



# General Assembly

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New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Shahid ..... (Maldives)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

## High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons

### Agenda item 108 (continued)

#### Crime prevention and criminal justice

##### Draft resolution (A/76/L.11)

**The President:** I declare open the High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. This meeting is being held in accordance with resolution 75/283, of 7 June 2021, and decisions 76/511, of 29 October 2021, and 76/513, of 11 November 2021.

The General Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/76/L.11, entitled “2021 Political Declaration on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons”. Before proceeding further, as stated in my letters dated 26 October and 16 November, I would like to remind members that action on the draft political declaration will be taken following the opening statements.

#### Statement by the President

**The President:** I welcome delegations to this high-level meeting on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. In particular, I welcome the presence

among us of survivors of human trafficking, whose voices are needed to remind us that that issue relates to much more than mere policy — it is human tragedy. I would like to thank one of those survivors — artist and advocate, Ms. Kendall Alaimo — who has graciously allowed her artwork, entitled *Victims’ Voices Lead the Way*, to feature throughout the event and its associated campaigns. We will hear more from Ms. Alaimo this afternoon about the story behind that painting.

The United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children were significant steps in recognizing and combating that heinous crime. Since its adoption by the General Assembly, the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons — with its focus on preventing trafficking, prosecuting offenders and protecting victims — has remained pivotal in implementing the Convention and its Protocol. Yet despite the progress made, trafficking in persons persists. We must remain vigilant.

Human trafficking deprives millions worldwide of their dignity and freedom. It undermines national security, distorts markets and enriches transnational criminals and terrorists and is an affront to our universal values. Human trafficking is linked to a number of crimes, including illicit money flows, the use of fraudulent travel documents and cybercrime. While there are many forms of trafficking, the one consistent aspect is the abuse of the inherent vulnerability of the victims. We must continue to improve capacities so

In accordance with decision 76/511, of 29 October 2021, the official records of the high-level meeting will be supplemented by annexes containing pre-recorded statements submitted by Heads of State or Government or other dignitaries, submitted to the President no later than the day on which such statements are delivered in the Assembly Hall. Submissions in this regard should be made to [estatements@un.org](mailto:estatements@un.org).



as to prevent and respond to human trafficking. And we must address the root causes that facilitate such trafficking in the first place.

In adopting the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Member States recognized that poverty, unemployment, gender-based violence, discrimination and marginalization are among the contributing factors, all of which have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic. The continuing pandemic has left the survivors of trafficking with less support and beset by the weakened ability of States to identify the perpetrators and hold them accountable. It is imperative that the global community redouble its efforts to better recover from the pandemic and build resilient communities. That includes by obtaining more research, data and analysis on the ways in which the crime is being carried out, how it is evolving and whom it is targeting and impacting. That will allow us to make better decisions on preventative measures and responses.

We must prioritize a victim- and survivor-centred approach to combating trafficking in persons — one that includes survivors in policy development; one that considers how existing policies and practices impact trafficking, including those on human rights, gender equality, migration, labour, education and health; and one that adopts a whole-of-society approach to combating trafficking and that strengthens partnerships among Governments, civil society and the private sector, while integrating the perspectives of survivors and recognizing trafficked persons as agents of change. Through collaboration we can build strong legal and policy frameworks, empower human rights defenders and enhance victims' access to justice. I am pleased that stakeholders representing multiple sectors will participate in this meeting, either virtually or in person.

Trafficking is first and foremost a severe human rights violation — one that thrives on prejudices and systemic inequalities, including gender inequality, discrimination, racism and xenophobia. As we develop anti-trafficking frameworks and devise new methods of identifying and protecting victims, we must consider how the interplay of various prejudices and iniquities render individuals more vulnerable. We must also recognize the unfortunate truth that migrants are among the most discriminated against and marginalized communities and therefore among the most vulnerable to human trafficking. We have a responsibility to implement policies that reduce the risk of migrants

being trafficked during every stage of their journey. And we must introduce additional measures to ensure the effective protection of migrant workers within their host societies.

Over the coming two days, this meeting will provide an opportunity to focus our attention on how to improve the responses to human trafficking. Over the course of our discussions and deliberations, let us never forget the human impact of that vile crime, including the brutal realities experienced by victims and the bravery and resilience of survivors. We will hear from some of those survivors during this high-level meeting. Their mere presence here testifies to the fortitude of the human spirit. Their courage reminds us of our obligations to do better in protecting our communities and providing justice to the victims. Let us do right by them. Let us ensure that others do not endure the tragedies and deprivation that they have endured. Let us empower their work and listen to them as we craft and implement policy.

As President of the General Assembly under the theme “Presidency of Hope”, I will do all that I can to bring together and work with partners to mobilize action against human trafficking. I look forward to the opportunity over the coming two days to engage in constructive dialogue so that we can collectively work together to advance our efforts to address that crime.

In accordance with rule 70 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I now give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Her Excellency Ms. Amina Mohammed.

**The Deputy Secretary-General:** I wish to express my deep appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for having convened this meeting on the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. I also wish to congratulate Member States on the successful negotiation of the draft political declaration on which action will be taken at today's meeting (A/76/L.11, annex).

Renewed and reinvigorated global action against the crime of human trafficking is needed more than ever, as economic hardship, conflict and health and climate emergencies are increasing and compounding the vulnerabilities to trafficking, exploitation and abuse. Global crises, including the continuing coronavirus disease pandemic, have delayed progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including important targets on preventing and combating all

forms of trafficking in persons. That is increasing the suffering of victims. Survivors of trafficking in many countries have encountered greater difficulties in accessing shelter, food, health care, legal aid and other essential services.

At the same time, law enforcement authorities face additional challenges in detecting human trafficking in the light of pandemic-related restrictions on travel and movement. Human trafficking — a crime that is often hidden in plain sight — has retreated further into the shadows of our global economy and the dark corners of the Internet. Information and communication technologies, which have also become increasingly important during the pandemic, are being misused by traffickers to facilitate the recruitment, control and exploitation of victims.

Women and girls are disproportionately targeted by traffickers and forced into marriage, including child marriage, as well as domestic servitude and forced labour. The latest United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* shows that around one third of all detected victims are children — a proportion that has tripled over the past 15 years. Tragically, more and more children are being targeted by traffickers, who are using social media to recruit new victims and profiting from the demand for child sexual exploitation materials. Refugees and migrants are especially vulnerable to traffickers. They may be abused and exploited for forced labour, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and even organ removal. According to the UNODC *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, a significant proportion of the victims of abuse in most regions of the world are migrants.

Trafficking in global supply chains continues to be under-detected and unpunished owing to a lack of appropriate frameworks and reporting mechanisms to tackle that complex issue. When trafficking cases are detected, all too often the victims themselves face punishment. Although many States now recognize victims' rights to assistance, protection and effective remedies, they may also punish people for acts committed as a consequence of being trafficked. To put an end to that suffering and injustice, we need to support all countries to build strong legal institutions and frameworks in order to respond to that crime. Survivors should be at the centre of policies to prevent and counter human trafficking, bring perpetrators

to justice and provide effective access to remedies, including compensation.

We now have strong tools for international cooperation on preventing and ending human trafficking. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime is almost universally ratified, and 178 States are now parties to its supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2010, has been decisive in promoting the implementation of the Protocol. The biennial *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* has become a primary resource on global trafficking trends and patterns. The Global Plan of Action also established the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and strengthened the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, which now brings together 30 United Nations agencies and regional organizations.

Thanks to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the Global Plan of Action, nearly all States parties have enacted national legislation that criminalizes trafficking in persons. However, practical responses to human trafficking continue to vary widely. We need increased technical assistance and support in order to strengthen common action. Better responses require improved cooperation among Member States on information-sharing, joint criminal justice operations and much more. And more needs to be done to protect vulnerable migrants from falling prey to trafficking, in line with the commitments made under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

We need to strengthen the coordination between United Nations entities and others in order to detect and respond to the crime of human trafficking in emergency situations and humanitarian crises. We also need to strengthen private sector engagement so that companies can manage their procurement processes in an ethical and transparent way. The United Nations has taken action to prevent and address human trafficking risks in its own procurement processes. And finally, we need to develop and promote partnerships with civil society. Survivor-led organizations can support a shift to holistic anti-trafficking responses, as well as victim support and services.

Today's appraisal meeting can reinforce the need for greater cooperation and action against human trafficking. The recently launched peer review process for the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Trafficking in Persons Protocol offers ways to further improve and inform policies and action. At this pivotal moment, the adoption by the General Assembly of the draft political declaration could help to generate the momentum needed to take decisive action against that horrific crime. I urge Member States to make the most of this opportunity to help us get back on track in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the decade of action and to work together to end the scourge of trafficking once and for all.

**The President:** I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/283 and decision 76/503, of 17 September 2021, I now introduce the pre-recorded statement of Ms. Ghada Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 1 and A/76/569).*

**The President:** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/283, I now give the floor to Ms. Siobhán Mullally, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, to make a statement.

**Ms. Mullally** (Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children): This high-level meeting to review the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons comes at a very critical time. More than a decade after the adoption of the Global Plan of Action, trafficking in persons continues with impunity. We need to ask why that is so. What are we not doing as an international community to combat that serious human rights violation?

We know that women and girls in particular are at risk of all forms of exploitation and often multiple and intersecting forms of exploitation. They are at risk because of the continuing systemic discrimination and violence against women and girls globally and the material consequences of such discrimination, including poverty, a brutalizing modification of women and girls' bodies, restrictions on movement and restrictions on access to education and decent work. That is not new, but the coronavirus disease

(COVID-19) pandemic has had a gendered impact, with rising poverty and unemployment disproportionately affecting women and girls. We are receiving reports of increases in child and forced marriages, which are indicators of increases in trafficking. We also know that men and boys are often ignored and invisible as victims of trafficking and therefore not identified and not provided with protection.

Despite the core norm of non-discrimination and promises of the universal protection of the rights of trafficked persons, racism and xenophobia continue to limit access to protection for trafficked persons, in particular at border crossings. If we are to be more effective in our anti-trafficking action, we need to ensure that such action is aligned with racial justice movements globally. We also know that indigenous peoples, minority communities, stateless persons, refugees and internally displaced persons are targeted by traffickers for exploitation. Such trafficking persists with impunity because of State failures to ensure protection without discrimination and failures to take effective preventative action for groups and communities that are already marginalized.

The legal and policy tools are available to us. However, the implementation of human rights law to protect trafficked persons and prevent trafficking remains weak. The rhetoric of combating modern slavery is not being met with the reality of protecting trafficked persons without discrimination or with meaningful action to combat impunity. The effective prevention of trafficking requires us to rethink our approaches to migration. The adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration was an important achievement for the international community. Expanding safe, orderly and regular migration reduces the risks of trafficking. We need to move beyond responses to migration that are built on pushbacks, the building of walls, the externalization of asylum procedures and the criminalization of migration.

However, regular migration is also risky for many people. We need a more effective monitoring of labour recruitment agencies in order to protect migrant workers. We need to ensure that the gaps in the enforcement and scope of labour laws and in the mandates of labour inspectorates are addressed. Restrictive employer-tied work permits, the failure to protect the rights of domestic workers, the unlimited enforcement of labour laws and restrictions on access to social protection for migrant workers all create vulnerabilities to exploitation. Those



are failures of policy and failures of political will that can be addressed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into very sharp relief the limited rights protections for migrant workers, as well as the heightened risks of trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation and the targeting of children online. As we continue to face humanitarian crises in many parts of the world, we are seeing increasing indicators of trafficking arising from a continuum of exploitation and failures of everyday rights protection. We know that digital technologies can assist in preventing trafficking and combating impunity. But effective action is not being taken by technology companies or States to combat impunity for trafficking through the use of technologies, in particular with regard to sexual exploitation and the targeting of women and girls online.

