

UNITED NATIONS MARKS SECOND YEAR OF WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

In 2013, the UN General Assembly designated every July 30 as a special day on the UN calendar to “raise awareness of the situation of victims of human trafficking and for the promotion and protection of their rights.” The UN estimates that at least 2.5 million people are trapped in modern-day slavery – tricked, kidnapped, blackmailed or manipulated into prostitution, forced labor, or organ removal. According to the 2014 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* by the UN’s Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 33 percent of the world’s 2.5 million trafficking victims are children, an increase of 5 percent since the release of the 2003-2010 report.

In his statement for the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, “Criminals are selling people for profit,” and noted that the majority of trafficking victims, especially those who are sexually exploited, are women and girls. Yury Fedotov, executive director of the UNODC, stated that the record number of people fleeing war and persecution and their hardships present “business opportunities” for human traffickers. The International Labour Organization estimates that criminal profits from human trafficking are \$150 billion annually.

The NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons calls on every country to address this transnational threat. “Governments must ratify and effectively implement the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol on trafficking, to protect trafficking victims, promote cooperation between countries, and ensure that criminal traffickers, wherever they are, are brought to justice.”

In his statement, Fedotov challenged everyone to educate themselves and help others become aware of the problem of human trafficking. Further, consumers, employees, and business owners should advocate for measures to prevent the use of forced labor in operations and supply chains and for the elimination of fraudulent recruitment practices that can lead to trafficking.

Governments, companies, and individuals are also urged to support the United Nations Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons: www.unodc.org/humantraffickingfund. The fund provides assistance to those in need, including protection and access to justice and remedies.