in the countries of origin, transit and destination that includes measures to prevent such trafficking, to punish the traffickers and to protect the victims of such trafficking, including by protecting their internationally recognized human rights,

*Taking into account* the fact that, despite the existence of a variety of international instruments containing rules and practical measures to combat the exploitation of persons, especially women and children, there is no universal instrument that addresses all aspects of trafficking in persons,

*Concerned* that, in the absence of such an instrument, persons who are vulnerable to trafficking will not be sufficiently protected,

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 53/111 of 9 December 1998, in which the Assembly decided to establish an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc committee for the purpose of elaborating a comprehensive international convention against transnational organized crime and of discussing the elaboration of, inter alia, an international instrument addressing trafficking in women and children,

*Convinced* that supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime with an international instrument for the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, will be useful in preventing and combating that crime,

*Have agreed as follows:*

## I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

### PROTOCOL ARTICLE 1 RELATION WITH UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

1. This Protocol supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It shall be interpreted together with the Convention.

Note: A corresponding provision, article 37.4 of the Convention, reads: “Any protocol to this Convention shall be interpreted together with this Convention, taking into account the purpose of that protocol.”

2. The provisions of the Convention shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to this Protocol unless otherwise provided herein.<sup>11</sup>

Protocol Annotation: Paragraphs 1 and 2 incorporate all relevant provisions of the Convention into the Trafficking Protocol. The Trafficking Protocol contains the majority of the commitments made by governments regarding trafficking in persons, but a number of very important provisions (for example, regarding protection of witnesses) are contained in the Convention.

3. The offences established in accordance with article 5 of this Protocol shall be regarded as offences established in accordance with the Convention.

### PROTOCOL ARTICLE 2 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purposes of this Protocol are:

- (a) To prevent and combat trafficking in persons, paying particular attention to women and children;
- (b) To protect and assist the victims of such trafficking, with full respect for their human rights; and

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<sup>11</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that this paragraph was adopted on the understanding that the words “mutatis mutandis” meant “with such modifications as circumstances require” or “with the necessary modifications”. Provisions of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime that are applied to the Protocol under this article would consequently be modified or interpreted so as to have the same essential meaning or effect in the Protocol as in the Convention.”

(c) To promote cooperation among States Parties in order to meet those objectives.

Protocol Annotation: One of the three purposes of the Trafficking Protocol is to *protect and assist* victims according to human rights principles. Consequently, even though the protections provisions are relatively weak, the Trafficking Protocol does obligate governments to adopt domestic laws and policies to protect the rights of, and provide assistance to, trafficked persons, in accordance with international human rights standards. It recognizes that certain types of protections and assistance are necessary and dictates that they must be consistent with international human rights norms.

### **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 3 USE OF TERMS**

Protocol Annotation: The UN definition of trafficking in persons in section 3(a) below describes in some detail the nature of the crime. However, this international definition is not appropriate for use in domestic criminal codes. It has too many elements that would have to be proven by prosecutors, thus making prosecutions more difficult. Also, some of the language is ambiguous, which could also lead legal challenges by defendants.

It is important first to read and understand the new international definition of trafficking in persons in the Protocol but then to incorporate the essence of that definition into national legislation using simple and clear language.

We propose just such a criminal law definition of trafficking. The following criminal law definition clearly states the nature of the crime but avoids using so many descriptive and potentially confusing elements:

“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by any means, for forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Under this criminal law definition, convictions would be easier to obtain and prosecutions would not open to attacks for vagueness by defendants. The proposed definition eliminates the necessity to prove that threats, coercion, fraud, etc., are used to move a person into the trafficking situation. The ‘means’ used to move someone into a trafficking situation are not important but the process of moving people from one place to another in order to hold them in forced, labor or slavery are essential to the crime. Lastly, the definition deletes all undefined and ambiguous terms, leaving only crimes that are defined in international law and in the domestic law of many countries. The criminal law definition is broad enough to cover each and every form of trafficking – from trafficking into forced begging or domestic work to trafficking into forced prostitution or farm labor.

We encourage readers to reconsider the above definition after they have finished reading the UN definition and the Commentaries set out below.



For the purposes of this Protocol:

(a) “Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability<sup>12</sup> or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

Protocol Annotation: The terms “abuse of a position of vulnerability” and the Interpretative Note in footnote 12 make it clear that trafficking can occur without any use of force. The definition recognizes that many trafficked people are told what to do by someone close to them, such as a parent, a spouse or a community leader. Persons in these situations may have no culturally acceptable or legal means to refuse and so they “submit” to the situation. They are still victims of trafficking.

Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation<sup>13</sup>,

Protocol Annotation: The terms “exploitation of the prostitution of others” and “sexual exploitation” are the only terms in the definition of trafficking that are intentionally left *undefined* and are also *not defined* anywhere else in international law.

The 100+ country delegations that negotiated the Trafficking Protocol at the UN Crime Commission were unable to agree upon definitions for these two terms and so they decided to leave them undefined. The majority of delegates and the Human Rights Caucus understood that countries have different laws and policies on adult sex work and that many countries would not want or be able to sign the Trafficking Protocol if it forced them to change their prostitution laws. A few delegates and NGOs at the negotiations insisted that all adult prostitution, including voluntary and even legal prostitution involving adults, should be classified as trafficking and so they forced a yearlong debate at the negotiations on the subject. The majority of delegates and the Human Rights Caucus rejected the notion that voluntary, non-coerced participation by adults in sex work, factory work or any other work is trafficking. While such work can be abusive and exploitative, it is only trafficking if it amounts to the internationally recognized human rights violations of forced labor, slavery or servitude.

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<sup>12</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the reference to the abuse of a position of vulnerability is understood to refer to any situation in which the person involved has no real and acceptable alternative but to submit to the abuse involved.”

<sup>13</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the Protocol addresses the exploitation of the prostitution of others and other forms of sexual exploitation only in the context of trafficking in persons. The terms “exploitation of the prostitution of others” or “other forms of sexual exploitation” are *not defined* in the Protocol, which is therefore *without prejudice* to how States Parties address prostitution in their respective domestic laws.” [Italics in second sentence added.]

The Human Rights Caucus advocated for a consensus solution that would allow all countries to sign the Trafficking Protocol, including countries that have laws criminalizing adult sex work and countries that have laws decriminalizing and/or regulating adult sex work. All delegations agreed that trafficking involves slavery, forced labor or servitude. However, since there is no international agreement on the meaning of 'sexual exploitation', Caucus members proposed to include the term but leave it undefined. In this way, all governments could sign the Trafficking Protocol because the compromise definition would allow each government to decide for itself on the legal treatment of voluntary adult sex work. This proposal was eventually adopted.

Thus, the Interpretative Note contained in footnote 13 explains the compromise language and recognizes the existence of both coerced participation and non-coerced participation in adult sex work. It explains that the Trafficking Protocol takes no position on the treatment of non-coerced adult sex work and explicitly leaves its legal treatment to the discretion of individual governments.

Since forced or coerced adult sex work (and any other forced or coerced work) and all child participation in sex work is covered in the Trafficking Protocol in the context of slavery, forced labor or servitude, governments can omit the terms "exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation" from their domestic laws. However, any government that decides to include these undefined terms in their domestic law will have to define them clearly. The preferred definitions would focus in the use of force or coercion (including psychological coercion) to hold people against their will. The following definitions could be considered:

"sexual exploitation" means "the participation by a person in prostitution, sexual servitude, or the production of pornographic materials as a result of being subjected to a threat, coercion, abduction, force, abuse of authority, debt bondage or fraud."

"exploitation of the prostitution of others" could be defined as "the obtaining by a person of any financial or other benefit from the sexual exploitation of another person."

forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs<sup>14, 15</sup>,

**Protocol Annotation:** The term "forced labour" is defined in article 2.1 of the International Labor Organization Convention Concerning Forced Labour No. 29<sup>16</sup> as follows: "For the purposes of this Convention the term forced or compulsory labour shall mean all work or

<sup>14</sup> UN Interpretative Note: "The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the removal of organs from children with the consent of a parent or guardian for legitimate medical or therapeutic reasons should not be considered exploitation."

<sup>15</sup> UN Interpretative Note: "The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that where illegal adoption amounts to a practice similar to slavery as defined in article 1, paragraph (d), of the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, it will also fall within the scope of the Protocol."

<sup>16</sup> ILO conventions are found at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp2.htm>.

service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.”

The term “slavery” is defined in article 1.1 of the UN Slavery Convention<sup>17</sup> as follows:

“Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.”

“Practices similar to slavery” are contained in the UN Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, article 1:

“(a) Debt bondage, that is to say, the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or of those of a person under his control as security for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined;

“(b) Serfdom, that is to say, the condition or status of a tenant who is by law, custom or agreement bound to live and labour on land belonging to another person and to render some determinate service to such other person, whether for reward or not, and is not free to change his status;

“(c) Any institution or practice whereby:

(i) A woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family or any other person or group; or

(ii) The husband of a woman, his family, or his clan, has the right to transfer her to another person for value received or otherwise; or

(iii) A woman on the death of her husband is liable to be inherited by another person;

“(d) Any institution or practice whereby a child or young person under the age of 18 years, is delivered by either or both of his natural parents or by his guardian to another person, whether for reward or not, with a view to the exploitation of the child or young person or of his labour.”

Servitude is not defined in international law but it is understood that the above practices are forms of servitude. The Supplementary Convention lists specific instances of servitude or practices similar to slavery. Other forms of servitude can be drawn from the principles evident in the Supplementary Convention, such as the use of customary practices to strip a person of any ability to refuse to submit to practices that otherwise would be considered slavery or forced labor.

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<sup>17</sup> All UN conventions are found at <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/intlinst.htm>.

Trafficking for body organs only occurs if a person is transported for the purpose of removing organs. The Trafficking Protocol does not cover the transportation of the organs alone.

The complexity of the definition of trafficking in persons in (a) should now be clear and we encourage readers to reconsider the simple and clear criminal law definition of trafficking proposed at the beginning of Article 3.

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;<sup>18 19</sup>

Protocol Annotation: This provision merely restates existing international legal norms. It is logically and legally not possible to ‘consent’ when any of the following are used: “force, coercion, abduction, deception, abuse of power or actions taken while one is in a state of vulnerability or while one is in the control of another person.” Delegates added footnote 19 to explain that defendants have a right to a defence but that, once the elements of the crime of trafficking are proven, any allegation that the trafficked persons ‘consented’ is irrelevant. Real consent is only possible, and legally recognizable, when all the relevant facts are known and a person is free to consent or not. The footnote also ensures that defendants do not lose their right to raise all defenses.

Thus, despite evidence that the victim consented to migrate, to carry false documents and to work illegally abroad, defendants cannot argue that the victim ‘consented’ to work in conditions of forced labor, slavery or servitude. By definition, these three crimes mean there is no consent. For example, a woman can consent to migrate to work in prostitution in a particular city, at a particular brothel, for a certain sum of money. However, if the defendant intended actually to hold the woman in forced or coerced sex work, then there is no consent because everything the defendant trafficker told the woman is a lie. No one can consent to a lie. Even if a person agrees to work in very bad conditions, for very little money, with very little freedom, he would still be a victim of trafficking if the trafficker intended to hold him in debt bondage, involuntary or forced conditions.

Nonetheless, consent can become confusing if the law is not clearly understood. However, the issue of consent is not and should not be a barrier to effective prosecutions. The real barriers to successful prosecutions in many countries are corruption, a lack of official willingness to take strong measures to prosecute traffickers and protect trafficked persons,

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<sup>18</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that this subparagraph should not be interpreted as restricting the application of mutual legal assistance in accordance with article 18 of the Convention.”

