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**TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS
IOM STRATEGY AND ACTIVITIES**

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IOM STRATEGY AND ACTIVITIES

I. BACKGROUND

1. Trafficking in persons is one of the most serious and urgent challenges to migration policy makers and practitioners around the world. Contrary to smuggling in migrants, it cannot be considered as a violation by the victim of the migration legislation of a country, but rather as a severe violation of human rights of the victim by persons participating in the trafficking process.
2. Both the causes and phenomenon of trafficking are rooted in poverty, lack of opportunities, gender discrimination, social and political violence and demand for services that trafficking victims will be forced to provide in other countries.
3. Trafficking affects mainly, but not exclusively, women and children. They are most frequently trafficked for sexual and/or labour exploitation, though they sometimes end up in situations of forced begging, delinquency, adoption, false marriage, or as victims of the trade in human organs. Victims of trafficking can be exposed to physical and psychological abuses, denied legal and labour rights and medical care, considered as illegal or irregular in a country, or otherwise as crime offenders, and are often found in forced and unwanted relationships of dependency with their traffickers or other persons.
4. Cases of trafficking are being reported daily, in different parts of the world. Not one single country has been spared from this phenomenon, regardless of whether it is a country of origin, transit or destination or, as is increasingly the case, a combination of all these. The profile of the victims is constantly changing. Nowadays, victims are younger than before; children are increasingly being caught up in the process. Cases of men are also being reported in different parts of the world. The expansion of the phenomenon, geographically and in terms of typology of victims, calls for a more tailored approach by the international community to effectively combat trafficking.
5. Since trafficking in persons is generally controlled by international criminal organizations whose activities often include other forms of illicit trade and smuggling such as drugs and arms, it can have serious security implications for all affected countries.
6. The Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, signed in Palermo in December 2000 came into force on 29 September 2003. The Convention is supplemented by a Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children¹ that will come into force on 25 December 2003, having received the necessary 40 ratifications. The purposes of this Protocol are to prevent and combat trafficking, paying particular attention to the protection of women and children, and to promote and facilitate cooperation among State parties in order to meet this objective.

¹ Two other Protocols supplementing the Convention are also to be adopted, namely the "Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea" and the "Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition".

7. The Protocol defines trafficking in persons as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or the use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”.² In December 2000, IOM adopted the above-mentioned definition, and the Protocol is the international legal instrument guiding its counter-trafficking activities.³

8. IOM document MC/EX/INF/58 (1999) defined the IOM objective in counteracting trafficking as “to curtail migrant trafficking and to protect the rights of migrants caught up in the practice”. It also elaborated the Organization’s main programmatic strategies for achieving the objective, such as seminars and forums, information gathering and research, technical cooperation, information dissemination, voluntary return and reintegration activities, and counselling and medical services.

9. IOM document MC/INF/245 (2000): “Trafficking in Persons: Update and Perspectives” elaborated on the developments in trafficking in human beings and established IOM’s strategic approaches at the global and regional levels.⁴ These approaches have been implemented in the last three years through the Organization’s global counter-trafficking activities.

10. The objective of this document is to update the information on trafficking trends, as well as IOM’s strategic approach, on the basis of the Organization’s accumulated expertise in cooperating with governments, other international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the victims of trafficking themselves.

II. IOM ACTIVITIES

11. IOM’s Counter-trafficking (CT) activities over the last three years have substantially increased and continue to target the most vulnerable group of victims: women and children. Financial resources provided by donors for counter-trafficking projects have drastically increased. As of mid-2003, there were 85 counter-trafficking projects valued at over USD 20 million. Projects are implemented in Africa, Asia, Central, Eastern and Western Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean, and there is a global assistance project targeting countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America (see examples in Annex). These activities have responded to individual governments’ needs in the fields of prevention, awareness raising, capacity-building and legislation, as well as to the protection and assistance needs of individual victims of trafficking, including their voluntary return to and reintegration into their countries of origin.

² The definition of trafficking in human beings as stated in the Protocol has thus become the internationally adopted definition.

³ IOM also applies the UNHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking, E/2002/68/Add.1, of 20 May 2002 in its counter-trafficking (CT) activities.

