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INTEGRATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF
WOMEN AND THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Report of the Secretary-General on activities of United Nations bodies and
other international organizations pertaining to the problem of trafficking in
women and girls

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Introduction

1. In its resolution 1999/40, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to provide it, at its fifty-sixth session, with a report on activities of United Nations bodies and other international organizations pertaining to the problem of trafficking in women and girls. In pursuance of this request, notes verbales requesting information on this subject were sent to all relevant agencies and organizations. As no replies were received, the information provided in the present report has been compiled from secondary sources.

I. ACTIVITIES OF UNITED NATIONS BODIES

A. The human rights system

2. Both the General Assembly¹ and the Commission on Human Rights² have recently emphasized the critical human rights dimensions of the problem of trafficking in women and girls.

3. Among the human rights treaty bodies, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Human Rights Committee (HRC) and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) have continued to pay special attention to the issue of trafficking in examining reports of States parties. Specific reference to trafficking and related exploitation was made in a number of concluding observations/comments adopted by those bodies during the past 12 months, including those adopted by HRC on Japan, by CRC on Japan, Thailand, Fiji and Maldives, by CEDAW on Indonesia and New Zealand, and by CESCR on Sri Lanka (about sexual exploitation of children). With reference to Germany, CESCR members also expressed their concern at so-called "marriage trafficking" in Europe.

4. A number of the Special Rapporteurs have also continued to address the trafficking of women and children in the context of their respective mandates. They include the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences and the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. In her report to the Commission at its present session the Special Rapporteur on violence against women gives particular attention to the issue of trafficking in women and girls. Of the country-specific investigatory mechanisms, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has also raised the issue of trafficking.

5. Several subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Human Rights are also addressing the issue of trafficking on an ongoing basis. They include the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (through its Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery) and the working group on a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

6. In late 1998, the High Commissioner for Human Rights decided to give high priority to the issue of trafficking. Concrete measures - including the allocation of additional human and

financial resources - have already been taken to implement this decision, including the appointment, in March 1999, of an Adviser on Trafficking to the High Commissioner. The work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the area of trafficking is based on two fundamental principles: first, that human rights must be at the core of any credible anti-trafficking strategy; and second, that such strategies must be developed and implemented from the perspective of those who most need their human rights protected and promoted.

7. OHCHR action in the area of trafficking is currently taking place on two fronts: (a) enhancing the quality of OHCHR support to the relevant mechanisms dealing with trafficking and related issues; and (b) developing and implementing a specific anti-trafficking programme. In relation to the first action-area, it is relevant to point out that in addition to the developments outlined in paragraphs 2 to 5 above, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery both focused specifically on the trafficking issue in 1999. The United Nations Trust Fund for Contemporary Forms of Slavery has recently received significant new contributions which are enabling it to provide a substantial number of travel and project grants to NGOs and individuals involved in the fight against trafficking. All of the mechanisms mentioned above are serviced and supported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. OHCHR has recently developed a system for intra-Office coordination on the issue of trafficking. Its purpose is to ensure that appropriate links are made between these various mechanisms, as well as between the officers who are working with them.

8. The OHCHR programme against trafficking in persons was established in March 1999. Its objective is to work towards the integration of human rights into international, regional and national anti-trafficking initiatives. The emphasis is on legal and policy development. The programme does not aim to undertake large projects or to otherwise duplicate the various initiatives which are being undertaken elsewhere. Instead, as far as possible, OHCHR tries to act as a catalyst and a support for the work of others.

9. At the international level OHCHR has focused its attention on the negotiation of two protocols to the draft convention against transnational organized crime. The first protocol deals with trafficking in persons - particularly women and children. The second protocol concerns smuggling of migrants (see further, para. 17 below). An informal note by the High Commissioner was prepared in May 1999 and has been submitted to the drafting group (the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime). The note analyses both instruments from a human rights perspective and makes specific recommendations for improvement of the draft texts. It formed part of the official documentation of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee which took place in Vienna from 28 June to 9 July (A/AC.254/16). The High Commissioner has continued to follow the work of the Ad Hoc Committee throughout 1999 and will do so until completion of the negotiations.