<sup>19</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that subparagraph (b) should not be interpreted as imposing any restriction on the right of accused persons to a full defence and to the presumption of innocence. They should also indicate that it should not be interpreted as imposing on the victim the burden of proof. As in any criminal case, the burden of proof is on the State or public prosecutor, in accordance with domestic law. Further, the *travaux préparatoires* will refer to article 11, paragraph 6, of the Convention, which preserves applicable legal defences and other related principles of the domestic law of States Parties.”

as well as the presence of poorly trained and inexperienced law enforcement officials. Professionally trained investigators would provide prosecutors with better evidence, making it easier to convict traffickers. If prosecutors have evidence showing that the defendant lied to the victim, kept her passport, did not pay her, kept her in prison-like conditions, threatened her or her family, never allowed her to move about freely or forced her to work in debt bondage or slavery, then convictions should be obtained more easily.

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

Protocol Annotation: This section is unclear. No force, coercion or deception is required when children are involved and so better language would be: “The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of prostitution or pornography shall be considered trafficking in persons.” This language would ensure that laws do not permit children, under any circumstances, to engage in prostitution or pornography.

Children are only mentioned here and briefly in Protocol section 6.4 below. Despite recommendations from the Human Rights Caucus, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration and others to address the special needs and legal status of children, the delegates failed to do so.

To fill this gap in the Trafficking Protocol, governments should incorporate relevant provisions into their domestic trafficking legislation from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>20</sup>, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography<sup>21</sup> and the ILO Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. C182 (1999)<sup>22</sup>.

(d) “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

#### **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 4 SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

This Protocol shall apply, except as otherwise stated herein, to the prevention, investigation and prosecution of the offences established in accordance with article 5 of this Protocol, where those offences are transnational in nature and involve an organized criminal group, as well as to the protection of victims of such offences.

<sup>20</sup> The Convention on the Rights of the Child is found at <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>.

<sup>21</sup> The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child is found at <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/dopchild.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> ILO Convention No. C182 is found at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>. Click on C182 in left menu.

**CONVENTION ARTICLES 2 AND 3.2**  
**USE OF TERMS; SCOPE OF APPLICATION**  
**CONVENTION ARTICLE 34.2**  
**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION**

2 (a) Organized criminal group shall mean a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established [by] the Convention [or Trafficking Protocol], in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.

3.2 ... an offence is transnational in nature if:

- (a) It is committed in more than one State;
- (b) It is committed in one State but a substantial part of its preparation, planning, directing or control takes place in another State;
- (c) It is committed in one State but involves an organized criminal group that engages in criminal activities in more than one State; or
- (d) It is committed in one State but has substantial effects in another State.

34.2. The offences established in accordance with articles 5, 6, 8 and 23 of this Convention shall be established in the domestic law of each State party independently of the transnational nature or the involvement of an organized criminal group as described in article 3, paragraph 2, of this Convention, except to the extent that article 5 of this Convention would require the involvement of an organized criminal group.

Convention Annotation: The first two sections establish who can be prosecuted and the scope of the crime. It is important to note that they do not cover trafficking by one or two persons or internal trafficking that has no international aspect. For example, traffickers of domestic workers are often a wife and husband who bring a worker from abroad and force her to work in a foreign country with little or no pay or freedom. They would not be covered by 2(a). Also not covered is trafficking that is done entirely within a country by nationals of the country.

Domestic legislation should go further than the Trafficking Protocol and include all domestic and cross-border trafficking and should punish individual traffickers as well as organized criminal groups. Trafficking within some countries is as serious as, or more serious than, cross-border trafficking. Furthermore, from the perspective of the victims, the harm can be just as great no matter whether there are one or ten traffickers and whether the trafficking is cross-border or internal. So the punishments for the traffickers and the protections for the rights of trafficked persons should be the same regardless of whether the trafficking is internal or across borders and whether there are one or twenty traffickers.

Convention article 34.2 states that certain crimes - belonging to an organized crime group (art. 5), money laundering (art. 6), corruption (art. 8) and obstruction of justice (art. 23) - do not need to be transnational or part of an organized criminal group. Governments must adopt laws ensuring that these crimes apply to every person who commits them. Arguably, this same provision applies to the crime of trafficking order to ensure that *all* traffickers can be prosecuted under domestic laws. Article 1 of the Protocol states that relevant Convention provisions are incorporated into the Protocol, which includes article 34.2. Governments, therefore, have an obligation under the Protocol to adopt a trafficking law that covers both internal and cross-border trafficking as well as trafficking by one or more persons.

### **CONVENTION ARTICLE 10 LIABILITY OF LEGAL PERSONS**

1. Each State Party shall adopt such measures as may be necessary, consistent with its legal principles, to establish the liability of legal persons for participation in serious crimes involving an organized criminal group and for the offences established in accordance with articles 5, 6, 8 and 23 of this Convention.
2. Subject to the legal principles of the State Party, the liability of legal persons may be criminal, civil or administrative.
3. Such liability shall be without prejudice to the criminal liability of the natural persons who have committed the offences.
4. Each State Party shall, in particular, ensure that legal persons held liable in accordance with this article are subject to effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal or non-criminal sanctions, including monetary sanctions.

***Convention Annotation:*** Not all traffickers are ‘natural persons.’ Some traffickers operate within a company or partnership and have assets that should be confiscated and used to pay compensation and damages to trafficked persons. This important provision ensures that all countries have domestic laws establishing the liability of ‘legal persons’.

### **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 5 CRIMINALIZATION**

1. Each State Party shall adopt such legislative and other measures as may be necessary to establish as criminal offences the conduct set forth in article 3 of this Protocol, when committed intentionally.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> **UN Interpretative Note:** “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the “other measures” mentioned here are additional to legislative measures and presuppose the existence of a law.”

Protocol Annotation: Law enforcement provisions throughout the Trafficking Protocol and the Convention are mandatory (“shall adopt”). Thus, all countries that sign the Trafficking Protocol must adopt legislation and other measures to combat trafficking.

2. Each State Party shall also adopt such legislative and other measures as may be necessary to establish as criminal offences:<sup>24</sup>

- (a) Subject to the basic concepts of its legal system, attempting to commit an offence established in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article;
- (b) Participating as an accomplice in an offence established in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article; and
- (c) Organizing or directing other persons to commit an offence established in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article.

Protocol Annotation: Theoretically, section 5.2 could be used to prosecute trafficked persons who agree to work illegally and to travel with false or no documentation. Trafficked persons could be accused of “organizing” or “attempting” to traffic or knowingly “participating” or assisting in their own trafficking, which is not the intention of this section. The Trafficking Protocol is intended to punish the traffickers only and not the victims. So domestic legislation should clearly state that a trafficked person is *never* punishable in connection with her or his own trafficking. It should also ensure that trafficked persons are not prosecuted for “trafficking” someone else. For example, if several persons are trafficked together, none of the victims should be prosecuted as an accomplice to trafficking the other victims.

## **CONVENTION ARTICLE 8** **CRIMINALIZATION OF CORRUPTION**

1. Each State Party shall adopt such legislative and other measures as may be necessary to establish as criminal offences, when committed intentionally:

- (a) The promise, offering or giving to a public official, directly or indirectly, of an undue advantage, for the official himself or herself or another person or entity, in order that the official act or refrain from acting in the exercise of his or her official duties;

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<sup>24</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that references to attempting to commit the offences established under domestic law in accordance with this subparagraph are understood in some countries to include both acts perpetrated in preparation for a criminal offence and those carried out in an unsuccessful attempt to commit the offence, where those acts are also culpable or punishable under domestic law.”



(b) The solicitation or acceptance by a public official, directly or indirectly, of an undue advantage, for the official himself or herself or another person or entity, in order that the official act or refrain from acting in the exercise of his or her official duties.

2. Each State Party shall consider adopting such legislative and other measures as may be necessary to establish as criminal offences conduct referred to in paragraph 1 of this article involving a foreign public official or international civil servant. Likewise, each State Party shall consider establishing as criminal offences other forms of corruption.

3. Each State Party shall also adopt such measures as may be necessary to establish as a criminal offence participation as an accomplice in an offence established in accordance with this article.

4. For the purposes of paragraph 1 of this article and article 9 of this Convention, “public official” shall mean a public official or a person who provides a public service as defined in the domestic law and as applied in the criminal law of the State Party in which the person in question performs that function.

### **CONVENTION ARTICLE 9 MEASURES AGAINST CORRUPTION**

1. In addition to the measures set forth in article 8 of this Convention, each State Party shall, to the extent appropriate and consistent with its legal system, adopt legislative, administrative or other effective measures to promote integrity and to prevent, detect and punish the corruption of public officials.

2. Each State Party shall take measures to ensure effective action by its authorities in the prevention, detection and punishment of the corruption of public officials, including providing such authorities with adequate independence to deter the exertion of inappropriate influence on their actions.

*Convention Annotation:* Many countries do not have any laws to investigate and prosecute corrupt officials despite the fact that trafficking cannot exist without the cooperation of corrupt government officials in most cases. Therefore, these anti-corruption provisions are extremely important in preventing trafficking and should be included in all domestic legislation.

### **CONVENTION ARTICLE 12 CONFISCATION AND SEIZURE**

1. States Parties shall adopt, to the greatest extent possible within their domestic legal systems, such measures as may be necessary to enable confiscation of:

(a) Proceeds of crime derived from offences covered by this Convention or property the value of which corresponds to that of such proceeds;

(b) Property, equipment or other instrumentalities used in or destined for use in offences covered by this Convention.

*Convention Annotation:* These provisions require governments to adopt laws to confiscate the assets of the traffickers. The assets will become the property of the state in which they are located. It is highly likely that a large proportion of the assets will be found in richer countries of destination and not in the poorer countries of origin.

(Note: Sections 2 through 7 are omitted for the purpose of brevity. These sections contain important details, however, that should also be incorporated into domestic laws.)

8. The provisions of this article shall not be construed to prejudice the rights of bona fide third parties.

*Convention Annotation:* This provision ensures the ability of “bona fide third parties” to have access to the confiscated assets. Thus, it is important for domestic legislation to recognize that trafficked persons are always “bona fide third parties” who should be able to access the assets to pay compensation for abuses suffered. Governments should not be permitted to argue that trafficked persons are not “bona fide” simply because they entered the country without proper documents or they worked without documents.

**CONVENTION ARTICLE 14**  
**DISPOSAL OF CONFISCATED PROCEEDS OF CRIME OR PROPERTY**

1. Proceeds of crime or property confiscated by a State Party pursuant to articles 12 or 13, paragraph 1, of this Convention shall be disposed of by that State Party in accordance with its domestic law and administrative procedures.

*Convention Annotation:* National laws in many countries will need to be revised in order to ensure that disposal of the assets is done in a manner that benefits trafficked persons. The assets should be used to pay compensation, restitution and damage awards to trafficked persons and to support services for trafficked persons in countries of destination, transit and origin.

Governments should not keep the assets for other purposes and those that do so are guilty of profiting from the traffickers’ criminal acts. Assets from human trafficking represent the forced labor, suffering and human rights violations suffered by human beings and they should be distributed to and for the benefit of those victims.

2. When acting on the request made by another State Party in accordance with article 13 of this Convention, States Parties shall, to the extent permitted by domestic law and if so requested, give

priority consideration to returning the confiscated proceeds of crime or property to the requesting State Party so that it can give compensation to the victims of the crime or return such proceeds of crime or property to their legitimate owners.