In my recent report to the General Assembly (A/76/263), I highlighted the nexus between trafficking and contexts of terrorism, as well as the targeting of women and girls and men and boys online and the use of digital technologies by terrorist groups for trafficking for all purposes of exploitation. Young people in particular are at risk. We need more effective action to harness the benefits of digital technologies in order to combat trafficking.

We also need to ensure that assistance to trafficked persons and social protection are long-term and not conditional if we are serious about breaking the cycles of trafficking, exploitation and re-trafficking. We use the rhetoric of human rights-based approaches to combat trafficking in persons, but we need to ensure that is backed up in practice. The role of civil society and human rights defenders is critical in supporting trafficked persons, preventing trafficking and ensuring protection. Imposing restrictions on civil society, the shrinking of civil society space and the criminalization of human rights defenders who assist migrants constitute a failure of States to respect their obligations to build partnerships with non-governmental organizations — a core commitment of the Palermo Protocol.

The implementation of the non-punishment principle is also critical to ensuring a human rights-based approach and effective protection. It is also essential to ensuring effective investigations and combating impunity for trafficking. Yet we continue to see victims of trafficking detained, imprisoned, punished, denied the possibility of recovery and

denied access to effective remedies. We need to recognize all forms of punishment, including detention, forced returns, arbitrary deprivations of citizenship, exclusions from refugee status and exclusions from social security protection.

Child trafficking in particular is an egregious and serious human rights violation. We need to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols and in particular the principle of non-discrimination. That is essential to protecting all child victims of trafficking and to moving towards more effective prevention action. We must ensure the inclusion of children and child protection language in peace processes and explicitly identify measures to address child trafficking in peace processes. We must also recognize that attacks against schools and hospitals may be used by traffickers as tactics to abduct or recruit children. In recognizing the particular vulnerability of children, States must ensure that effective prevention and protection measures are in place for children in situations of conflict or forced displacement. We must ensure that children who are detained for association with armed groups are recognized as victims of trafficking and as victims of grave violations of human rights and humanitarian law. We need to strengthen and resource child protection systems.

We also need to ensure that measures to combat trafficking in persons are disability-inclusive and comply with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Security Council resolution 2475 (2019), on the protection of persons with disabilities in conflict. That is essential to ensure effective access to justice, assistance and protection and effective remedies for trafficked persons with disabilities. We must ensure that actions to combat trafficking are incorporated into the planning of peacekeeping transition processes, in recognizing that a time of transition may bring heightened risks. Combating trafficking in persons for all purposes of exploitation and ensuring the protection of trafficked persons and persons at risk of trafficking must be explicitly stated in the mandates of peacekeeping missions that include the protection of civilians among their directives. It is not enough to assume the inclusion of those obligations in measures to combat conflict-related sexual violence or sexual and gender-based violence. Without explicit recognition of the obligations to combat trafficking in persons, the indicators of

trafficking are missed. Children go missing with impunity. There are no effective investigations and no effective protection.

While the contexts of terrorism, conflict and forced displacement contribute to heightened risks of trafficking in persons, such risks are rooted in continuums of exploitation that are linked to structural discrimination, violence, poverty and exclusion, which are part of the everyday and are not exceptional. It is therefore essential that we continue to focus on the everyday poverty, economic vulnerability, discrimination against migrant workers and exploitation as the underlying and persistent root causes of trafficking and recognize the need for structural reforms in countries of origin and countries of destination. Protecting the rights of refugees through resettlement, humanitarian visas and family reunification and the effective protection of the right to seek and enjoy asylum also help ensure the protection of trafficked persons who are refugees and are essential to preventing the trafficking of refugees and others who are forcibly displaced.

In the context of the climate crisis, we must take seriously the heightened risks of trafficking arising from climate-related conflicts and climate displacement. We must also recognize that trafficking in persons for forced labour in the agricultural sector, extractive industries, garment industries and fisheries is contributing to the climate crisis. In recognizing those risks, my report to the General Assembly in 2022 will examine trafficking in persons in the context of the climate crisis and forced displacement.

In conclusion, we know that trafficking treats human beings as commodities to be bought and sold. We know that it is a serious human rights violation and one that demands urgent and meaningful action. That action must be led by survivors. All anti-trafficking actions must be informed by the experience and expertise of survivors — not on an ad hoc basis but on a continuing and systemic basis. I look forward to continuing to work with all delegations to combat trafficking in persons.

**The President:** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/283, I now give the floor to Ms. Yasmeen Hassan, Global Executive Director of Equality Now, to make a statement.

**Ms. Hassan:** I would like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, on

having convened this high-level meeting. I am honoured to participate in it.

When I was a young activist in the early 1990s, sex trafficking was not an issue that most people were aware of. There were no laws addressing it, and the victims of sex trafficking had almost no support in escaping their ordeal. To the contrary, they were trapped, as they could be criminalized for prostitution or immigration-related offences, and they were socially stigmatized for what had been done to them. Criminal enterprises that trafficked women and girls flourished with the rise of the commercial sex trade, which created an increased and normalized demand and a lucrative market for traffickers. Women's rights organizations, especially those working in courts and in the provision of services, sounded the alarm bell. We saw that the women and girls who were victims of sex trafficking were the most marginalized, whether due to poverty, abuse, addiction, ethnicity or laws that disempowered them on the basis of sex. We also saw that very little was being done to help them.

A period of sustained advocacy with, and on behalf of, victims and survivors led to the establishment of the Palermo Protocol in 2003, which has been ratified by 178 countries, and to the introduction of laws against sex trafficking in 93 per cent of countries. The Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons was created in 2010 to monitor progress, and in 2018 States committed to a formal review process and to protecting and supporting the victims of human trafficking by adopting the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. So, yes, there has been significant progress, but the current trends show that sex trafficking is increasing in new and complex ways and that we are failing vulnerable women and girls.

More than 50 per cent of detected trafficking victims globally are sex trafficked. Seventy-seven per cent of women and 72 per cent of girls who are trafficked are trafficked for sexual exploitation. Sex trafficking remains the most profitable for traffickers, who rake in huge profits in a \$99-billion-a-year global commercial sex trade. And while countries have laws against trafficking, those laws are not being implemented, and prosecutions and convictions remain abysmally low. At Equality Now, we have been working to combat sex trafficking for more than a quarter of a century, and we have seen the ways in which women and girls are trafficked for sex and the devastating impact on their lives — if they even make it out alive.

I will give a few examples. In Mexico, young girls are recruited as models from rural areas and sold into prostitution by drug cartels posing as modelling agencies. Nigerian women are deceived, moved across borders and then prostituted in Italy to pay off incurred debts to their traffickers. Twelve- and 13-year-old Pakistani girls are taken on virginity-sale tours to countries in the Gulf region. And in Egypt there are cases of young women being repeatedly sold into temporary marriages by their families. The experiences of those women and girls all have a common thread — they have all experienced vulnerabilities, whether based on sex, race, economic status or legal status, and those vulnerabilities are exploited. The narrative that those women and girls have a genuine choice or that they are migrating for sex work misrepresents the lived realities of survivors.

So, what can we do? First of all, Governments must reduce people's vulnerability to being trafficked by establishing an ecosystem of laws and policies that foster equality and provide real opportunity and options. In addition to sex trafficking laws and anti-trafficking laws, laws and policies must meaningfully address inequality and the demand for prostitution, provide equal rights, education and economic opportunities and ensure the protection of migrants and displaced people, among other things. Governments must also put an end to impunity for traffickers and profiteers. That requires more than paying lip service to the perspectives of survivors. The implementation of anti-trafficking laws is difficult and requires political will at every level, in addition to sustained resourcing, training and, quite frankly, a crackdown on apathy and corruption.

Moreover, urgent and collective action needs to be taken to address the new threats posed by the misuse of the Internet and digital technology. The Internet is enabling sex trafficking and sexual exploitation to grow at an alarming pace. That is particularly relevant in the time of the coronavirus disease pandemic, in which traffickers have adjusted their business models to the new normal through the abuse of digital technology. Governments must appropriately regulate the digital space so as to protect against abuse. In doing so, they must address the tension between the right to, and freedom of, expression and privacy on the one hand and protection from online harms on the other.

Traffickers are hiding behind the veil of online anonymity on platforms that operate under very limited regulation in order to groom and recruit

their victims. The current national and international laws are inadequate, as they have not kept pace with technological advances. In our report, "Ending Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Women and Girls: A Call for International Standards", which was published just last week, we call on Governments to develop international standards, a guiding framework for international cooperation and robust laws that address the gendered and multijurisdictional nature of online sexual exploitation. Equality Now is committed to being a part of the global movement to address the ongoing scourge that devastates the lives of so many. There is no time to waste, and inaction is not an option.

**The President:** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/283, I now give the floor to Ms. Malaika Oringo, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Footprint to Freedom and a survivor of trafficking in persons, to make a statement.

**Ms. Oringo:** When I was about 8 years old, in a small suburb of Kampala back in Uganda, some friends and I were playing a game called "let us dare to dream", where we would ask each other what they would like to be when they grow up. One of my friends said he wanted to be a minister so that he could own a convoy of cars; some wanted to be superheroes; others wanted to be princesses. I said, "When I grow up, I want to go to the United Nations and speak about the war and what it does to children". I am honoured to be here today and to be given a stage at this high-level meeting of the General Assembly on trafficking in persons.

Unfortunately the story I wanted to tell has evolved. Today I am here to tell the Assembly that the war opened doors to being trafficked. But I also want to assert that the journey of a trafficking victim does not begin at the moment when the trafficker shows up. Most of the time it is the result of generations or years of vulnerability that has been insufficiently addressed and has gone unreported and unnoticed. That is the reality for so many survivors around the world and will continue to be the reality for further victims in the future if we do not work hard to address the causes of vulnerability among children, especially in post-conflict areas, such as the one in which I spent part of my childhood.

My name is Malaika Oringo, and I am from the Netherlands. I am the founder of Footprint to Freedom — a survivor-led organization that empowers survivors to take to the front line in the fight against human trafficking. I work with The Salvation Army

as an inclusion and engagement specialist, and I am a serving member of the International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council, which was inaugurated by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Although I stand alone before the Assembly today, I bring with me thousands of voices of survivors from across the world.

First, I would like to acknowledge the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in giving survivors a stage and amplifying our voices in this year's campaign, "Victims' Voices Lead the Way". With regard to its impact, I would like to share some quotes from resilient survivors. Marcela Loaiza said, "The key to successful reintegration is psychological support". Shandra Woworuntu said, "Our narratives must not merely be inspiring, but the lessons that lie within them must be turned into solutions". Jerome Elam said, "I have put a face to the crime of human trafficking and have begun to shatter the stereotype that men are not being sold". Senga Jeanbaptiste from Footprint to Freedom said, "I understand the importance of integration, so I offer survivors the support I wanted to have as a victim". Kendall Alaimo said, "Learning from victims' experiences and turning their suggestions into concrete actions will lead to a more victim-centred and effective approach in combating human trafficking".

