UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION GROUP AGAINST TRAFFICKING (ICAT)
CHAIR'S REPORT – 2015
(UNHCR)

Brief Background of ICAT

ICAT comprises 17 entities, with an active core of six members (ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNODC) which form the ICAT Working Group and take the lead in decision-making and coordinating the work of ICAT. The ICAT Chairmanship rotates amongst ICAT members, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) assuming the Chairmanship for 2015. In 2016, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) will hold the Chair of ICAT. OSCE joined ICAT in 2015 as 'partner organisation', in accordance with ICAT's Terms of Reference.

In accordance with GA Resolution 61/180 and the ICAT Terms of Reference, ICAT functions are:

- To provide a platform for exchange of information, experiences and good practices on anti-trafficking activities of the partner agencies to share with Governments, international and regional organizations, NGOs and other relevant bodies.

- To encourage, support and review the activities of the UN and other international organizations with the aim of ensuring a full and comprehensive implementation of all international instruments and standards of relevance for the prevention and combating of trafficking in persons and protection of and support for victims of trafficking.

- To work towards a comprehensive, coordinated and holistic approach to human trafficking, which is gender and age-sensitive and grounded in a human rights based approach.

- To draw on the comparative advantages of the respective agencies, promote effective and efficient use of existing resources, using, to the extent possible, mechanisms already in place at the regional and national level.

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 64/293, endorsing the ***United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (GPA)***. The Global Plan of Action urged all responsible UN entities to coordinate their efforts to fight trafficking in persons effectively and to protect the human rights of its victims, including via ICAT and the now defunct Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT). Further, the GPA calls for strengthening and supporting ICAT to improve coordination and cooperation amongst relevant UN bodies, including UN human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms, and international organizations. Under this framework ICAT, as well as its member agencies, are required to report on the progress achieved towards implementation. Reporting is done on a biannual basis, with the next report due in 2017.

UNHCR as ICAT Chair – 1 January – 31 December 2015

UNHCR assumed the ICAT Chair in January 2015 for a one-year period. The main objectives for this chairmanship can be summed up as follows:

- Implement the agreed Work-Plan for the reporting period;
- Consolidate an *outreach strategy* to ICAT's broader constituency;
- Strengthen a *regional approach* perspective in the implementation of ICAT's initiatives; and
- Promote ICAT's *visibility strategy* and its *fundraising* capacity.

UNHCR's involvement in ICAT has been led by its Division of International Protection (DIP) and specifically by the Head of UNHCR's Asylum and Migration Unit. The Head of Unit, Sumbul Rizvi, has led ICAT in 2015 with support from Ariel Riva, Legal Officer.

Throughout the year UNODC has continued to provide much appreciated Secretariat support, without which much of the work done over the period would have been difficult to achieve. The Secretariat was able to function due to Swedish funding which ceased at the end of 2015.

ICAT work-plan for 2015 – Summary of key achievements

In accordance with the work-plan, ICAT held three Working Group meetings over the year:

- The first Working Group meeting of the year was held in <u>January (19-21) in New York</u> to discuss the activities planned for 2015.
- The Second WG meeting took place in <u>Geneva in July</u> (22-24).
- The third and final WG for the year was held in <u>Vienna in December (7-8)</u>.

For further information on each ICAT meeting of the year, the corresponding minutes, held by the Secretariat, can be made available upon request.

Successful implementation of the agreed work-plan resulted in the following ICAT achievements:

1. **Policy Papers -** *Progress towards finalisation of pending Policy Papers*: Out of the five originally planned policy papers, two have previously been launched (#1 *The International Legal Framework concerning Trafficking in Persons* (2012) and #2 on *Preventing Trafficking in Persons by addressing Demand* (2014)): <u>one paper (#3 on *Providing Effective Remedies for Victims of Trafficking in persons* (2015))</u> has been finalised during the reporting period and will be e-launched in February 2016, and one (#4 *Evaluation of Anti-trafficking Responses*) is being finalised and will be launched later in 2016. The last paper # 5 on *Vulnerabilities* will be developed and launched in 2016, subject to availability of funds.

   In relation to Policy Paper #4 on *Evaluation of Anti-trafficking Responses*, progress was significant during the reporting period in that a first draft was developed and used as the basis for discussion during the two days expert group meeting on "Evaluation of Anti-trafficking Responses", that was held in Vienna on 9-10 December. The inputs gathered during the expert group meeting will inform the further development of the discussion paper. The final product will be launched during the course of 2016.