⁴ This document concluded that IOM’s strategy could only be achieved “with the continued support of IOM Member States and observers, most of which are affected by the trafficking phenomenon”. This conclusion is still valid today.

12. To standardize the IOM approach on direct assistance, a Counter-Trafficking Handbook has been developed to cover six aspects: interview guidelines and screening procedures, voluntary return, reception and reintegration, shelter management, health (including the psychological well-being of the IOM staff working on direct assistance for victims), security and law enforcement cooperation and data management.

13. In order to contribute to a standardized data collection, IOM has developed a Counter-Trafficking Module Database (CTM), to enable not only the monitoring of the whole IOM assistance, movement and reintegration process through a centrally managed system, but also the reconstruction of the trafficking process that a victim has gone through. The CTM Database is meant to facilitate the management of assistance, voluntary return and reintegration activities for victims of trafficking, and to strengthen the research capacity and understanding of the causes, processes, trends and consequences of trafficking.

III. STRATEGIC APPROACH

14. Taking stock of its experience over many years in all continents, IOM can offer a coherent, strategic approach to the multifaceted aspects of trafficking in persons, including the below.

15. **Responses to trafficking should be comprehensive and integrated**, applying a global concept of migration management to analyse migration patterns, and should include the prevention of trafficking through awareness-raising and capacity-building, to enable governments and agencies, through technical cooperation, to manage the problem themselves, and assist and protect the victims through immediate assistance, shelter, access to services, return and reintegration.

16. **Tackling the root causes** of trafficking, i.e. poverty, lack of opportunities, gender discrimination, wealth inequalities, lack of education, and others, particularly among the most vulnerable populations, should be included in all activities against trafficking in order to avoid combating the symptoms rather than the main causes of the phenomenon.

17. **Addressing the factors facilitating trafficking** both in countries of origin (root causes) as well as in countries of destination (demand) should be included in the IOM programmes to combat and prevent trafficking in human beings.

18. **Data collection, research and analysis** are of crucial importance to understand and address new forms, trends, mechanisms and patterns of trafficking globally. Information should be collected and exchanged with all concerned partners in the combat against trafficking. The IOM counter-trafficking database will be expanded and installed in all regions. Research should include countries of origin, transit and destination.

19. **Awareness raising campaigns** should be implemented as an ongoing process and target potential victims, clients and policy makers in countries of origin and destination.

20. **Gender aspects** should be included in all counter-trafficking activities by acknowledging that trafficking concerns both men and women. There are similarities and differences in the trafficking experience of women and men in relation to vulnerabilities, abuses and consequences, but the impact of policies and programmes against trafficking is different on men and women.
21. **Protection of the human rights and safety of the victims of trafficking** should be the paramount preoccupation of IOM's direct assistance activities.
22. **Specific programmes for the assistance and protection of children** victims of trafficking should be developed in all regions of the world, taking into account the cultural characteristics of each form of trafficking and the particular needs of children.
23. **Global, rapid response to trafficked victims** should be provided, including access to protection, assistance and support measures through shelters, physical and psychological health care, legal counselling, voluntary return, and temporary residence when possible.
24. **Reintegration assistance should be an integral part of voluntary return programmes** to address the root causes of trafficking and avoid potential re-trafficking of victims after return. Reintegration elements to be included are, *inter alia*, medical and psychological assistance, security protection, vocational training, job referral, subsidized employment, self-employment and micro-credits tailored to each individual case, with a view to empowering victims in their country of origin.
25. **Health risks and consequences of trafficking for victims should be addressed** in all parts of the protection, assistance, and return and reintegration process. HIV/AIDS and STD prevention and assistance, including supporting and strengthening national capacities in this field, are an integral part of assistance programmes.
26. **Regional and subregional strategies** – convinced that trafficking should be combated through a multi-country approach rather than a country-by-country one, IOM should bring together countries sharing similar problems to look for common solutions to be implemented regionally. This would enhance cooperation among affected countries searching for best practices.
27. **Capacity-building activities for governmental institutions**, particularly law enforcement, migration, consular and security services, on trafficking issues in general and on their respective roles to combat trafficking and protect victims specifically, should be strengthened.
28. **Reinforcement of the necessary legal reforms at the national level**, including the adoption and implementation of appropriate anti-trafficking legislation and the creation of better protection and assistance for victims of trafficking.
29. **Cooperation with NGOs and other international organizations** working in the field of counter-trafficking should be part of programme development and implementation, in order to make better and more cost-effective use of resources through a coordinated approach. When dealing with assistance and reintegration, cooperation with local NGOs should be strengthened so as to ensure sustainability and establish a clear exit strategy for IOM.

