



31 March 2007

Input from the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) to the questions posed by the UNODC *Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery*

Thank you for the opportunity provided to GAATW, by the letter from the UNODC Secretariat of 14 February 2007, to provide input on two questions as part of the Global Initiative. GAATW has now consulted its members and reviewed its materials to offer such input.

GAATW is an international alliance of 82 member organisations in five continents that work to combat human trafficking from a human rights perspective. Many of our members are direct service providers to trafficked persons, and have a unique insight into what is needed to strengthen anti-trafficking policies.

Below is a thematic summary of responses from six organisations of both origin and destination countries. The GAATW International Secretariat has supplemented the responses with information from discussions with other members and colleagues. Overall, NGOs were very pleased to be asked to contribute and would value more opportunities to offer their expertise. We hope this input will be of assistance.

1. What do NGO's need? What kind of assistance, recognition, cooperation etc. would best enable NGOs to prevent and combat human trafficking?

Participation

- All NGOs emphasized the need for involvement of NGOs in policy-making and at anti-trafficking conferences and meetings at the global and regional level.
- Also, women affected by trafficking or anti-trafficking measures (trafficking survivors, undocumented migrants, potential migrants, workers in informal sectors including prostitution) must be able to participate in policy-making.

Recognition

- NGOs need to be recognized by the government and government agencies as competent and essential actors in fighting human trafficking and in providing assistance to victims of the crime of trafficking.
- We would like to work in cooperation with government to provide legal, social and psychological assistance to victims of trafficking.
- NGOs must also be able to retain their independence.
- We would like more opportunities to advise and train police and government authorities (for example about identification and providing immediate advice and assistance to women following raids of workplaces).

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Funding

- We need long-term funding. Adequate government funding is necessary for NGOs to provide professional assistance to trafficked women.
- We ask governments to fund professional counseling for trafficked persons. This is a fundamental pre-requisite to a trafficked woman being able to give testimony as a witness in criminal prosecutions; the effective cooperation of the trafficked person is essential for a successful prosecution.
- We need to be able to provide survivors of trafficking with financial support. This is to pay for essential needs, such as accommodation and food, as well as medical bills, education and legal advice. A secure income can also provide some of the stability that survivors of trafficking need to recover from trauma, to begin to trust authorities, and to conceptualize a new life for themselves. Therefore, in addition to initial financial support, this requires regularizing their status so that they can legally undertake paid work, even while in a shelter (unless of course they have a condition such that they are unable to work.)
- We need funding for assisting with reintegration to ensure that trafficked persons get the support, shelter and assistance that prevent them from being re-trafficked. Now victims are simply 'dropped' at the airport of their home country, where sometimes their traffickers already await them.
- We need funding for prevention programs to tackle discrimination against certain social groups.
- Criminal investigations need enough funding to ensure that investigations are conducted thoroughly and comprehensively. It must be acknowledged that investigations require an enormous amount of time, personnel and financial resources and many cases are 'dropped' only because human and financial resources are not readily available.

Funding in respect to all types of trafficking

- We need more shelter capacity, especially for non-traditional 'victims' such as men, children, and persons trafficked into sectors other than the sex industry. Governments must facilitate and fund more shelters for victims.
- We need more attention and funding given to internal trafficking.
- Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Funding for assistance and for the allocation of a guardian to protect the minor from exploitation is needed.

NGO Protection

- We need to know that we will not be penalized for assisting undocumented people.
- We must be able to keep certain information about clients confidential in order to gain the trust of the client.

Information sharing and coordination

- All information that is received at government level about trafficking patterns, priorities and policies should be shared with NGOs.
- We need timely and in depth information about the trafficking situation in targeted areas in order that we can provide the most effective support.
- We also need research and information about trafficking in other sectors, not only into the sex industry.

- We need a system by which government agencies notify NGOs of persons that the government assists, so that NGOs can ensure the protection of their human rights.
- Since the International Organisation for Migration coordinates repatriation in many parts of the world, we need better coordination with IOM to organise secure and protected returns. At the very least NGOs should be informed by authorities when no IOM involvement is foreseen.
- In returning victims to their countries of origin, governments should cooperate with NGOs in both destination and origin countries to ensure safe return.
- Governments should establish national and regional referral systems. The network should involve all actors (police, customs, shelter facilities, lawyers, international agencies and NGO's that provide assistance and support).

Technical assistance in:

- Planning and implementation of effective projects
- Monitoring and evaluation - in particular on indicators and evaluation methods that are coordinated and comparable
- Trainings for staff of community-based NGOs to increase capacity
- Some community-based organisations that provide essential services to survivors would like support from a psychologist, including trainings in how to lead interviews and workshops, sensitive prevention and other skill trainings.

Changes in policy

Government policies on human trafficking and migration can seriously hamper or support the efforts of NGOs to provide protection. In this light, NGOs call on governments to:

- Commit sincerely to combating trafficking through prevention, prosecution (supporting the police and public prosecution office) and protection of victims
- Ensure protection and support to all victims of trafficking, independent of whether they are willing and able to press charges or act as witnesses. It is unconscionable to restrict basic services to the small percentage (about 5% in the Netherlands, for instance) both willing and able to act as a witness in a trial against their traffickers
- Allow NGO's to support all victims, even if it is just by ensuring their safe return to their home countries
- Empower migrants and give them more legal opportunities to migrate. For example, provide regular channels for women migrant workers who are needed in the informal sector and allow them to change employers if they suffer exploitation. This is without doubt the best strategy for preventing trafficking
- Adopt a human rights based framework for designing and evaluating policy to ensure genuine and effective protection of victims of the crime of trafficking;
- Offer residency to victims of the crime of trafficking, or refugee status on humanitarian basis, if the victim would be in serious danger in her/his country of origin (independently from her/his willingness to act as a witness and to denounce the perpetrators). Individual risk assessments (not assessment of a class or nationality) should be made to determine risk of danger
- Acknowledge the difference between trafficking and smuggling so that immigration policies do not affect or subsume anti-trafficking efforts
- Enforce laws aimed at fighting forced prostitution without negatively impacting policies around voluntary sex work. The improvement of the living

and working conditions of all workers - in all sectors - should be at the core of all efforts

- Decriminalize victims of the crime of trafficking for infringement of migration and other laws. Trafficking survivors are being charged with minor sentences for their irregular status or participation in illegal work sectors, but no mention is made about their status as victims of a serious crime.

2. What would you like the Global Initiative to do to reflect and address the needs identified by you?

Involvement

- More information about the Global Initiative, its objectives, aims, plans, countries which will be taken into consideration, country specific budgets
- UNODC should make it a principle *sine qua non* that NGOs participate in global and regional conferences or meetings, including about the action plans of the Global Initiative
- Clear indications on how we could optimally contribute to formulating plans and enable the participation of survivors of trafficking themselves.
- Opportunities to present sustainable project proposals with objectives that conform to those of the Global Initiative
- Participation in working meetings regarding the strength and weaknesses of anti-trafficking projects, country-specific problems, risks and dangers in certain areas, etc.
- We would like to express our interest in participating in the Global Initiative.

Global funding

- Create a fund for NGOs to be able to finance activities for prevention, assistance and research.

Coordination

- Keep a shared database of addresses and contacts accessible to all NGOs all over the world.

Many thanks and best regards,
GAATW International Secretariat,

With specific input from:

Ban-Ying, Germany
BlinN, the Netherlands
ECPAT Guatemala, Guatemala
Fiz, Switzerland
Modemu, Dominican Republic
Sodireitos, Brazil

And general input from our members in Nepal, India, Brazil and Nigeria.