



Zonta International

Advancing the Status of Women Worldwide

Zonta International Position Paper

Trafficking of Women and Girls

Founded in 1919, Zonta International is a global organization of executives and professionals working together to advance the status of women worldwide through service and advocacy. Nearly 33,000 members belong to more than 1,200 Zonta Clubs in 67 countries and geographic areas. Zonta International seeks to improve women's health, education, self-esteem, legal rights, and economic status and prevent violence against women.

Preventing violence against women and girls is a Zonta International priority. Zonta has demonstrated its commitment to reducing the incidence of violence against women and girls by supporting local and international prevention and advocacy strategies and by awarding grants for projects that seek to change personal and/or political knowledge, attitudes and behavior contributing to gender-based violence.

Zonta International condemns the practice of trafficking of persons, especially women and girls, for sexual or labor exploitation as a gross violation of human rights and a crime against humanity. Recognizing the fact that the majority of those trafficked are women and girls who suffer severe physical, mental and sexual violence, Zonta International is committed to preventing and combating trafficking in countries of origin, transit and destination.

DEFINITION

Zonta International recognizes trafficking as defined in Article 3 of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime:

Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.¹

SCALE AND ROOT CAUSES

It is estimated that between 600,000 and 800,000 victims are trafficked across international borders each year. Including trafficking within national borders increases the estimate to two to four million persons per year.² No country is immune. Approximately 80 percent of trafficked victims are women and girls, the majority of whom are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation. Some are lured by promises of employment, educational opportunities or marriage. Others are sold into service by a relative, acquaintance or family friend. They suffer extreme physical, psychological and sexual violence and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, and face personal and familial death threats from their traffickers if they dare to escape.

Trafficking of persons is the fastest growing global criminal industry, generating US\$7 billion to US\$10 billion annually, with high profits, low risks and a "commodity" that can be used over and over again.³ Economic inequities, high unemployment, restrictive immigration policies, lack of appropriate

legislation and the involvement of transnational organized criminal networks support this lucrative business.

The root causes of the trafficking of women and girls stem from a lack of women's rights and opportunity. Women and girls are especially susceptible to trafficking due to gender-bias, oppression, discrimination, social and cultural practices, and the prevalence of gender-based violence. Potential victims are at even greater risk if they originate from countries experiencing political and economic instability, internal displacement, militarism, civil unrest, internal armed conflict, and natural disasters.⁴ By failing to address gender gaps in the law, many governments fail to promote situations in which women's social, civil, political and economic rights are protected.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

A growing number of governmental bodies and international organizations have adopted conventions and action plans to direct their responses to trafficking.

- ❑ The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Trafficking of Women and Children (2002).
- ❑ The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (2003).⁵

The following Conventions are legally-binding instruments for countries that ratify them.

- ❑ The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979).⁶
- ❑ The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).⁷
- ❑ The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000).⁸
- ❑ The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005).⁹

ZONTA INTERNATIONAL'S RESPONSE TO TRAFFICKING

Zonta International condemns the practice of trafficking in persons, especially women and girls, for sexual or labor exploitation as a gross violation of human rights and a crime against humanity. In July 2002, Zonta International adopted a Resolution on Trafficking in support of the "Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime" (Annex II supplementing UN document A/RES/55/25). Zonta Clubs have responded to the resolution through local, national and international advocacy, service and educational initiatives focused on preventing and combating trafficking through improved legislation, public awareness and employment opportunities.

Since 2002, grants from the Zonta International Foundation have supported the anti-trafficking mobilization efforts of the STAR Network of World Learning. Contributions from Zontians and Zonta Clubs have supported grants for projects that seek to prevent trafficking in women and girls through policy advocacy and increasing community-based prevention activities and regional cooperation on anti-trafficking issues among the governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro. These anti-trafficking activities have directly impacted more than 5,000 beneficiaries and media campaigns have reached as many as 400,000 people.

AGENDA FOR ACTION - THE WAY FORWARD

Eliminating trafficking requires collaborative efforts of governments, international, regional and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, including the media, to provide a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach to preventing trafficking and protecting trafficking victims, and an aggressive approach to prosecuting and punishing traffickers. Therefore, Zonta International

calls for Zonta Clubs to collaborate with NGOs and civil society and advocate for governments to eliminate trafficking in persons, especially women and girls, through the 3 Ps strategy:

- ❑ **Prevent** conditions driving demand and supply for trafficking, illegal prostitution and sexual exploitation.
- ❑ **Protect** trafficking victims by providing reintegration assistance and opportunities for social inclusion.
- ❑ **Prosecute** and punish traffickers. Criminalize all forms of trafficking.