Annex

EXAMPLES OF CURRENT IOM COUNTER-TRAFFICKING PROJECTS

GLOBAL COVERAGE

Programme of Assistance for the Protection and Reintegration of Trafficked Women and Children

1. This programme establishes a mechanism for rapid, case-by-case assistance to trafficked migrant women and children stranded outside their country of origin, who require immediate protection and return support. It provides, through a global emergency fund, a coordinated operational response applicable in specified countries affected by trafficking, where victims do not fall within the defined caseload of existing IOM counter-trafficking projects or comparable assistance schemes. Such cases are carefully assessed by the originating IOM Field Office(s) and immediately referred to the Programme Manager in IOM Geneva for quick assessment and disbursement of emergency assistance in the form of *ad hoc* protection and return to the country of origin in close coordination with local implementing partners.

Global Assistance Counter-Trafficking Database

2. IOM is using a unique tool to monitor assistance and collect information on the victims of trafficking whom it assists. The Counter-Trafficking Module (CTM) Database allows for a reconstruction of the trafficking process each assisted victim has suffered from. It also monitors the direct IOM assistance, movement and reintegration process in a central system and allows for a strengthened research capability in trafficking. Now used in the IOM global assistance fund and in the Balkan regions, the CTM has demonstrated its operational effectiveness.

3. This new project will build on the successes of the initial deployment of CTM by:

- supporting and implementing a full integration of the CTM with IOM's Migration Management Operational Software Application (MiMOSA);
- developing the reintegration part of the database and programme in the Missions;
- creating a multilingual platform that supports English, French and Spanish;
- creating an intelligence gathering functionality within the CTM, by
- creating a secure web access and interaction with authorized foreign systems.

AFRICA

4. In **Africa**, IOM projects to prevent trafficking and assist victims are operational in several countries, many of them targeting exclusively children trafficked for labour exploitation. Regional entities play an important role in helping to curtail irregular migration and trafficking in migrants. IOM works closely with the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to ensure and strengthen protection of and assistance to the migrants and regular migration processes.

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Ghanaian Children Victims of Trafficking for Labour Exploitation in Yeji Fishing Communities

5. The purpose of this pilot project is to assist in facilitating the return and reintegration of Ghanaian children victims of trafficking for labour exploitation in three identified Yeji fishing communities in the Atebubu District in the Brong Ahafo Region in Ghana. The project will assist 1,213 school-age children engaged in fishing in Jakalai No. 3, Kaduegbodzi Kope and Tonka fishing communities along the Volta Lake at Yeji to reunite with their families in different parts of Ghana, especially in the Volta and Central Regions. Family reunification will be achieved through well-integrated programme coordination benefiting the children in their reintegration, reduce their parents' poverty and train the deprived fishermen to improve their fishing methods. Major activities to be undertaken will include identification, documentation, counselling, transportation and other support activities to facilitate the reunification of the children with their parents and reintegration into their communities of origin.

Programme d'assistance au retour et à la réintégration des enfants maliens victimes du trafic transfrontalier entre le Mali et la Côte d'Ivoire

6. Après leur retour au Mali depuis la Côte d'Ivoire, la réinstallation des bénéficiaires, et notamment leur regroupement familial, se feront en étroite collaboration avec les autorités locales et les représentants des communautés, de même qu'avec les organisations internationales et non gouvernementales présentes sur le terrain. Dans le cadre de cette assistance, une attention particulière sera accordée au renforcement des capacités des familles et des communautés d'accueil afin de les aider à surmonter la contrainte que fera peser sur leurs maigres ressources le retour des enfants.