*Convention Annotation:* Trafficked persons will need some legal means to recover compensation, restitution and damages in countries of destination, as well as in countries of origin. They should not be prevented from financial recovery simply because the assets are located, for example, in the country of destination while they have returned (voluntarily or involuntarily) to another country.

This section recognizes the need for governments holding confiscated assets to return them to another country to pay compensation to victims. It allows government A to ask government B to return the confiscated assets to government A. The requesting government A would then use the money to pay compensation, restitution and damages for the harms suffered. However, this section does not require governments to change their laws. So advocates, especially those in countries where assets are likely to be found, should work to ensure that domestic laws require their governments to return confiscated assets.

3. When acting on the request made by another State Party in accordance with articles 12 and 13 of this Convention, a State Party may give special consideration to concluding agreements or arrangements on:

(a) Contributing the value of such proceeds of crime or property or funds derived from the sale of such proceeds of crime or property or a part thereof to the account designated in accordance with article 30, paragraph 2 (c), of this Convention [a fund for technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition] and to intergovernmental bodies specializing in the fight against organized crime;

*Convention Annotation:* This provision would allow a government with confiscated assets to contribute part or all of the assets into a fund set up at the UN to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition to combat trafficking. While this provision is helpful and even necessary, the contributions should only be made *after* payment of compensation, restitution and damages to trafficked persons and after providing financial support to organizations that provide services and assistance to, or advocate on behalf of, trafficked persons.

(b) Sharing with other States Parties, on a regular or case-by-case basis, such proceeds of crime or property, or funds derived from the sale of such proceeds of crime or property, in accordance with its domestic law or administrative procedures.

*Convention Annotation:* This provision encourages governments to share confiscated assets. Trafficking is a billion-dollar industry and assets are located all over the world. No

country should claim ownership over all of the assets simply because the assets are found in its territory. The assets should be shared by all of the affected countries, with particular consideration being given to the needs of trafficked persons and the financial ability of governments in countries of origin to provide services and assistance to trafficked persons and populations vulnerable to trafficking. The assets should be distributed in a manner that meets the needs of the trafficked persons and the government's burden of providing such assistance.

Failure to return the assets to trafficked persons could lead to re-trafficking and re-victimization. Persons often return home with no money, a lingering debt to the trafficker back home and a continuing need to support family members. They often decide to migrate once again in the hopes of avoiding the traffickers and earning some money. Unfortunately, some of them end up re-trafficked.

Therefore, advocates should strongly urge their governments to distribute confiscated assets, in the following order:

1. To use the assets (a) to satisfy court orders for compensation, restitution and damages to trafficked persons and (b), if a court order is unavailable, to pay compensation, restitution and damages to trafficked persons. The payments should be made whether or not the trafficked persons are in the country in which the crime occurred and/or the assets are located.
2. To fund victim services in countries of destination and origin and in other countries in which trafficked persons are living.
3. To fund law enforcement efforts, including special units to fight corruption, human rights trainings for law enforcement officials, witness protection programs and specially trained anti-trafficking units to work with trafficked persons.
4. To fund programs to implement the trafficking prevention measures set out in Protocol article 9.

## II. PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

### PROTOCOL ARTICLE 6

#### ASSISTANCE TO AND PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

1. In appropriate cases and to the extent possible under its domestic law, each State Party shall protect the privacy and identity of victims of trafficking in persons, including, inter alia, by making legal proceedings relating to such trafficking confidential.

Protocol Annotation: Public disclosure of the person's identity increases the risk of retaliation. When the government releases the names of victims and then deports them, traffickers often retaliate against the victims and their family members and sometimes even re-traffic them. Nonetheless, delegates refused to adopt language ensuring protection of the privacy and identity of the victims (note the phrase "in appropriate cases and to the extent possible"), despite intense lobbying by the Human Rights Caucus.

Therefore, in order to ensure that confidentiality is 'possible' under domestic law, NGOs should urge their governments to adopt laws protecting the identity and privacy of trafficked persons. Government should forbid the release of the names, the addresses or other identifying information to the public.

If governments insist upon releasing the names of the victims, particularly those who testify against their traffickers, then those governments should be prepared to grant residency (even new identities) to the victims and, in some cases, family members as long as a risk of retaliation exists. If they do not protect the privacy and do not provide any type of residency protection, then NGOs and victims will not cooperate with the government.

Note that Convention section 24.2(a) below also calls upon governments to protect the identity and whereabouts of witnesses. It is similar to the Protocol provision, but not identical and provides a stronger basis for such legislation.

2. Each State Party shall ensure that its domestic legal or administrative system contains measures that provide to victims of trafficking in persons, in appropriate cases:

- (a) Information on relevant court and administrative proceedings;
- (b) Assistance to enable their views and concerns to be presented and considered at appropriate stages of criminal proceedings against offenders, in a manner not prejudicial to the rights of the defence.

Protocol Annotation: Although this language is weak ("in appropriate cases") and appears to permit governments to provide assistance to some trafficked persons and not to others, it nonetheless requires governments to adopt such measures.

Governments must give information to trafficked persons through a translator or in writing in their own language about their legal status and the legal issues involved. Section 2(b) requires “assistance” in legal proceedings and this language must be interpreted to mean legal assistance because non-lawyers would not be competent to assist at “criminal proceedings”. Thus, governments must provide some legal assistance so that trafficked persons can protect their rights during the proceedings. This section also requires governments to enable trafficked persons to testify at the trial and at any sentencing hearings.

As for the words “in appropriate cases”, governments cannot argue that some trafficked persons have a right to understand the legal proceedings and others do not. Information and assistance are always “appropriate” when a person is involved in legal proceedings.

3. Each State Party shall consider implementing measures to provide for the physical, psychological and social recovery of victims of trafficking in persons, including, in appropriate cases, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, other relevant organizations and other elements of civil society, and, in particular, the provision of:

Protocol Annotation: This provision addresses the most important and urgent needs of trafficked persons. The language is weak (“shall consider” and “in appropriate cases”) but it does reflect a consensus that certain services are necessary. Delegates at the negotiations were unwilling to commit to providing basic or emergency services, despite the efforts of the Human Rights Caucus. Thus, the burden falls to local NGOs to convince their governments that these services are always appropriate and necessary in trafficking cases.

NGOs are in the best position to assist with the physical, psychological and social recovery of trafficked persons and so “cooperation with non-governmental organizations” is essential. NGOs can assist in providing services and also that they have expertise governments can use in adopting laws, policies and programs.

Convention section 25.1 below contains stronger language requiring governments to provide assistance and protection to victims. It could be used to overcome the weakness of section 6.3.

(a) Appropriate housing;

Protocol Annotation: In many countries, trafficked persons are deported immediately or held in prisons or detention centers because there is no appropriate shelter. Governments must recognize that, if trafficked persons are not provided any shelter and deported immediately, they may not report the crime to law enforcement. Thus, the lack of appropriate shelter results in revictimization and allows the traffickers to remain unpunished and continue trafficking.

This section recognizes that trafficked persons are victims who should be provided with “appropriate housing” and that they should not be held in detention centers or prisons. However, many governments do not have resources to provide long-term housing. However, at a minimum, all governments should be obligated to provide or fund appropriate short-term emergency shelters and security for the shelters. It should not place trafficked persons in detention centers. Most governments could also provide land or an empty building and then authorize and provide grants to local NGOs to operate a shelter.

Trafficking Protocol section 6.3(a) could be incorporated into domestic law in two parts. The first part would establish the principle that trafficked persons should never be held in detention centers, jails or prisons, unless absolutely no other shelter is available. Under no circumstances should trafficked persons be housed with other detainees or prisoners; they must be segregated from detainees and prisoners. The second part would be a commitment by the government to provide funding or resources for “appropriate housing”.

(b) Counselling and information, in particular as regards their legal rights, in a language that the victims of trafficking in persons can understand;

Protocol Annotation: Section 6.2(b) and this section 6.3(b) together strongly support a government commitment to provide legal assistance. Although the term “counselling” could be interpreted to mean legal advice only, it must have a broader meaning. Legal counselling must be provided by a lawyer and not by a layperson. It must be provided at all stages of any legal proceedings involving the trafficked person. However, if governments are unable to afford legal services for trafficked persons, then counselling should be provided by advocates with legal expertise on trafficking-related issues.

Trafficked persons can only realize their right of access to justice if they have a lawyer and, given that trafficked persons have no money, they cannot hire a private, non-government-funded lawyer. Trafficked persons are typically undocumented and do not understand the foreign legal system and they may face governments that are not interested in recognizing or respecting their fundamental human rights. Few trafficked persons have any legal representation and so most of them are deported, which effectively prevents them from recovering any financial redress or realizing any of their other rights. Legal representation, then, is essential.

(c) Medical, psychological and material assistance; and

Protocol Annotation: All trafficked persons require some level of medical and/or psychological assistance as well as basic resources such as food and clothing. Governments that are financially able to provide such assistance should make a commitment to do so and governments that lack resources should use their ‘best efforts’.

All governments holding confiscated trafficking assets should have an absolute obligation to provide such assistance. Furthermore, all governments, rich or poor, should refer trafficked persons to appropriate NGO service providers.

(d) Employment, educational and training opportunities.<sup>25</sup>

Protocol Annotation: The Trafficking Protocol treats law enforcement as a shared responsibility of all governments but it treats victim issues as the individual responsibility of governments. Governments with adequate financial resources are able and should provide employment, education and training opportunities to trafficked persons who are allowed to remain in the country.

However, governments of countries of destination and origin often face an enormous burden in providing assistance to trafficked persons and many are financially unable to do so. In addition, some countries of destination are also countries of origin and thus face the double burden of providing assistance to non-citizens and citizens. To alleviate this burden in an equitable manner, governments of wealthier countries should establish a method for funding programs to ensure that trafficked persons are provided with employment, education and training opportunities in all countries of destination and origin. All governments must further ensure that all minors who are trafficked are provided with appropriate education and training.

Important mechanisms for government asset sharing are contained in Convention article 14 above.

4. Each State Party shall take into account, in applying the provisions of this article, the age, gender and special needs of victims of trafficking in persons, in particular the special needs of children, including appropriate housing, education and care.

Protocol Annotation: The provision requires governments to ensure that assistance and protections are gender and child sensitive, which is particularly important in cases involving sexual assault. This could even include the formation of special units to deal with child victims of trafficking and women who had been subjected to sexual violence. This provision must be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>26</sup> and in accordance with the principle that decisions about the child are made in accordance with the “best interests” of the child.

<sup>25</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the type of assistance set forth in this paragraph is applicable to both the receiving State and the State of origin of the victims of trafficking in persons, but only as regards victims who are in their respective territory. Paragraph 3 is applicable to the receiving State until the victim of trafficking in persons has returned to his or her State of origin and to the State of origin thereafter.”

<sup>26</sup> The Convention on the Rights of the Child is found at <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>.



5. Each State Party shall endeavour to provide for the physical safety of victims of trafficking in persons while they are within its territory.

Protocol Annotation: This is an extremely important provision because it addresses the need to protect *all* trafficked persons, not just witnesses. However, it is very weak (“shall endeavor”) and domestic legislation should be much stronger.

Additionally, the provision only addresses protection from danger while trafficked persons “are within” the territory and does not impose any requirement to ensure the person’s safety prior to repatriation. If it is dangerous for a trafficked person to return home, governments should develop a plan for witness relocation and change of identity.

Convention section 24.1 below contains much stronger language on protection measures and covers all witnesses, not just victim-witnesses.

