



Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

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Working Group on Trafficking in Persons

Vienna, 9–11 September 2019

Draft Report

I. Introduction

1. In its decision 4/4, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime acknowledged that the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, was the principal legally binding global instrument to combat trafficking in persons. In that decision, the Conference also decided to establish an open-ended interim working group on trafficking in persons. The previous meetings of the Working Group were held on 14 and 15 April 2009, from 27 to 29 January 2010, on 19 October 2010, from 10 to 12 October 2011, from 6 to 8 November 2013, from 16 to 18 November 2015, from 6 to 8 September 2017 and from 2 to 3 July 2018.

2. In its resolution 7/1, entitled “Strengthening the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto”, the Conference of the Parties decided, inter alia, that the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons would be a constant element of the Conference of the Parties, forwarding its reports and recommendations to the Conference, and encouraged the working groups of the Conference to consider meeting on an annual basis, as needed, and to hold their meetings consecutively, in order to ensure the effective use of resources.

II. Recommendations

3. At its meeting held in Vienna from 9 to 11 September 2019, the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons adopted the recommendations presented below for consideration by the Conference.

A. General recommendations

4. The Working Group recommended that the Conference of the Parties consider the following recommendations for adoption.

Recommendation 1

Member States should convene “litigation surgeries” for prosecutors, allowing for prosecutors to share their experiences, including on evidential issues in trafficking in persons cases.



Recommendation 2

Member States should effectively cooperate with victim assistance service providers, and develop stronger witness protection measures, as part of a multidisciplinary strategy to counter trafficking in persons.

Recommendation 3

Member States should place stronger emphasis on joint investigation teams and specialized investigations.

Recommendation 4

Member States should consider developing toolkits containing standard operating procedures on the effective functioning of national referral mechanisms.

Recommendation 5

Member States should share best practices detailing roles and responsibilities of civil society organizations and community-based organizations in national referral mechanisms, to support meaningful and sustained policy change.

Recommendation 6

Member States should consider developing national plans of action, introducing solid legal frameworks as well as establishing a national DNA database on combating trafficking in persons.

Recommendation 7

Member States should carry out relevant research on new trends of human trafficking including interviewing victims to develop or adjust prevention strategies.

Recommendation 8

Member States should take measures to support a strong and independent media, in order to help raise awareness and strengthen prevention efforts.

B. Recommendations on crime prevention measures in trafficking in persons

5. The Working Group recommended that the Conference of the Parties consider the following recommendations for adoption:

Recommendation 9

Member States should coordinate and strengthen efforts with multilateral institutions to prevent forced labour in their supply chains, including by leveraging their own purchasing power.

Recommendation 10

Member States should draw on the Principles for Governments to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Global Supply Chains launched at the United Nations General Assembly in 2018, as a framework to prioritize action to tackle trafficking in persons in supply chains, and share learning on the development and implementation of transparency measures as well as promote international alignment of measures.

Recommendation 11

Member States should work in partnership with business, civil society and public sector organizations to develop policies and legislation, which drive effective and targeted action to address the risks of forced labour in supply chains.

C. Recommendations on diplomatic and consular officials or liaison officers in diplomatic and consular missions and their roles in addressing human trafficking.

III. Summary of deliberations

6. At its 1st and 2nd meetings, on 9 September 2019, the Working Group considered agenda item 2, entitled “Crime prevention measures in trafficking in persons”.