10. At the regional and subregional levels, OHCHR is undertaking a number of different activities. Within Europe, OHCHR has developed, together with the Council of Europe, a joint trafficking prevention programme for Eastern and Central Europe. The programme comprises a series of awareness-raising and training activities, which commenced in June 1999. Programme emphasis is on preventive measures - particularly sensitization of vulnerable groups and those with whom they come in contact. OHCHR and the Council of Europe are jointly funding and

implementing the programme and will conduct a joint evaluation at its completion. OHCHR, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) are also currently exploring the possibility of developing a joint anti-trafficking programme within the context of the South Eastern Europe Stabilization Process.

11. The OHCHR field office in Sarajevo is undertaking a number of anti-trafficking activities in conjunction with local NGOs, the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) and other international organizations, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM). These activities are intended to assist victims of trafficking; to facilitate the prosecution of traffickers; and to promote law reform and governmental responsibility. In September 1999, OHCHR field office in Sarajevo coordinated and led a round table on the issue of trafficking in Kosovo. The aim of the round table was to provide recommendations to assist the international community in dealing with the issue of trafficking in the context of the reconstruction of Kosovo.

12. OHCHR activities against the trafficking of women and girls in Asia have included two workshops in Nepal (March 1999) in the context of its ongoing programme of assistance to that country. The first workshop focused on criminal procedure and the second on the human rights of women. Both workshops addressed the issue of trafficking specifically and formulated recommendations to the Government, civil society and the United Nations system for dealing with the problem. A major output of the second workshop was a project proposal for piloting a comprehensive human rights approach to trafficking in two selected regions of Nepal. The pilot project on trafficking has been informally endorsed by the Government and is being developed and implemented in cooperation with the UNDP Office in Nepal and the United Nations System Task Force on Trafficking (Nepal). The project will focus specifically on strengthening the capacity of police and judicial bodies to address the problem of trafficking. It will also aim to promote closer cooperation between Nepalese and Indian law enforcement and border authorities on this issue.

13. The High Commissioner has been actively following the draft South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) convention against trafficking in women and girls (see paras. 41-43 below) and recently communicated her views on the draft convention to the SAARC Heads of Government.

14. OHCHR is working to encourage the national human rights commissions of the Asia and Pacific region to take up the issue of trafficking. This possibility was first discussed at an OHCHR sponsored Workshop on National Institutions and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Philippines, May 1999). OHCHR subsequently continued these discussions with the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF). A working paper on the subject was presented to the fourth annual meeting of APF, held in Manila from 6 to 8 September 1999. APF subsequently recommended that all its member-institutions appoint a focal point on this issue. The High Commissioner has followed up on this recommendation with the heads of all member institutions. The national institutions of other regions, including Central and Eastern Europe, will also be focused on in the near future.

15. In view of the seriousness of the trafficking phenomenon in Asia, the High Commissioner recently decided to appoint a senior OHCHR official as her special representative on this issue. The Special Representative will be based in Cambodia and will have a key role in supporting national and regional anti-trafficking initiatives.

16. Lastly, OHCHR is seeking to build alliances on the trafficking issue with the key United Nations and intergovernmental (IGO) agencies and programmes dealing with trafficking (including IOM, ILO, UNICEF, UNHCR, and relevant regional intergovernmental organizations) in order to: (i) further the OHCHR goal of integrating a human rights perspective into international anti-trafficking initiatives; and (ii) identify areas for potential collaboration. Contacts have also been established with the international NGO community active on the trafficking issue. The recent NGO/IGO Consultation on Trafficking and the Global Sex Industry (Geneva, June 1999), opened by the High Commissioner, provided an opportunity for OHCHR to expand and build upon these contacts.

B. The crime prevention and criminal justice system

17. The most important trafficking-related development within the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice system is the development of two draft protocols supplementing the draft United Nations convention against transnational organized crime: the protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and the protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, air and sea. Each of these instruments is being negotiated under the auspices of an Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which was established by the General Assembly. The convention and its protocols are scheduled for completion by the year 2000 and adoption by a plenipotentiary conference. The Centre for International Crime Prevention functions as the secretariat for the Ad Hoc Committee and the plenipotentiary conference.