2. **Outreach Strategy -** Consolidate an *outreach strategy* to ICAT's broader constituency initiated in 2015: During the reporting period, under UNHCR's leadership, ICAT has consistently engaged with a wide variety of stakeholders that have been interested in supporting anti-trafficking initiatives over the past years. In particular, the following activities were held:

   o Consultative meeting between ICAT and Permanent Missions was held in New York on 20th January in the margins of the first working group meeting of the year. The meeting, held at the UN Headquarters, was attended by over 50 participants, including representatives from 31 Member States, international organisations, the EU and representatives from the NGO community. The meeting was well received and much appreciated by the Group of Friends. It also helped bridge some differences of opinion and inconsistent perceptions of ICAT's role. UNHCR has recommended that this meeting be replicated each year, as a means to keep the international community updated on ICAT activities.

   o Briefing Session by UNHCR for the ICAT Group of Friends (chaired by the Permanent Mission of Belarus and with the participation of representatives from 17 developing world States). This session was led by UNHCR and provided an update to participants on ICAT activities during the year and plans for 2016 and beyond. The session was held in Geneva on 25th June 2015.

- Actions towards the consolidation of an <u>outreach strategy</u> included an invitation to all ICAT members for a yearly face-to-face meeting. This was held in New York in January 2015. UNHCR has urged the ICAT Working Group to strengthen this contact and maintain one or two annual meetings with the wider ICAT.

- In order to keep State and other stakeholders engaged, and to be able to support awareness of ICAT activities and plans (and explore fundraising as appropriate), UNHCR has recommended that an updated list of focal points be prepared, and that they be kept updated on appropriate developments.

3. **Regional Approach -** Strengthen a *regional approach* perspective in the implementation of ICAT's initiatives: UNHCR has supported ICAT's engagement with regional organisations and other stakeholders, recognising the need for a broader engagement with interested organisations, as this will add value to coordination against trafficking in persons. As part of this initiative the following was accomplished:

- Agreed to identify a separate stakeholder group titled "partners". All partners will be specifically invited for ICAT consultations and briefings to be held annually, or more frequently, as appropriate. As the **OSCE** had submitted a request to join ICAT, they were accorded the status of an "ICAT partner" pursuant to the agreed terms of engagement.

- ICAT increased its efforts to engage, more generally, with other relevant stakeholders, including States and civil society organisations. This will be further strengthened and expanded through Public Events, the launch of the policy papers series, and relevant commemorative dates on issues related to trafficking in persons.

- ICAT initiated the mapping of the different working groups, fora and regional processes engaged in anti-trafficking initiatives (policy development, protection and/or assistance support, research, etc.). This will be finalised in 2016;

4. **Fund Raising** –Since 2012 ICAT has been operating under funding received from Sweden, which has permitted the continued work of its Secretariat functions (UNODC) and which supported ICAT's main activities up to December 2015, including funding two annual face to face meetings of the Working Group. In order to promote ICAT's fundraising capacity and to secure funding for 2016, UNHCR developed a *Fundraising Concept Note* for sharing with interested governments and other donors, and urged all ICAT WG members to use it and to make other efforts to seek funding for ICAT activities.

No assurances of funding have yet been received and the next Chair will need to carry this advocacy forward. In order to further substantiate the *Concept Note*, it has been recommended that proposed activities for 2016 and beyond be outlined for sharing with potential donors. UNODC, as the 2016 chair, will update the proposal to include a more detailed description of proposed activities for 2016 and beyond, and include (as much as possible) the following aspects: multi-year planning, elaboration of tools/dissemination materials on responses to victims of trafficking (VoTs) for field practitioners and agency staff, and development of training toolkits. Further discussion on the dissemination strategy for this initiative will be held in 2016. In principle it was proposed by UNHCR that the trio of past, present and upcoming Chairs take on additional responsibility to undertake funding consultations with donors.

5. **Visibility** – In order to promote ICAT's *visibility,* various steps have been taken, as follows: An [ICAT website](#) is being developed by IOM to provide easily accessible information to a wider public on the work of ICAT and its member agencies, and to more effectively

disseminate the products of the ICAT policy paper series. The website will be fully operational in February 2016 and will be used as ICAT's platform for all awareness and advocacy activities in the future. IOM's support in this effort has been much appreciated.

The World Day against Trafficking in Persons on 30 July 2015, the second annual commemoration of the day, was marked by the release of an advocacy video featuring statements by the Principals of eight of the world's key organizations working to tackle this crime. Together, they urged that more be done to help the millions of women, men and children who fall victim to one of today's most brutal crimes, and that all stakeholders join forces to improve trafficked persons' access to remedies that respond to their individual needs. This was led by UNODC and supported by all ICAT WG members.

6. **Reporting** - To contribute to the several *reporting requirements* as a consequence of its engagement with ICAT and obligations in respect to the GPA, UNHCR has prepared an update of its engagement in anti-trafficking in person activities in 2015. See Annex 1.

UNHCR, Division of International Protection
11 February 2016