7. The discussion under agenda item 2 was facilitated by the following panellists: Ms. Phoebe Blagg, Senior Modern Slavery Policy Adviser, Modern Slavery Unit, Home Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States; Ms. Qingtian Meng, Deputy Director, Anti-Human Trafficking Office of Criminal Investigations Department, Ministry of Public Security, China, on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States; Ms. Ooshara Sewpaul, Deputy Chief State Law Adviser, Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, Republic of South Africa, on behalf of the Group of African States; and Ms. Rafaella Mikos Passos, Federal Public Defender of the Federal Public Defender’s Office of Brazil, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

8. Ms. Phoebe Blagg delivered a presentation on the United Kingdom’s experience in combating trafficking in persons in supply chains. She stated that, under the current legislation, large commercial organizations operating in the United Kingdom are required to report on how they tackle the crime. Ms. Blagg stressed that this measure has led to increased transparency in operations and more scrutiny from the public. She added that the Government will publish its own statement in 2019 on measures taken to fight human trafficking in procurement. Ms. Blagg stressed that governments should strive for harmonization of policy and legislation and advance responsible recruitment policies and practices, while encouraging the private sector to address human trafficking in supply chains. Lastly, she emphasized the need to measure action and impact, as well as review and adapt approaches, over time.

9. Ms. Rafaella Mikos Passos spoke about Brazil’s efforts to combat trafficking in persons and, in particular, the specific role of the Public Defender’s Office in doing so. She then presented the achievements in collaboration with UNODC through partnership under the GLO.ACT project, such as successfully training public officials and releasing publications and guides on the rights of victims of trafficking in persons. She noted with concern, however, that her Office faces several challenges such as stigma linked to victimization, the lack of quantitative and qualitative data, the need for a better cooperation between private and public service providers, as well as the need for a network of caregivers to better support victims.

10. Ms. Qingtian Meng spoke about the efforts of China related to a national plan of action 2013–2020 to fight human trafficking. She detailed the establishment of a dedicated office to combat the trafficking of women and children by the Ministry of Public Security (MPS). Since 2009, the MPS has set up a DNA database and facial recognition to identify victims of trafficking and missing children. An Alert Platform was developed in 2016 by the MPS in partnership with Alibaba Group which is being used by 6,000 special police officers who can log in and access apps and platforms to alert the public about missing children. This system has been successful in locating missing children, with 3,901 children found through this system. Ms. Qingtian Meng finally stressed that the mobilization of society is the best weapon to combat trafficking in persons.

11. Ms. Ooshara Sewpaul delivered a presentation on the efforts of South Africa to combat trafficking in persons. Jointly with UNODC, South Africa has aligned its legal framework to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. She stressed the lack of data collection and public awareness and mentioned that the partnership between South Africa and UNODC has resulted in progress to fight the crime. She then described the

concept of “litigation surgeries” which allows for prosecutors to share their experiences on evidential issues in trafficking cases. Together with UNODC, several such activities were organized and proved highly successful. She then highlighted the successful Operation Batho, supported by UNODC, which brought together intelligence operatives and investigators from Southern African countries in an operation on identifying trafficking routes. She stressed that the new National Policy Framework on Trafficking in Persons, recently developed under the GLO.ACT project, allowed for the clarification of roles and procedures to fight human trafficking. She added that, thanks to efforts to increase data collection, the Government was better positioned to detect victims. She concluded by stating that education and awareness-raising are necessary to fight trafficking and stated that South Africa was considering joining the Blue Heart Campaign.

12. After these presentations, the panellists exchanged additional information with the participants in response to several questions and comments regarding specific challenges and examples of good practices.

13. In the discussions that followed, many speakers emphasized the importance of multi-disciplinary approaches to preventing the crime of trafficking in persons, which can contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Speakers stressed that such approaches should include partnerships with civil society, including in broad public consultations.

14. Many speakers highlighted the challenge of measuring the scale of the crime of trafficking in persons, as well as the impact of awareness-raising measures. However, several speakers noted national efforts to improve data collection, as well as evidence-based policies and responses to human trafficking.

15. Several speakers noted their decision to join the Blue Heart Campaign, to further their awareness-raising efforts.

16. Many speakers addressed the need to tackle the root causes of trafficking in persons, as well as the linkages between trafficking and conflict situations as well as migration. Some speakers also noted the need to distinguish trafficking in persons from other crimes in national legislation.