18. In order to enable Governments and the international community to respond better to the worldwide problems of human smuggling and trafficking, the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) launched, in March 1999, the Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings. The aim of the Programme is to bring to the forefront the involvement of organized criminal groups in human smuggling and trafficking, and promote the development of effective criminal justice responses to these problems. The Global Programme, consisting of policy-oriented research and targeted technical cooperation, has been developed by the Centre for International Crime Prevention (CICP) and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). CICP is in charge of technical cooperation activities. UNICRI is in charge of developing standardized research methodology and of coordinating research in the various projects to be carried out under the Global Programme.

19. The Global Programme will collect data on different routes for smuggling and trafficking in human beings, and the structures and modalities used for transporting and subsequently exploiting them. A global inventory will be created of best practices used in addressing organized crime involvement in smuggling and trafficking, including special legislation and institutional arrangements.

20. In close cooperation with the Governments, NGOs and other institutions concerned, a series of demonstration projects will be implemented in selected countries. The demonstration projects will assist Governments in: counteracting groups involved in the smuggling and trafficking of human beings; strengthening crime prevention strategies against the smuggling and trafficking of humans; improving witness protection and victim assistance for victims of human smuggling and trafficking. The processes, impacts and possible side effects of the demonstration projects will be evaluated in close cooperation with national counterparts. By the end of the three-year programme, a global strategy against human smuggling and trafficking will be formulated in close consultation with relevant national and international organizations and experts, and presented for adoption by the international community at a global forum. The first demonstration project is currently under way in the Philippines.

21. The envisaged duration of the programme is 36 months and the programme has an estimated budget of US\$ 6.5 million. It should be noted that the programme does not focus specifically on women and children, although its approach will no doubt be influenced by the clear gender dimensions of the trafficking phenomenon in all parts of the world.

C. United Nations activities against trafficking in the areas of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance

22. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) acknowledges that refugee women and children are often victims of sexual abuse and harassment not only in their countries of origin but in countries of asylum. UNHCR addresses this issue, particularly, through strong partnership with refugee communities, NGOs, Governments and international organizations. As border control is tightened throughout the world, an increasing proportion of asylum-seekers are using the services of people smugglers and traffickers to escape persecution. Recent events have also demonstrated that women and girl refugees are particularly vulnerable to traffickers who trick, coerce or otherwise force them into situations from which they cannot escape. UNHCR has undertaken studies on the trafficking of asylum-seekers into the United Kingdom and is currently looking at this situation from a broader European perspective. UNHCR is also closely following the development of the two draft protocols on migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons referred to in paragraph 17 above.

23. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supports, along with other United Nations agencies, campaigns in South Asia, Latin America and Africa to alert girls to the dangers of hazardous labour and the sex trade, and has been actively involved in the fight against commercial sexual exploitation of children, including through trafficking. A number of UNICEF country and regional offices have launched anti-trafficking projects. UNICEF is also closely following the development of the protocol on trafficking in persons referred to in paragraph 17 above.

24. The United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) has been addressing the issue of trafficking principally through its Gender in Development (GID) Programme. This programme, which has been developed at regional, subregional and national levels, focuses attention on violence against women and girls as part of its support for coordinated United Nations-system implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Regional Gender Programme of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific includes the production and dissemination of

information materials, such as video commercials, on trafficking of women. UNDP is also implementing or sponsoring a number of specific anti-trafficking initiatives, including a comprehensive programme for the Mekong subregion. As noted in paragraph 12 above, UNDP Nepal is cooperating with OHCHR in the development of a project which will focus on strengthening the law enforcement and judicial response to trafficking in that country.

25. The UNDP Human Development Report 1999 notes the existence of a “virulent synergy between globalization and organized crime”. The report identifies the trafficking of women and girls as one of the criminal activities found to have increased with the rise of globalization, the \$1.5 trillion estimated to be the annual revenue of global crime syndicates being larger than the gross domestic product of most countries. Human Development Report 1999 identifies a number of measures needed to combat global crime such as trafficking, including: increased international cooperation; a relaxation of restrictive bank secrecy laws; finalization of the international convention against transnational organized crime and its protocols; and strengthening of governance and national and international institutions.

26. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has launched three inter-agency regional campaigns to eliminate violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific. The Asia and the Pacific campaign addresses specific regional issues of violence, which include trafficking in young women and girls from Thailand and South Asian countries.³ In 1996, the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women was established at UNIFEM. The Trust Fund has supported a number of grass-roots anti-trafficking initiatives.

27. The International Labour Organization (ILO) deals extensively with the issue of trafficking in the context of forced labour, child labour, migrants and migrant workers. In June 1999, the International Labour Conference adopted the Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. The Convention identifies trafficking and related exploitation such as child prostitution among the worst forms of child labour. Trafficking issues have been incorporated into the ILO International Programme to End Child Labour (IPEC) and many anti-trafficking initiatives have been launched under ILO/IPEC at both the national and regional levels.⁴ In 1998 ILO published a study of the economic and social bases of prostitution in South-East Asia that focused particularly on trafficking into the sex industry.⁵

28. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) takes the view that violence and the sexual exploitation of women are rooted in poverty, unemployment and poor education. Accordingly, UNESCO promotes preventive action, inter alia to limit the effects of female prostitution in migration-related phenomena. Much of this activity is undertaken through cooperative projects with local non-governmental organizations. Through collaboration with the Open Society Institute (OSI)/SOROS in Eastern and Central Europe and in Central Asia, a network, “stop trafficking” (stop-traffic@solar.cini.utk.edu), has been created in order to encourage information dissemination and to strengthen links between non-governmental organizations engaged in fighting trafficking.

II. ACTIVITIES OF OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

A. The International Organization for Migration

29. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) deals with the issue of trafficking in migrants through, inter alia, information campaigns, counselling activities, technical cooperation, return and reintegration assistance, research studies and policy papers. IOM aims to increase awareness of the dangers to victims and potential victims, and Governments and NGOs. IOM has launched a number of informative campaigns to alert to the risks of irregular emigration using the services of traffickers and trafficking networks, inter alia in Romania (1992-1996), Albania (1997-1998), the Philippines (from 1997), Ukraine (1997-1998), and Lang Son province in Viet Nam (1998-1999). In the Philippines, the campaign consisted of the nationwide broadcasting of 34 write-in and call-in radio programmes. The campaign in Ukraine resulted in a published research report in July 1998.

30. IOM provides the forum for various intergovernmental regional meetings on issues of irregular migration and trafficking, inter alia in Latin America, North America, South-East Asia and South Africa. It has also hosted such seminars in Europe. In 1994, IOM organized a worldwide conference on "International response to trafficking in migrants and the safeguarding of migrant rights". It has also submitted background papers to various conferences on trafficking in migrants from a global and regional perspective. In September 1998, IOM organized the Third IOM Regional Seminar on Irregular Migration and Migrant Trafficking in East and South-East Asia, entitled "Recent trends and developments in irregular migration and returns in light of the recent Asian economic crisis". An international symposium, "Towards cooperation on irregular/undocumented migration", with the participation of Governments and international organizations, was organized in Bangkok in April 1999.

31. IOM provides technical assistance, training and equipment to governmental authorities to promote the establishment of effective migration systems. A number of activities have been undertaken in order to integrate trafficking into technical cooperation with Governments, advising Governments to adopt appropriate policies and legislation, inter alia on criminalizing and prosecuting the trafficking in persons, and on protection and treatment of trafficked migrants.

32. IOM offers voluntary return and reintegration to trafficked migrants based on their individual needs. In this regard, a number of trafficked migrants from the Baltic States, Central America and European countries have been assisted. Since 1996, IOM has implemented in the Mekong region a programme combining return and reintegration of trafficked and other vulnerable women and children. Between April 1996 and May 1998, 315 Cambodian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Burmese and Laotian people were assisted by IOM to return from Thailand. Voluntary return and reintegration from Italy of trafficked Albanian women will be targeted as a project in 1999/2000 in the context of preventing and combating trafficking in women and minors for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

33. Currently, three major research projects co-sponsored by IOM are exploring the prevalence of trafficking in Europe and possible preventive measures. These are: (i) a feasibility study on rapid transfer aimed at preventing and combating trafficking in human

beings, in particular women and children, for sexual exploitation in the European Union; (ii) a research project on trafficking in Poland, Hungary and Ukraine; (iii) analysis of data and statistical resources available in the EU member States on trafficking in humans, particularly in women and children.

