

**Sexual exploitation** is a manifestation of **abuse of power** over a person and can occur in both labor and sex trafficking. Within **labor trafficking**, women and girls in particular can experience sexual exploitation, for example in situations of **domestic servitude** or **farm work**. Victims of commercial sexual exploitation are bought and sold in the multi-billion dollar sex trade — in **brothels, strip clubs, “massage” parlors, red light districts, online, on the streets, or for pornography**. It happens all over the world in every city, town or village. The sex trade preys on vulnerable people, especially women and girls. Most have experienced significant trauma and many are still children when they are sold into the sex trade. **Prostitution** is often the **end point of sex trafficking. Demand** for sex, from mostly male buyers, **fuels the sex trade, perpetuating sex trafficking.**

**Survivor Story:** Cathy lived with her paternal grandmother in the Philippines. Cathy never met her mother while she was alive but knew her mother was a prostituted woman who had met her father in a bar. When Cathy attended her mother’s funeral, she saw the evidence of the abuse her mother suffered at the hand of her live-in partner.

While her grandmother was supportive, the rest of the family believed that Cathy would end up in prostitution just like her mother. The young woman was able to attend school until her second year of high school. However, to help support her grandmother, she left school and got a waitressing job. At the same time, she began having an affair with a married man. His wife found out and Cathy decided to leave her job and the area where she had grown up. Finding out about a work opportunity in Cebu, Cathy and a few of her friends moved.

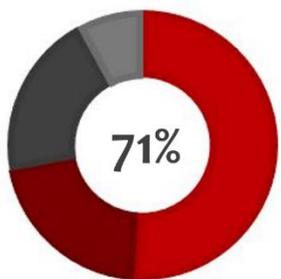
However, the opportunity was not what they expected. The young women were transported in a van to a club. The lighting was low and Cathy could see girls in heavy make-up

and transparent clothing around the room. She knew where she was and she did not want to do this.

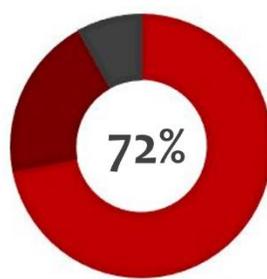
Cathy was given a number to wear so that she could dance for the customers. Every day for three weeks, she danced until she was “bar fined”—meaning a man had bought her for the evening. Men continued to buy her; some would give big tips but some were known to beat the women they bought. Cathy always had to be careful. She gave all the money the men paid to her pimps, who would give her next to nothing in return, claiming she was in debt to them for her living expenses.

When she was 18, the bar was raided. Cathy had been in that club for two years. She pitied herself for what had happened to her and felt as though she lived a lonely life—never able to share her true feelings. While looking back she felt like a victim, Cathy has hopes for her future.

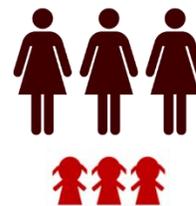
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of detected trafficking victims are women and girls.



of detected female trafficking victims are sexually exploited.



Women and girls trafficked for forced labor frequently encounter and endure domestic and/or sexual violence and exploitation.

# Recommendations for Action

## UN and Member States

- Ratify the Palermo Protocol and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) both of which call for the eradication of trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- Enact laws and policies that penalize traffickers, pimps and sex buyers, and decriminalize those bought and sold in the sex trade to combat the demand for sex that perpetuates sex trafficking.
- Work to eliminate the economic, social, legal and political structures that make people, particularly women and girls, vulnerable to traffickers, pimps and buyers.
- Properly train law enforcement and criminal justice officials to investigate and prosecute crimes perpetrated by traffickers, pimps, and sex buyers against victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.
- Adequately fund and support services for survivors of international and domestic trafficking and sexual exploitation, including exit programs with financial assistance, education and job training, employment opportunities, housing, health services, legal advocacy, residency permits, and language training.

## Individuals and Communities

- Implement awareness campaigns — both for your company/organization or local community — including in-person and online training, Public Service Announcements, and the creation of resources for educators and youth.
- Advocate for stronger legislation on trafficking and sexual exploitation at all levels of government that will: prosecute perpetrators, including buyers; protect victims and provide them with comprehensive support services; work to prevent trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- Post the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** number (**1-888-373-7888 in the US**) on social media and distribute it around your neighborhood. Callers can report potential cases, get help, or request information and training.
- Keep learning. Visit [catwinternational.org](http://catwinternational.org), [equalitynow.org](http://equalitynow.org), [ecpatusa.org](http://ecpatusa.org), [unicefusa.org/endtrafficking](http://unicefusa.org/endtrafficking), [worldwithoutexploitation.org](http://worldwithoutexploitation.org) for more information about the issue.
- Campaign for ratification and effective implementation of international legislation that deal with trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, such as the Palermo Protocol and the CEDAW.
- Develop and implement safe migration programs and provide support to migrant populations.
- Involve youth in fighting against human trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- Hold businesses accountable for the below recommendations.

## Businesses

- Train staff on the issue of human trafficking, including how to spot and prevent it.
- Sign The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism. For more information: [ecpatusa.org/corporations](http://ecpatusa.org/corporations)
- Change the culture. Develop policies that oppose degradation and dehumanization, especially of sexually exploited women and girls. For example, do not tolerate or fund client meetings in strip clubs.

**“Sexual exploitation constitutes a violation of the most fundamental human rights, and embodies harms unimaginable. For the vast majority of those exploited, it is not chosen, and stems from a toxic combination of vulnerabilities.”**

**- Autumn Burris, Founder, Survivors for Solutions; Executive Council, World Without Exploitation**



The NGOCSTIP is committed to the prevention and eradication of human trafficking in all its forms through advocacy and education. The Committee recognizes trafficking in persons as a violation of human rights and advocates for policy and action plans to address all aspects of human trafficking. While the Committee’s work is primarily at the United Nations, it works in partnership with its member organizations and other stakeholders taking action on local and national levels.