INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITHIN AND FROM AFRICA

Co-organised by Caritas Internationalis and the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People

DRAFT AGENDA

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Issue paper: Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation

- **State of affairs**

Sexual exploitation could be referred to as the abuse or unfair treatment of people (especially females) because of their sex. It is a situation where a person is considered for her/his sexual attraction, without taking into consideration her/his human dignity. Trafficking for sexual exploitation therefore relates to the recruiting, harbouring, enticing, transporting, providing, obtaining or maintaining of a person for the purpose of sexual activities through the use of force, threat of force, fraud, coercion or a combination of these.¹ All its victims have been damaged, bruised, dejected and rejected. In many cases, a human rights approach to avoid more violations of victims’ rights is completely lacking. Young people, predominantly women and girls (there are male victims as well)², are trafficked internally within African borders and externally for the purpose of sexual exploitation, as the demand for using them as objects of sexual gratification for a price remains high. Unfortunately, trafficking for sexual exploitation has become a lucrative multi-national business in which almost every country is involved. In many parts of the world, human trafficking is a high-profit and low-risk endeavour for the traffickers.

According to the UNODC 2014 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 53% of trafficked persons detected in 2011 globally were subjected to sexual exploitation, while 40% were subjected to forced labour.³ In the 2009 report, 79% of total detected cases of human trafficking were recorded as victims

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of trafficking for sexual exploitation. This decline may be related to increased information on the number of detected cases of trafficking for labour exploitation, and not necessarily to a drop in the number of victims being trafficked for sexual exploitation. Information provided on the gender of traffickers indicate that women make up the largest proportion of traffickers in 30% of the 155 countries investigated. In some parts of the world, women trafficking women is the norm.

The majority of persons trafficked from Africa are either subjected to forced labour (49%) or sexual exploitation (36%). Most of these victims remained within their sub-regions, as domestic trafficking constitutes 76% of trafficked victims in sub-Saharan Africa. However, where transregional trafficking from sub-Saharan Africa occurs, the main destination areas are Western and Central Europe and the Middle East, with the flows of West African victims to Western Europe largely comprising women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation.

Eurostat records that the majority of registered victims in the EU were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation (69% from 2010 to 2012). Trafficking for forced labour (19%) came second, followed by other forms of trafficking such as trafficking for the removal of organs, for criminal activities, or for the sale of children (12% altogether).

It should be noted, however, that many of the trafficking victims are undocumented, unidentified and unregistered, so in reality the number of victims is much higher.

Traffickers use several means to prevent victims from escaping. These may include physical restraint in the form of locks and guards, physical or psychological violence, drugging, or instilling a fear of the police, making the victims believe that they are the offenders.

- **What are the current challenges both for faith-based organisations and the international community?**

Some of the challenges faced in stemming trafficking for sexual exploitation include: inadequate funding of anti-human trafficking activities to adequately address issues of prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims by faith-based and not-for-profit organisations, especially in countries of origin; lack of equipment and facilities by law enforcement agencies; ineffective border patrolling/control; lack of coordination and cooperation among law enforcement agencies at multi-country levels to tackle human trafficking cases, especially in the field of organised crime and irregular migration; ineffective communication; lack of connection with migrants communities, especially in countries of transit and destination; difficulty in gaining the cooperation of victims as witnesses in court due to fear of reprisal attacks from traffickers and/or fear of stigmatization; and challenges in investigation and prosecution processes, which in some instances could result in more violations of the rights of the trafficked victims, especially for the women and girls. Often, returnees

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6 *Trafficking in persons in Africa and the Middle East* in *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, UNODC, 2014


are faced with abject poverty due to lack of a sustainable livelihood, and some are subjected to stigmatization in the communities or places to which they return. Stigma and poverty make a volatile combination which hinders reintegration and predispose the victims to conditions of high vulnerability for re-trafficking.

- **Who are the stakeholders working on the issue and what are they doing (national, regional and international levels)?**

The anti-human trafficking response cannot be exclusively left to the domain of police forces and security agencies. The judiciary, legislative and executive arms of government in countries of origin, transit and destination should also be fully involved, with multilateral agencies playing a key role, in order to create an enabling environment in the fight against and eradication of trafficking in persons. Schools, civil societies, religious institutions, corporate organisations and business entities, community associations, youth and women’s groups, social clubs and neighbourhood watch groups should not be left behind in this fight. Some of the stakeholders actively working on anti-human trafficking include: national government agencies such as the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) in Nigeria and the Department of Equal Opportunities in Italy; national networks such as the Network of Civil Society Organisations Against Child Trafficking and Child Labour (NACTAL) in Nigeria; regional networks such as the African Network Against Human Trafficking (ANAHT) which focuses mainly on prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration; global networks such as Christian Organisations Against Trafficking in Persons Network (COATNET), the Caritas Confederation and the International Network of Consecrated Life Against Trafficking in Persons (TALITHA KUM); religious and faith-based organisations such as the Committee for the Support of Dignity of Women (COSUDOW) in Nigeria, the NGO “Slaves No More” in Italy; NGOs and civil society organisations such as WOTCLEF and Ida Renaissance; multilateral agencies such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), with bilateral cooperation agreements with, among others, Italy, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries, France and the UK, which have led to the dismantling of several international criminal trafficking networks.

