



## THE HOLY SEE

2013 **Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**  
*Working Session 10: Humanitarian issues and other commitments (continued).*  
*Combating Trafficking in Human Beings*  
*Monday, September 30, 2013*

Mr. Chairman,

The Holy See wishes to use this opportunity to raise its voice once again against the heinous crime of trafficking in human persons. We will not tire of doing so at all levels, be it local, national or international. The commitment of combating human trafficking is at the heart of the OSCE's founding principle that security begins with the protection and promotion of the inherent dignity of the human person. It is the person, every person and, in particular, those who are victims of modern day slavery, that must be at the centre of all our activities. No other consideration should be more important. This is why my Delegation welcomes and commends the activities undertaken by all stakeholders participating in the suppression of human trafficking, whether individual or institutionalized, governmental or non-governmental, civil or religious.

Combating trafficking in human beings was at the top of the agenda for the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People held last May in Rome. In this context, referring to this despicable phenomenon, Pope Francis reiterated that,

*“the "trafficking in persons” is a shameful activity, a disgrace to our societies who call themselves civilized! Exploiters and clients at all levels should make a serious examination of conscience before themselves and before God! The Church today renews its strong appeal for the protection of dignity and centrality of each person, in respect of fundamental rights, as emphasized by its social doctrine, which calls for rights to be extended where there really are not recognized to the millions of men and women on every continent. In a world where there is much talk of rights, how many times actually human dignity is trampled! ”*

(Pope Francis, 24 May 2013)

Mr. Chairman,

Trafficking in human persons, especially of women and minors, in all its horrible forms has become a powerful global business involving many countries of origin, transit and destination. Unfortunately, this is yet another battlefield between forces driven by selfish and material interests, on the one hand, and those inspired by love and justice towards those in need, on the other.

The globalization of this crime and the ever growing development of a global market which exploits the extreme poverty and vulnerability, especially of those who try to escape from often unendurable conditions of misery, violence or even war is very worrying. Equally of concern is the inadequate global response to such criminal activities.

Immigrants and asylum seekers who, in search of a better future, often fall into a trap of false promises of a better life are particularly exposed to criminals. In order to prevent, or at least reduce, the number of these tragedies, provisions for concrete solidarity must be made by means of appropriate hospitality structures and resettlement programmes. Migration laws should pay special attention to the dignity of these people in order to prevent exploitation and trafficking. All this naturally entails mutual assistance between the countries affected and those which for years have accepted a large number of refugees, as well as a greater sharing of responsibilities among States.

Mr. Chairman,

While recognizing the right of States to control their borders and the entry of persons into their territory, the Holy See believes that this should not clash with the right of migrants to be treated and protected with the respect due to every human person. Everything should be done to prevent situations where irregular migrants who manage to enter another country, instead of the honest and decently paid job which they were promised, end up in the hands of traffickers and being forced to engage in prostitution or various forms of slavery or submit to the extraction of organs. Migrants in an irregular situation are particularly vulnerable. Although they maintain their human dignity and rights, these are not guaranteed by law. Safeguarding the rights of irregular migrants, therefore, would be an important step forward in protecting them from abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

In conclusion, my Delegation would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the continuous commitment of the Catholic Church to assisting the victims of human trafficking. Numerous parishes, religious institutes and volunteer groups, as well as many associations of Catholic inspiration, are already at the forefront in various parts of the world in supporting victims and protecting potential victims from exploitation and trafficking in human persons. They will certainly continue to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!