Hearing such wisdom from a diverse range of survivors affirms that survivors are the most significant stakeholders in the fight against human trafficking. However, their voices are mainly centred around sharing their stories as victims. Less than 10 per cent of victims' voices are included in the decisions that lead to the implementation of policies and laws. Yet survivors' narratives are very important in establishing effective strategies that address the prosecution of traffickers, the prevention of trafficking and the reintegration of victims, because survivors know first-hand the tactics and strategies that traffickers use to bind victims to slavery. For that reason, I call on all Member States to leverage the wisdom of survivors and invest in the leadership of survivors.

I would like to make some recommendations from a survivor perspective. We need to see more meaningful partnerships with survivors and shift from merely symbolic survivor engagement, which we see as exploitation. We need to see an increase in the quality of mental support for survivors, which should be customized to their needs and provided over the

long term. We also need to see an improvement in the way victims are treated during legal proceedings. Such proceedings need to be victim-centred and trauma-informed. We need to put a stop to the narrative of a "perfect victim", because looking for a "perfect victim" among victims is one of the major reasons for the low rates of prosecution and conviction, as it blinds us from seeing those that are standing before our very eyes. That is a reality for migrant survivors of trafficking, because their victimhood is addressed as a migration issue.

We need non-discriminatory support. In most countries, the duration of the assistance offered to victims is often linked to the duration of any ongoing investigation. I myself became a victim of that notion. I was left undocumented for 10 years, which left me without the right to access medication, to go to school or to access shelter. That left me vulnerable to re-exploitation and exposed me to gender-based violence.

Most of all, we need to see accountability, not only in bringing the traffickers to justice but on the part of all parties involved. For example, we need the civil service sector to be accountable for the quality of the services it offers to victims and survivors. We need the private sector to be accountable for addressing the exploitation that is present in its supply chains. We need law enforcement to be accountable for ensuring that it is victim-centred and trauma-informed. And above all, we need Governments to be accountable for the systems in place that facilitate the demand for exploitative services, such as the *kafala* system in the Gulf States, the legalization of prostitution in Europe, corruption and the impunity of traffickers. Lastly, the United Nations should foster survivor engagement and inclusion among Member States as part of the mandate when forming research policies and holding discussions on reintegration.

Finally, we need to value the lived experience — we should not undermine it. Even when I was 8 years old, back in Uganda, where the voices of children are undermined, I still felt and understood the importance of lived experience and the need for victims of human trafficking to be at the table when it comes to discussing matters that affect our lives. Now that I have a voice, a stage and an agency, I want to call the Assembly to action. When delegations come to discuss the issue of human trafficking, I want them to ask themselves whose voice they are representing, whose voice is missing from the table and why that voice is missing.



Answering those questions is key to achieving genuine survivor inclusion.

We need to look beyond compassion and turn our empathy into action. Sharing stories of trauma is not enough; we need to share stories of resilience and hope. We need to make greater efforts to provide survivors with access to restoration programmes, education and employment and to fund survivor-led initiatives. Pity is not enough. Survivors need more opportunities to thrive.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker for the opening segment of the high-level meeting.

The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/76/L.11, entitled “2021 Political Declaration on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons”.

Before giving the floor for explanations of position before adoption, may I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Ms. Johnstone** (United States of America): The United States welcomes the adoption of the draft political declaration (A/76/L.11, annex). We have long been committed to preventing and combating trafficking in persons and advocating for survivors. The United States affirms its commitment to protecting the privacy and identity of victims of trafficking in persons before, during and after criminal proceedings subject to our national laws, rules and regulations, including the protection of the rights of criminal defendants under the United States Constitution.

The United States supports fully and effectively implementing obligations under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, including the provisions on granting assistance to, and the protection of, victims of trafficking. There is no obligation to implement the non-mandatory provisions of those instruments, and the United States does not consider the language contained in the draft political declaration as amending or expanding its obligations under either of them. Nevertheless, the United States will continue to act in accordance with its obligations to prevent and combat transnational organized crime and trafficking in persons.

**The President:** We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position before adoption.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/76/L.11?

*Draft resolution A/76/L.11 was adopted (resolution 76/7).*

**The President:** Before giving the floor for explanations of position after adoption, may I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Ms. Pongor** (Hungary): First of all, allow me to express our appreciation to the Republic of the Philippines and the Dominican Republic for their leadership as co-facilitators of the 2021 Political Declaration just adopted (resolution 76/7, annex). Hungary supported the adoption of the Political Declaration, as a Member State that is deeply committed to the prevention and elimination of all forms of human trafficking, with special regard to trafficking in women and girls. We stand firm in the fight against that horrendous crime and in protecting and supporting the survivors of human trafficking, as well as in holding the perpetrators to account.

At the same time, we would like to take this opportunity to put on the record Hungary's position concerning paragraphs 7 and 24 (b), which include references to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. We wish to recall that Hungary did not adopt the Global Compact and does not take part in its implementation. We therefore dissociate ourselves from the aforementioned paragraphs. We further emphasize that the fight against human trafficking should focus on combating organized crime, holding the perpetrators to account, raising awareness among at-risk populations and tackling the root causes of their vulnerability. We wish to stress that expanding the legal channels for migration is not an appropriate way to tackle human trafficking, and we recall that defining migration policy remains the prerogative of Member States.

Hungary remains actively engaged in providing protection and assistance to the survivors and potential victims of human trafficking, with special regard to women and girls.

**Ms. Charikhi** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the adoption of the 2021 Political Declaration on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (resolution 76/7, annex). We would like to thank the Permanent Representatives of the Philippines and the Dominican Republic, respectively, for their efforts as co-facilitators, which enabled us to adopt the Political Declaration by consensus.

Algeria engaged in good faith and a constructive spirit throughout the process and submitted a number of proposals to help arrive at a strong political declaration that addresses the consequences of human trafficking and establishes preventative measures in a comprehensive and targeted manner. Algeria is fully committed to combating and preventing trafficking in persons, which is why we joined the consensus in adopting the 2021 Political Declaration despite the fact that certain paragraphs are not supported by my delegation, specifically, those that make reference to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

In that regard, my delegation would like to express its reservations over, and dissociate itself from, all paragraphs containing a reference to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, on which my country abstained in the voting and the provisions of which do not apply to us. Hence nothing contained in those paragraphs should be interpreted as my country's tacit endorsement of the commitments set out in the Global Compact.

I would like to take this opportunity to recall Algeria's position regarding the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. My delegation believes that the Compact does not distinguish between regular migrants and those in an irregular situation. The absence of such a distinction in an international context is incongruous as it constitutes a failure to effectively contribute to the fight against illegal migration, which is a complex reality that may deteriorate in the future if the necessary measures are not taken to combat the causes of that phenomenon.

Moreover, the Global Compact ignores the root causes of the migration phenomenon. Without concrete and jointly developed measures to combat the resurgence of armed conflict and the eradication of poverty and food insecurity, as well as comprehensive solutions to combat the adverse effects of natural

disasters, illegal migration will remain a danger for thousands of migrants.

I would like this statement to be included in the verbatim record of this meeting.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position after adoption.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to His Excellency Mr. José Alfonso Blanco Conde, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations, and His Excellency Mr. Enrique Austria Manalo, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, who ably and patiently conducted the discussions and complex negotiations in the informal consultations on draft resolution A/76/L.11. I am sure that the members of the Assembly join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

As members are aware, pursuant to resolution 75/283, this high-level meeting consists of an opening segment and a plenary meeting today from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; plenary meetings tomorrow, 23 November, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.; a closing plenary meeting tomorrow at 5.30 p.m.; as well as two consecutive interactive panel discussions this afternoon.

As indicated in my letter of 1 November, I have invited His Excellency Mr. José Alfonso Blanco Conde, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations, to chair panel discussion one, to be held from 3 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. in this Hall. The panel discussion will address the theme, "The Global Plan of Action and enduring trafficking issues and gaps, including, inter alia, the trafficking of women and children, particularly girls, for the purpose of sexual exploitation".

As further indicated in the same letter, I have invited His Excellency Mr. Enrique Austria Manalo, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, to chair panel discussion two, which is to be held immediately following panel discussion one and will address the theme, "The Global Plan of Action and emerging issues, such as trafficking in persons in the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic, and the misuse of information and communication technologies to facilitate trafficking, including trafficking in children, for the purpose of sexual exploitation on the Internet".

Before we begin with the list of speakers, I would like to address important organizational matters pertaining to the conduct of the plenary meetings.

The introduction of pre-recorded statements will be made by the representatives from their national seats. Due to time constraints, it is expected that the introductory remarks be kept concise. Statements delivered by high-level representatives who are physically present in the Assembly Hall can be made from their national seats or from the rostrum.

As set out in resolution 75/283, statements will be limited to three minutes for individual delegations and five minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of States. In the case of pre-recorded statements, the introductory remarks and the length of the video itself will be counted in the allocated time limit.

In accordance with decision 76/511, in addition to the verbatim records of the high-level meeting, the President of the General Assembly will circulate as a document of the Assembly a compilation document of the statements delivered by means of pre-recorded statements during the high-level meeting and submitted to the President no later than the day on which the pre-recorded statement is played in the Assembly Hall, and such pre-recorded statements will be attached to the verbatim records of the meeting. Submissions in that regard should be made to [statements@un.org](mailto:statements@un.org).

**Address by Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez,  
Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of  
the Republic of Colombia**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia to introduce an address by the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia.

**Ms. Quintero Correa** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the pleasure to introduce the pre-recorded statement of the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia, Her Excellency Ms. Marta Lucía Ramírez.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 2 and A/76/569).*

**The President:** I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alfonso Nsue Mokuy, Third Deputy Prime Minister and Minister in Charge of Human Rights of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

**Mr. Mokuy** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to take the floor on behalf of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea at this high-level meeting on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. I should like to thank the Secretariat for all of the provisions and arrangements put in place to facilitate the participation of my delegation in this forum.

Equatorial Guinea joins previous speakers in acknowledging the difficulties that States have been experiencing owing to the restrictions imposed as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which continues to thwart the effective fulfilment of our international commitments.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Government of the United States of America for the assistance provided to our Government to combat trafficking in persons in all its forms. That fight must be a collective effort among all governmental and non-governmental stakeholders geared towards the full protection of the victims of that phenomenon. Hence having effective partners such as the Government of the United States facilitates the implementation of more finely tuned actions against trafficking in persons.

The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea has made it a priority of its public policies to ensure the protection of all victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. That can be seen in our 2019-2021 national action plan to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, which has served as a guide in channelling the Government's efforts over the past two years, even amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The action plan will conclude at the end of this year, and the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea has therefore seen fit to modify it with a view to adapting it to current needs and to the new dynamics that have arisen from the pandemic.

Moreover, we have focused on addressing various gaps that we had yet to resolve, including by establishing an inter-agency protocol of action to protect and assist the victims of trafficking in persons, which is currently undergoing the relevant legislative process and will be adopted in the near future. We have also deemed it appropriate to amend Law No. 1/2004 of 14 September 2004, on the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, to bring it in line with the Palermo Protocol and thereby resolve certain shortcomings identified

by legal experts from our public administration, at the request of the United States Department of State.

