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**Social and human rights questions: crime prevention
and criminal justice**

Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 22 July 2021

*[on the recommendation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and
Criminal Justice (E/2021/30)]*

2021/25. Implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons

The Economic and Social Council,

Reiterating its strong condemnation of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, which constitutes an offence and a serious threat to human dignity and physical integrity, human rights and sustainable development,

Reaffirming the commitments by Member States to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate all forms of trafficking in persons,

Recalling the relevant United Nations resolutions and special meetings on trafficking in persons,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, containing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its goals and targets relevant to trafficking in persons,

Recalling further the importance of eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, as well as of ending abuse, exploitation and trafficking of and all forms of violence against and torture of children, also in support of the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons,¹

Reaffirming the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime² and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons,

¹ General Assembly resolution [64/293](#).

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2225, No. 39574.



Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,³

Recognizing the significance of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution [64/293](#) of 30 July 2010, and underlining the importance of its full and effective use,

Reaffirming that the Global Plan of Action was developed:

(a) To promote universal ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as other relevant international instruments that address trafficking in persons, and to reinforce the implementation of existing instruments against trafficking in persons,

(b) To help Member States to reinforce their political commitments and legal obligations to prevent and combat trafficking in persons,

(c) To promote comprehensive, coordinated and consistent responses at the national, regional and international levels to counter trafficking in persons,

(d) To promote a human rights-based and gender- and age-sensitive approach to addressing all factors that make people vulnerable to trafficking in persons and to strengthening the criminal justice response, which is necessary to prevent trafficking in persons, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators,

(e) To raise awareness within the United Nations system and among States and other stakeholders, such as the private sector and civil society organizations, and among the national and international mass media and the public at large,

(f) To foster cooperation and coordination among all relevant stakeholders, including Member States, international organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, and within various entities of the United Nations system, taking into account existing best practices and lessons learned,

Welcoming the efforts of Member States, United Nations bodies and agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to combat trafficking in persons, including in the context of the implementation of the Global Plan of Action,

Emphasizing the role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, including as coordinator of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, and welcoming the holding of the co-chairmanship of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2021,

Recalling that the Inter-Agency Coordination Group was established to foster cooperation among relevant United Nations agencies and other international organizations involved in combating human trafficking, to promote effective and efficient use of existing resources to increase tangible results in combating human trafficking in countries around the world using, to the extent possible, mechanisms already in place at the national and regional levels, and to share information, experiences and good practices relating to the activities of partner agencies in order to counter trafficking with Governments, regional and international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other relevant bodies,

³ Ibid., vol. 2237, No. 39574.

Recognizing that the Inter-Agency Coordination Group, within its mandate, contributes to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, taking note of the activities of the members of the Coordination Group, acting on a rotational basis as Chair of the working group of the Coordination Group, and encouraging the more robust participation of all members of the Coordination Group,

Recognizing also the contributions of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group in fostering coordination and cooperation in efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, within the existing mandates of its partners, which are the members of the United Nations system and regional organizations, as well as the development of various issue papers on current topics that have an impact on global efforts to counter trafficking in persons, and encouraging further engagement on the part of regional organizations with respect to possibly joining and co-chairing the Coordination Group,

Taking note of the thematic focus of the Coordination Group in recent years on trafficking in children, trafficking in persons and technology and on measures to prevent trafficking in persons in supply chains, including in public procurement, as well as in the procurement of goods and services by the United Nations,

Taking note also of the second meeting of the Coordination Group at the level of principals of the relevant international and regional organizations and agencies, held in a virtual format on 15 December 2020, which reinforced the inter-agency partnership to tackle trafficking in persons, and of the admission of the Organization of American States and the Council of the Baltic Sea States as the newest members of the Coordination Group,

Recognizing that the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, established in accordance with the Global Plan of Action, is aimed at providing victims of trafficking in persons with humanitarian, legal and financial aid through established channels of assistance, such as governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and welcoming contributions made to the trust fund by States and all other relevant stakeholders,

Taking note of the decision of the General Assembly, in its resolution [68/192](#) of 18 December 2013, to appraise the progress achieved in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action on a four-year basis, starting at its seventy-second session, in order to assess achievements, gaps and challenges, including in the implementation of the relevant legal instruments,

Recalling the holding of the high-level meetings of the General Assembly during its sixty-seventh session, from 13 to 15 May 2013, and during its seventy-second session, on 27 and 28 September 2017, to appraise the progress achieved in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, at which the Assembly, inter alia, reiterated the strong political will of Member States to step up efforts against trafficking in persons,

Welcoming the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, adopted by the General Assembly at its high-level meeting during the seventy-second session,⁴ in which Member States reiterated, in the strongest possible terms, the importance of strengthening collective action to end trafficking in persons,

Looking forward to the next high-level meeting of the General Assembly to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, to

