



## **Prevention is a Core Strategy for Ending Human Trafficking, One of the Worst Forms of Violence against Women**

“Prevention” is the theme of the 2015 UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25 and of the Secretary General’s campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women, a 16-day call for action from November 25 to December 10.

According to the International Labour Organization, more than 4.5 million women and girls are victims of commercial sexual exploitation worldwide, the majority of them victims of trafficking. This modern form of slavery alone generates an estimated illegal profit of \$99 billion annually.

In 2003, the United Nations adopted the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, to address the global problem of trafficking. The framework for the implementation of this protocol emphasizes three essential areas to be addressed – prevention, protection, and prosecution – to combat human trafficking.

The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, has recently stated that we do not need to create new laws and regulations to fight human trafficking, but rather to focus on the social and economic issues that perpetuate human trafficking, including poverty, vulnerability, low levels of education, literacy, and migration. Countries need to exercise due diligence to prevent trafficking by ensuring policy coherence between anti-trafficking policy and related policy areas, such as immigration and labor.

Relatedly, the United Nations has recently adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Goal No. 5 on the agenda is gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls. The agenda specifically calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against women, including trafficking and sexual exploitation. Achieving this goal will require the political will of states, as well as initiative by many stakeholders to change social norms and mobilize communities to action. On this International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, let us all commit ourselves to this task.