We have recently set out to register foreign citizens in my country. Certain media outlets wrongly interpreted that measure as an attack on foreign citizens, when in reality the intention of the Government was merely to verify the situation of all non-national residents. An agreement was reached to grant a three-month moratorium to allow all expatriates to regularize their status in Equatorial Guinea. It was far from the Government's intention to mistreat or crack down on non-national citizens residing in our national territory.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea expresses its willingness to constantly maintain close cooperation with the United Nations system in matters of human rights in order to achieve a world that is more respectful and committed to sustainable development based on the principles of equality, justice and peace. We therefore reaffirm our political will and pledge to devote greater efforts and capacities in working with the Assembly to prevent trafficking in persons, prosecute the traffickers and protect and provide assistance to all victims, thereby achieving a national society in which human rights represent the highest values of peaceful and democratic coexistence.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Jamaica to introduce a statement by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security of Jamaica.

**Mr. Williams** (Jamaica): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security of Jamaica, the Honourable Mr. Horace Chang.

Mr. Chang has been serving as Jamaica's Minister of National Security since 2018 and as Deputy Prime Minister since September 2020. His vast experience in various areas of Government brings a dynamic and inspirational way of thinking to the Ministry of National Security. He is committed to reducing crime and violence in Jamaica through strategic thinking that is geared towards a holistic transformation of our national security apparatus. The subject of trafficking in persons falls within his portfolio as Minister of National Security, and in that vein he is well-placed to address the Assembly on Jamaica's efforts to tackle the issue of trafficking in persons.

I now invite the Assembly to hear the pre-recorded statement of Mr. Chang.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 3 and A/76/569).*

*Mr. Blanco Conde (Dominican Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, to introduce a statement by the European Commissioner for Home Affairs of the European Union.

**Mr. Skoog** (European Union): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this high-level meeting. I wish to extend a special word of appreciation to Ms. Malaika Oringo for her very powerful statement, which provided a survivor's perspective to our debate.

I now have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement delivered by Her Excellency Ms. Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs of the European Union, on behalf of the European Union and its States members.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 4 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of my country, the Dominican Republic, to introduce a statement by our Minister for Foreign Affairs.

**Ms. Andújar** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of His Excellency Mr. Roberto Álvarez Gil, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 5 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba to introduce a statement by the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Cuba.

**Mr. Pedroso Cuesta** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of His Excellency Mr. Oscar Silvera Martínez, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Cuba.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 6 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein to introduce a statement



by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

**Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein): I have the pleasure and honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of Her Excellency Ms. Dominique Hasler, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport of the Principality of Liechtenstein, who will address the Assembly on behalf of my country.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 7 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar to introduce a statement by the Minister of Labour of the State of Qatar.

**Ms. Al-Nesf** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the pleasure to introduce the pre-recorded statement of His Excellency Mr. Ali bin Saeed bin Smaikh Al Marri, Minister of Labour of the State of Qatar.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 8 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Peru to introduce a statement by the Minister of Justice and Human Rights of the Republic of Peru.

**Ms. Laso Geldres** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce to the Assembly the pre-recorded statement of His Excellency Mr. Aníbal Torres Vásquez, Minister of Justice and Human Rights of the Republic of Peru.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 9 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Minister for Immigration and Asylum of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

**Mr. Maes** (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded message of His Excellency Mr. Jean Asselborn, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Minister for Immigration and Asylum of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 10 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

**Mr. Rybakov** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Makei, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 11 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Burkina Faso to introduce a statement by the Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Civic Promotion and Keeper of the Seals of Burkina Faso.

**Mrs. Niamba Congo** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of Ms. Victoria Ouédraogo Kibora, Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Civic Promotion and Keeper of the Seals of Burkina Faso.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 12 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines to introduce a statement by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines.

**Mr. Manalo** (Philippines): It is my honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines, His Excellency Mr. Teodoro L. Locsin, Jr.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 13 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Malta to introduce a statement by the Minister of Equality, Research and Innovation of Malta.

**Mrs. Frazier** (Malta): I have the pleasure and honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of the Honourable Owen Bonnici, Malta's Minister of Equality, Research and Innovation, who will address the Assembly today on behalf of my country.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 14 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands to introduce

a statement by the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

**Mr. Zellenrath** (Netherlands): I have the honour to introduce a pre-recorded statement by the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, His Excellency Mr. Tom De Bruijn.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 15 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland to introduce a statement by the Minister of Justice of Ireland.

**Ms. Staunton** (Ireland): I have the honour of introducing the pre-recorded statement of the Minister of Justice of Ireland, Her Excellency Ms. Helen McEntee.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 16 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now call on His Excellency Mr. Albert Fabrice Puela, Minister of Human Rights of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Mr. Puela** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): The Democratic Republic of the Congo, under the leadership of His Excellency the President of the Republic, Mr. Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, and his Government — which we in the Ministry of Human Rights are honoured to be a part of — is committed to effectively combating the scourge of trafficking in persons.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, numerous criminal networks involved in human trafficking carry out illicit trafficking in several sectors, including in drugs and weapons. Child victims of human trafficking work in mines and are recruited as child soldiers by those criminal organizations. Others are forced to work, often in unacceptable conditions. Building on the privileged partnership for peace and prosperity between the United States — to which we express our gratitude — and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the President of our country created a specialized service within his Cabinet in 2019, namely, the agency to prevent and combat trafficking in persons — whose coordinator and deputy we are pleased to count among our delegation. In that endeavour, the agency's work seeks, *inter alia*, to strengthen the capacity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to investigate crimes,

prosecute the perpetrators and inform the Government and judicial bodies with regard to trafficking in persons.

I should like to extend special thanks to the General Assembly for having convened this high-level meeting on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. That was done through the modalities set forth in resolution 75/283, but also with a view to pooling our efforts to combat trafficking in persons. Addressing the various challenges of human trafficking requires, first and foremost, putting legal instruments in place so that potential criminals are arrested, brought to justice and sentenced under law. In that connection, a significant and essential step was recently taken by our Government, which approved, during its Council of Ministers meeting of 12 November, a draft law submitted by my Ministry — the Ministry of Human Rights — that amends and supplements the Congolese criminal code with respect to preventing and clamping down on trafficking in persons.

Given the determination of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to bolster its competence by enacting that law in Parliament in the coming days, my country will undoubtedly move into a higher level of proficiency in that area. In particular, the Congolese Government has taken certain measures to prevent trafficking in persons, protect potential victims and cooperate with other countries, as well as to facilitate criminal prosecutions. In the context of combating the scourge of human trafficking, a group of traffickers was recently arrested and prosecuted, in accordance with the legal provisions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and a sentence was recently handed down by the Congolese courts against those thugs.

While many of our fellow citizens, in particular women and girls, travel or are taken to other countries around the world by criminal networks that falsely promise them a better future, the sad reality is that once there our female compatriots are turned into sex slaves. The Congolese Government has already begun and will continue to fight to eradicate that scourge from our national territory. However, we will not be doing so alone. One of the very reasons for our participation in this high-level meeting is to ensure that together we can move towards a single objective, specifically, that of making our world a global village in which all men are born truly free and equal in dignity and rights and called to live in a peaceful world free from acts of trafficking, modern slavery and all other acts that

undermine the relations between peoples. Only together can we effectively combat this scourge.

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Guyana to introduce a statement by the Minister of Human Services and Social Security of Guyana.

**Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett** (Guyana): I have the honour to introduce Her Excellency Dr. Vindhya Persaud, Minister of Human Services and Social Security of Guyana, to deliver a pre-recorded statement.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 17 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria to introduce a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad of Algeria.

**Ms. Charikhi** (Algeria): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad of Algeria, His Excellency Mr. Ramtane Lamamra.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 18 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Greece to introduce a statement by the Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece.

**Mr. Kezas** (Greece): I have the honour of introducing the Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Mr. Miltiadis Vavitsiotis, who will deliver the national statement of Greece via pre-recorded video.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 19 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand to introduce a statement by the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand.

**Mr. Prongthura** (Thailand): I have the honour to introduce His Excellency Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, to deliver a pre-recorded statement.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 20 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Austria to introduce a statement by the Vice Minister and National Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Persons of the Republic of Austria.

**Mr. Almoslechner** (Austria): I have the honour to introduce a pre-recorded statement by Her Excellency Ms. Petra Schneebeuer, National Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Persons of the Republic of Austria.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 21 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of China to introduce a statement by the Vice Minister of Public Security of China.

**Mrs. Zhang Jiarui** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I have the honour to introduce the pre-recorded statement of the Vice Minister of Public Security of China, His Excellency Mr. Du Hangwei.

*A pre-recorded video statement was shown in the General Assembly Hall (see annex 22 and A/76/569).*

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. in this Hall.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*

**Annex 1****Statement by Ms. Ghada Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to address this high-level meeting on the appraisal of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

I thank the President of the General Assembly for bringing us together, and I congratulate the Permanent Representatives of the Dominican Republic and of the Philippines on successfully guiding the intergovernmental negotiations in their role as co-facilitators.

This meeting is an important opportunity for countries to take stock of achievements under the Global Plan of Action, identify gaps and pledge to ensure that joint responses are adapted to the needs of victims.

The COVID-19 crisis has deprived many victims of access to essential services. It has increased trafficking risks and vulnerabilities due to lockdowns, learning disruptions and loss of livelihoods. More time spent online has also led to more exploitation and to the misuse of technology.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime supports your work to align responses to the reality of trafficking in the pandemic and beyond.

Preventing and combating trafficking is a key priority of the UNODC Strategy 2021-2025, our Strategic Vision for Africa 2030 and our upcoming Strategic Vision for Latin America and the Caribbean.

In our latest Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, we analysed how socioeconomic conditions, such as those caused by the COVID-19 recession, make people more vulnerable to trafficking. This summer, we published a landmark study identifying ways of better supporting victims and frontline organizations in future crises.

Our dedicated global programmes have already assisted 55 countries in 2021 to advance implementation of the United Nations Trafficking Protocol by enhancing anti-trafficking laws, conducting successful prosecutions across jurisdictions and training practitioners.

Our support further includes building digital capacity and helping Member States leverage financial evidence to detect and prosecute trafficking. We also assist countries in adopting sustainable public procurement processes and policies addressing human trafficking in supply chains.

On all those fronts, we encourage public-private partnerships, including with technology companies and the financial sector, to promote ethical practices, inform investigations and help end impunity for traffickers.

Throughout its work, UNODC promotes victim-centred approaches and I very much welcome the commitment in the Declaration to recognizing victims and ensuring their access to justice.

The United Nations Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, managed by UNODC, continues to directly assist



more than 5,000 victims per year through front-line NGOs, carefully selected under its small grants programme.

UNODC has celebrated and supported trafficking survivors as agents of change through its campaign for the 2021 World Day against Trafficking in Persons, which called on the international community to let victims' voices lead the way.

I commend you for having listened to survivors in the elaboration of the Political Declaration and for your consultations with experts, civil society and the 30 member organizations of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, which our Office is proud to coordinate.

UNODC will continue working with you and with all our partners to put an end to the exploitation of people for profit, prosecute traffickers and help victims find justice and rebuild their lives. Thank you.

