

**Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
Special day on trafficking -3<sup>rd</sup> October 2006**

**Alliance statement on demand**

**Presented by La Strada International on behalf of the Alliance Expert Coordination Team**

The Alliance Expert Coordination Team is convinced that trafficking in human beings cannot be tackled if its root causes are not addressed.

Alongside root causes in the countries of origin including poverty, gender discrimination, violence and corruption and contributing factors during the migration process, such as the lack of safe and legal migration opportunities there are root causes in the countries of destination, including the demand for cheap and unprotected labour.

Therefore we welcome the civil and political attention being paid to research for and action to address the demand side of trafficking.

Demand however is an ideologically loaded term which lacks understanding and definition. In the past much of the focus has concerned demand for trafficked persons' services in the sex industry. In particular the recent UN Special Rapporteur's report on trafficking, presented to the Human Rights Council in September devoted almost exclusive attention to demand for trafficked persons services in the sex industry. But trafficking is defined more broadly under the Palermo Protocol. To do justice to both the definition and the different kinds of trafficking situations that we the Alliance partners address in our day to day work, discussions of demand and measures to be taken 'to discourage the demand' (Art. 9.5, Palermo Protocol) must reflect the breadth and seriousness of all purposes for which people are trafficked.

In the OSCE region, alongside trafficking into the sex industry, there is ample evidence of trafficking into construction work, agriculture and food processing, domestic and care work, hotels and hospitality and for the purposes of begging, the exploitation of petty crime and benefit fraud. Worst and hazardous forms of child labour also continue to thrive. Trafficking thus arises in sectors that are legal and regulated or informal and unregulated and for activities that may be illegal.

Among the important questions that need to be addressed on the issue of demand are: Why does the global demand for cheap labour result in modern day slavery? Also, is the demand really in fact for trafficked persons labour or services or more generally for cheap, unprotected and - as a consequence- exploitative labour or services? Research so far has indicated that the demand in activities and sectors prone to exploitation is for employees who are invisible, unprotected, excluded, vulnerable and disempowered. It seems that demand for such labour may often be met, although not exclusively so, through trafficking.

The OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings connects the problem of unprotected, informal and often illegal labour and the demand side in trafficking (Chapter IV, 3.2). It implicitly suggests that to tackle the demand attention must be paid to labour protection in those sectors or activities where forced labour or services are likely to occur.

However this connection is not sufficiently acknowledged nor examined in countries where forced and exploitative labour is possibly used in the production of many goods and services. Also the fact that several sectors, especially those that are labour intensive, might not survive without cheap, and unprotected labour is not openly recognised.

In addition to economic factors, the reasons for social acceptance and tolerance of discrimination and exploitation need to be examined. Why do consumers of products or services provided by exploitative labour and more generally the public tacitly accept this exploitation? Is there a general lack of awareness amongst consumers preventing them from differentiating between free and fair and un-free labour and service? Do discriminatory attitudes towards migrant workers underpin this silent or wilful tolerance?

The Alliance firmly believes that research on demand for all forms of trafficked, forced and exploitative labour, including the role of states and the private sector, is needed to fully understand the issues and to explore the responses needed. The respect for and the protection of the human rights of the affected groups should be at the core of all measures taken or policies adopted.

In the debate on the demand side of trafficking, the Alliance calls upon states, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, labour unions and the private sector to:

- Broaden the awareness, attention and research into all forms of forced labour and exploitation, whether as a result of internal or international trafficking, and the factors that underpin its demand;
- Tackle the problem of unprotected, informal and often illegal labour which leads to violations of the rights of migrant workers and fosters trafficking and exploitation;
- Support the organisation/unionisation of migrant workers/trafficked persons to enable them to better protect their rights;
- Ensure that informal and unregulated work activities are brought within the protection of Labour laws to ensure that all workers enjoy the same labour rights;
- Collect information and address all exploitative and hazardous forms of child labour in conformity with the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and design strategic responses in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Encourage the creation of ethical employer associations which will adhere to codes of conduct that ensure protection of the rights of its workers;
- Develop public awareness campaigns on products and services that are produced by exploitative and forced labour and develop guidance to assist consumers in identifying goods or services that have not been produced through exploitation;
- Sign and ratify the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant workers and their Families and the Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;
- Engage in public awareness campaigns focusing on acceptance of migrants and their families to reduce discrimination and stigmatisation of migrant workers.

On behalf of the Alliance Expert Coordination Team:

OSCE/ODIHR, UNHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM, ILO, IOM, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, ICMPD, Europol, Interpol, Dutch National Rapporteur, Nexus Institute, ACTA, Anti-Slavery International, ECPAT, La Strada International, International Federation of Terre des Hommes, Save the Children, Amnesty International.