6. Each State Party shall ensure that its domestic legal system contains measures that offer victims of trafficking in persons the possibility of obtaining compensation for damage suffered.

Protocol Annotation: This measure only requires governments to offer the *possibility* of obtaining compensation, not the *right* to seek compensation and restitution for the harm suffered. It could also be interpreted to limit victims to compensation from a government created victim compensation fund, which could result in much less money than victims could recover directly from the traffickers in a court order to compensate for the harm suffered. Government compensation funds typically only pay a fixed amount, which may not be adequate for compensation *and* restitution. Compensation funds are very useful, however, in cases when the trafficker’s assets cannot be located and confiscated or when the assets are insufficient to pay the full amount of any court-ordered awards.

An alternative and better model is in Convention section 25.2 discussed below.

## **CONVENTION ARTICLE 24 PROTECTION OF WITNESSES**

1. Each State Party shall take appropriate measures within its means to provide effective protection from potential retaliation or intimidation for witnesses in criminal proceedings who give testimony concerning offences covered by this Convention and, as appropriate, for their relatives and other persons close to them.

Convention Annotation: This section is excellent for the protection of witnesses and their “relatives and others persons close to them” before and during the trial. However, the danger may not end with the trial and so protections should extend beyond the end of the

legal proceedings. It is often the case that traffickers or their friends are not captured and they remain free to threaten witnesses.

2. The measures envisaged in paragraph 1 of this article may include, inter alia, without prejudice to the rights of the defendant, including the right to due process:

(a) Establishing procedures for the physical protection of such persons, such as, to the extent necessary and feasible, relocating them and permitting, where appropriate, non-disclosure or limitations on the disclosure of information concerning the identity and whereabouts of such persons;

*Convention Annotation:* In order to protect witnesses and their relatives and friends, governments should ensure that no one is deported if the threat of retaliation or intimidation by traffickers in the country of origin remains. Governments must not deport persons to countries in which their lives are in danger.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, at present, most governments, in fact, do deport trafficked persons and witnesses to their countries of origin without any investigation into safety before the return.

Legal provisions to relocate witnesses are extremely important means to protect witnesses during and after the legal proceedings when the risk of retaliation or intimidation is considerable. Governments can relocate persons to another part of the country if the risk of danger exists. Furthermore, if a government is unable to ensure the safety of a person within its territory and it is unsafe for the person to return home, then relocation to a third country is essential.

(b) Providing evidentiary rules to permit witness testimony to be given in a manner that ensures the safety of the witness, such as permitting testimony to be given through the use of communications technology such as video links or other adequate means.

*Convention Annotation:* Many witnesses are too young or too frightened to speak openly in court in front of their traffickers. This section provides a means to allow testimony from another location and yet still permit defendants' attorneys to cross-examine the witnesses.

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<sup>27</sup> See the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment ([http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/h\\_cat39.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/h_cat39.htm)) and the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees ([http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/o\\_c\\_ref.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/o_c_ref.htm)).

3. States Parties shall consider entering into agreements or arrangements with other States for the relocation of persons referred to in paragraph 1 of this article.

Convention Annotation: Relocation of witnesses and trafficked persons to a third country is sometimes necessary when it is too dangerous to remain in the country of destination or to return home. This often occurs when the countries of origin and destination are very small, making it difficult for people to slip back in unnoticed and undiscoverable. In these cases, third countries should offer residence.

Unfortunately, few third countries have offered to assist trafficked persons with a new residence and identity. The problem is more likely to occur when the person is trafficked into a poor country or small country. Persons trafficked into a richer country may be able to remain permanently in that country but persons trafficked into poor countries are usually deported. At present, governments in wealthier countries have not taken in many persons found at risk with no safe place to live. Third party governments have no incentive to take in immigrants when the trafficking did not occur in their territory. Advocates in wealthier countries then should seek to convince their governments to enter into the type of bilateral agreements recommended in this Convention section 24.3.

4. The provisions of this article shall also apply to victims insofar as they are witnesses.

Convention Annotation: This provision ensures protections for all witnesses, whether or not they are victim, but the Trafficking Protocol only protects victim-witnesses. So, in order to ensure protections for all persons who can testify against the traffickers and who may be at risk of retaliation, advocates should ensure that their governments adopt legislation incorporating this Convention provision.

**CONVENTION ARTICLE 25**  
**ASSISTANCE TO AND PROTECTION OF VICTIMS**

1. Each State Party shall take appropriate measures within its means to provide assistance and protection to victims of offences covered by this Convention, in particular in cases of threat of retaliation or intimidation.

Convention Annotation: Convention Article 25 and Trafficking Protocol Article 6 provisions are similar but not identical. Article 25 actually contains stronger obligations than does Article 6 and is preferable to Article 6 in many respects.

The Trafficking Protocol is subordinate to the main Convention and so the stronger provisions in the Convention should apply in such cases. Thus, where the two articles overlap or conflict, governments must adopt the stronger provisions found in Article 25 of the main Convention unless the Trafficking Protocol provision is specifically related to trafficking.

Where the Trafficking Protocol provisions are less favorable to trafficked persons, they should not be adopted if the Convention contains better protections or assistance provisions. Otherwise, witnesses and victims of non-trafficking offenses would be entitled to better protections under the Convention than witnesses and victims of trafficking would obtain under the Trafficking Protocol. Such a disparity of treatment is certainly not the intent of the drafters.

For example, Convention section 25.1 says a government “shall” provide assistance and protection, “within its means”, which means if the government has the resources, it must act. Trafficking Protocol section 6.3 says governments “shall consider” and act “in appropriate cases”, which does not require governments to do anything. Thus, governments must provide some level of assistance and protection according to the commitment they made in section 25.1.

2. Each State Party shall establish appropriate procedures to provide access to compensation and restitution for victims of offences covered by this Convention.

*Convention Annotation:* This language is much stronger than the language contained in Trafficking Protocol section 6.6, which only offers the “possibility” of obtaining compensation and not the right always to seek compensation. Section 25.2 recognizes that trafficked persons have a right to compensation and restitution. As stated previously, however, this right to compensation should not be limited to money from a government-operated victim compensation fund. Trafficked persons also must have the right to access the courts and seek compensation, restitution and damages from the traffickers’ assets.

3. Each State Party shall, subject to its domestic law, enable views and concerns of victims to be presented and considered at appropriate stages of criminal proceedings against offenders in a manner not prejudicial to the rights of the defence.

*Convention Annotation:* This provision repeats section 6.2(b) of the Protocol.

## **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 7**

### **STATUS OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN RECEIVING STATES**

1. In addition to taking measures pursuant to article 6 of this Protocol, each State Party shall consider adopting legislative or other appropriate measures that permit victims of trafficking in persons to remain in its territory, temporarily or permanently, in appropriate cases.

*Protocol Annotation:* The immigration status of trafficked persons must be addressed in a manner that ensures safety, provides time for recovery and reflection, and encourages cooperation with law enforcement. This section recognizes the need for legal immigration

status but it does not actually require governments to do anything. It merely states that governments ‘shall consider’ temporary or permanent residence ‘in appropriate cases.’ Governments need to understand that trafficked persons who face immediate deportation or arrest will not report crimes or cooperate with investigations and NGOs will be unlikely to urge their clients to contact law enforcement.

Several governments have already recognized that it is always ‘appropriate’ to provide a short-term residence of 45-60 days to provide trafficked persons with time to begin physical and psychological recovery, to decide whether it is safe to cooperate with law enforcement, and to learn their rights and options. Some governments have also recognized it is ‘appropriate’ to provide longer temporary residence to trafficked persons who cooperate with the investigation or who are in danger due to threats of retaliation. In the latter situation, it would be appropriate to provide permanent residence if the threats continue.

2. In implementing the provision contained in paragraph 1 of this article, each State Party shall give appropriate consideration to humanitarian and compassionate factors.

Protocol Annotation: If domestic law does not allow trafficked persons to remain in the country temporarily or permanently, then it is quite important to include this provision in the law. Section 7.2 ensures that immigration laws are interpreted in a manner that takes into consideration the specific situation of the trafficked person prior to deciding whether or not she or he can remain in the country.

## **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 8 REPATRIATION OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS**

1. The State Party of which a victim of trafficking in persons is a national or in which the person had the right of permanent residence at the time of entry into the territory of the receiving State Party shall facilitate and accept, with due regard for the safety of that person, the return of that person without undue or unreasonable delay.<sup>28</sup>

Protocol Annotation: The important language in this provision is the phrase “with due regard for the safety of that person.” This imposes a positive obligation upon governments to ensure that there is no danger of retaliation or other harm (such as arrest for leaving the country or working in prostitution abroad) that could meet the trafficked person upon returning home.

The phrase “without undue or unreasonable delay”, on the other hand, only mean that governments can arrange for the return of the trafficked person only after they have had the

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<sup>28</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the words “permanent residence” in this paragraph mean long-term residence, but not necessarily indefinite residence. The paragraph should be understood as being without prejudice to any domestic legislation regarding either the granting of the right of residence or the duration of residence.”

opportunity to access all of their legal rights to justice and their safety upon return is assured. It does not mean that governments can immediately deport all trafficked persons.

See the following section 8.2 for additional supporting language on these issues (“due regard for the safety of that person and for the status of any legal proceedings related to the fact that the person is a victim of trafficking”).

2. When a State Party returns a victim of trafficking in persons to a State Party of which that person is a national or in which he or she had, at the time of entry into the territory of the receiving State Party, the right of permanent residence, such return shall be with due regard for the safety of that person and for the status of any legal proceedings related to the fact that the person is a victim of trafficking and shall preferably be voluntary.<sup>29</sup>

Protocol Annotation: Returns “shall preferably be voluntary” but the Interpretative Note in footnote 29 makes it clear that they can also be involuntary. However, sections 8.1 and 8.2 also clearly limit involuntary returns to those that are safe and after legal proceedings are final.

3. At the request of a receiving State Party, a requested State Party shall, without undue or unreasonable delay, verify whether a person who is a victim of trafficking in persons is its national or had the right of permanent residence in its territory at the time of entry into the territory of the receiving State Party.<sup>30</sup>

4. In order to facilitate the return of a victim of trafficking in persons who is without proper documentation, the State Party of which that person is a national or in which he or she had the right of permanent residence at the time of entry into the territory of the receiving State Party shall agree to issue, at the request of the receiving State Party, such travel documents or other authorization as may be necessary to enable the person to travel to and re-enter its territory.<sup>31</sup>

5. This article shall be without prejudice to any right afforded to victims of trafficking in persons by any domestic law of the receiving State Party.

6. This article shall be without prejudice to any applicable bilateral or multilateral agreement or arrangement that governs, in whole or in part, the return of victims of trafficking in persons.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the words “and shall preferably be voluntary” are understood not to place any obligation on the State Party returning the victims.”

<sup>30</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate the understanding of the Ad Hoc Committee that a return under this article shall not be undertaken before the nationality or right of permanent residence of the person whose return is sought has been duly verified.”

<sup>31</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the words “travel documents” include any type of document required for entering or leaving a State under its domestic law.”

<sup>32</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the references to agreements or arrangements in this paragraph include both agreements that deal specifically with the subject matter of the Protocol and more general readmission agreements that include provisions dealing with illegal migration.”

Protocol Annotation: This article was a priority for countries of destination at the negotiations because it requires countries of origin to accept the return of their citizens and residents. A number of governments do not cooperate with repatriations and so trafficked persons often are held in detention centers for long periods of time. This article should improve the situation because all countries that sign the Trafficking Protocol will be obligated to take back their citizens and permanent residents.

