

Speech by
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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Celebrating United Nations Day 2017
24 October 2017
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Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, UN Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to join this Special Event to mark UN Day and to talk about GLO.ACT's exhibition, "Hear their voices. Act to Protect." GLO.ACT is a project within UNODC's Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section and stands for the Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants. The project is a joint initiative by the European Union (EU) and UNODC being implemented in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and delivered across 13 countries around the world.

GLO.ACT's exhibition feature testimonies of human trafficking victims of all ages from across Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The exhibits are made up of 15 life size figures – 5 women, 5 men and 5 children. These testimonies are truly moving - Tikirit was only 10 years old when she was sexually abused; Marcela was only 17 when she was trafficked for sexual exploitation; Urmat, a little boy was trafficked for forced begging while Sang was only 15 when she was trafficked for domestic servitude, a male victim whose kidney was removed... I could go on.

"Hear their voices. Act to Protect." is a simple message but one with substance – that we must listen to the voices of victims so that we can better prevent human trafficking, improve and strengthen our response to human trafficking and importantly, meet our obligations to victims. As mentioned at a separate event – these testimonies make the invisible visible in order that we hear their voices and act to protect them.

In reading these testimonies I hope we can develop a collective responsibility to ensure that protection and assistance measures are appropriate, that they do no harm and that they ensure the protection of the most vulnerable. To this end, there can be no more important voices to privilege and bear witness to, than those of victims.

Distinguished participants,

I encourage you to read the testimonies of the men, women and children who are presented to us today. These are real stories, which speak to the suffering that these victims have endured, but also to their courage and resilience. These testimonies invite us to consider how we can and must, do more to "Hear their voices. and to Act to Protect."

On UN Day, let us measure our successes by how we treat our most vulnerable.

Thank you.

For more information, please visit:
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/glo-act/>
Email: glo.act@unodc.org
Twitter: [@glo_act](https://twitter.com/glo_act)