Prevention

Zonta International calls upon Zonta Clubs, governments, international, regional and local non-governmental organizations and civil society to work together to:

- ❑ Provide social and economic initiatives to alleviate conditions that make women and girls vulnerable to trafficking, such as economic and social poverty, lack of employment and educational opportunities, gender-based violence, exclusion and discrimination.
- ❑ Increase awareness, involvement, and cooperation of all sectors of society to prevent all forms of trafficking.
- ❑ Raise awareness of trafficking and gender based discrimination locally, especially among women and girls.
- ❑ Educate the media about anti-trafficking laws, the causes and consequences of trafficking and reporting from a gender sensitive and rights-based perspective.
- ❑ Initiate a mass media campaign to educate the public about traffickers, trafficking and its various forms.
- ❑ Train teachers and incorporate trafficking prevention into the school curriculum.
- ❑ Encourage and support telephone hotlines and support services for reporting of offences in countries of origin, transit and destination.
- ❑ Work in partnership with the tourism industry to implement the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (1998)¹⁰, distribute awareness-raising materials and provide support services to women and child victims.
- ❑ Initiate and collaborate with women's grass root organizations to support advocacy campaigns aimed at preventing demand for trafficking.
- ❑ Train healthcare providers and social service organizations to identify trafficked persons, especially women and girls.

Protection

Zonta International calls upon governments to:

- ❑ Ratify the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) and adopt all human rights provisions in Articles 6 and 7 for the protection and assistance of trafficked persons in national legislation. State Parties are obliged to "consider implementing" the human rights provisions" in appropriate cases, including appropriate housing, counseling, medical, physical, psychological and material assistance, employment and training opportunities, and residency status."
- ❑ Prohibit detention, prosecution, punishment or immediate deportation of trafficked persons for immigration status, prostitution, forced labor or other crimes related to being trafficked. These prohibitions must apply in all cases and not be dependent upon the victim's ability or inability to cooperate with the police in prosecution of their traffickers.

Zonta International calls upon Zonta Clubs, governments, international, regional and local non-governmental organizations and civil society to work together to:

- ❑ Train immigration and law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors, attorneys, international military, peace-keeping forces and other officials to identify and protect the human rights of trafficked persons and use gender sensitive and rights-based investigation methods for trafficking cases.
- ❑ Encourage and support collaborative efforts of victim services, law enforcement, prosecutors and attorneys to work together in enforcing and strengthening existing laws.
- ❑ Organize community coalitions of law enforcement, service providers, community and faith-based groups to collaborate on effective outreach and education efforts throughout the community to increase leads on potential and undetected victims.
- ❑ Support shelters and services for trafficked persons, especially women and girls, including access to legal services, health care, including mental health support and employment.

Prosecution

Zonta International calls upon governments to:

- ❑ Adopt, strengthen and enforce effective laws that criminalize all forms of trafficking.
- ❑ Prosecute persons who:
 - Sell trafficked persons for sexual services.
 - Recruit, transport, hide or obtain a woman or girl for the purposes of trafficking.
 - Facilitate sexual exploitation of trafficked persons, especially women and girls.
- ❑ Apply punishment aimed at discouraging demand for trafficking.
- ❑ Advocate for laws that protect the rights of trafficked persons, especially women and girls, throughout the prosecution process.

Position Paper approved by the Zonta International Board, 25 April 2007

¹ United Nations, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime* (Annex II supplementing UN document A/RES/55/25): Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly Resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000; Geneva: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Web site: www.ohchr.org/english/law/protocoltraff.htm.

² United States Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, June 2005.

³ International Rescue Committee Anti-Trafficking Initiative, Web site: http://www.theirc.org/what/irc_antitrafficking_initiative.html

⁴ International Rescue Committee Anti-Trafficking Initiative, Web site: http://www.theirc.org/what/irc_antitrafficking_initiative.html

⁵ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings*, Decision No. 557, July 2003, Web site: http://www.osce.org/press_rel/2003/pdf_documents/07-3447-pc1.pdf

⁶ United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly., Web site: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>

⁷ United Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN General Assembly Resolution 44/25, 1989, Web site: http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_index.html

⁸ United Nations, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime* (Annex II supplementing UN document A/RES/55/25): Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly Resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000; Geneva: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Web site: www.ohchr.org/english/law/protocoltraff.htm.

⁹ Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Warsaw, 16.V.2005. Web site: http://www.coe.int/T/e/human_rights/trafficking/

¹⁰ World Tourism Organization (WTO) Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (1998), Web site: <http://www.thecode.org/>