**Annex 2****Statement by Mrs. Marta Lucía Ramírez, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia**

[Original: Spanish]

His Excellency António Guterres, Secretary-General;

His Excellency Abdulla Shahid, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives and President of the General Assembly;

Ms. Ghada Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime;

Ms. Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on trafficking in persons, especially women and children;

Distinguished representatives of Member States and civil society; To all those who are with us,

On behalf of the President of Colombia, Iván Duque Márquez, and all the Colombian people, and today in my capacity as Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs, I would like to express my gratitude for the invitation to participate in this High-level Meeting on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. This Plan constitutes a road map to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, and it rightly stresses the importance of protecting and assisting victims, as well as prosecuting those responsible for committing such heinous crimes. I am confident that the declaration that we will adopt today will be conducive to furthering the efforts made by each Member State in the fight against trafficking in human beings with more partnerships and greater cooperation. However, I must insist on the need to focus our efforts above all on prevention. That is the real strategy that will enable us to reduce this abominable crime of trafficking in human beings.

According to the 2020 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, 65 per cent of the victims of this criminal activity remain women and girls, and sexual exploitation is the main cause of exploitation in the world, representing 50 per cent of the cases identified, followed by forced labour as well as begging.

The economic recession resulting from the pandemic has increased the crime of human trafficking and has exacerbated the conditions of vulnerability of the victims, which means minimal opportunities for access to education and employment, as well as increased cases of domestic violence — aspects that create an environment of heightened vulnerability, which is pitifully exploited by these networks and criminal mafias that trade in human beings.

Even more serious, the current irregular migratory situation has put the lives of migrants at risk and exposes them to sexual and labour exploitation, human trafficking and kidnapping, among many other crimes. On this occasion, I call on States to redouble their efforts and to form a common front to address the new challenges arising from irregular migratory flows. It is necessary to have effective and coordinated responses to confront transnational human trafficking networks. With regard to our hemisphere, Colombia proposed the establishment of an expert group in which the Prosecutor's Offices of all our countries and the police work together in the region to detect and act in a coordinated and resolute forceful manner against these human trafficking mafias.

Tackling migration in a comprehensive and coordinated manner is a priority for Colombia. That is why the Government of President Iván Duque Márquez made the most ambitious commitment that the world has ever known by adopting the temporary protection status for Venezuelan migrants, with the precise aim of regularizing the status of 2 million migrants who have been forced to leave their country due to the dictatorship of Nicolás Maduro Moros. This temporary protection status allows for the comprehensive and humanitarian care of this population, opening the way for Venezuelans to have access to education, health care and decent work under equal conditions, particularly in terms of dignity for those people — a genuine commitment to ensuring human rights.

In response to our Government's commitment to the fight against human trafficking, we are making very significant efforts, including the implementation in 2020 of a strategy to combat human trafficking, which is being developed by the Ministry of the Interior in Colombia, and was developed with the participation of civil society. Likewise, the Intersectoral Commission for the prevention of recruitment, use, utilization and sexual violation of children and adolescents has been strengthened. This strategy has been in place since 2019.

The greatest challenge facing all States is to increase technical capacities to deal with the new forms of the crime of trafficking in persons. To that end, it is essential to constantly exchange experiences, lessons learned and best practices and, in the context of the Global Plan of Action that brings us together today, to redouble our efforts to confront criminal networks and to place respect for, and the guarantee of, the human rights of victims at the centre of the discussion in order to provide them with assistance and appropriate and comprehensive protection.

Today the migratory events that we are experiencing throughout the world are a response to the economic need and the lack of opportunities that many human beings face in their countries. That is why we, as States, must act, first, based on the principle of humanity, not forgetting that these are human beings who are in need and who are looking for a place on Earth where they and their families can find stability. Secondly, it is also a principle of security for States, both the receiving States and the transit States. There is a security issue involved, and we must clearly verify that these migrants are not also being exploited by drug-trafficking networks and others, precisely to threaten States. Thirdly, it is a principle of solidarity. No State, however rich or important it may be, has the capacity to endlessly absorb all the migrants who arrive at its borders. We must therefore adopt the principle of shared responsibility.

At the regional level, Colombia has been leading the efforts towards a common, coordinated and complementary policy among us given this massive migration that has been increasing from Haiti, Venezuela and, unfortunately, in some cases also from Cuba, as well as a number of African migrants. This is an issue that is just beginning for our hemisphere. We do not have the same experience as Europe in managing migratory crises, but we must be coordinated, support each other and understand the principle of humanity, the principle of security and the principle of solidarity among all States.

Thank you very much.

**Annex 3****Statement by the Honourable Mr. Horace Chang, Minister of National Security and Deputy Prime Minister of Jamaica**

Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Jamaica welcomes the convening of this High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action (GPA) to Combat Trafficking in Persons. As we collectively reflect on the achievements, gaps and challenges, we also recognize the mutually reinforcing relationship of the progress we are making to implement the SDGs, Objective 10 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Plan of Action.

This meeting is therefore relevant and timely given shifts in the security landscape as a result of the ongoing global coronavirus pandemic. Jamaica applauds the global efforts made in the fight to combat trafficking in persons in all forms. We are resolute in our commitment to do our part to advance a comprehensive anti-trafficking response to protect, prevent, prosecute and to foster partnerships towards the elimination of this scourge.

Jamaica accords the highest level of political commitment to this fight. Cognizant of the impact of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic to push victims of trafficking further underground, we continue to implement public education and awareness-raising campaigns to inform the general public and persons at risk of being trafficked.

Mr. President,

At the same time, Jamaica continues to strengthen the institutional framework to tackle trafficking in persons. Since its establishment in 2015, the Office of the National Rapporteur for Trafficking in Persons has been resourced to allow it to function more effectively. In 2019, an Anti-Human Trafficking Officer post was created in the organization, and the team was further strengthened in 2020, with the addition of a Research Analyst who provides research strategy and undertakes data analysis, collection and reporting.

We are mindful that there are global challenges in implementing the Global Plan of Action. There is still insufficient data collection on trafficking in persons to inform proper data analysis across jurisdictions. We fully support a system that allows for standardized data collection across Member States. There is further an urgent need to establish mechanisms for cooperation between source, transit and destination countries. This can be achieved only through information-sharing and greater collaboration and partnership at the global level.

Mr. President, within the context of the ongoing global coronavirus pandemic, which has exacerbated vulnerability of individuals at risk globally, we must address the root causes of trafficking in persons, eliminate the conditions of poverty and underdevelopment.

Mr. President, the Global Plan of Action is one vehicle through which the global community can achieve success. However, in the words of the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan,



“These conventions will not end trafficking on their own, but they are part of the legal framework necessary for our efforts. Policies and practices must also be strengthened at the regional and national levels.”

Mr. President, Jamaica is fully committed to fulfilling our responsibilities as part of the global community recognizing that addressing this global challenge of human trafficking requires a global response. We must build on the progress we have made and urgently translate our words into action that has to be the commitment of all Member States.

I thank you.

**Annex 4****Statement by Ms. Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs of the European Union**

Dear President,

Honourable members of the General Assembly,

Dear participants in this high-level meeting,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

Trafficking in human beings is a serious crime. A severe violation of human rights. Of fundamental rights, affecting thousands of people in the European Union and worldwide.

As a transnational and global crime, it demands a united approach. The EU stands firm behind the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, to which the EU and its member States are parties.

Trafficking in human beings is not in the first place about people smuggling. It is about exploiting people.

But victims of trafficking are sometimes smuggled. Migrant smugglers are often organised criminals — who also engage in other crimes like trafficking. And irregular migration increases the risks of trafficking, with traffickers targeting and abusing vulnerable migrants.

It is highly concerning that Belarus, is currently instrumentalizing migration on a large scale for political purposes — a practice that amounts to migrant smuggling. The dire situation in Belarus increases the risk of people being trafficked. This is unacceptable. The EU condemns the instrumentalization and abuse of migrants by the regime in Belarus.

The fight against trafficking in human beings is a European Union priority. The EU Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings lays down concrete actions to combat this crime. In a comprehensive way, from prevention and protection of victims, to the prosecution and conviction of perpetrators. The strategy takes into account in particular women and children, as well as trafficking for sexual exploitation.

The EU Strategy focuses on four main areas of action: reducing the demand that fosters trafficking in human beings for all forms of exploitation. Breaking the business model of traffickers, online and offline. Protecting, supporting and empowering victims, especially women and children. And promoting international cooperation.

In the European Union, criminals mainly traffic their victims for sexual exploitation. Nearly three quarters of all victims in the EU and 92 per cent of the victims trafficked for sexual exploitation are women and girls. One in four victims of trafficking is a child. These trends are also reflected at the global level.

Demand fosters exploitation of vulnerable people, taken advantage of by traffickers. Especially in high-risk sectors and high-risk environments. Bringing huge revenues to organized-crime groups and others who profit from the exploitation of the bodies, services and labour of trafficked victims.

€14 billion — that is the estimated criminal revenue of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the European Union. In one single year. Reducing demand is essential to deprive traffickers of their criminal profits and to make sure crime does not pay.

The EU is committed to addressing the gender dimension of trafficking in human beings and the specific vulnerabilities of women and children. Early identification of victims is crucial to promptly assist, support and protect victims of trafficking in human beings and to enable police and prosecution authorities to better investigate and punish traffickers.

It is key to train professionals who are likely to come into contact with victims, and essential to exchange best practices among practitioners to improve cooperation for assistance and support to victims.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, traffickers increasingly moved online for every phase of trafficking. Recruitment and exploitation of victims. Organization of transport and accommodation. Advertising victims online and reaching out to potential clients. Controlling victims. Communicating between perpetrators and hiding the criminal proceeds.

Children are at particular risk of falling victim to traffickers online. Internet and technology companies have a role to play to reduce the use of online platforms for the recruitment and exploitation of victims.

We must also increase law enforcement and judicial authorities' capacity to tackle the digital business model of traffickers. That includes detection of signs of exploitation in the growing number of online advertisements and obtaining crucial digital evidence. The prosecution and conviction of criminals has to improve, online and offline.

A comprehensive approach is clearly needed. In this context, the adoption of the Political Declaration on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons is crucial in our joint and multilateral effort to fight this horrible crime.

## **Annex 5**

### **Dominican Republic**

[no statement submitted]



**Annex 6****Statement by Mr. Oscar Silvera Martínez, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Cuba**

[Original: Spanish]

Mr. President:

As a State party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto, Cuba is firmly committed to preventing and confronting this crime.

Trafficking in persons is rarely seen in our country. The implementation of a zero-tolerance policy, based on the pillars of prevention, confrontation and the protection of victims, has been key to achieving that record.

As part of Cuba's firm commitment to combating this scourge, a national report on human trafficking in the country has been published since 2013.

Mr. President:

Promoting effective international cooperation in confronting human trafficking is a priority for Cuba.

In 2017, we welcomed the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, who was able to confirm the very high priority given by the Cuban State and Government to addressing the crime.

Politicizing the issue in no way contributes to increasing or improving international cooperation in this area.

We reject the unjustified and discriminatory inclusion of Cuba, for entirely political reasons, in the *Trafficking in Persons Report*, issued unilaterally by the United States Department of State.

It is unacceptable for the United States to charge Cuba with promoting human trafficking and slavery on completely baseless grounds. Its goal is to discredit the laudable work of the hundreds of thousands of Cuban health professionals and technicians who, with their profound humanistic dedication and sense of solidarity, have for decades volunteered their expertise in dozens of countries, including most recently in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Our response to those absurd allegations is firm: we will continue to save lives and foster the health and welfare of others wherever we are requested throughout the world to the best of our abilities.

In conclusion, I reiterate Cuba's firm commitment to improving the prevention of and response to human trafficking and the protection of victims and cooperating at the international level against this scourge.