7. La réinstallation des bénéficiaires sera suivie d'une phase de réinsertion. Elle s'effectuera sur la base d'un développement communautaire et familial et sera accompagnée d'une assistance médicale. De même, tous les enfants bénéficieront d'un suivi psychologique, grâce à la présence et à l'appui dans chaque région de retour d'une structure médicale locale pouvant assurer ce suivi. Les enfants dont l'état de santé nécessite un suivi seront aussi pris en charge par le programme. Tenant compte d'un marché du travail réduit et peu dynamique et de la faiblesse du tissu économique, ainsi que de la nécessité d'adaptation aux réalités locales, les activités de réinsertion revêtiront différents aspects:

- Assistance financière aux enfants;
- Assistance psychologique aux enfants;
- Assistance sanitaire aux enfants;
- Réhabilitation des services sociaux et des infrastructures;
- Renforcement des capacités: Réhabilitation des services sociaux et des infrastructures gouvernementales et des partenaires locaux; formation des agents gouvernementaux des services techniques et des ONG dans l'optique de l'assistance qu'ils seront appelés à fournir aux enfants victimes de la traite.

THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN

8. In **the Americas**, the Puebla Process and the South American Conference on Migration have underlined the importance of combating and preventing irregular migration and trafficking in a coordinated way in the Central American/US/Canadian and the South American regions respectively. IOM's close cooperation with these processes provides a unique opportunity to work with countries of origin, transit and destination in the same region. Awareness-raising activities and training of government officials have been carried out in several countries; and direct assistance projects are increasingly offering immediate protection and voluntary return and reintegration support to the victims in that region.

Prevention and Combat of Trafficking in Persons in the Dominican Republic - Phase 3

9. Based on inputs and results achieved during previous phases of the project, this phase will concentrate on assisting victims and creating or consolidating the organizational, technical and institutional capacities necessary for the provision of effective assistance and reintegration services. It will also assist trafficking victims, both internal and international, and promote respect for migrant women's rights. The project will include the preparation and dissemination of public information regarding internal and Haitian trafficking in the country.

Programa de Prevención, Asistencia y Reinserción para las Víctimas de la Trata de Personas en Colombia. Módulo de Asistencia a Víctimas de la Trata

10. La emigración de colombianos tiene como causas, entre otras, la crisis económica, el conflicto armado y el desplazamiento forzado. La migración no ordenada en Colombia facilita fenómenos como la Trata de Personas y el Tráfico Ilícito de Migrantes.

11. El **Programa** propuesto está estructurado en cuatro módulos que son los siguientes:

- Fortalecimiento Institucional;
- Reinserción de las víctimas;
- Sensibilización sobre la Trata;
- Investigación.

12. El monto total del presupuesto del **Programa**, es de 1 millón de dólares EE.UU.. La Real Embajada de los Países Bajos ha contribuido con 584.936 dólares EE.UU., con el apoyo a los Módulos 1, 3 y 4. La contribución del Departamento de Estado del Gobierno de los Estados Unidos (G-TIP/INL) es de 200.000 dólares EE.UU., para atender exclusivamente el módulo de Reinserción de las víctimas. La propuesta tiene como objetivo reunir alrededor de los objetivos propuestos las cooperaciones de distintos países europeos, destinatarios de la Trata de Personas.

ASIA

13. In **Asia**, particular attention has been given to subregional experiences, and a comprehensive counter-trafficking approach has been developed to cover several affected countries in one. Strong emphasis is given to enhancing the local capacity to protect and assist victims, and several projects have been implemented specifically to assist children increasingly caught up in the trafficking phenomenon. IOM actively participates in regional efforts, such as the Bali Process, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Manila Process, the Bangkok Declaration and the Intergovernmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants (APC).