B. The European regional organizations

34. European institutional activity in the area of trafficking has been centred particularly on the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

35. In 1993 the Justice and Home Affairs Council of the European Union agreed on a set of recommendations to member States to counter trafficking.⁶ Following the preparation of a report on the subject⁷ the European Parliament adopted, in January, 1996, a comprehensive resolution on trafficking in human beings⁸ in which trafficking was identified as a flagrant violation of human rights. In May 1996 the EU promulgated a set of Proposals for Action to be taken by member States and in the Framework of the Council of Europe.⁹ In June of the same year the European Commission and IOM organized a joint conference on trafficking in women.¹⁰ The Commission of the European Communities subsequently issued a detailed communication to the Council and the European Parliament on trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation.¹¹

36. In 1997, following up on its earlier recommendations on the same subject,¹² the Council of the European Union adopted a "Joint Action on trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of children". Through the (non-binding) Joint Action, EU member States agree to review existing laws and practices with a view to improving judicial cooperation and ensuring appropriate penalties (including confiscation of the proceeds of trafficking). Member States are also to ensure protection for witnesses, and assistance for victims and their families. The Joint Action makes extensive provision for strengthening cooperation between member States in all relevant areas, including judicial processes and information exchange. Implementation of the Joint Action is scheduled to be reviewed by the Council by the end of 1999. In April 1997, an EU ministerial conference was held on the question of traffic in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The conference resulted in the Ministerial Declaration on European Guidelines for Effective Measures to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Women for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation.¹³ Known as The Hague Declaration, it sets out recommendations at the national and European level to combat trafficking, to encourage and assist victims to report trafficking to the police, to detect, investigate and prosecute traffickers, to provide victims with adequate protection, appropriate assistance and support, and to ensure a "fair treatment" response on the part of criminal justice systems. A second Communication to the Council and the European Parliament on trafficking in women was issued in December 1998.¹⁴ The communication affirms that the question of trafficking in women remains high on the agenda of the EU. It focuses particularly on the need for improved inter-State cooperation and for a multidisciplinary approach to trafficking.

37. Council of Europe activity on the issue of trafficking can be traced back to the late 1980s. Since that time, the Council has been extremely active in fighting trafficking - particularly through awareness raising, public information and collaboration with non-governmental

organizations. In 1997, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation on traffic in women and forced prostitution in Council of Europe member States,¹⁵ prompted by the dramatic increase in trafficking in women and forced prostitution in member States, the growing involvement of organized crime in these activities and the deterioration of the treatment of trafficked women. The Assembly recommended that the Council of Ministers elaborate a convention focusing on human rights, stipulating repressive, anti-trafficking measures through harmonization of laws, improved police and judicial communication, coordination and cooperation, and organizing assistance and protection for victims. Pending such a convention, the Council recommended the adoption of a recommendation on the subject by the Committee of Ministers. It further recommended that the Committee urge member States to, *inter alia*, increase public awareness of the problem, train immigration staff, strengthen the national and international police response, ensure appropriate penalties and provide assistance to victims, especially those willing to testify against traffickers.

38. Recent activities of the Council of Europe in the field of trafficking have focused particularly on awareness-raising and legal measures. The awareness-raising and action oriented activities included two seminars organized in 1998 focusing, respectively, on the role of NGOs in fighting trafficking and the role of the media in trafficking. As a follow-up to the second conference, the Council of Europe is now considering the feasibility of preparing guidelines on the use of new technologies, in order to prevent their negative impact on the issue of trafficking. Other information and awareness-raising activities are being implemented in the context of a joint project with OHCHR.

