

Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons

Joint statement on the occasion of
the first World Day against Trafficking in Persons
30 July 2014

Today, on 30 July 2014, we commemorate the first World Day against Trafficking in Persons.

Trafficking in persons is a grave human rights violation and a serious crime affecting societies worldwide. It victimizes millions of women, men, and children, including those most vulnerable amongst migrant communities, asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons, and is commonly associated with many other forms of exploitation, such as sexual exploitation, forced and bonded labour, forced marriages and all practices similar to slavery.

The brutality and injustice associated with trafficking in persons is immeasurable for each and every victim. Their lives, dreams and expectations are shattered.

Trafficking in persons is a very lucrative business. This is illustrated by the most recent estimates published this spring by the International Labour Office which suggest that forced labour in the private economy alone generates US\$ 150 billion in illegal profits per year. Two thirds of this figure (US\$ 99 billion) comes from commercial sexual exploitation, while another US\$ 51 billion are a result of forced economic exploitation, including domestic work, agriculture and other economic activities.

The international community has recognised that we must adopt a rights-based, multi-disciplinary approach which ensures that anti-trafficking measures do not adversely affect the human rights and dignity of trafficking victims.

One key area for action in preventing this horrible crime and human rights violation is addressing the demand for services and goods produced by trafficked victims.

No one actor can tackle demand alone. Root causes and contributing factors that fuel demand are spread across countries of origin, transit and destination, and they cannot be addressed in isolation from supply. A comprehensive response to addressing the entire trafficking chain will require the combined action of different stakeholders – States, international organisations, civil society, the private sector, employers and workers and their organizations, as well as individual citizens in their roles both as consumers and as members of society.

In 2006, the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT), bringing together sixteen United Nations entities and other international organizations, was created to facilitate a holistic and comprehensive approach by the international community to the problem of trafficking in persons.

Today's joint statement on behalf of ICAT is a sign of its member organizations' renewed commitment to inter-agency cooperation and coordination to support Member States in the fight against trafficking in persons.