

DIRECTOR-GENERAL, UNON

World Day against Trafficking in Persons
Reinforcement of Regional and International Police and Judicial Cooperation for effective response to the
Trafficking of Children and Young People
Monday 30 July 2018,

Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

Distinguished Panelists;
Students from universities;
UN Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen;

Thank you for joining us for this event to mark the 2018 World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.
I would also like to thank our distinguished panelists for their participation.

Background

This year's World Day against Trafficking in Persons highlights the urgent need to step up responses to the trafficking of children and young people.

When we talk about human trafficking, the numbers tell a cold and difficult story. According to the 2016 Global Report on Human Trafficking, 79% of trafficking victims around the world are women and children. In Sub-Saharan Africa and Central America and the Caribbean, a majority of the detected victims are children. There seems to be a relation between a country's level of development and the age of detected trafficking victims.

In the least developed countries, children often comprise large shares of the detected victims. Human trafficking is a serious crime and a grave violation of human rights, which threatens national security and undermines sustainable development and the rule of law. Criminals prey on vulnerable people in need and without support, and they see migrants, especially children and young people, as easy targets for exploitation, violence and abuse. The scope of the violence and criminal exploitation the world has witnessed appears to know no bounds.

In Eastern Africa, this is not an exception. Children and young people fall victim to human trafficking, kidnapping, and extortion at an alarming rate. Thousands of children have died on perilous sea crossings or crossing deserts, while the criminals responsible escape justice.

International community

The United Nations is engaged at various levels in efforts to dismantle criminal networks involved in trafficking in persons. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its supplementary Protocols, and in particular, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, are great examples.

Nearly every country in the world has pledged to put the Protocol against human trafficking into action. UNODC, as the UN's key technical agency in this field, is mandated to assist Member States with implementation of the Protocol. By strengthening action under the Protocol, we can better protect vulnerable children and young people. The Convention and the Protocol also underpin the international cooperation needed to bring criminals to justice.

Further, the UN Global Plan of Action calls for integrating the fight against human trafficking into the United Nations' broader programmes to boost development and strengthen security around the world. There is a real need for concerted action to address trafficking in persons. A coherent, comprehensive and coordinated approach is crucial, underlining the importance of enhancing international cooperation to tackle this global problem.

UNODC has a key role to play in this regard. As the guardian of the Convention and its Protocol, UNODC is also the Coordinator of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons. This Group brings together 23 UN entities and other international and regional partners to harmonize and reinforce anti-trafficking responses.

Conclusion

Distinguished participants,

The challenges presented by the unprecedented flows of people around the world are many. But as the Secretary-General has said, this is not a crisis of numbers, it is a crisis of solidarity. Now more than ever, we need to stand together to end the human suffering caused by trafficking. Working together, we can give trafficking victims, as well as the many children and young people who are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, a much-needed voice and a helping hand.

Thank you.