Thank you very much.

**Annex 7****Statement by Ms. Dominique Hasler, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Education, and Sport of the Principality of Liechtenstein**

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein is happy to take part in this important appraisal of the United Nations (UN) Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Human trafficking and modern slavery are defining human rights challenges of our time. They are global — affecting all regions of the world. They thrive in conditions conducive to vulnerability, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. They are the most extreme expression of economic inequality. And they disproportionately affect women and girls. These crimes are of enormous and gruesome proportions, and they undermine our efforts to achieve sustainable development. In shaping our response and strategy to take action, victims and survivors must have a strong voice.

Mr. President,

The international community agreed, long ago, on the universal abolition of slavery in all its forms. And yet, to this day, modern slavery and human trafficking persist around the world, with shocking levels of impunity. Ending human trafficking and modern slavery is a priority for Liechtenstein, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provides us with a framework to make the world socially, economically and environmentally more sustainable. The fight against modern slavery and human trafficking is a key component of the Agenda.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a call on all our societies to build back better. This must include redoubling our efforts to end trafficking and modern slavery. Leveraging the essential role of the financial sector in ending human trafficking must be a crucial part of this effort. We welcome that this year's Political Declaration on Trafficking in Persons clearly references the need for public-private partnerships to prevent and detect human trafficking and the recognition of the important role played by financial institutions and initiatives of Member States to contribute to ending trafficking in persons. In this regard, we are happy to recall Liechtenstein's flagship Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) initiative FAST (Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking), a public-private partnership embedded in the UN system. FAST places financial institutions at the heart of the fight against human trafficking and modern slavery by outlining action in the areas of compliance, responsible investment and financial innovation. It is supported by Australia, the Netherlands, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, as well as various private sector partners, and carried out by the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research. FAST is expanding its reach and making progress in its dissemination and implementation efforts. Enhancing partnerships for FAST will remain a key objective of Liechtenstein's engagement on the 2030 Agenda, in particular in meeting target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, but also Goals 5, 8, 16 and 17. Sustainable finance, meaning increased attention to environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors, can create new pathways for investment that are key in helping us achieve the SDGs. It is of essential importance that we treat the ESG framework in a holistic manner, as it was conceived for the 2030 Agenda. The "S" or "Social" components of ESG are among least measured factors in corporate sustainability despite being among the most impactful. We need to do more to amplify the "S" in ESG, in particular in the context of ending human trafficking and modern slavery. This is as

much a policy issue as it is a national commitment for Liechtenstein. I look forward to the discussions during this important appraisal and invite all of you to approach us if you would like to join forces on the FAST Initiative.

I thank you.

**Annex 8****Statement by Mr. Ali bin Saeed bin Smaikh Al Marri, Minister of Labour of Qatar**

[Original: Arabic]

Mr. President,

At the outset, I should like to thank you for your efforts in convening this important meeting. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his participation and support in opening the meeting.

Mr. President,

Qatar has supported the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons since it was adopted, in keeping with the country's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, which are central to the Qatar National Vision 2030.

My country welcomes the adoption of the political declaration issued at this meeting. We have affirmed our support for the declaration through the joint statement issued by the high-level side event organized by Qatar in the margins of this meeting, in cooperation with the United Kingdom, Austria, Bangladesh and Nigeria and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), on accelerating the level of commitment to fight human trafficking and modern slavery during COVID-19 and beyond.

Mr. President,

Qatar took an important step towards combating trafficking in persons by establishing the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons in 2017. The Committee has facilitated the adoption of a national plan on combating trafficking in persons and the follow-up to its implementation. It also coordinates the efforts of various national agencies to prevent trafficking, bring the perpetrators to justice, protect victims and provide them with suitable shelter and rehabilitation and form national and international partnerships to combat trafficking in persons.

Recently, in cooperation with the office of the International Labour Organization in Qatar, the Committee published a handbook, entitled "Our Fight Against Forced Labour and Trafficking for Labour Exploitation in Qatar". In addition, the National Commission, UNODC and the mission of the International Organization for Migration in Qatar are working together to strengthen awareness-raising, education and capacity-building efforts.

Qatar has recently taken legislative and executive measures to promote and protect the rights of foreign migrant workers. Those measures, ground-breaking in the region, include abolishing the kafala system and exit permits, facilitating the free movement of labourers, setting a non-discriminatory minimum wage for labourers and domestic workers, giving workers a more prominent voice, granting them access to effective remedies and establishing a workers' support and insurance fund.

Mr. President,

My country has been unstinting in its support of international efforts to combat trafficking in persons. Qatar was one of the first countries to donate to the United

Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

In closing, we reaffirm the commitment of Qatar to implement the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and advance the effort to fight this scourge at the national, regional and international levels.



**Annex 9****Statement by Mr. Aníbal Torres Vásquez, Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Peru**

[Original: Spanish]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin my speech by mentioning that, in line with international human rights obligations regarding human trafficking and its forms of exploitation, the Peruvian State has adopted public policies and regulatory measures for the prevention, prosecution and protection of victims. Specifically, I will refer to two public policy instruments of the highest level that were adopted this year, which will guide the actions of the State until 2030.

Both public policy instruments have considered the recommendations the United Nations system made to Peru. Similarly, in order to address the issue in a more effective manner and to strengthen the actions of the State, civil society is now involved.

Specifically, the National Policy against Trafficking in Persons and its Forms of Exploitation aims to coordinate the efforts of all public entities so as to address the issue through various local, regional and national methods and approaches.

In addition, recognizing the impact of human trafficking on children, the Multisectoral Policy for Children and Adolescents complements the intervention of the State to ensure the comprehensive provision of services.

Acknowledging human trafficking as a crime that violates the human rights and dignity of persons and hinders their development and progress, as well as their physical and socioemotional integrity, is essential in determining the impact of State intervention.

In this regard, Peruvian criminal legislation has specified that the consent given by the victim in any form of exploitation lacks effect and violates human dignity. In addition, parameters have been established for civil reparation, which includes costs related to medical and psychological treatment, physical, social and occupational rehabilitation and compensation for loss of opportunities, employment, education and social benefits.

The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights provides legal assistance and sponsorship free of charge to victims of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation at the national level. Therefore, it should be noted that from 2018 to August 2021, 3,806 sponsorships have been provided to alleged victims of human trafficking.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for inviting Peru to this space for dialogue that enables us to share valuable experiences, identify tools to combat human trafficking, protect victims and prosecute the perpetrators accordingly and, at the same time, promote the important cooperation and coordination among States.

Thank you for your attention.

**Annex 10****Statement by Mr. Jean Asselborn, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Minister for Immigration and Asylum of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg**

[Original: French]

Mr. President,

We welcome the adoption of the Political Declaration on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The Declaration is timely and rightly commits us to redouble our collective efforts to end that scourge.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated human trafficking through loss of livelihoods, school closures, significant cuts in assistance programmes for trafficked persons and travel restrictions, to name but a few. Restrictive migration policies have also increased the vulnerability of migrants to trafficking and exploitation.

In that context, Luxembourg condemns the instrumentalization of migrants for political purposes by the Belarusian authorities at the border of EU member States. Such actions constitute a clear violation of international human rights law. Luxembourg stands in solidarity with the member States that are suffering from that hybrid attack.

We continue to make the protection of the human rights of migrants a priority. In that regard, we recall our commitment to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and to the creation of regular migration routes in order to reduce the vulnerability of migrants to trafficking.

Mr. President,

A multidisciplinary human rights approach is a fundamental element in the fight against human trafficking. Indeed, trafficking is a multifaceted phenomenon, the motivations for which vary considerably. First and foremost, vulnerability to trafficking stems from intergenerational poverty, socioeconomic marginalization and discrimination. Therefore, the fight against that scourge cannot be anchored solely in a criminal law model, but must also pursue an approach that is based on gender equality, decent work, social protection, sustainable development and human rights.

Luxembourg remains firmly committed to the fight against human trafficking and is currently developing a second national action plan against trafficking. Our action plan recognizes that the fight against trafficking requires a multidisciplinary human rights policy. To that end, we have appointed the Consultative Human Rights Commission of Luxembourg as the rapporteur on the prevention of trafficking at the national level to ensure that human rights are taken into account.

Furthermore, in order to ensure the transversality of our anti-trafficking policy and to target all forms of exploitation motivated by trafficking, including modern slavery and forced labour, we have established an inter-ministerial monitoring committee composed of a dozen ministries and administrations, which will facilitate more coordinated and effective action to end the phenomenon of trafficking by bringing together all relevant actors.

Thank you for your attention.

**Annex 11****Statement by Mr. Vladimir Makei, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus**

[Original: Russian]

Mr. President,

At the 2005 World Summit, the President of the Republic of Belarus called for the establishment of a global partnership to combat trafficking in persons, marking the beginning of many years of active work by the Republic of Belarus in that area.

Resolutions initiated by Belarus resulted in the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the designation of 30 July as the World Day against Trafficking in Persons and the establishment of the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons. By decision of the Head of State, Belarus has made three voluntary contributions to the fund.

We believe that those initiatives of the United Nations deserve continued support.

Despite significant progress, new forms and methods of exploiting people, new schemes for recruiting adults and children and new mechanisms for re-trafficking rehabilitated victims are observed every year.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has led to further tragic developments in the ways in which those crimes are committed, pushing them into the shadow of the digital space and making them increasingly cross-border in nature.

Trafficking in persons has also become a weapon in armed conflicts. The Security Council must pay attention to that issue in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Efforts should also be made to increase the efficiency of cross-border collaboration to solve crimes of trafficking in persons.

In that context, the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking continues to call for strengthened coordination of international efforts in that area.

At the current session of the General Assembly, Belarus submitted its traditional resolution on improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons. We are grateful to all States for their sponsorship.

That resolution, the Global Plan of Action and today's high-level meeting all serve the same purpose, namely, to maintain a clear focus on trafficking in persons and to foster international cooperation that leads to progress in combating trafficking in persons. Dialogue and joint efforts are key to progress in any endeavour.

Thank you.

**Annex 12****Statement by Mrs. Victoria Ouédraogo Kibora, Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Civic Promotion, Keeper of the Seals of Burkina Faso**

[Original: French]

Mr. President,

Distinguished representatives,

It is always with renewed pleasure that Burkina Faso takes part in this important high-level event on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Trafficking, especially in women and children, has become an increasing concern for West African countries, in general, and for Burkina Faso, in particular. Indeed, the problem is increasing in an unprecedented way in my country, which is regarded as a place of origin, transit and destination for victims of trafficking.

This reality reminds us once again of the urgent need to develop concrete and effective measures to enhance the effectiveness of the fight, thereby strengthening the technical and operational capacities of the bodies responsible for detecting, prosecuting and punishing trafficking in persons.

Mr. President, Distinguished representatives,

In that regard, Burkina Faso has put in place a legal and institutional system of enforcement, on which a national strategy to combat the problem is based. Through this strategy, my country's efforts are focused on four priority areas, which are set out in the United Nations Protocol, and which also correspond to internationally approved good practices. These four components of the fight include:

- the prevention of trafficking in persons;
- the protection of victims;
- the rehabilitation of victims;
- cooperation, both nationally and internationally.