However, the Article does not address the problem of statelessness of trafficked persons. Some trafficked persons come from communities in which childbirths are not registered and others travel with false documents. In both situations, the trafficked persons do not have any legitimate travel documents and may find it very difficult to obtain new ones. As a result, countries of destination are sometimes faced with the situation in which no government will accept the trafficked person as a citizen, leaving the person stateless.

The Trafficking Protocol does not provide any guidance on how to handle these situations. However, trafficked persons are victims of serious crimes and should not be held in detention simply because they do not have legitimate travel documents, through no fault of their own. Ideally, countries of destination should treat all stateless trafficked persons in the same manner as refugees and provide them with a legal means to remain in the country.<sup>33</sup>

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“The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that this paragraph should be understood as being without prejudice to any other obligations under customary international law regarding the return of migrants.”

<sup>33</sup> See UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons at [http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/o\\_c\\_sp.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/o_c_sp.htm).

### III. PREVENTION, COOPERATION AND OTHER MEASURES

#### PROTOCOL ARTICLE 9 PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

1. States Parties shall establish comprehensive policies, programmes and other measures:
  - (a) To prevent and combat trafficking in persons; and
  - (b) To protect victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, from revictimization.
2. States Parties shall endeavour to undertake measures such as research, information and mass media campaigns and social and economic initiatives to prevent and combat trafficking in persons.

Protocol Annotation: Research is important in understanding trafficking and developing policies and responses. For example, research needs to be done in countries of destination to assess the manner in which restrictive immigration laws facilitate trafficking by preventing people from entering legally to work at jobs begging for workers. Research is also needed on best practices regarding prevention and reintegration.

Information and mass media campaigns have been carried out in many countries and the best ones do not use scare tactics to deter people from migrating. Governments should fund campaigns that provide information to potential migrants about their legal rights abroad and safe migration so that people can decide whether or not their travel and work plans are realistic and safe. The campaigns should also be linked to service providers and ways to obtain more information.

3. Policies, programmes and other measures established in accordance with this article shall, as appropriate, include cooperation with non-governmental organizations, other relevant organizations and other elements of civil society.

Protocol Annotation: Governments that sign the Trafficking Protocol must find appropriate ways to collaborate and cooperate with NGOs. This provision supports NGO demands for a role in the development of policies, programs and measures related to the prevention of trafficking. Part of the cooperation should also include government funding of NGO activities.

4. States Parties shall take or strengthen measures, including through bilateral or multilateral cooperation, to alleviate the factors that make persons, especially women and children, vulnerable to trafficking, such as poverty, underdevelopment and lack of equal opportunity.



Protocol Annotation: Governments in many countries of origin do not have the resources to carry out poverty reduction programs but they can all adopt legislation ensuring equal opportunity in the law to all persons, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, etc. The terms “shall take or strengthen measures” require all governments to take positive steps to address the underlying causes of trafficking. Governments in countries of destination and origin have a duty to act. The richer countries could meet their duty through strategic development and other aid.

Other causative factors governments should consider and take measures to address are: violence against women in all of its forms, child abuse, lack of proper labor laws, restrictive immigration laws and poorly planned economic development strategies.

5. States Parties shall adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures, such as educational, social or cultural measures, including through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to trafficking.

Protocol Annotation: Almost all persons who are trafficked start out as migrants seeking work. They are pulled into the migration stream by the demand for labor in other countries. This demand exists because citizens and residents of many countries refuse to take low wage jobs. Jobs exist but no one wants them except migrants.

At the same time, immigration laws in countries of destination are almost uniformly restrictive and prevent migrant workers from entering legally to work legally. Consequently, migrants are forced to find someone to help them migrate without documents. Often, that person is a trafficker who places the migrant into a situation of forced labor, slavery or servitude abroad.

In order to reduce the ability of traffickers to prey on migrant workers, governments should “adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures...to discourage the demand” for undocumented, vulnerable, exploitable migrant workers. They should adopt laws and measures to permit migrants to enter and work legally and to have access to the same labor rights provided to other workers. The demand for labor exists and will be met one way or another. The question remaining to be answered is whether the demand will be met by workers with rights or by trafficked persons.

## **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 10**

### **INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND TRAINING**

1. Law enforcement, immigration or other relevant authorities of States Parties shall, as appropriate, cooperate with one another by exchanging information, in accordance with their domestic law, to enable them to determine:<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the term “travel documents” includes any type of document required for entering or leaving a State under its domestic law.”

(a) Whether individuals crossing or attempting to cross an international border with travel documents belonging to other persons or without travel documents are perpetrators or victims of trafficking in persons;

(b) The types of travel document that individuals have used or attempted to use to cross an international border for the purpose of trafficking in persons; and

(c) The means and methods used by organized criminal groups for the purpose of trafficking in persons, including the recruitment and transportation of victims, routes and links between and among individuals and groups engaged in such trafficking, and possible measures for detecting them.

Protocol Annotation: The means and methods adopted must be applied in a non-discriminatory manner and must not infringe upon the rights of individuals to enter and leave their country freely, which is found in article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Governments must not adopt any laws or measures that would prevent anyone, particularly women, from leaving the country for the purpose of 'protecting' them from being trafficked. Unfortunately, some governments have adopted policies or measures that, in effect, 'protect' young women out of their right to travel.

2. States Parties shall provide or strengthen training for law enforcement, immigration and other relevant officials in the prevention of trafficking in persons. The training should focus on methods used in preventing such trafficking, prosecuting the traffickers and protecting the rights of the victims, including protecting the victims from the traffickers. The training should also take into account the need to consider human rights and child- and gender-sensitive issues and it should encourage cooperation with non-governmental organizations, other relevant organizations and other elements of civil society.

Protocol Annotation: NGOs and law enforcement need to work together. This section recognizes the need for governments to allow NGOs to participate in law enforcement trainings. Experience has shown that the input of NGOs is often extremely helpful in encouraging law enforcement officials to change their practices in a manner that protects the rights of trafficked persons and assists law enforcement.

3. A State Party that receives information shall comply with any request by the State Party that transmitted the information that places restrictions on its use.

## **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 11**

### **BORDER MEASURES**

1. Without prejudice to international commitments in relation to the free movement of people, States Parties shall strengthen, to the extent possible, such border controls as may be necessary to prevent and detect trafficking in persons.

**Protocol Annotation:** The “international commitments” mentioned above are those that guarantee all persons the right to enter and leave their countries freely.

2. Each State Party shall adopt legislative or other appropriate measures to prevent, to the extent possible, means of transport operated by commercial carriers from being used in the commission of offences established in accordance with article 5 of this Protocol.<sup>35</sup>

3. Where appropriate, and without prejudice to applicable international conventions, such measures shall include establishing the obligation of commercial carriers, including any transportation company or the owner or operator of any means of transport, to ascertain that all passengers are in possession of the travel documents required for entry into the receiving State.

4. Each State Party shall take the necessary measures, in accordance with its domestic law, to provide for sanctions in cases of violation of the obligation set forth in paragraph 3 of this article.<sup>36</sup>

5. Each State Party shall consider taking measures that permit, in accordance with its domestic law, the denial of entry or revocation of visas of persons implicated in the commission of offences established in accordance with this Protocol.

6. Without prejudice to article 27 of the Convention, States Parties shall consider strengthening cooperation among border control agencies by, inter alia, establishing and maintaining direct channels of communication.

## **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 12**

### **SECURITY AND CONTROL OF DOCUMENTS<sup>37</sup>**

Each State Party shall take such measures as may be necessary, within available means:

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<sup>35</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that victims of trafficking in persons may enter a State legally only to face subsequent exploitation, whereas in cases of smuggling of migrants, illegal means of entry are more generally used. This may make it more difficult for common carriers to apply preventive measures in trafficking cases than in smuggling cases and legislative or other measures taken in accordance with this paragraph should take this into account.”

<sup>36</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that measures and sanctions applied in accordance with this paragraph should take into account other international obligations of the State Party concerned. It should also be noted that this article requires States Parties to impose an obligation on common carriers only to ascertain whether or not passengers have the necessary documents in their possession and not to make any judgement or assessment of the validity or authenticity of the documents. It should further be noted that this paragraph does not unduly limit the discretion of States Parties not to hold carriers liable for transporting undocumented refugees.”

<sup>37</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the term “travel documents” includes any type of document required for entering or leaving a State under its domestic law and that the term “identity documents” includes any document commonly used to establish the identity of a person in a State under the laws or procedures of that State.”

“The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the words “falsified or unlawfully altered, replicated or issued” should be interpreted as including not only the creation of false documents, but also the alteration of legitimate documents and the filling in of stolen blank documents. They should also indicate that the intention was to include both documents that had been forged and genuine documents that had been validly issued but were being used by a person other than the lawful holder.”

- (a) To ensure that travel or identity documents issued by it are of such quality that they cannot easily be misused and cannot readily be falsified or unlawfully altered, replicated or issued; and
- (b) To ensure the integrity and security of travel or identity documents issued by or on behalf of the State Party and to prevent their unlawful creation, issuance and use.

**PROTOCOL ARTICLE 13**  
**LEGITIMACY AND VALIDITY OF DOCUMENTS**

At the request of another State Party, a State Party shall, in accordance with its domestic law, verify within a reasonable time the legitimacy and validity of travel or identity documents issued or purported to have been issued in its name and suspected of being used for trafficking in persons.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the term “travel documents” includes any type of document required for entering or leaving a State under its domestic law and that the term “identity documents” includes any document commonly used to establish the identity of a person in a State under the laws or procedures of that State.”

## IV. FINAL PROVISIONS

### PROTOCOL ARTICLE 14 SAVINGS CLAUSE

1. Nothing in this Protocol shall affect the rights, obligations and responsibilities of States and individuals under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law and, in particular, where applicable, the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and the principle of non-refoulement as contained therein.<sup>39</sup>

Protocol Annotation: This provision ensures that the Trafficking Protocol does not alter any other obligation of governments under international humanitarian or human rights laws. Thus, all provisions of the Trafficking Protocol must be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with international instruments, such as the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. The measures set forth in this Protocol shall be interpreted and applied in a way that is not discriminatory to persons on the ground that they are victims of trafficking in persons. The interpretation and application of those measures shall be consistent with internationally recognized principles of non-discrimination.

Protocol Annotation: Section 14.2 is excellent for most cases. It ensures no discrimination against victims of trafficking simply because they were trafficked and it also prohibits discrimination against trafficked persons on the grounds, such as race, religion, sex, nationality, etc. that are enumerated in existing international instruments.

However, it does not eliminate all possible bases for discrimination. Governments could still discriminate against a trafficked person who is or has been a sex worker or who is gay, lesbian or transgender. All persons who are trafficked suffer violations of their most fundamental rights and so governments should treat all of them the same, irrespective of other factors. Unfortunately, governments worldwide routinely discriminate against people in the sex industry, gays, lesbians and transgenders.

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<sup>39</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that the Protocol does not cover the status of refugees.”

“The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that this Protocol is without prejudice to the existing rights, obligations or responsibilities of States Parties under other international instruments, such as those referred to in this paragraph. Rights, obligations and responsibilities under another instrument are determined by the terms of that instrument and whether the State concerned is a party to it, not by this Protocol. Therefore, any State that becomes a party to this Protocol but is not a party to another international instrument referred to in the Protocol would not become subject to any right, obligation or responsibility under that instrument.”