Return and Reintegration of Trafficked and other Vulnerable Women and Children between Selected Countries in the Mekong Region

14. The overall purpose of the project is to establish a systematic and sustainable cross-border working arrangement for the return and reintegration of trafficked and other vulnerable migrant women and children within the six countries of the Mekong region. In order to do so, and as a valuable humanitarian goal in itself, the project will assist the return and reintegration of 900 women and children victims of trafficking over a three-year period, with a particular focus on return to Cambodia from Thailand and Viet Nam. The project will strengthen the ability of all partners involved, both governmental and NGO, to provide assistance to the victims, and promote the necessary cooperation in the region to successfully counter trafficking through legal, administrative, policy and advocacy measures. Targeted research will be conducted to provide timely information on trafficking dynamics in the target countries and a mapping of the regional networks and routes that facilitate this activity. The project will also seek to promote understanding and cooperation among government entities, international agencies and non-governmental organizations on policy issues, as well as practical counter-trafficking activities through seminars and workshops at both national and regional levels.

Pilot Project on Assisted Return and Integration of Trafficked Women and Children in Nepal

15. The overall objective of this pilot project is to contribute to counter-trafficking mechanisms, as well as to assist a small number of Nepalese children and women trafficked to India. The project will pilot a targeted return and integration programme for 60 beneficiaries, identify appropriate return and integration strategies, develop best practices and generate reliable

information to serve as a foundation for future strategies in the assistance to victims of trafficking. This project is consistent with the framework of the draft Convention to combat trafficking of women and children of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) which reflects concerns of governments on trafficking, and the consequences it has for societies in the region. The project also corresponds to the “National Policy” to combat trafficking, established by the Government of the Kingdom of Nepal.

EUROPE

16. In **Europe**, in September 2002, IOM co-organized with the European Commission the European Conference on “Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, global challenge for the twenty-first century”. The conclusions and recommendations of the Conference, reflected in the Brussels Declaration,⁵ were endorsed by the European Council of Ministers on 8 May 2003. The Brussels Declaration aimed to create a roadmap of best practices to generate a comprehensive and coordinated European approach to ending the human rights abuses associated with trafficking in human beings. One of the results has been the creation of a European Group of Experts on Trafficking in Human Beings, in which IOM participates. IOM has initiated regional and comprehensive approaches to counter trafficking, particularly in the Balkans/South Eastern Europe, in coordination with regional institutions, such as the European Commission the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking.

Programme of Assistance for the Protection, Return and Reintegration of Trafficked Women and Children in the Western Balkans and Main Countries of Origin

17. This twelve-month project will continue to facilitate the orderly, safe and dignified return and reintegration of trafficked persons, in particular women and children stranded in the Balkans in the context of IOM’s global concern to prevent, assist and protect migrants who fall victim to trafficking. It will also continue to facilitate the collection of more detailed data on the phenomenon of trafficking in the region using the recently established Counter-Trafficking Module Database. In cooperation with local government partners and NGOs, as well as international agencies, IOM will assist trafficked victims in need of return and reintegration assistance with pre-departure counselling, and return transportation to their home countries. Upon arrival of the victims, the IOM Offices will, in coordination with local partners and according to the individuals' needs, temporarily house the victims in safe shelters if available. In cooperation with NGOs, medical and social services will be made available in order to ease the victims' reintegration into their families of origin, as well as to facilitate access to vocational training and/or employment orientation courses.

⁵ Brussels Declaration on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Council of the European Union, Brussels, 29 November 2002 – 14981/02 LIMITE JAI 280 SOC 572.

Combating Trafficking in Human Beings: Republic of Moldova

18. By building upon and complementing IOM's past and present activities in the Republic of Moldova to counteract trafficking in women, the programme addresses three interrelated aspects of this phenomenon, which contribute to the efforts of the Moldovan authorities to combat trafficking in women from and within the Republic of Moldova: **prevention** through the dissemination of information to further increase public awareness; **prosecution** and criminalization by supporting law enforcement and judiciary structures to more effectively act against crimes of trafficking in women; and **protection** and reintegration assistance through the support to victims of trafficking who have returned to the Republic of Moldova.

19. The project aims to strengthen the capability of the relevant authorities and civil society in Moldova to more effectively combat this phenomenon, focusing on protection and reintegration, through the development of micro-enterprises for victims of trafficking. Furthermore, the initiative is consistent with and supportive of the Moldovan Government's "*National Workplan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings*".