Mr. President,

Distinguished representatives,

Since 2015, the situation in my country has been marked by the continued presence of criminal organizations and the resurgence of the terrorist phenomenon. This situation is not without consequences for our efforts to combat human trafficking, such that one of the major challenges facing my country is to establish a synergy of action among the various actors in the fight to prevent links being established between criminal recruitment networks and internally displaced persons, particularly women and children.

Mr. President, Distinguished representatives,

Finally, I would like to reiterate my country's readiness to strengthen cooperation with the other States Members of the United Nations and international

organizations to ensure the full effectiveness of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

I thank you.



## Annex 13

### **Statement by Mr. Teodoro L. Locsin Jr., Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines**

Trafficking in persons is antithetical to humanity. It treats humans not as fellows but trades them as chattel; indeed, the most profitable object of commerce.

Trafficking affronts every distinguishing mark of humanity; its practice – predatory. At a Munich Security Conference, an expert who watched them close-up noted the pleasure traffickers took in their trade and concluded that there is no solution for it but the most drastic corrective. Globalization has only made it more wicked with the progression of technology, communication, financial transactions and transport.

It exists in all societies. Unlike regular commerce, it thrives even in failing economies, especially conflict-riven countries and in the current pandemic. It points to the once shocking, now resigned reality that demand is high and constant.

Despite its pervasiveness, trafficking in persons, says UNODC, remains a hidden crime because societies are complicit. Effective suppression always falls short of voluminous outrage. We know the why — the gross profit and grosser pleasure of abusing the weak. Erasing poverty would erase it; no one wants to be treated like an animal; but that is a long and tall order. Societies with wider rich-poor gaps have more cases of sex trafficking. For every ten victims, five are women and two are girls, mostly migrants. One-third are children; half for sex.

We are a labor-sending country of mostly women; but most victims are not Filipinos. My country has protected them.

Anti-trafficking protocols are observed mostly in the talk than observance. We have consistently ranked Tier 1 in the US Trafficking in Persons Report.

We call for increasing extra budgetary resources for UNODC and ICAT, and for protecting rather than punishing victims for acts they are made to commit on pain of prison where they are raped by the authorities or traded forward by them. Human trafficking will only end with the traffickers and their enablers in governments.

Thank you.

## Annex 14

### **Statement by the Honourable Owen Bonnici, Minister for Equality, Research and Innovation of the Republic of Malta**

Trafficking in human beings takes many forms and affects people of all ages, genders, and races. From the physical violence and torture of victims, to the psychological and emotional trauma endured and the economic and political implication of the relentless crime, the repercussions of human trafficking are extensive and far-reaching.

As a result, it is evident that this crime has an undeniable impact on every one of us and the fight against it needs to be stronger and more effective.

We are aware that, most of the time, traffickers search for those people who are vulnerable or find themselves in a vulnerable situation. They prey on the poor, isolated and weak. It is evident that certain factors contribute and make individuals, social groups, and communities more vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation.

As a nation we are raising awareness of factors which are known to be the underlying cause of inadequate employment opportunities, political and economic insecurity, as well as violations of human rights such as discrimination and gender-based violence.

Over the past years, the problem of human trafficking has become a focus of the Maltese Government, which joins advocacy agendas worldwide. The Government of Malta remains committed to suppressing this crime through several initiatives, including the development of victim assistance services, training of government officials, and raising of public awareness through national campaigns.

Furthermore, the legislative framework related to actions against trafficking in human beings has also evolved considerably. As a way of example, in 2018, the minimum penalty for this crime was increased from four to six years, while the maximum penalty is that of 12 years. Moreover, the Victims of Crime Act was further amended to introduce two new services to the list of minimum services offered to victims of crimes, namely medical treatment, and protection measures against the risks of intimidation and retaliation. In this regard, it is important to emphasize that these services are provided to human trafficking victims even when the offence was committed outside the Maltese territories.

Special support measures for child victims of trafficking are also incorporated in Maltese legislation. The Minor Protection (Alternative Care) Act allows for the formulation of a comprehensible child-friendly framework aligned with children's rights, specifically aimed at addressing abuse, neglect, harassment, ill-treatment, exploitation, abandonment, exposure, and trafficking of minors. The act contains several important protection measures that are delineated in the Council of Europe's Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on Child-friendly Justice. It covers various aspects of child protection, including a review of the childcare system, protection of children during judicial procedures, the availability of children's advocates and issues related to foster care.

In September 2019, a public consultation was launched with a view to carrying out a reform on human trafficking and prostitution. As part of this process, the Government intends to develop a comprehensive National Strategy against this crime. The anti-trafficking portfolio was recently transferred from the Ministry for

Home Affairs, National Security, and Law Enforcement (MHSE) to the Ministry for Equality, Research, and Innovation (MFER), to the Human Rights Directorate. The Human Rights Directorate took over reporting duties in relation to human trafficking for questionnaires and surveys both at the national and international levels. It also coordinates and collaborates with other ministries as necessary to ensure that the Government procures the necessary resources to spearhead the anti-human trafficking policy and succeed in its endeavors.

The newly created Human Rights Initiatives unit is coordinating the reform on human trafficking. In this regard, Malta is expected to achieve its ultimate objective of designing and implementing a new strategy and to strengthen the existing action plan, to address and deter the phenomenon of this crime. This reform requires special attention and expertise due to its complex, urgent, and transnational nature. Once implemented, the strategy should present strategic goals and specific objectives which are clearly defined both qualitatively and quantitatively and which are based on public measures and activities to be supported institutionally and financially, and it will include measures which are verifiable through a detailed monitoring and assessment process.

To conclude, it is essential to state that the Maltese Government takes a comprehensive approach in combating this crime and enlists all relevant stakeholders that can help fight this phenomenon. Several initiatives and programmes have enabled the Government to strengthen the capacity of national and local authorities, as well as civil society organizations, in preventing that crime, protecting the victims, and prosecuting the perpetrators. In this regard, the “Human like you” campaign is a national campaign intended to raise awareness off the offence and encourages victims to reach out for help. Moreover, training law enforcement agencies and other practitioners have also aided and strengthened the prosecution’s efforts to enable them to bring the perpetrators of this crime to justice.

Thank you.

## **Annex 15**

### **Netherlands**

[no statement submitted]

## Annex 16

### Statement by Ms. Helen McEntee, Minister of Justice of Ireland

Human trafficking is a particularly heinous crime, based on deception and exploitation of vulnerable people.

The Irish Government is serious about preventing and prosecuting human trafficking, and we are confident that the victim-centred policy approach we are taking will encourage more victims to come forward which will, in turn, strengthen prosecutions and convictions.

There are two areas of progress in particular that I wish to highlight.

The first is the approval by Government earlier this year to revise the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to make it easier for victims of trafficking to come forward, be identified and access advice, accommodation and support, which is a significant advancement.

The NRM provides a way for all agencies, both State and civil society, to co-operate, share information about potential victims, identify those victims and facilitate their access to advice, accommodation and support.

Currently, when suspected victims of human trafficking are encountered by, or referred to, An Garda Síochána — Irish police — they are provided with a wide range of services by both the Government and NGOs through the NRM. It is widely accepted that having the Gardaí as the sole competent authority for the formal recognition of people as victims of human trafficking is not an adequate response.

The new approach acknowledges other state bodies and NGOs have a role in identifying victims of human trafficking and referring them to the NRM.

We want to be sure that every victim of trafficking is identified and helped so we can support them. Doing this will also help us gather more information and evidence in order to bring to justice the traffickers who prey on vulnerable people with no regard for the lives and safety of their victims.

I also want to note today the development of a new National Action Plan on human trafficking. A consultant has produced a short and focussed analysis of the current position in relation to human trafficking in Ireland. The analysis includes a research review, a synopsis of the extent of trafficking in Ireland and a summary of issues to address.

The Department of Justice is now engaged with a working group to draft the new National Action Plan high-level goals and outcomes.

Finally, I want to briefly mention a number of other initiatives to combat this crime.

The development of training, through NGOs, targeting front line staff in industries such as hospitality, airline, shipping and security who may come into contact with trafficked persons is under way.

There has been an increase in funding for supporting victims of crime generally and increased funding dedicated specifically to supporting victims of trafficking.



Also, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth intends to procure and open a dedicated shelter for victims of human trafficking, in particular for female victims of sexual exploitation.

A specialised Garda Unit, the Human Trafficking Investigation and Coordination Unit (HTICU), has been in place since 2009 to conduct investigations into human trafficking. It also provides advice, support and where necessary, operational assistance to investigations at district level.

This Government is aware that vulnerable people are trafficked into Ireland for exploitation reasons including sexual exploitation, forced labour and forced criminality. This Government is determined to combat this insidious crime.

**Annex 17****Statement by Dr. Vindhya Persaud, Minister of Human Services and Social Security of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana**

Mr. President,

Guyana is pleased to participate in this critical high-level meeting and to provide an update on our national efforts in combating trafficking in persons.

The 2020 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* by the UNODC paints a grim picture which all Member States should take very seriously.

Guyana recognizes that trafficking in persons transcends borders and requires a coordinated global effort among Member States through bilateral, regional and international mechanisms in partnerships with the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders.

Mr. President,

The Government of Guyana has a zero-tolerance policy for trafficking in persons and is committed to the prevention of trafficking and protection of victims within its available resources and to the prosecution of traffickers. Over the years, Guyana has incrementally increased its budgeted allocations to fight trafficking in persons.

Guyana's national anti-trafficking efforts are coordinated by a broad-based ministerial task force comprised of government and non- government entities.

The national action plan includes a strong training component that aims to prepare front-line workers, police and community policing groups, customs officers, transport operators and members of civil society with the skills to identify victims of trafficking.

Guyana has improved its capacity to collect information and report on suspected cases of trafficking, conduct undercover operations, provide support to victims to rebuild their lives and/or facilitate their repatriation when requested. Ongoing public awareness programmes are conducted in foreign languages and some indigenous languages.

Recent initiatives include offering a bilingual anti-trafficking 24-hour hotline to assist Spanish-speaking victims and the development of standard operating procedures for victim identification. There has also been progress in dismantling some criminal networks in Guyana involved in trafficking.

Government shelters offer specialized care for victims, including training, translation, legal and medical services, and psychological therapy. Government also provides financial support to NGO-managed shelters while direct financial and other assistance are provided to victims who opt not to stay in a shelter.

The government is currently finalizing our 2021-2025 National Action Plan for the Prevention and Response to Trafficking in Persons. The revised Combating-Trafficking in Persons Act will be presented to the National Assembly before year end.

Mr. President

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Guyana has maintained its anti-trafficking programme.

In conclusion, Guyana remains committed to working at all levels to reduce trafficking of persons within our available resources. Guyana welcomes the consensual adoption of the 2021 Political Declaration.

I thank you.

**Annex 18****Statement by Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, Minister for Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to commend the Organization on this important meeting dedicated to the fight against human trafficking, a crime targeting the most vulnerable persons, especially women and children, and which constitutes an abject violation of human dignity, a crime that UNODC considers as the third most lucrative criminal trafficking after the trafficking in arms and drugs.

I would like also to express our support to the Political Declaration of this high-level meeting, which reinvigorates our common will and resolve to put an end to this horrific crime, through the implementation of the necessary measures upstream and downstream.

We strongly believe that time has come to translate this political will into concrete actions that will strengthen international cooperation with the aim of preventing this crime, protecting the victims and ensuring that impunity will no longer prevail.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me reiterate Algeria's full commitment and support to the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, as this comprehensive and concerted framework remains the cornerstone of our collective efforts against this crime. From our perspective, more efforts are needed to tackle the root causes of this crime, as well as the factors aggravating its devastating consequences.

