

## **ACTIVITIES REGARDING THE PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS**

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The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) provides substantive and technical servicing to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the body that monitors implementation of the CEDAW Convention. The Division also provides substantive support to the Commission on the Status of Women, the central intergovernmental body responsible for follow-up to and monitoring of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in 2000, “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”. The Division also provides substantive support to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in relation to their work on gender equality and the advancement of women. To that end, the Division undertakes policy research and analysis, convenes expert group and technical meetings on issues falling within the Beijing Platform for Action; supports gender mainstreaming into all policies and programmes of the United Nations; and also implements a small technical cooperation and advisory services programme which focuses on capacity building for national machineries for the advancement of women, and support for governments in implementation of the Convention, with a particular focus on reporting.

Turning to the topic of this panel, trafficking in human beings is the fastest growing form of transnational organized crime, involving very high earnings and very low risks. It thrives on the fact that many countries do not have adequate laws against trafficking. Globalization has facilitated freer movements of people, goods and services across international borders, unwittingly resulting in camouflaging clandestine operations such as human trafficking. Trafficking in women and girls is one of the most corrosive forms of violation of human rights. It results in gradual and total destruction of a woman’s personal identity and her right to live as a free human being in a civilized society. Victims are subjected to violence, humiliation and violation of personal integrity, which in many cases leaves them with the lifelong effects of mental and physical trauma. The victim of such devastating violence may also end up with life-threatening HIV/AIDS, STDs, drug addiction or personality disintegration. It is a denial of the right to liberty and security of the person, the right to freedom from torture, violence, cruelty or degrading treatment, the right to a home and a family, the right to education and employment, the right to health care -

other forms of commercialized sex, in order to eliminate trafficking in women and girls. The outcome

As a follow-up to the Expert Group Meeting, the Division, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, is now working at the preparation of a publication on trafficking in women and girls to be addressed to policy makers and practitioners. The publication would take as a reference point the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking as well as article 6 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and, on the basis of such documents, identify the necessary elements to make “good practices” to prevent trafficking in women and girls, prosecute traffickers and protect victims of trafficking. The publication is at its initial stage of preparation and it is expected to be ready next year.

In conclusion, emphasis should be placed on the need to reflect on the distinction between undocumented migrants and trafficked persons. Whilst undocumented migrants willingly accept to pay and take risks in order to be transported across borders in search for better life prospects, trafficked persons are victims of criminal groups and find themselves in situations of slavery after having been deceived. Yet, one needs to be aware that there is a fine line between undocumented migration and trafficking as, very often women wishing to migrate in search of better living conditions find themselves victims of trafficking. The link between migration and trafficking therefore needs to be further explored so that adequate responses, which are attentive to the situation of victims, can be appropriately designed.