National legislation on trafficking should remedy this gap. Ideally, the first sentence of section 14.2 would read: “The measures set forth in this Protocol shall be interpreted and applied in a way that does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, belief, age, family status, culture, language, ethnicity, nationality, gender (including gay, lesbian, transgender) and is not discriminatory to persons on the ground that they are victims of trafficking in persons.”

If not possible to enact legislation listing all the potential grounds of unlawful discrimination, then an acceptable alternative would be to simply state: “The measures set forth in this [name of domestic law] shall be interpreted and applied in a nondiscriminatory manner.”

## **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 15 SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES**

1. States Parties shall endeavour to settle disputes concerning the interpretation or application of this Protocol through negotiation.
2. Any dispute between two or more States Parties concerning the interpretation or application of this Protocol that cannot be settled through negotiation within a reasonable time shall, at the request of one of those States Parties, be submitted to arbitration. If, six months after the date of the request for arbitration, those States Parties are unable to agree on the organization of the arbitration, any one of those States Parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice by request in accordance with the Statute of the Court.
3. Each State Party may, at the time of signature, ratification, acceptance or approval of or accession to this Protocol, declare that it does not consider itself bound by paragraph 2 of this article. The other States Parties shall not be bound by paragraph 2 of this article with respect to any State Party that has made such a reservation.
4. Any State Party that has made a reservation in accordance with paragraph 3 of this article may at any time withdraw that reservation by notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

## **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 16 SIGNATURE, RATIFICATION, ACCEPTANCE, APPROVAL AND ACCESSION<sup>40</sup>**

1. This Protocol shall be open to all States for signature from 12 to 15 December 2000 in Palermo, Italy, and thereafter at United Nations Headquarters in New York until 12 December 2002.

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<sup>40</sup> UN Interpretative Note: “The *travaux préparatoires* should indicate that, while the Protocol has no specific provisions or reservations, it is understood that the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 1969 applies regarding reservations.”

2. This Protocol shall also be open for signature by regional economic integration organizations provided that at least one member State of such organization has signed this Protocol in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article.

3. This Protocol is subject to ratification, acceptance or approval. Instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. A regional economic integration organization may deposit its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval if at least one of its member States has done likewise. In that instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, such organization shall declare the extent of its competence with respect to the matters governed by this Protocol. Such organization shall also inform the depositary of any relevant modification in the extent of its competence.

4. This Protocol is open for accession by any State or any regional economic integration organization of which at least one member State is a Party to this Protocol. Instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. At the time of its accession, a regional economic integration organization shall declare the extent of its competence with respect to matters governed by this Protocol. Such organization shall also inform the depositary of any relevant modification in the extent of its competence.

### **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 17 ENTRY INTO FORCE**

1. This Protocol shall enter into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of the fortieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, except that it shall not enter into force before the entry into force of the Convention. For the purpose of this paragraph, any instrument deposited by a regional economic integration organization shall not be counted as additional to those deposited by member States of such organization.

Protocol Annotation: The Convention entered into force on September 29, 2003, and the Trafficking Protocol on December 25, 2003.

2. For each State or regional economic integration organization ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding to this Protocol after the deposit of the fortieth instrument of such action, this Protocol shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the date of deposit by such State or organization of the relevant instrument or on the date this Protocol enters into force pursuant to paragraph 1 of this article, whichever is the later.

### **CONVENTION ARTICLE 32 CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION**

1. A Conference of the Parties to the Convention is hereby established to improve the capacity of States Parties to combat transnational organized crime and to promote and review the implementation of this Convention [and the Protocol].

Convention Annotation: Governments that have ratified or signed the Convention and the Trafficking Protocol meet annually in Vienna, starting in 2004. Information on the first meeting in 2004 is available at [www.unodc.org/unodc/crime\\_cicp\\_signatures.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/crime_cicp_signatures.html).

2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall convene the Conference of the Parties not later than one year following the entry into force of this Convention. The Conference of the Parties shall adopt rules of procedure and rules governing the activities set forth in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this article (including rules concerning payment of expenses incurred in carrying out those activities).

Convention Annotation: The Rules of Procedure, which were adopted at the first meeting, permit NGOs to observe the meetings.

3. The Conference of the Parties shall agree upon mechanisms for achieving the objectives mentioned in paragraph 1 of this article, including:

(a) Facilitating activities by States Parties under articles 29, 30 and 31 of this Convention, including by encouraging the mobilization of voluntary contributions;

(b) Facilitating the exchange of information among States Parties on patterns and trends in transnational organized crime and on successful practices for combating it;

(c) Cooperating with relevant international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations;

(d) Reviewing periodically the implementation of this Convention [and the Protocol];

(e) Making recommendations to improve this Convention [and the Protocol] and its implementation.

4. For the purpose of paragraphs 3 (d) and (e) of this article, the Conference of the Parties shall acquire the necessary knowledge of the measures taken by States Parties in implementing this Convention and the difficulties encountered by them in doing so through information provided by them and through such supplemental review mechanisms as may be established by the Conference of the Parties.

Convention Annotation: Governments will report to the permanent Secretariat for the Conference on the steps they have taken to implement the Convention and the Trafficking Protocol. NGOs have no formal role in the review process but should be able to distribute “shadow reports” (unofficial NGO reports on their governments) to delegates at the annual meetings.



5. Each State Party shall provide the Conference of the Parties with information on its programmes, plans and practices, as well as legislative and administrative measures to implement this Convention, as required by the Conference of the Parties.

## **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 18 AMENDMENT**

1. After the expiry of five years from the entry into force of this Protocol, a State Party to the Protocol may propose an amendment and file it with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall thereupon communicate the proposed amendment to the States Parties and to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention for the purpose of considering and deciding on the proposal. The States Parties to this Protocol meeting at the Conference of the Parties shall make every effort to achieve consensus on each amendment. If all efforts at consensus have been exhausted and no agreement has been reached, the amendment shall, as a last resort, require for its adoption a two-thirds majority vote of the States Parties to this Protocol present and voting at the meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

2. Regional economic integration organizations, in matters within their competence, shall exercise their right to vote under this article with a number of votes equal to the number of their member States that are Parties to this Protocol. Such organizations shall not exercise their right to vote if their member States exercise theirs and vice versa.

3. An amendment adopted in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article is subject to ratification, acceptance or approval by States Parties.

4. An amendment adopted in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article shall enter into force in respect of a State Party ninety days after the date of the deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of an instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval of such amendment.

5. When an amendment enters into force, it shall be binding on those States Parties which have expressed their consent to be bound by it. Other States Parties shall still be bound by the provisions of this Protocol and any earlier amendments that they have ratified, accepted or approved.

## **PROTOCOL ARTICLE 19 DENUNCIATION**

1. A State Party may denounce this Protocol by written notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Such denunciation shall become effective one year after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General.

2. A regional economic integration organization shall cease to be a Party to this Protocol when all of its member States have denounced it.

**PROTOCOL ARTICLE 20**  
**DEPOSITARY AND LANGUAGES**

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is designated depositary of this Protocol.
2. The original of this Protocol, of which the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned plenipotentiaries, being duly authorized thereto by their respective Governments, have signed this Protocol.

## **ANNEX**

# **UN RECOMMENDED PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS TO THE  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
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New York, 1-26 July 2002  
Item 14 (g) of the provisional agenda\*  
Social and human rights questions: human rights

### **Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking**

#### **Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Economic and Social Council\*\***

##### **Addendum**

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\* E/2002/100.

\*\* The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

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## Recommended Principles on Human Rights and Human Trafficking<sup>41</sup>

### **The primacy of human rights**

1. The human rights of trafficked persons shall be at the centre of all efforts to prevent and combat trafficking and to protect, assist and provide redress to victims.
2. States have a responsibility under international law to act with due diligence to prevent trafficking, to investigate and prosecute traffickers and to assist and protect trafficked persons.
3. Anti-trafficking measures shall not adversely affect the human rights and dignity of persons, in particular the rights of those who have been trafficked, and of migrants, internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum-seekers.

### **Preventing trafficking**

4. Strategies aimed at preventing trafficking shall address demand as a root cause of trafficking.

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<sup>41</sup> The term “trafficking”, as used in the present Principles and Guidelines, refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. Source: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (article 3 (a)).

5. States and intergovernmental organizations shall ensure that their interventions address the factors that increase vulnerability to trafficking, including inequality, poverty and all forms of discrimination.

6. States shall exercise due diligence in identifying and eradicating public-sector involvement or complicity in trafficking. All public officials suspected of being implicated in trafficking shall be investigated, tried and, if convicted, appropriately punished.

#### **Protection and assistance**

7. Trafficked persons shall not be detained, charged or prosecuted for the illegality of their entry into or residence in countries of transit and destination, or for their involvement in unlawful activities to the extent that such involvement is a direct consequence of their situation as trafficked persons.

8. States shall ensure that trafficked persons are protected from further exploitation and harm and have access to adequate physical and psychological care. Such protection and care shall not be made conditional upon the capacity or willingness of the trafficked person to cooperate in legal proceedings.

9. Legal and other assistance shall be provided to trafficked persons for the duration of any criminal, civil or other actions against suspected traffickers. States shall provide protection and temporary residence permits to victims and witnesses during legal proceedings.

10. Children who are victims of trafficking shall be identified as such. Their best interests shall be considered paramount at all times. Child victims of trafficking shall be provided with appropriate assistance and protection. Full account shall be taken of their special vulnerabilities, rights and needs.

11. Safe (and, to the extent possible, voluntary) return shall be guaranteed to trafficked persons by both the receiving State and the State of origin. Trafficked persons shall be offered legal alternatives to repatriation in cases where it is reasonable to conclude that such repatriation would pose a serious risk to their safety and/or to the safety of their families.

#### **Criminalization, punishment and redress**

12. States shall adopt appropriate legislative and other measures necessary to establish, as criminal offences, trafficking, its component acts<sup>42</sup> and related conduct.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> For the purposes of the present Principles and Guidelines, the “component acts” and “component offences” of trafficking are understood to include the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons over eighteen years of age by means of threat, force, coercion or deception for the purpose of exploitation. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person under eighteen years of age constitute component acts and component offences of trafficking in children. Source: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, articles 3 (a) and 3 (c).

<sup>43</sup> For the purposes of the present Principles and Guidelines, conduct and offences “related to” trafficking are understood to include: exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery and servitude. Source: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, article 3 (a).

13. States shall effectively investigate, prosecute and adjudicate trafficking, including its component acts and related conduct, whether committed by governmental or by non-State actors.

14. States shall ensure that trafficking, its component acts and related offences constitute extraditable offences under national law and extradition treaties. States shall cooperate to ensure that the appropriate extradition procedures are followed in accordance with international law.

15. Effective and proportionate sanctions shall be applied to individuals and legal persons found guilty of trafficking or of its component or related offences.

16. States shall, in appropriate cases, freeze and confiscate the assets of individuals and legal persons involved in trafficking. To the extent possible, confiscated assets shall be used to support and compensate victims of trafficking.

17. States shall ensure that trafficked persons are given access to effective and appropriate legal remedies.

## **Recommended Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking**

### **Guideline 1: Promotion and protection of human rights**

**Violations of human rights are both a cause and a consequence of trafficking in persons. Accordingly, it is essential to place the protection of all human rights at the centre of any measures taken to prevent and end trafficking. Anti-trafficking measures should not adversely affect the human rights and dignity of persons and, in particular, the rights of those who have been trafficked, migrants, internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum-seekers.**

**States and, where applicable, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, should consider:**

1. Taking steps to ensure that measures adopted for the purpose of preventing and combating trafficking in persons do not have an adverse impact on the rights and dignity of persons, including those who have been trafficked.

