



Permanent Observer Mission of Italy
to the Organization of American States



women's  worldwide

Trafficking of women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional Challenges

Tuesday May 23 2017

Hall of the Americas, OAS Main Building, 17th Street & Constitution Avenue

Trafficking in persons is a serious human rights violation and a form of slavery, which also constitutes a lucrative crime generating around US\$150.2 billion dollars a year in illegal profits around the world. ⁱ

Victims of trafficking with the purpose of sexual exploitation, and with the purpose of exploitation in domestic work, are mainly women and children, ⁱⁱ which means this is a highly feminized human rights violation and a form of gender-based violence. ⁱⁱⁱ Factors such as poverty, unemployment, lack of access to basic services, ethnic or racial origin, and armed conflict make women and other persons from specific groups more likely to be victims of this form of violence.

The first instrument to provide an international definition of trafficking in persons was the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children. However, this Protocol has an emphasis on criminal policy rather than the protection of victims, having its origin in the fight against transnational crime. States' use of a criminal focus rather than a human rights approach when dealing with the situation of victims of trafficking has created serious obstacles to victims recovering their life projects. These obstacles include failings by States in identification and assistance of victims of trafficking.

It is essential in this context to reflect on how migratory phenomena are approached as border control problems, and possible cases of trafficking within them are not addressed. It is important to consider the responsibilities of countries of departure, based on their failure to guarantee conditions (whether social, economic or security etc.) which ensure that persons within their jurisdiction are not vulnerable to being trafficked, but also the responsibilities of countries which receive or refuse to receive victims, based on their failure to protect the human rights of persons subject to exploitation in their countries, or to identify the existence of victims of trafficking.

The meeting will seek to raise awareness, through the sharing of Women's Link Worldwide's report *"Victims of trafficking in Latin America. Between lack of protection and indifference"*, of the common challenges in the tasks of identification and assistance in five countries of the region (Mexico, Paraguay, Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru) and how these challenges are born out of an approach which prioritizes the prosecution of crime and/or immigration control over the protection of and respect for the rights of the victim, making clear the need to adopt a human rights approach through which victims can achieve the vindication of their rights, without this implying the abandonment of criminal prosecution of the crime of trafficking, or the regularization of victims' immigration status.

In the region, figures for reports of the crime of trafficking in comparison to the number of convictions are still disproportionate, revealing the ineffectiveness and insufficiency of the approach based on criminal policy, which is why it is important to work with victims to restore their rights and guarantee access to justice.

Agenda

9:00 Registration

9:30-9:45 Welcome

- Carmen Moreno, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women, OAS
- Viviana Waisman, President, Women's Link Worldwide

9:45-11:30 Round table discussion on regional challenges in the trafficking of women and girls from a human rights perspective

- Diana González-Perrett, President of the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI
- Carmen Cecilia Martínez, Regional Legal Director, Women's Link Worldwide
- Claudia Paz y Paz, Secretary for Multidimensional Security of the OAS
- Alejandra Di Pierro, Coordinator of the Inter-American Program to Prevent and Eradicate trafficking and sexual exploitation of girls, boys and adolescents (video) (TBC)

Moderator: Luz Patricia Mejía Guerrero, Technical Secretary of the MESECVI

Question and answer session

11:30-13:15 Trafficking of women and girls in the States party to the Convention of Belém do Pará

- Liriola Leoteau, Director of Panama's National Institute for Women and First Vice-president of the Conference of State Parties of the MESECVI
- Hilda Morales Trujillo, Deputy State Attorney, Office of Human Rights of Guatemala, and Expert of the Committee of Experts of the MESECVI (CEVI)
- Karina Elizabeth Núñez, Human rights defender and anti-trafficking and sexual exploitation activist, Uruguay
- Marcela Loiza, Marcela Loiza Foundation, Colombia
- Fernanda Dos Anjos, IACHR Consultant, Ex-Director of Justice at the Minister of Justice, Brazil
- Marcelo Colombo, State Attorney of the Office for the Fight against Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons, Argentina

Moderator: Viviana Waisman, President, Women's Link Worldwide

Question and answer session

13:15-13:30 Closing remarks

- Marilina Armellin, Ambassador, Permanent Observer of Italy to the OAS.

Register [here](#) to participate.

The event can be followed live at: http://www.oas.org/en/media_center/webcast_schedule.asp

ⁱ GIAMMARINARO, Maria Grazia. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children*. [Online] United Nations Human Rights Council. A/HRC/29/38 (31 March 2015). Para. 7. Available at: <http://goo.gl/bgCvRZ>

ⁱⁱ UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME. *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. [Online]. 2014. Page 5, 10. Available at: www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/GLOTIP_2014_full_report.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ MALANGONE Danielle y CRANK Katie. *The Intersection of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Human Trafficking*, Center for Court Innovation, United States. [Online] Available at: www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/UnderstandingHumanTrafficking_2.pdf