Indeed, armed conflicts, political crises, terrorism and violent extremism, as well as the increased levels of poverty and the widening development gap within and among countries, are all factors that constitute the underlying causes and the fueling factors which turn vulnerable people into easy prey for transnational organized crime networks.

Against the depth and complexity of the root causes of this evil, preventive measures remain, in our opinion, the best remedy, which requires the commitment of all States to redouble their efforts in order to fight poverty, economic inequalities and underdevelopment, while promoting democratic values and the rule of law, as part of a holistic approach that addresses both the causes of human trafficking and its consequences.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It goes without saying that human trafficking is, nowadays, a global crisis affecting countries of origin, transit, and destination alike.

Algeria has not been spared by this borderless phenomenon, mainly because of the proliferation of conflicts and crises in its neighboring region and in the continent that is also plagued by terrorism and trafficking in arms and drugs.

I would like to highlight, in this regard, that the Algerian Government continues to devote the necessary resources to combat trafficking in persons, in particular through the establishment since 2015, of the National Committee for the Prevention and Fight against Trafficking in Persons. This committee has greatly contributed to expand the legal framework and improve the operational aspect of our efforts.

In addition, the Government is in the process of finalizing the Law on the prevention, protection, and prosecution of the crime of trafficking in persons. This law will pull together all the relevant legal provisions provided in the penal code and the law on the protection of children, in addition to establishing a specific global framework for victims, through the creation of accommodation centers to protect them and preserve their dignity, in full compliance with our international obligations, in particular those emanating from the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, aimed at preventing, suppressing and punishing trafficking in persons, in particular against women and children.

Furthermore, being the Government's focal point in the fight against trafficking in persons, the National Committee plays a key role in raising awareness among all national actors about the nature and multiple facets of this crime, with the involvement of the civil society, which remains a key player in this regard.

However, in the face of the complex interconnections between the different branches of transnational organized crime, our separate efforts will have little impact if not combined together.

Algeria is, therefore, convinced that no country alone can beat this scourge, which requires targeted global partnerships and international solidarity anchored in the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Algeria, which remains fully committed to the fight against trafficking in persons, calls for the full implementation of United Nations policies and programs against trafficking in persons, including the commitments deriving from the Political Declaration that we have just adopted.

I thank you for your kind attention.

## Annex 19

### **Statement by Mr. Miltiadis Varvitsiotis, Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece**

Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege for me today to address the plenary of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the UN Global Plan of Action to combat trafficking in persons.

Human trafficking is indeed one of the major challenges faced by the global community. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted new dangers for victims of human trafficking and smuggling, especially for more vulnerable groups, like women and unaccompanied minors. This becomes even worse, according to the World Bank, since the pandemic and the ensuing global recession will force some forty to sixty million people into extreme poverty and that, at the same time, international remittances have been reduced by twenty percent. The travel restrictions can lead many migrants or asylum seekers to look for more dangerous migration routes. In Greece, due to our geographical location, as a gateway to the EU and Schengen Area, we are familiar with the inhumane practices of human traffickers.

So, we followed concrete steps in order to fight human trafficking with a special emphasis on unaccompanied minors. The Office of the National Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was established in 2013. The national referral mechanism for the protection and support of victims of trafficking was officially launched in 2019. The Greek Penal Code was amended in July 2019 and November 2021 in order to enhance harmonization with European and international standards. In addition, a new law on asylum and referral procedures contains provisions for vulnerable populations on the move, including the victims of trafficking. Greece has also ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the so-called Istanbul Convention) and I would like to express at this point our disappointment that certain Member States of the United Nations, European Union and of the Council of Europe have withdrawn from this important convention.

Ladies and gentlemen, we remain committed to achieving the main goals emanating from the UN Global Plan of Action. However, the instrumentalization of migrants for political motives sends vulnerable persons, like women and children, into the hands of traffickers. We have been on the front lines for years now, in our land and maritime borders, which are at the same time external borders of the European Union. In the Aegean Sea, we have become familiar with the inhumane practices followed by human traffickers and supported or encouraged by authorities of third countries. We have saved thousands of human lives at sea, and we are determined to continue to do so. As long as human trafficking is permitted or encouraged by third parties, it is vital to maintain our humanity and do everything we can for the victims. It is crucial to send a message today that the cooperation and understanding among neighbouring countries is vital.

Thank you for your attention.



**Annex 20****Statement by Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand**

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Human trafficking is a violation of basic human rights. It is akin to modern-day slavery when victims are deprived of their rights over their own bodies and their lives. The continuing trend of trafficking in persons in all regions of the world is highly worrisome. This must not be tolerated. The international community must redouble its efforts and take action to fight this heinous crime.

The Global Plan of Action has provided us with a comprehensive framework for action, with the call for prevention, protection of victims, prosecution of recruiters and traffickers, and partnership. Its people-centered, victim-focused, gender-specific and rights-based approaches continue to be our guiding principles in moving forward.

For Thailand, combating human trafficking is a national agenda. The COVID-19 situation has led to an overall decline of cross-border human trafficking cases in Thailand due to strict border controls. However, online sexual exploitation and trafficking through the Internet have significantly increased to around 30 — 50 per cent of the total human trafficking cases in the last 2 years.

Information technology and the Internet have made it easy to access a much larger group of potential victims. Traffickers are currently using technology to profile, recruit, control and exploit their victim, while being able to hide illegal materials stemming from trafficking and their real identities from investigators. They can also operate in multiple locations at the same time. Law enforcement has become increasingly challenging, since any investigation requires cooperation across borders, as well as digital expertise. Therefore, capacity-building and cooperation among countries are much needed in this area.

We also need to address human trafficking at its root causes, namely the demand side, social and economic inequality worldwide, and the vulnerabilities of people, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments must address poverty and underdevelopment, as well as invest in people through education, health care, jobs and livelihood opportunities.

The implementation of the Global Plan of Action should be further strengthened and integrated in our continued efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Prevention of human trafficking and protection of victims must be a part of our inclusive response to the pandemic as well as our recovery strategy to ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**Annex 21****Statement by Ms. Petra Schneebauer, Vice-Minister and National Coordinator for Combating Human Trafficking of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria**

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellences, distinguished delegates, esteemed colleagues,

Having been a member of the United Nations family in New York for more than four years at the turn of the millennium, I am more than pleased to join you after a very long time — even if only virtually.

The United Nations Organization is, of course, a frontrunner in the global fight against trafficking in human beings — it does so in the General Assembly in New York as well as in Vienna through UNODC.

As we gather today at the General Assembly, let me thank the Permanent Representatives of the Philippines and the Dominican Republic as the co-facilitators of the Political Declaration.

The fight against human trafficking is international in nature. But the three key elements — the three Cs of coordination, cooperation and commitment, as I call them — must start with and within every single Member State of the United Nations.

That is the reason why the Austrian Government set up a task force on combatting human trafficking in 2004, which I have had the honour to chair the past couple of years.

The task force brings together all relevant Austrian stakeholders. Let me underline the importance of specialized non-governmental organizations in that regard. They are essential and key as they are the ones working on the ground, bringing to life the victim-centred approach by really creating a space of trust for those affected by human trafficking.

Austria's major tool against human trafficking is a national triannual action plan. It presents a set of measures against human trafficking — of which there are currently 109 — based on past experiences and on future research and monitoring. It includes goals for cooperation, prevention, the protection of victims, prosecution, and, as already mentioned, research and monitoring.

A second tool complements the national action plan: an anti-trafficking conference organized every year. At the conference, national and international experts alike come together to discuss pertinent aspects of that complex topic. After featuring the links between trafficking and digitalization in 2019 and COVID-19 in 2020, this year's conference held in Vienna in October shed a light on the various financial aspects of human trafficking, from detecting transfers of illicit proceeds to fair compensation for victims.

At the conference, a participant asked me what the benefit of conferences like ours was. My answer was clear: coordination, cooperation and commitment. Those are our best tools to fight cross-border organized crimes such as human trafficking.

Therefore, I want to reiterate Austria's commitment to the fight against trafficking together with the United Nations, its Member States, other international organizations and civil society and I want to extend to all of you — already today — an invitation to next year's anti-trafficking conference to be held again in October on a topic of special interest.

Thank you for your attention.

**Annex 22****Statement by Mr. Du Hangwei, Vice Minister of Public Security of the People's Republic of China**

[Original: Chinese]

The crime of trafficking in persons is a common challenge for all countries in the world. China highly commends the important role played by the United Nations in coordinating the positions of all parties and promoting the fight against human trafficking, and expresses its heartfelt thanks to colleagues from different countries for their long-standing persistent efforts in that regard.

The Chinese Government has always attached great importance to anti-trafficking work, and actively implemented the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. China has made a sustained effort in enhancing integrated management, human rights protection and practical international cooperation, and provided China's experience in promoting joint anti-trafficking efforts, thereby contributing to safeguarding the rights and interests of women and children around the world and building a community of shared future for mankind.

The Chinese Government has issued and implemented three action plans against human trafficking, continuously improved the anti-trafficking mechanism led by the Government and with the broad participation by all sectors of the society and built a solid mechanism for preventing and combating human trafficking, rescuing and protecting victims. In 2021, under the guidance of the Chinese Government, China secured a complete victory in the fight against poverty, eradicating extreme poverty, which marks a miracle in human history of poverty reduction, and represents a big step forward in eliminating the breeding grounds of human trafficking. In 2021, the Chinese Government revised and implemented the new law on the protection of minors, promulgated and implemented the framework for the development of women for 2021-2030 and the framework for the development of children for 2021-2030 to effectively protect the legitimate rights and interests of women and children.

China's public security organs have sustained the crackdown on human trafficking. In 2021, China launched a reunion operation to solve the long-pending cases of child abduction and trafficking, arrest the suspected offenders and locate and rescue the missing and abducted children, which achieved good results. The reunion system, an emergency information release platform on missing children developed and built by the Ministry of Public Security, uses high technology and IT to quickly solve cases and locate children, achieving a recover rate of 98.5 per cent.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to international cooperation in combating human trafficking. China's Ministry of Public Security has established hotlines with its counterparts from 34 countries and, regular working-level meeting mechanisms with 27 countries, signed 177 cooperation documents, including cooperation agreements and MOUs with 54 countries, set up eight anti-trafficking liaison offices in the border areas of Guangxi and Yunnan provinces, and strengthened joint law enforcement operations with 13 countries and regions, including Viet Nam.

Combating human trafficking is the common responsibility of the whole world. The Chinese Government supports the United Nations anti-trafficking cooperation process and will continue to promote the implementation of the following measures.

First, support United Nations anti-trafficking cooperation process through financial contributions and other means.

Secondly, conduct bilateral and multilateral joint anti-trafficking operations under the framework of the United Nations to vigorously combat transnational human trafficking, and timely rescue and make proper arrangements for victims.

Thirdly, provide free technical support to countries that are willing to use the “internet + anti-trafficking” technology to establish the mechanism to find missing children for mutual improvement of professional capabilities in that regard.

The Chinese Government calls on all countries to deepen cooperation, improve the mechanisms and break new grounds in the fight against human trafficking. We stand ready to work with other countries to fully implement the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and continue our efforts towards building a community with a shared future for mankind and a world without human trafficking.

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