

Eva Biaudet
Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
For PC Meeting of November 9, 2006

Your Excellencies, Honorable new Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to have the opportunity to appear before you already today and give my early views on how I will be addressing my responsibilities during the coming year. I would also like to present an outline of a vision for coming strategies. I am aware that I will not step in unbroken ground, on the contrary, there is a lot of expertise and experience to utilize within the anti-trafficking unit, the secretariat headed by the Secretary-General and the Chair-in-Office, just to mention some of my nearest working partners in the future. I would therefore like to start with thanking the Secretary-General, Mr. Perrin de Brichambaut for his strong presentation of the report from the anti-trafficking unit. It feels comfortable to continue from that.

A wise old president of Finland used to say that every clever politician starts with recognizing the reality. Only then is it possible to build strategies of survival and ultimately of success.

Recognition of Trafficking in Human Beings as a serious crime that violates human dignity and integrity in all our societies is a realistic approach. The comprehensive approach promoted by the OSCE is one which indeed requires “a focus on bringing to justice those responsible for this crime, and carrying out effective measures to prevent it while maintaining a humanitarian and compassionate approach in rendering assistance to its victims.” (PC Decision No. 557 of the 24 July 2003 OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, 1.3) This wording in the PC decision from 2003 reflects the pragmatics in fighting trafficking as an international organized crime as well as it brings out the principal human rights values behind protecting victims and human dignity.

I want to commend the OSCE for its anti-trafficking activities in the whole region; in countries of origin, transit and destination, thus ensuring geographical balance which is necessary in order to ensure sustainable results towards eradicating THB. This balance is not only necessary for political reasons but for ensuring that the chain of operation will be addressed adequately, being aware that these distinctions might not always work linearly.

The substantial and comprehensive framework of the OSCE political commitments in the area of combating THB also highlights the unique placement of the OSCE. Here I would like to refer to the thorough discussion of this framework as Annex A of the Annual Report.

The role of the participating States

But in the end, dear distinguished friends, it is the primary responsibility of the participating States to take action at the national level to establish a solid anti-

trafficking legal framework in accordance with international standards. And even that is not enough. We need to work towards creating an environment that is clearly hostile to trafficking in human beings, through prevention, prosecution or protection activities. Synergy in States' anti-trafficking activities needs to be enhanced through interagency coordinating bodies. The institute of National Rapporteur is one which will facilitate independent data collection and research and provide for monitoring at the national level and this has emerged as a strong recommendation of the Annual Report of the Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit. A strong system of co-operation between the State bodies and NGOs contributes much towards ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice and that victims are assisted and compensated for harm suffered.

The work ahead – a strategic outline for the year 2007

The strategic outline for the incoming year will therefore continue to build upon the priority areas of the anti-trafficking mechanism as formalized in the 2007 Unified Budget Outline. These priorities focus on assisting participating States in the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the OSCE Action Plan. Specifically, for 2007, I will, together with the anti-trafficking unit of the Secretariat that I lead, focus on:

- a) translating knowledge into policy: we are committed to raising the understanding and increasing the knowledge of all forms of THB; disseminating information on effective policies and practices to combat the crime and offering technical assistance towards their design and implementation at the national level;
- b) improving strategic communication, which will involve continuing the development of strategic approaches to OSCE anti-trafficking work, at the policy and programmatic levels;
- c) building capacity and strengthening institutions, which involves assisting participating States at their request in the implementation of anti-trafficking commitments in the areas of prevention, prosecution and protection and assistance through activities aimed at strengthening institutions and developing capacity at the national and regional levels; and
- d) reporting on trafficking in human beings in the OSCE region, continuing to build upon the work of the first Annual Report in a way that will be useful to participating States and all OSCE bodies involved in combating THB.

For this purpose I intend to establish an informal open-ended Group of Friends of the SR to have regular meetings with interested delegations, provide briefings of activities, hold consultations on priorities and future actions, preparation of anti-trafficking fora, and other forms of close consultations with the delegations.

I am definitely committed to address all forms of THB, in accordance with the OSCE Action Plan to Combat THB and other relevant OSCE Decisions, with special attention to areas which have not received adequate attention in OSCE participating States for example, THB for labour exploitation: detection of the crime; victim identification and access to justice; raised level of understanding and awareness for all

relevant actors; links between migration and THB; safe return or stay; broader participation in anti-trafficking activities by the private sector, trade unions and other relevant actors and other key areas. The conference next week on Prosecution of Trafficking for Forced and Bonded Labor marks one more step in our commitment to raise the importance and visibility of all forms of THB across the OSCE region and to provide participants with concrete and practical guidance on how to address this issue in their own countries.

We have plans to start preparations for the 6th Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons in 2007 which could focus on data collection and research (existing tools, methodology, questions of availability, reliability and comparability). The justification for the subject of the conference stems from the conclusions of the Annual Report drawing attention to the negative implications of the absence of reliable data and lack of national mechanisms to monitor the status of THB in each country;

Confirming the significance to enhance capacity building in participating States it is important to continue work in partnership with the Alliance members. To this end we plan to hold an expert level workshop on training manuals, elaborated by the leading international organizations. This joint workshop will involve IOs and NGOs working in the area of specialized training on THB for government officials and other stakeholders. The aim of the workshop is the development of a comprehensive assessment of training programs which have been developed to meet the professional needs of the various actors responsible for combating trafficking in human beings this might be law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, immigration and border officials, labor inspectors, social service providers, etc.

Co-operation between the OSCE and the leading international organizations and NGOs, in the framework of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, has already provided mutual understanding and coordination of activities and has become an asset for the OSCE participating States through receiving first-hand expertise experience of the international community in combating THB. It will hence be of great value to develop the Alliance cooperation further both at the high representative level and the expert level.

From the bottom of my heart – and I am convinced that all our hearts are absolutely necessary for creating the willpower needed for defeating THB - I here want to express my willingness to cooperate closely with the OSCE participating States and naturally with and by the lead of the CiO. I will offer and invite my partnership to the SG and work as close and open as possible with the OSCE structures and Institutions, including field operations – within a transparent and proactive approach. Also in this respect, I am very Nordic!

I am offering to provide political guidance and support to the anti-trafficking initiatives of the OSCE bodies, and I am looking forward to engaging in a productive dialogue with all relevant bodies on the recommendations of the Annual Report, From Policy to Practice: Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in the OSCE Region.