



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

**SPECIAL HIGH LEVEL EVENT
DEVOTED TO THE FIRST OBSERVATION
OF THE WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS
UN Headquarters, New York, July 14, 2014**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be here today and to represent the International Organization for Migration at this important event to observe, for the first time, the World's Day Against trafficking in persons.

I would like to thank the Group of Friends United Against Human Trafficking for taking the initiative to recognize the World Day Against Human Trafficking.

IOM participates as the global lead agency on migration, and the Chair of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) for the year 2014.

ICAT was created in 2006, to bring together sixteen United Nations entities and other international organizations, amongst which IOM, to respond to the need of a holistic and comprehensive approach to the problem of trafficking in persons, including protection and support for victims of trafficking.

The commitment of ICAT's members is reflected in regular yearly meetings to coordinate counter-trafficking and strengthen the fight against this heinous crime. Since its creation, ICAT has carried out valuable work, raising awareness of states' obligations and advocating that they ratify and implement the Palermo Protocol. ICAT has produced various seminal policy papers that are valuable references for all stakeholders involved in the fight against trafficking in persons. One of these papers focuses on the relevant international framework to fight trafficking; another paper, which addresses the demand side of this crime, has just been finalized and will be released later on this year. Additional papers are in the pipeline to support evidence-based policy and practice.

Today more than ever before, ICAT's members remain committed to inter-agency cooperation and coordination to support Member States in the fight against trafficking in persons.

IOM has built considerable counter-trafficking expertise, having accumulated this experience through implementing over 1000 counter-trafficking projects in over 100 countries since the early 90's. Overall, IOM has assisted over 65,000 women, men, girls and boys victims of trafficking mainly for sexual and labour purposes. It is important to note that labour exploitation is a growing concern: it grew from 35% of the caseload in 2011 to a staggering 65% of the total number of beneficiaries in 2013.

Central to IOM's approach is a specific focus on migrants' needs and vulnerabilities, to ensure that protection, assistance and reintegration packages fit their individuals needs and contribute to providing them with a dignified, second chance in life after exploitation. Specifically, I would like to highlight three areas where, from IOM's perspective, more concerted efforts are required:

1. The challenge of 'Identification of Vulnerable Migrants':

While we have made considerable progress to ensure better protection, assistance and rehabilitation for victims of trafficking, the total numbers of beneficiaries that IOM has assisted so far remains small in proportion to the hundreds of thousands of people thought to be trafficked annually. One reason for this is that many victims still fail to be identified.

More efforts are needed to improve the capacities of actors in the field to identify vulnerable individuals and refer them for assistance.

2. The 'Responsibility of the Private Sector':

For the past decade, the fight against trafficking has been led mainly by governments, intergovernmental actors and NGOs. It is however clear that private sector companies have a key role to play in this - especially considering the continuous rise of cases of labour exploitation.

We need the proactive involvement of private companies, specifically in those sectors known to be vulnerable to the exploitation of migrant workers, such as agriculture, construction, fisheries, textiles and domestic service.

IOM works directly with private recruitment agencies, employers and migrant workers associations to promote ethical labour recruitment practices in the coordination of overseas work as well as strategies to mitigate the risk of worker exploitation at all stages of the migration cycle.

3. The 'Need for More Effective Prosecution':

As we continue to work together to combat trafficking in persons, we have seen an increase in ratifications of the Palermo Protocol and the adoption of the Global Plan of Action.

This has led to an increase in the number of criminalization and to renewed efforts to investigate, prosecute and sentence traffickers.

Despite this progress, trafficking still remains the world's third most profitable criminal activity, wreaking incalculable damage on victims and their families, communities, and countries.

IOM firmly supports the commitment of the Group of Friends and of the ICAT to strengthen the fight against human trafficking.

Today more than ever before, IOM remains committed to making a difference in fighting this crime to finally eradicate it.