2. Consulting with judicial and legislative bodies, national human rights institutions and relevant sectors of civil society in the development, adoption, implementation and review of anti-trafficking legislation, policies and programmes.

3. Developing national plans of action to end trafficking. This process should be used to build links and partnerships between governmental institutions involved in combating trafficking and/or assisting trafficked persons and relevant sectors of civil society.

4. Taking particular care to ensure that the issue of gender-based discrimination is addressed systematically when anti-trafficking measures are proposed with a view to ensuring that such measures are not applied in a discriminatory manner.

5. Protecting the right of all persons to freedom of movement and ensuring that anti-trafficking measures do not infringe upon this right.

6. Ensuring that anti-trafficking laws, policies, programmes and interventions do not affect the right of all persons, including trafficked persons, to seek and

enjoy asylum from persecution in accordance with international refugee law, in particular through the effective application of the principle of non-refoulement.

7. Establishing mechanisms to monitor the human rights impact of anti-trafficking laws, policies, programmes and interventions. Consideration should be given to assigning this role to independent national human rights institutions where such bodies exist. Non-governmental organizations working with trafficked persons should be encouraged to participate in monitoring and evaluating the human rights impact of anti-trafficking measures.

8. Presenting detailed information concerning the measures that they have taken to prevent and combat trafficking in their periodic reports to the United Nations human rights treaty-monitoring bodies.<sup>44</sup>

9. Ensuring that bilateral, regional and international cooperation agreements and other laws and policies concerning trafficking in persons do not affect the rights, obligations or responsibilities of States under international law, including human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law.

10. Offering technical and financial assistance to States and relevant sectors of civil society for the purpose of developing and implementing human rights-based anti-trafficking strategies.

## **Guideline 2: Identification of trafficked persons and traffickers**

**Trafficking means much more than the organized movement of persons for profit. The critical additional factor that distinguishes trafficking from migrant smuggling is the presence of force, coercion and/or deception throughout or at some stage in the process — such deception, force or coercion being used for the purpose of exploitation. While the additional elements that distinguish trafficking from migrant smuggling may sometimes be obvious, in many cases they are difficult to prove without active investigation. A failure to identify a trafficked person correctly is likely to result in a further denial of that person’s rights. States are therefore under an obligation to ensure that such identification can and does take place.**

**States are also obliged to exercise due diligence in identifying traffickers,<sup>45</sup> including those who are involved in controlling and exploiting trafficked persons.**

**States and, where applicable, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, should consider:**

1. Developing guidelines and procedures for relevant State authorities and officials such as police, border guards, immigration officials and others involved in the detection, detention, reception and processing of irregular migrants, to permit the rapid and accurate identification of trafficked persons.

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<sup>44</sup> The human rights treaty-monitoring bodies include the Human Rights Committee; the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; the Committee against Torture; and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

<sup>45</sup> The term “traffickers”, where it appears in the present Principles and Guidelines, is used to refer to: recruiters; transporters; those who exercise control over trafficked persons; those who transfer and/or maintain trafficked persons in exploitative situations; those involved in related crimes; and those who profit either directly or indirectly from trafficking, its component acts and related offences.



2. Providing appropriate training to relevant State authorities and officials in the identification of trafficked persons and correct application of the guidelines and procedures referred to above.
3. Ensuring cooperation between relevant authorities, officials and non-governmental organizations to facilitate the identification and provision of assistance to trafficked persons. The organization and implementation of such cooperation should be formalized in order to maximize its effectiveness.
4. Identifying appropriate points of intervention to ensure that migrants and potential migrants are warned about possible dangers and consequences of trafficking and receive information that enables them to seek assistance if required.
5. Ensuring that trafficked persons are not prosecuted for violations of immigration laws or for the activities they are involved in as a direct consequence of their situation as trafficked persons.
6. Ensuring that trafficked persons are not, in any circumstances, held in immigration detention or other forms of custody.
7. Ensuring that procedures and processes are in place for receipt and consideration of asylum claims from both trafficked persons and smuggled asylum seekers and that the principle of non-refoulement is respected and upheld at all times.

### **Guideline 3: Research, analysis, evaluation and dissemination**

**Effective and realistic anti-trafficking strategies must be based on accurate and current information, experience and analysis. It is essential that all parties involved in developing and implementing these strategies have and maintain a clear understanding of the issues.**

**The media has an important role to play in increasing public understanding of the trafficking phenomenon by providing accurate information in accordance with professional ethical standards.**

**States and, where appropriate, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, should consider:**

1. Adopting and consistently using the internationally agreed definition of trafficking contained in the Palermo Protocol.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, defines trafficking in persons as: "... the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (article 3 (a)). The Protocol further states that the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth above (article 3 (c)).

2. Standardizing the collection of statistical information on trafficking and related movements (such as migrant smuggling) that may include a trafficking element.
3. Ensuring that data concerning individuals who are trafficked is disaggregated on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity and other relevant characteristics.
4. Undertaking, supporting and bringing together research into trafficking. Such research should be firmly grounded in ethical principles, including an understanding of the need not to re-traumatize trafficked persons. Research methodologies and interpretative techniques should be of the highest quality.
5. Monitoring and evaluating the relationship between the intention of anti-trafficking laws, policies and interventions, and their real impact. In particular, ensuring that distinctions are made between measures which actually reduce trafficking and measures which may have the effect of transferring the problem from one place or group to another.
6. Recognizing the important contribution that survivors of trafficking can, on a strictly voluntary basis, make to developing and implementing anti-trafficking interventions and evaluating their impact.
7. Recognizing the central role that non-governmental organizations can play in improving the law enforcement response to trafficking by providing relevant authorities with information on trafficking incidents and patterns taking into account the need to preserve the privacy of trafficked persons.

#### **Guideline 4: Ensuring an adequate legal framework**

**The lack of specific and/or adequate legislation on trafficking at the national level has been identified as one of the major obstacles in the fight against trafficking. There is an urgent need to harmonize legal definitions, procedures and cooperation at the national and regional levels in accordance with international standards. The development of an appropriate legal framework that is consistent with relevant international instruments and standards will also play an important role in the prevention of trafficking and related exploitation.**

**States should consider:**

1. Amending or adopting national legislation in accordance with international standards so that the crime of trafficking is precisely defined in national law and detailed guidance is provided as to its various punishable elements. All practices covered by the definition of trafficking such as debt bondage, forced labour and enforced prostitution should also be criminalized.
2. Enacting legislation to provide for the administrative, civil and, where appropriate, criminal liability of legal persons for trafficking offences in addition to the liability of natural persons. Reviewing current laws, administrative controls and conditions relating to the licensing and operation of businesses that may serve as cover for trafficking such as marriage bureaux, employment agencies, travel agencies, hotels and escort services.
3. Making legislative provision for effective and proportional criminal penalties (including custodial penalties giving rise to extradition in the case of individuals). Where appropriate, legislation should provide for additional penalties to be applied to persons found guilty of trafficking in aggravating

circumstances, including offences involving trafficking in children or offences committed or involving complicity by State officials.

4. Making legislative provision for confiscation of the instruments and proceeds of trafficking and related offences. Where possible, the legislation should specify that the confiscated proceeds of trafficking will be used for the benefit of victims of trafficking. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a compensation fund for victims of trafficking and the use of confiscated assets to finance such a fund.

5. Ensuring that legislation prevents trafficked persons from being prosecuted, detained or punished for the illegality of their entry or residence or for the activities they are involved in as a direct consequence of their situation as trafficked persons.

6. Ensuring that the protection of trafficked persons is built into anti-trafficking legislation, including protection from summary deportation or return where there are reasonable grounds to conclude that such deportation or return would represent a significant security risk to the trafficked person and/or her/his family.

7. Providing legislative protection for trafficked persons who voluntarily agree to cooperate with law enforcement authorities, including protection of their right to remain lawfully within the country of destination for the duration of any legal proceedings.

8. Making effective provision for trafficked persons to be given legal information and assistance in a language they understand as well as appropriate social support sufficient to meet their immediate needs. States should ensure that entitlement to such information, assistance and immediate support is not discretionary but is available as a right for all persons who have been identified as trafficked.

9. Ensuring that the right of trafficking victims to pursue civil claims against alleged traffickers is enshrined in law.

10. Guaranteeing that protections for witnesses are provided for in law.

11. Making legislative provision for the punishment of public sector involvement or complicity in trafficking and related exploitation.

## **Guideline 5: Ensuring an adequate law enforcement response**

**Although there is evidence to suggest that trafficking in persons is increasing in all regions of the world, few traffickers have been apprehended. More effective law enforcement will create a disincentive for traffickers and will therefore have a direct impact upon demand.**

**An adequate law enforcement response to trafficking is dependent on the cooperation of trafficked persons and other witnesses. In many cases, individuals are reluctant or unable to report traffickers or to serve as witnesses because they lack confidence in the police and the judicial system and/or because of the absence of any effective protection mechanisms. These problems are compounded when law enforcement officials are involved or complicit in trafficking. Strong measures need to be taken to ensure that such involvement is investigated, prosecuted and punished. Law enforcement officials must also be sensitized to the paramount requirement of ensuring the safety of trafficked persons. This responsibility lies with the investigator and cannot be abrogated.**

**States and, where applicable, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations should consider:**

1. Sensitizing law enforcement authorities and officials to their primary responsibility to ensure the safety and immediate well-being of trafficked persons.
2. Ensuring that law enforcement personnel are provided with adequate training in the investigation and prosecution of cases of trafficking. This training should be sensitive to the needs of trafficked persons, particularly those of women and children, and should acknowledge the practical value of providing incentives for trafficked persons and others to come forward to report traffickers. The involvement of relevant non-governmental organizations in such training should be considered as a means of increasing its relevance and effectiveness.
3. Providing law enforcement authorities with adequate investigative powers and techniques to enable effective investigation and prosecution of suspected traffickers. States should encourage and support the development of proactive investigatory procedures that avoid over-reliance on victim testimony.
4. Establishing specialist anti-trafficking units (comprising both women and men) in order to promote competence and professionalism.
5. Guaranteeing that traffickers are and will remain the focus of anti-trafficking strategies and that law enforcement efforts do not place trafficked persons at risk of being punished for offences committed as a consequence of their situation.
6. Implementing measures to ensure that “rescue” operations do not further harm the rights and dignity of trafficked persons. Such operations should only take place once appropriate and adequate procedures for responding to the needs of trafficked persons released in this way have been put in place.
7. Sensitizing police, prosecutors, border, immigration and judicial authorities, and social and public health workers to the problem of trafficking and ensuring the provision of specialized training in identifying trafficking cases, combating trafficking and protecting the rights of victims.
8. Making appropriate efforts to protect individual trafficked persons during the investigation and trial process and any subsequent period when the safety of the trafficked person so requires. Appropriate protection programmes may include some or all of the following elements: identification of a safe place in the country of destination; access to independent legal counsel; protection of identity during legal proceedings; identification of options for continued stay, resettlement or repatriation.
9. Encouraging law enforcement authorities to work in partnership with non-governmental agencies in order to ensure that trafficked persons receive necessary support and assistance.

**Guideline 6: Protection and support for trafficked persons**

**The trafficking cycle cannot be broken without attention to the rights and needs of those who have been trafficked. Appropriate protection and support should be extended to all trafficked persons without discrimination.**

**States and, where applicable, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, should consider:**

1. Ensuring, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, that safe and adequate shelter that meets the needs of trafficked persons is made available. The

provision of such shelter should not be made contingent on the willingness of the victims to give evidence in criminal proceedings. Trafficked persons should not be held in immigration detention centres, other detention facilities or vagrant houses.