39. The Council of Europe is also active in the legal field. A multisectoral group of specialists is now working on a draft recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to the member States. This group is composed of specialists nominated by various committees of the Council of Europe competent in issues of equality between women and men, the mass media, social policy, human rights, legal cooperation, crime problems and migration. The group's draft recommendation focuses on such issues as assistance to and protection of the victims, awareness-raising, information and education, prevention, social measures, right of return and rehabilitation, and the mass media. It is hoped that this text will be adopted by the Committee of Ministers towards the end of 1999 or at the beginning of 2000.

40. The European Police Office (EUROPOL) has been involved in activities concerning the trafficking in human beings as defined in the decision of the Council of the European Union supplementing the definition of the crime of "traffic in human beings" in the annex to the Treaty on European Union on the establishment of a European Police Office (Europol Convention) (12902/98, 26 November 1998). The decision, which entered into force on 1 January 1999, reads:

“ ‘Traffic in human beings’ means subjection of a person to the real and illegal sway of other persons by using violence or menaces or by abuse of authority or intrigue, especially with a view to the exploitation and assault of minors or trade in abandoned children. These forms of exploitation also include the production, sale or distribution of child-pornography material.”

C. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

41. The issue of trafficking in women and children was first taken up by SAARC at a meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs held in December 1996. At the Ninth SAARC Summit, held in Maldives in May 1997, Heads of State or Government expressed concern at the trafficking of women within and between countries and pledged to coordinate efforts of member States to take effective measures to address this problem. A resolution was adopted on trafficking in women and children which called for the elaboration of a regional convention. The Government of Bangladesh took responsibility for elaborating the first draft, which was discussed at a technical meeting held in Kathmandu in September 1997. The second and current draft of the convention was produced by the Government of India and discussed at an expert committee meeting held in Delhi in June 1998.

42. The draft convention was considered by the SAARC Heads of State or Government at the Tenth SAARC Summit, held in Colombo in July, 1998 at which those present welcomed the finalization of the draft text of the regional convention on combating trafficking in women and children for prostitution, and noted that it would be a vital instrument in dealing with this problem. They agreed that the convention would be signed at the Eleventh SAARC Summit, which was to have taken place in Kathmandu at the end of November 1999 but which has been postponed.

43. The High Commissioner for Human Rights wrote to all Heads of SAARC Governments expressing her strong support for the elaboration of a sub-regional convention on this issue and emphasizing the need to ensure that a human rights perspective was fully integrated into the final draft text. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences undertook a detailed analysis of the draft text, which she submitted to the SAARC Heads of Government for their consideration.

D. The inter-American system

44. The Organization of American States has recently launched a project entitled "International trafficking in women and children in the Americas: research on trafficking in women and children for purposes of labour and sexual exploitation". This project is being developed in partnership with the International Human Rights Law Institute (IHRLI) of De Paul University (Chicago, Illinois). On the basis of its experience in the field of human rights, IHRLI is selecting seven or eight pilot countries. Suggested countries are Argentina, Brazil, Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Peru and Venezuela. With the assistance of two or three NGOs in the field, data will be compiled by country. Experts from the region, including experts from the selected countries, will be chosen to participate in analysing the collected data. At a meeting to be hosted by the Inter-American Commission of Women in Washington, D.C., data will be reviewed and discussed and recommendations will be made. The results of these deliberations will be presented to the delegates of that Commission at the biennial Assembly of Delegates in November 2000. These findings will provide the basis for recommendations to the member States for action, and will be published and distributed throughout the hemisphere. The Commission will also coordinate this project with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Children's Institute.

E. Other international organizations

45. The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) recently created a new branch within its General Secretariat to deal with the issue of trafficking. Future services are expected to include: identifying affected regions through strategic analysis using available data, the expertise of other organizations and open sources; helping affected regions to formulate an adapted approach defining minimum standards for repression, prevention and support mechanisms; enhancing mutual understanding of evidence requirements in other regions through awareness training of police officers at regional training sessions; and developing a standard collection format which responds to all elements of the modus operandi. Interpol sponsored an international conference on trafficking in women in October 1998. The report of that conference includes an inventory of special police techniques and other provisions for combating trafficking of women for sexual purposes.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

46. The issue of trafficking is now high on the international agenda and the present report has shown the range and depth of commitment, on the part of the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, to resolving this global problem. It is particularly appropriate that a compilation of information of this kind is being presented to the Commission on Human Rights. Trafficking and related practices, such as forced prostitution, forced labour, debt bondage and servitude, violate the most basic of all human rights, including the right to life, the right to dignity and security, the right to just and favourable conditions of work, the right to health and the right to equality. These are rights which all individuals possess - irrespective of their race, sex, occupation, social status or any other difference.

