

**HDIM Special Day on Trafficking
October 3, 2006**

**Side Event Report
Recent developments in the protection and assistance to trafficked persons,
including children**

Background

The protection of and assistance to trafficked persons is not negotiable. States need to ensure that those most likely to come into contact with trafficked persons (including children) are aware and sensitised as to their needs. Also they need to ensure that the appropriate support is always available. The ODIHR supports establishment of multi-agency structures, in the form of national referral mechanisms to achieve these aims. This event provided a number of NGO's with a forum to present recent project activity and lessons learnt on identification and protection of trafficked persons for both labour and sexual exploitation. The event aimed to highlight good practices in ensuring protection of trafficked persons rights alongside continuing challenges in this work. It also aimed to develop recommendations for future action on the issues raised.

Panel Participants

Ms Anke van den Borne, ECPAT Netherlands
Ms Sophie Grelat and Ms Dimitra Pippidou Terre des Hommes and ARSIS¹,
Ms Marieke van Doorninck, La Strada International,

Moderation: Michele Clark, Head of Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit, OSCE Vienna

Main Points of Discussion and Recommendations:

Victim Identification and Protection

- A human rights approach to trafficking means that assessments should be conducted before the adoption of anti-trafficking measures to establish how policies will impact on the human rights of those affected. Such measures should also be monitored and reviewed for their human rights impact also during implementation.

¹ The power point presentations of Terre des Hommes/ARSIS and ECPAT are available from the ODIHR Anti-Trafficking Programme upon request.

- Protection of trafficked persons should mean support to empower them and help them regain control over their lives. Current support and assistance should be reviewed to ensure that it corresponds to the needs of trafficked persons. Compensation should be advocated as an important tool for empowerment.
- Cooperation with those who work with migrants, including undocumented migrants, is important for those who work on trafficking in human beings in order to reach out to a group which is very vulnerable to trafficking in human beings. More needs to be done to develop synergies with this group of actors.
- Awareness raising campaigns should not focus on preventing people from migrating, but on providing information so that people can make a well informed decision on their work opportunities.

Issues specific to Child Trafficking

- Policies and measures to combat child trafficking must be guided by child rights standards (and not migration or public security concerns) there must be safeguards in place to ensure that measures do not have a discriminating effect on the child. Special social policies and protection measures should be developed for communities that are particularly vulnerable, such as socially marginalised groups, including ethnic minorities and migrants. Effective child protection is also crucial in preventing trafficking in children.
- There is a need to improve existing child protection infrastructure in participating States, in both countries of origin and countries of destination, which are often inadequate to protect children, in particular foreign children, from abuse and exploitation. Responses should be led by the aim of finding a durable solution for the child, based on an assessment of the family and social environment, the opportunities of the child in the place of origin and destination and the interests of the child.
- A review of current child protection infrastructures at the local and national level and increased funding and human resources in this sector are necessary to address current gaps in protection. The environment surrounding children should be improved at all levels: the family, community and civil society organisations, state institutions. The strategies and methodologies used in protection and prevention work targeting children need to be adapted to the needs of children. Good existing practices, such as street work, peer education and other forms of outreach should be shared and integrated in all prevention and protection work. In this context, networks of all relevant practitioners at the local and national level working with children, such as doctors, social workers, teachers, law enforcement officers, community leaders, civil society organisations should be established and supported.

- All children's access to education, including life skills education at school, should be a priority of participating States in order to combat child trafficking.
- In the context of international child trafficking, cooperation between all stakeholders - policy makers, social services, civil society actors law enforcement and judiciary etc. - in the respective countries is essential and needs to be enhanced.