2. Ensuring, in partnership with non-governmental organizations, that trafficked persons are given access to primary health care and counselling. Trafficked persons should not be required to accept any such support and assistance and they should not be subject to mandatory testing for diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

3. Ensuring that trafficked persons are informed of their right of access to diplomatic and consular representatives from their State of nationality. Staff working in embassies and consulates should be provided with appropriate training in responding to requests for information and assistance from trafficked persons. These provisions would not apply to trafficked asylum-seekers.

4. Ensuring that legal proceedings in which trafficked persons are involved are not prejudicial to their rights, dignity or physical or psychological well-being.

5. Providing trafficked persons with legal and other assistance in relation to any criminal, civil or other actions against traffickers/exploiters. Victims should be provided with information in a language that they understand.

6. Ensuring that trafficked persons are effectively protected from harm, threats or intimidation by traffickers and associated persons. To this end, there should be no public disclosure of the identity of trafficking victims and their privacy should be respected and protected to the extent possible, while taking into account the right of any accused person to a fair trial. Trafficked persons should be given full warning, in advance, of the difficulties inherent in protecting identities and should not be given false or unrealistic expectations regarding the capacities of law enforcement agencies in this regard.

7. Ensuring the safe and, where possible, voluntary return of trafficked persons and exploring the option of residency in the country of destination or third-country resettlement in specific circumstances (e.g. to prevent reprisals or in cases where re-trafficking is considered likely).

8. In partnership with non-governmental organizations, ensuring that trafficked persons who do return to their country of origin are provided with the assistance and support necessary to ensure their well-being, facilitate their social integration and prevent re-trafficking. Measures should be taken to ensure the provision of appropriate physical and psychological health care, housing and educational and employment services for returned trafficking victims.

## **Guideline 7: Preventing trafficking**

**Strategies aimed at preventing trafficking should take into account demand as a root cause. States and intergovernmental organizations should also take into account the factors that increase vulnerability to trafficking, including inequality, poverty and all forms of discrimination and prejudice. Effective prevention strategies should be based on existing experience and accurate information.**

**States, in partnership with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and where appropriate, using development cooperation policies and programmes, should consider:**

1. Analysing the factors that generate demand for exploitative commercial sexual services and exploitative labour and taking strong legislative, policy and other measures to address these issues.
2. Developing programmes that offer livelihood options, including basic education, skills training and literacy, especially for women and other traditionally disadvantaged groups.
3. Improving children's access to educational opportunities and increasing the level of school attendance, in particular by girl children.
4. Ensuring that potential migrants, especially women, are properly informed about the risks of migration (e.g. exploitation, debt bondage and health and security issues, including exposure to HIV/AIDS) as well as avenues available for legal, non-exploitative migration.
5. Developing information campaigns for the general public aimed at promoting awareness of the dangers associated with trafficking. Such campaigns should be informed by an understanding of the complexities surrounding trafficking and of the reasons why individuals may make potentially dangerous migration decisions.
6. Reviewing and modifying policies that may compel people to resort to irregular and vulnerable labour migration. This process should include examining the effect on women of repressive and/or discriminatory nationality, property, immigration, emigration and migrant labour laws.
7. Examining ways of increasing opportunities for legal, gainful and non-exploitative labour migration. The promotion of labour migration by the State should be dependent on the existence of regulatory and supervisory mechanisms to protect the rights of migrant workers.
8. Strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies to arrest and prosecute those involved in trafficking as a preventive measure. This includes ensuring that law enforcement agencies comply with their legal obligations.
9. Adopting measures to reduce vulnerability by ensuring that appropriate legal documentation for birth, citizenship and marriage is provided and made available to all persons.

### **Guideline 8: Special measures for the protection and support of child victims of trafficking**

**The particular physical, psychological and psychosocial harm suffered by trafficked children and their increased vulnerability to exploitation require that they be dealt with separately from adult trafficked persons in terms of laws, policies, programmes and interventions. The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning trafficked children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies. Child victims of trafficking should be provided with appropriate assistance and protection and full account should be taken of their special rights and needs.**

**States and, where applicable, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, should consider, in addition to the measures outlined under Guideline 6:**

1. Ensuring that definitions of trafficking in children in both law and policy reflect their need for special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection. In particular, and in accordance with the Palermo Protocol, evidence of deception, force, coercion, etc. should not form part of the definition of trafficking where the person involved is a child.
2. Ensuring that procedures are in place for the rapid identification of child victims of trafficking.
3. Ensuring that children who are victims of trafficking are not subjected to criminal procedures or sanctions for offences related to their situation as trafficked persons.
4. In cases where children are not accompanied by relatives or guardians, taking steps to identify and locate family members. Following a risk assessment and consultation with the child, measures should be taken to facilitate the reunion of trafficked children with their families where this is deemed to be in their best interest.
5. In situations where the safe return of the child to his or her family is not possible, or where such return would not be in the child's best interests, establishing adequate care arrangements that respect the rights and dignity of the trafficked child.
6. In both the situations referred to in the two paragraphs above, ensuring that a child who is capable of forming his or her own views enjoys the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting him or her, in particular concerning decisions about his or her possible return to the family, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with his or her age and maturity.
7. Adopting specialized policies and programmes to protect and support children who have been victims of trafficking. Children should be provided with appropriate physical, psychosocial, legal, educational, housing and health-care assistance.
8. Adopting measures necessary to protect the rights and interests of trafficked children at all stages of criminal proceedings against alleged offenders and during procedures for obtaining compensation.
9. Protecting, as appropriate, the privacy and identity of child victims and taking measures to avoid the dissemination of information that could lead to their identification.
10. Taking measures to ensure adequate and appropriate training, in particular legal and psychological training, for persons working with child victims of trafficking.

### **Guideline 9: Access to remedies**

**Trafficked persons, as victims of human rights violations, have an international legal right to adequate and appropriate remedies. This right is often not effectively available to trafficked persons as they frequently lack information on the possibilities and processes for obtaining remedies, including compensation, for trafficking and related exploitation. In order to overcome this problem, legal and other material assistance should be provided to trafficked persons to enable them to realize their right to adequate and appropriate remedies.**

**States and, where applicable, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, should consider:**

1. Ensuring that victims of trafficking have an enforceable right to fair and adequate remedies, including the means for as full a rehabilitation as possible. These remedies may be criminal, civil or administrative in nature.
2. Providing information as well as legal and other assistance to enable trafficked persons to access remedies. The procedures for obtaining remedies should be clearly explained in a language that the trafficked person understands.
3. Making arrangements to enable trafficked persons to remain safely in the country in which the remedy is being sought for the duration of any criminal, civil or administrative proceedings.

**Guideline 10: Obligations of peacekeepers, civilian police and humanitarian and diplomatic personnel**

**The direct or indirect involvement of peacekeeping, peace-building, civilian policing, humanitarian and diplomatic personnel in trafficking raises special concerns. States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are responsible for the actions of those working under their authority and are therefore under an obligation to take effective measures to prevent their nationals and employees from engaging in trafficking and related exploitation. They are also required to investigate thoroughly all allegations of trafficking and related exploitation and to provide for and apply appropriate sanctions to personnel found to have been involved in trafficking.**

**States and, where appropriate, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, should consider:**

1. Ensuring that pre- and post-deployment training programmes for all peacekeeping, peace-building, civilian policing, humanitarian and diplomatic staff adequately address the issue of trafficking and clearly set out the expected standard of behaviour. This training should be developed within a human rights framework and delivered by appropriately experienced trainers.
2. Ensuring that recruitment, placement and transfer procedures (including those of private contractors and sub-contractors) are rigorous and transparent.
3. Ensuring that staff employed in the context of peacekeeping, peace-building, civilian policing, humanitarian and diplomatic missions do not engage in trafficking and related exploitation or use the services of persons in relation to which there are reasonable grounds to suspect they may have been trafficked. This obligation also covers complicity in trafficking through corruption or affiliation with any person or group of persons who could reasonably be suspected of engaging in trafficking and related exploitation.
4. Developing and adopting specific regulations and codes of conduct setting out expected standards of behaviour and the consequences of failure to adhere to these standards.
5. Requiring all personnel employed in the context of peacekeeping, peace-building, civilian policing, humanitarian and diplomatic missions to report on any instances of trafficking and related exploitation that come to their attention.
6. Establishing mechanisms for the systematic investigation of all allegations of trafficking and related exploitation involving personnel employed in the



context of peacekeeping, peace-building, civilian policing, humanitarian and diplomatic missions.

7. Consistently applying appropriate criminal, civil and administrative sanctions to personnel shown to have engaged in or been complicit in trafficking and related exploitation. Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations should, in appropriate cases, apply disciplinary sanctions to staff members found to be involved in trafficking and related exploitation in addition to and independently of any criminal or other sanctions decided on by the State concerned. Privileges and immunities attached to the status of an employee should not be invoked in order to shield that person from sanctions for serious crimes such as trafficking and related offences.

### **Guideline 11: Cooperation and coordination between States and regions**

**Trafficking is a regional and global phenomenon that cannot always be dealt with effectively at the national level: a strengthened national response can often result in the operations of traffickers moving elsewhere. International, multilateral and bilateral cooperation can play an important role in combating trafficking activities. Such cooperation is particularly critical between countries involved in different stages of the trafficking cycle.**

**States and, where applicable, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, should consider:**

1. Adopting bilateral agreements aimed at preventing trafficking, protecting the rights and dignity of trafficked persons and promoting their welfare.
2. Offering, either on a bilateral basis or through multilateral organizations, technical and financial assistance to States and relevant sectors of civil society for the purpose of promoting the development and implementation of human rights-based anti-trafficking strategies.
3. Elaborating regional and subregional treaties on trafficking, using the Palermo Protocol and relevant international human rights standards as a baseline and framework.
4. Adopting labour migration agreements, which may include provision for minimum work standards, model contracts, modes of repatriation, etc., in accordance with existing international standards. States are encouraged effectively to enforce all such agreements in order to help eliminate trafficking and related exploitation.
5. Developing cooperation arrangements to facilitate the rapid identification of trafficked persons including the sharing and exchange of information in relation to their nationality and right of residence.
6. Establishing mechanisms to facilitate the exchange of information concerning traffickers and their methods of operation.
7. Developing procedures and protocols for the conduct of proactive joint investigations by law enforcement authorities of different concerned States. In recognition of the value of direct contacts, provision should be made for direct transmission of requests for assistance between locally competent authorities in order to ensure that such requests are rapidly dealt with and to foster the development of cooperative relations at the working level.

8. Ensuring judicial cooperation between States in investigations and judicial processes relating to trafficking and related offences, in particular through common prosecution methodologies and joint investigations. This cooperation should include assistance in: identifying and interviewing witnesses with due regard for their safety; identifying, obtaining and preserving evidence; producing and serving the legal documents necessary to secure evidence and witnesses; and the enforcement of judgements.
  9. Ensuring that requests for extradition for offences related to trafficking are dealt with by the authorities of the requested State without undue delay.
  10. Establishing cooperative mechanisms for the confiscation of the proceeds of trafficking. This cooperation should include the provision of assistance in identifying, tracing, freezing and confiscating assets connected to trafficking and related exploitation.
  11. Exchanging information and experience relating to the implementation of assistance, return and integration programmes with a view to maximizing impact and effectiveness.
  12. Encouraging and facilitating cooperation between non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations in countries of origin, transit and destination. This is particularly important to ensure support and assistance to trafficked persons who are repatriated.
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