47. It is important to acknowledge that the development of effective and realistic solutions to the problem of trafficking will depend, to a great extent, on an understanding of its root causes. These include: economic factors, such as poverty, food scarcity, unemployment and indebtedness; social and cultural factors, such as violence against women and girls, and gender discrimination in the family and the community and by the State; political and legal factors, such as lack of appropriate legislation, lack of political will and public sector corruption; and international factors, such as the growing feminization of labour migration on the one hand and increasingly restrictive immigration policies of recipient countries on the other, increased power and involvement of transnational organized criminal networks, the rapidly expanding global sex industry and the growing gap between rich and poor countries.

48. It is only by addressing these complex and overlapping causes that progress will be made on eliminating trafficking and protecting the rights of trafficked persons. It is particularly important to ensure that human rights are integrated into analysis of the trafficking problem and the development of solutions. As the High Commissioner for Human Rights has observed, that is the only way to retain a focus on the trafficked person and to ensure that trafficking is not simply reduced to a problem of migration, a problem of public order or a problem of organized crime. The integration of a human rights perspective into the anti-trafficking work of the United Nations is also an essential aspect of the broader commitment of the organization to the integration of human rights throughout its work.

Notes

¹ See, for example, the following resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, in 1998, which mention or address the issue of trafficking in women and children: resolution 53/111 on transnational organized crime (para. 10); resolution 53/114 on the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme (para. 12); resolution 53/116 on traffic in women and girls; resolution 53/120 on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women; resolution 53/127 on the girl child. See also the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on traffic in women and girls (A/53/409).

² See, for example, the following resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fifth session: 1999/40 on trafficking in women and girls; 1999/42 on elimination of violence against women; 1999/44 on the human rights of migrants; 1999/46 on contemporary forms of slavery; 1999/76 on the situation of human rights in Cambodia (para. 17); and 1999/80 on the rights of the child.

³ See Trade in Human Misery: Trafficking in Women and Children: Asia Region, UNIFEM, South Asia Regional Office, 1998.

⁴ See, for example, ILO/IPEC discussion paper “Framework for action to combat trafficking in children for labour exploitation in South Asia”, submitted to the South Asian Subregional Consultation, Kathmandu, Nepal, October 1998.

⁵ Lin Lean Lim (ed.), The Sex Sector: The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia, International Labour Office, Geneva, 1998.

⁶ “Recommendations on trade in human beings”, Justice and Home Affairs Council press release 10550/93 of 29-30 November 1993, annex 2.

⁷ Report on Trafficking in Human Beings of the Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs, 14 December 1995, A4-0326/95.

⁸ Resolution on trafficking in human beings adopted by the European Parliament on 18 January 1996, OJ No. C 32, 5.2. 1996, p. 88.

⁹ CDEG (96) 6 rev. 10 May 1996.

¹⁰ See European Commission, Report of the Conference on Trafficking in Women, 10-11 June 1996, Vienna, CAB./183/96/ENG.

¹¹ Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Trafficking in Women for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation, COM (96) 567 final.

¹² Recommendations of the Council of the European Union on combating trafficking in human beings, adopted on 29 and 30 November 1993.

¹³ The Hague Ministerial Declaration on European Guidelines for Effective Measures to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Women for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation, The Hague, 27 April 1997.

¹⁴ Communication to the Council and the European Parliament for Further Actions in the Fight Against Trafficking in Women, COM (1998) 726 final.

¹⁵ Recommendation 1325 (1997), adopted by the Assembly of the Council of Europe on 23 April 1997.

¹⁶ International Criminal Police Organization, International Conference on Trafficking in Women, Vienna, 20-21 October 1998.