- **What are the results of the actions implemented and the changes obtained by faith-based organisations?**

The authorities in both countries of origin and destination need to do more to rescue victims and help them to recover. The Council of Europe convention requires countries to provide trafficking victims with at least 30 days of recovery, including accommodation, medical treatment and legal advice. The UK offers a 45-day “reflection period”, during which a person cannot be deported. The Italian model for the assistance of the victims, which is still considered as a best practice in this field, was built on the principle that an effective anti-trafficking strategy should be based on a victim rights-centred approach. A complex structure for assistance to trafficked persons was then developed on the basis of legislation and is now in place at national level, which works through two main tools: programmes for temporary assistance; and programmes for long-term assistance and social inclusion. Between 2006 and 2012, Caritas Italy and other NGOs gave assistance to 4,207 persons under these programmes.
• What would be your recommendations (to Caritas, Bishops Conferences, religious congregations, other faith-based actors, governments and regional bodies for implementation of the respective SDGs, etc.)? Please come up with three and specify to whom they are directed.

- Powerful networking among the various Bishops Conferences, faith-based organisations, regional bodies and governments in countries of origin, transit and destination is required. There should also be strong collaboration between all stakeholders and law enforcement agencies.

- Preventive activities, such as awareness raising on trafficking for labour exploitation and other forms of non-sexual exploitation, should be enhanced by all relevant stakeholders, especially in countries of origin. Good, effective, transnational collaboration and cooperation is essential between the different actors who are involved and who interface with women and girls who are (potential) victims of trafficking.

- Destination countries need to improve their detection and identification systems, review their migration policies and ensure a safe path for people who have undertaken a migration process. A trafficked person for instance, should not be denied temporary residence visas while any criminal, civil or other legal actions are pending.

- In proceedings regarding deportation to their countries of origin for illegal residence, it would be necessary to put policies in place to assist trafficking victims and develop protocols in which communication between government forces and security bodies, NGOs, etc. is developed in order to protect the women. In countries of origin, a protocol of identification for women deported from destination countries is essential to ensure their protection and assistance.

• What questions would you like to address during the Conference?

1. How can governments handle prevention of human trafficking and effectively address the area of ‘demand’?

2. What role could poverty reduction and alleviation play in combating human trafficking?

3. How can we tap into our rich traditional African values and culture in stopping human trafficking, especially of our girls and women for sexual exploitation?

4. How can COATNET and other faith-based organisations in victims’ countries of origin collaborate more effectively and seamlessly with the faith-based organisations in victims’ countries of destination to prevent and combat trafficking for sexual exploitation?
**Can you suggest a good practice (briefly describe it)?**

- The Italian Government in collaboration with the Federal Government of Nigeria is working to ensure that victims of human trafficking in Italy have proper documents. Aware that most victims of human trafficking went over with fake documents, the Nigerian Immigration Department now issues those victims with valid Nigerian passports to enable them regularise their documents and live and work in dignity in Italy.

- Victim protection and compensation. Sweden started the best practice of compensating victims with funds confiscated from traffickers. It is heartening to know that some other countries, including Nigeria, have adopted this practice; many more need to follow suit.

- Financial support by Caritas Italy to ensure that the victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, presently held in Centres for Identification and Deportation (CIE) or hosted in safe houses/shelters, are repatriated in a dignified manner.

- The Catch Them Young campaign by Caritas Nigeria – a preventive awareness creation campaign in primary and secondary schools in the rural areas of Edo state to make children aware of the dangers faced by victims of human trafficking so that they do not fall prey to the lure of traffickers.

**Suggestions for a common prevention strategy for faith-based organisations?**

Faith-based organisations have an important task in strongly pursuing a preventive strategy aimed at educating and informing the public and various strata in society on the dangers of human trafficking. Massive awareness creation, especially in countries of origin, through enlightenment campaigns and awareness-raising programmes via print and electronic media, such as the internet, organisations’ websites, emails, radio jingles, call-in talk shows, TV commercials and newspaper columns; mass rallies in the most vulnerable communities; speaking at mass in parishes and other religious gatherings; campaigns in schools and educational institutions; seminars and workshops for actors and those who interface with vulnerable groups and returnees; use of information, education and communication (IEC) materials such as posters, flyers, stickers and books on the dangers of human trafficking; and targeted and appropriate use of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Bearing in mind that human traffickers for sexual exploitation mainly target women, children and those between the ages of 18 and 24, youth should be central to this battle, as it is their future that is attacked by this terrible phenomenon. In Nigeria, it has been observed that traffickers have moved into the rural areas to deceive poor and unsuspecting rural dwellers. Therefore, those involved in combating human trafficking should move their campaigns to the rural areas and work closely with the communities.
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