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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Apne Aap Women World Wide (India) Trust, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2013/1.



Statement

Global implementation plan to improve trafficking legislation

A life free of violence is an indispensable right of any individual. However, violence against women and girls is rampant and the worst form of human rights violation in today's world. Around the globe, women and girls are subjected to various forms of violence, including rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence and forced labour, irrespective of age, race, place of residence and religion. The international community has taken serious note of this problem and adopted several legal instruments to prevent, eradicate and punish violence against women and girls. Despite the strenuous efforts of the international community and Member States, the exploitation of women and girls continues.

Human trafficking is a means of enabling violence against women and girls. It is the fastest-growing criminal industry, wherein profits are gained through sexual servitude or forced labour. Specifically, sex trafficking of girls and women flourishes because of the demand for purchased sex, combined with vulnerabilities arising from gender discrimination maintained through the State, the community and the family unit. This discrimination normalizes the purchase of sex and denies girls and women equal access to safe housing, livelihoods, education and legal protection. This reality makes women easy prey to traffickers who trick, force, lure and seduce them to cater to the demand for purchased sex. The demand for sex is rarely properly addressed, and it is often overlooked that people are trafficked into the sex industry not to satisfy the demand of the traffickers, but rather that of the purchasers, most of whom are men. We believe that the present laws in Member States are not sufficient to curb sex trafficking, since not every individual involved in a single act of trafficking is punished, which creates impunity.

The combination of demand and impunity creates a space in which trafficking can flourish. This environment offers high profits at low risk for the traffickers, but serious health risks and human rights violations for the victims. We would like Member States to commit to undertake a global implementation plan to improve trafficking legislation, with a particular focus on punishing pimps and buyers, rather than victims. The concept behind such a plan could be endorsed at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, with the goal of launching the plan in 2015.

All too often, attention is focused on the women who are the victims of trafficking, and the male demand is left unaddressed. Without men buying sex, traffickers, pimps and brothel owners will be driven out of business. Our ultimate objective is both societal and legal change.