



FAWCO UN Report

Submitted By: Pam Perraud

Date: 17 July 2014

Location: Palais des Nations, Room XII

Program: Special Event Devoted to the first Observation of the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

Organizations: Office of the UN High Commissioner For Human Rights

Speakers: Opening Remarks:
Alexander Opinmakh, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Belarus

Panelists Ms Navanethem Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; Ms Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General, International Organization for Migration and Coordinator of ICAT; Vladimir Grachev, Head Division of Conference Management UNOG; Kari Tapiola, Special Adviser to the Director-General of the International Labour Office; Jean-Claude Legrand, Regional Advisor Child Protection, UNICE; Mike Dottridge, Board of Trustees of the UN Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery; Ricardo Espinosa, Head of Development and Global Initiatives at the Geneva Center for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue

July 30th marks the day of the adoption of the UN Global Plan of Action Against the Trafficking of Persons in 2010. The purpose of the Platform was to increase awareness of the importance of fighting modern day slavery at all levels.

The day's meeting was organized with the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights and the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking based in Geneva. The Group of Friends was formed to raise the visibility of the efforts to eradicate human trafficking of women and children and to share best practices among those members on the front lines fighting trafficking.

The UN High Commissioner of Human Rights, Navi Pillay spoke about the importance of celebrating the 1st official day because it reaffirmed the commitment of the UN, member states as well as civil society to protect the victims of human trafficking. She challenged those groups to root out the structural causes of trafficking such as historically discriminated groups, young runaways, and the traffickers offering false hopes of jobs. By celebrating the special day, it reaffirmed the need to prosecute the offenders and protect the victims in the future.

She also said the world knows already what fuels much of the demand--- prostitution and cheap labor. She explained that the UN has guidelines on remedies for governments and we owe respect to the victims. She mentioned the UN Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, which was formed in 1991 to give grants to NGOs assisting victims of trafficking.

Laura Thompson, Deputy Director International Organization for General Migration discussed ICAT – the organization created in 2006 by 16 founding organizations to respond to the need to create a more holistic approach to protect victims from trafficking. So far the organization has helped over 65,000 victims however she pointed out that it is only a minuscule number compared to what is actually needed. She outlined three areas where more work was needed. First, more research needed to identify the victims. Second, more assistance is needed on the part of the private sector as much of the demand now is coming from private industry for cheap labor. Third, she sees the need for more prosecution of offenders, as it is now the world's most profitable industry.

Mr. Kari Tapiola, Special Advisor to the Director General of ILO discussed the recent passage of new legally binding protocol to modernize one passed in 1930, which prohibited forced labor. It includes new obligations of member states to compensate victims. It also obligates states to punish perpetrators and it opens the way for remedies for victims who are not legal residents of the country. The aim is to make a dent in the \$150 billion industry. The key, he said, was setting coherent, effective strategies to deal with ever more sophisticated traffickers.

Jean-Claude Legrand, regional Advisor of Child Protection of UNICEF, discussed the recent study done in 22 countries, which outlined the problems, which causes trafficking— previous violence in the family, poverty, social exclusion, limited access to education, abandonment of children and the negative effects of migration. UNICEF sees a greater need for access to services and the need to strengthen data collection in order to facilitate decision-making on solutions.

Mike Dottridge, Trustee of the UN Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, which was founded in 1991, explained how the fund worked. They give small grants to NGO's to specialize in rehabilitation and counseling victims of trafficking. He pointed out that the fund has a very small administrative budget and the emphasis is not on awareness programs or going to conferences, it is spending as much money as possible on the victims themselves. The money is spent on housing, schooling for kids, social assistance or job training. Some 7000 people- three quarters of them women and one-quarter children are currently being assisted. They currently have given out 35 grants in 33 countries of an average of \$12,000 each. Unfortunately, the Fund is not able to give as many grants today as 5 years ago. In 2008, they received \$800,000 and in 2013 they received only half of that \$400,000. Only 11 UN Member states have donated and they need at least \$2,000,000 to reach their targets. They are currently seeking additional funding.

After the official presentations, the floor was left open for statements and questions. The UN representative from the Philippines who is a member of the Group of Friends discussed the work the Philippines is doing with other ASEAN members to stem the tide of illegal trafficking in her country. She spoke about more crackdowns on trafficking by the government and a new emphasis on pre-departure training for those leaving the Philippines.

Representatives of the Group of Friends passed out information about the UN Voluntary Fund as well as a diskette from the UN Human Rights Department, which included the "Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking."