



United States Mission to the OSCE
Statement on the 11th Economic Forum:
"Trafficking in Human Beings, Drugs, Small
Arms and Light Weapons: National and
International Economic Impact"

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Prague, Czech Republic
May 20, 2003

The United States strongly opposes trafficking in all of its forms and welcomes the efforts of the Dutch Chairmanship to focus attention on the very important, but often overlooked, economic aspects of trafficking in human beings, drugs, and small arms and light weapons. It is imperative that, in attempting to deal with the economic side of this issue, we examine the factors in source, transit and destination countries that foster and sustain trafficking.

The OSCE, its participating States, institutions and bodies, must work to address, among others, poor economic conditions that compel people to get involved in trafficking out of economic need, corruption that facilitates transit or fails to halt the movement of trafficked goods and people, and the very real problem of demand. Without attacking all sides of the problem, we will not succeed in solving it.

The three preparatory seminars produced a wealth of ideas for further action. Our task now is to move these ideas closer to concrete action. Some steps are relatively easy, others are complex; some will have immediate impact, others will require more time. There are initiatives participating States and NGOs may launch on their own, and suggestions that merit transformation into OSCE decisions and commitments.

Of the many good ideas that have been advanced, several strike us as being particularly well suited to the OSCE's comparative strengths in the Economic and Environmental Dimension:

In the realm of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Trafficking, the OSCE could:

- Work to develop an internationally standardized definition of brokering, including instituting a regulatory framework to control brokering activities.
- Assist governments in developing better export control policies on SALW.

In the realm of Human Trafficking, the OSCE could:

- Help develop targeted information campaigns about the potential risks of accepting employment abroad.
- Intensify entrepreneurial training, especially efforts to help women transform skills into an income stream, and promote small business development.

In the realm of Drug Trafficking, the OSCE could:

- Support speedy ratification and implementation of the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime. Work with participating States to implement this convention with the highest possible standards.
- Support efforts to promote farming of legal crops.

Regarding the economics of trafficking in all its forms, the OSCE could:

- Help states with efforts to implement the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) 40 Recommendations on Money Laundering.
- Ensure that all OSCE participating States have an article in the criminal code that allows courts to seize and re-direct assets of convicted traffickers into social and community services to compensate victims and to combat trafficking efforts in general.
- Explore the use of tax inspection or other investigating units to check the origin of suspicious assets, fortunes and real estate.
- Promote the reporting of irregular financial transactions by banks, lawyers, real estate agents and brokerage houses.
- Continue its efforts to promote good governance and transparency.

There are, of course, hundreds of things that can and must be done, but our challenge is to identify the most pertinent steps for the Economic and Environmental Dimension of the OSCE.

If we make significant progress on just a few of the suggestions listed above, the OSCE will make an important contribution towards eliminating a scourge that affects us all. Trafficking, efforts to combat it, as well as its after effects, drain enormous financial and human resources from governments, diverting them from uses with far more positive socio-economic effects.

Our deep concern for the victims of human trafficking and the overall cost of trafficking in all its forms compel us to action. All OSCE participating States, not to mention countries throughout the world, would be better off if money spent to destroy surplus arms, seize drugs and disrupt human trafficking networks, to cite just a few, could be spent instead to build schools, train teachers, and promote economic growth and development. The forced "misuse" of scarce state resources poses a huge threat to security and stability and must be brought to an end.