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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

30 July 2022

Human trafficking is a horrific crime and an all-out assault on people's rights, safety and dignity.

Tragically, it is also a problem that is growing worse — especially for women and girls, who represent the majority of detected trafficked persons globally.

Conflicts, forced displacement, climate change, inequality and poverty have left tens of millions of people around the world destitute, isolated and vulnerable.

The COVID-19 pandemic has separated children and young people from their friends and peers, causing them to spend more time alone and online.

Human traffickers are taking advantage of these vulnerabilities, using sophisticated technology to identify, track, control and exploit victims.

Online platforms allow them to deceive and recruit people with false promises. The dark web lets them conceal their identities while spreading their vile materials, including those that sexually exploit children. And technology gives consumers the ability to anonymously demand increasingly dangerous and degrading content that fuels human trafficking.

But as the theme of this year's World Day Against Trafficking in Persons — "Use and Abuse of Technology" — reminds us, while technology can enable human trafficking, it can also be a critical tool in fighting it.

We need governments, regulators, businesses and civil society joining forces to invest in policies, laws and technology-based solutions that can identify and support victims, locate and punish perpetrators, and ensure a safe, open and secure internet for all. As part of 2023's Summit of the Future, I have proposed a Global Digital Compact to rally the world around the need to bring good governance to the digital space.

On this important day, I call on the world to give this issue the attention and action it deserves and work to end the scourge of human trafficking once and for all.