⁴ General Assembly resolution [72/1](#).

be held during the seventy-sixth session of the Assembly, after the general debate and no later than December 2021,

Taking note of the decision of the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/192, to designate 30 July as the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, to be observed every year beginning in 2014, and welcoming events held by Member States, United Nations agencies, other international organizations and civil society at the national, regional and international levels to mark the World Day in order to raise awareness of trafficking in persons and the situation of the victims of this crime and for the promotion and protection of their rights,

Welcoming the decision of the General Assembly in its resolution 73/327 of 25 July 2019 to declare 2021 the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour,

Recalling the continued role of relevant regional, subregional and cross-regional mechanisms and initiatives to combat and eliminate all forms of trafficking in persons, including in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action,

Welcoming the growing number of businesses that embrace a core business model that operates in accordance with those principles of the United Nations Global Compact that address the crime of trafficking in persons,

Recalling the need to strengthen efforts to prevent, counter and combat trafficking in persons, including by supporting data collection and sharing as appropriate, through relevant technical assistance by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, addressing factors that make people vulnerable to trafficking, detecting and dismantling trafficking networks, including in supply chains, discouraging demand that fosters exploitation leading to trafficking, ending impunity of trafficking networks, conducting financial investigations and using special investigative techniques under the conditions prescribed by domestic law, and protecting victims of trafficking in persons,

Expressing serious concern that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its socioeconomic implications may create additional opportunities for organized criminal groups and bring new challenges in the fight against trafficking in persons, and stressing the importance of finding effective ways to address these challenges, including through the full and effective use of relevant international instruments such as the Trafficking in Persons Protocol by its States parties and the Global Plan of Action,

Noting that reports have highlighted a sharp increase in unemployment rates brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic that is likely to increase trafficking in persons, in particular from countries experiencing the fastest and most persistent drops in employment,

1. *Urges* Member States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying or acceding to, as a matter of priority, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, taking into consideration the important role of those instruments in the fight against trafficking in persons, and also urges States parties to make full and effective use of those instruments;

2. *Encourages* States parties to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, in the context of the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, to consider measures in support of the full and effective use of the Protocol;

3. *Urges* Member States and other stakeholders mentioned in the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and invites the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and other relevant subregional, regional and international organizations, within their respective mandates, to continue to contribute to the full and effective use of the Global Plan of Action, including by means of strengthening cooperation and improving coordination among themselves in achieving that goal;

4. *Invites* Member States to address the social, economic, cultural, political and other factors that make people vulnerable to trafficking in persons;

5. *Invites* all Member States, relevant agencies of the United Nations system and other international organizations, as well as civil society, to continue to actively observe the annual World Day against Trafficking in Persons;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue, in close cooperation and collaboration with Member States, to collect, in a balanced, reliable and comprehensive manner, information on patterns, forms and flows of trafficking in persons at the national, regional and international levels for use in the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* and to share best practices and lessons learned from the various initiatives and mechanisms;

7. *Also requests* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, within its mandate, to continue to integrate the Global Plan of Action into its programmes and activities and continue to provide, at the national and regional levels, technical assistance to countries, upon their request, aimed at strengthening their ability to ensure the full and effective use of the Global Plan of Action;

8. *Encourages* Member States to make every possible effort to improve the exchange of information in the context of the Global Plan of Action and to consider developing standard operating procedures to allow law enforcement, immigration or other relevant authorities of Member States, as appropriate, to promptly send official information about identified victims to the destination countries, countries of origin and transit countries, including information on the acts and means used for the purpose of trafficking in persons, in order to initiate a joint investigation, in accordance with national law;

9. *Invites* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other relevant agencies of the United Nations system, within the framework of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, to continue to increase the activities of the Group related to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action;

10. *Invites* Member States, in the context of the appraisal of the Global Plan of Action, to consider developing and implementing national policies, in line and in accordance with their domestic laws, to prevent trafficking in persons in government procurement and global supply chains, and to consider, where appropriate, promoting partnerships and engagement of the business community and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in developing and implementing sustainable initiatives to prevent and combat trafficking in persons in supply chains, bearing in mind the primary role and responsibility of Member States in that regard;

11. *Requests* the relevant agencies of the United Nations system to ensure that United Nations procurement is free from trafficking in persons;

12. *Requests* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in its capacity as fund manager of the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, to continue to encourage contributions by States and all other relevant stakeholders to the trust fund;

13. *Invites* Member States and other donors to provide extrabudgetary resources for the purposes described above, in accordance with the rules and procedures of the United Nations;

14. *Recalls* the request made to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly in its resolution [64/293](#) to include, within existing reporting obligations to the Assembly under the item on crime prevention and criminal justice, a section on the implementation by the United Nations system of the Global Plan of Action.

*13th plenary meeting
22 July 2021*