17. Several speakers highlighted the value they attach to the technical assistance provided by UNODC, noting achievements in national legislation and policy, investigations and detection of trafficking cases as a result.

18. One speaker mentioned the importance of a trauma-informed, culture, and gender-sensitive approach to providing services for victims of trafficking.

19. One speaker described the good practice of the provision of financial compensation to trafficking victims who do not wish or are unable to work outside of shelters for their work inside those shelters.

20. One speaker noted the essential role of independent media in preventing trafficking in persons as well as the need to train specialized journalists to this end.

21. Several speakers stressed the interaction between trafficking and technology, noting good practices to draw on the benefits of technology in fighting the crime such as through mobile applications. One speaker also noted legislative measures to combat trafficking online.

22. At its [3rd and 4th] meeting[s], on 10 September 2019, the Working Group considered agenda item 3, entitled “Diplomatic and consular officials or liaison officers in diplomatic and consular missions and their roles in addressing human trafficking”.

IV. Organization of the meeting

A. Opening of the meeting

23. The ninth meeting of the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons was held in Vienna from 9 to 11 September 2019. Five meetings were held.

24. The meeting was opened by H.E. Nazhat Shameem Khan (Fiji), Chair of the Working Group. She addressed the meeting and presented an overview of the mandate of the Working Group, its objectives and the subjects under its consideration.

25. At the opening of the meeting, a statement was made by the Secretariat.

B. Statements

26. General introductory statements were made by the Secretariat under agenda items 2 and 3.

27. With the Chair presiding, the discussion under item 2 was led by the following panellists: Ms. Phoebe Blagg (UK), Ms. Rafaella Passos (Brazil), Ms. Qingtian Meng (China), and Ms. Ooshara Sewpaul (Republic of South Africa).

28. With the Chair presiding, the discussion under item 3 was led by the following panellists: Ms. Chenobia Calhoun (US), Mr. Jesús Alberto Marquez Navarro (Spain) and Ms. Qingtian Meng (China).

29. Under agenda items 2 and 3, statements were made by representatives of the following parties to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol: Brazil, Canada, China, Dominican Republic, Norway, Sudan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United States of America.

30. The observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran also made a statement.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

31. At its 1st meeting, on 9 September 2019, the Working Group adopted by consensus the following agenda:

1. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Opening of the meeting;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Crime prevention measures in trafficking in persons.
3. Diplomatic and consular officials or liaison officers in diplomatic and consular missions and their roles in addressing human trafficking.
4. Other matters.
5. Adoption of the report.

D. Attendance

32. The following parties to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol were represented at the meeting: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, European Union, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria,

Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

33. The following States that are not parties or signatories to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol were represented by observers: Brunei Darussalam, Holy See, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nepal, Pakistan, Tuvalu, Yemen.

34. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was represented by an observer.

35. The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, an entity maintaining permanent observer office, was represented by an observer.

36. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Interpol, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) [...]

37. A list of participants is contained in document CTOC/COP/WG.4/2019/INF/1/Rev.1.

E. Documentation

38. The Working Group had before it the following:

- (a) Annotated provisional agenda ([CTOC/COP/WG.4/2019/1](#));
- (b) Background paper prepared by the Secretariat entitled “Crime prevention measures in trafficking in persons” ([CTOC/COP/WG.4/2019/2](#));
- (c) Background paper prepared by the Secretariat entitled “Diplomatic and consular officials or liaison officers in diplomatic and consular missions and their roles in addressing human trafficking.” ([CTOC/COP/WG.4/2019/3](#))
- (c) Background paper containing an index of recommendations adopted by the Working Group at its first eight meetings ([CTOC/COP/WG.4/2019/4](#));
- (d) Background paper containing a compilation of recommendations adopted by the Working Group at its first eight meetings ([CTOC/COP/WG.4/2019/5](#)).

V. Adoption of the report

39. On 11 September 2019, the Working Group adopted the present report on its meeting.
