

Kingdom of Eswatini commemorates the World Day Against TIP, by launching the National Strategic Framework and Action Plan to Combat People Trafficking (2019 - 2023)



Ezulwini, Kingdom of Eswatini – 8 August 2019 – Prime Minister in the Kingdom of Eswatini, His Excellency Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini, launched the National Strategic Framework and Action Plan to Combat People Trafficking 2019-2023. The launch of the Strategic Framework and Action Plan took place under the Commemoration of the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons framework with the theme: “Human Trafficking: Call your Government to action.”

The action plan, supported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Regional Office for Southern Africa (UNODC ROSAF) aims to upscale prevention measures, effectively empower law enforcement agencies and facilitate prosecution of criminals. The plan addresses amongst other priorities, the current gaps in the victim protection measures, by advocating for a victim-centred approach as one of the guiding principles in exercising criminal justice. This year’s World Day Against Trafficking in Persons theme “Human Trafficking: Call your Government to Action” is intended to highlight that trafficking happens all around us and that victims should be protected and not criminalized. Also, the campaign seeks to inform people of the actions prioritized by Governments that have signed up to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.



Prime Minister in the Kingdom of Eswatini, His Excellency Ambrose Dlamini, UN Eswatini Resident Coordinator, Ms. Nathalie Ndongo-She, UNODC Regional Representative, Ms. Zhuldyz Akisheva, The United States Embassy Political/Economic Chief, Mr. Mich Coker

Eswatini is a source country for human trafficking with its citizens being trafficked primarily for labour exploitation to neighboring countries (mostly South Africa and to lesser extent Mozambique). It is also a transit country for African and Asian nationals being trafficked to South Africa predominantly for labour exploitation. Emerging forms of exploitation detected are: trafficking for purposes of being used in the drug trade (drug mules); and abduction of babies from hospitals or families to South Africa for the purpose of accessing government child grants. There are recent Media reports on people being trafficked to Eswatini, which show a newly emerging trend of the country becoming a destination for TIP.

Key challenges faced by the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini in the response to TIP have been the low conviction rates, as well as insufficient services offered to the victims of TIP. The Government is committed to address these gaps. There are first trafficking in persons Judgements that are beginning to emanate from the Eswatini Court system.

H.E. Ambrose Dlamini highlighted that the framework will guide stakeholders on their respective roles and responsibilities in fighting human trafficking. “I implore all role players to honour their obligations, take collective responsibility and deliver in accordance with their specific intuitional mandates,” stated the Prime Minister.

UNODC Regional Representative, Ms. Zhuldyz Akisheva, commended the Government of Eswatini for making significant strides in combating human trafficking. “We believe the commemoration theme resonates very well with the actions of the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini who has shown serious efforts in the response to Trafficking in Persons,” she stated. “This is evidenced amongst other things, by the trafficking in persons Judgements that are beginning to emanate from the kingdom of Eswatini with the Judicial system becoming more efficient in bringing perpetrators to Justice.”. While rigorous investigation, prosecution and adjudication of TIP cases are crucial for building trust in the Justice system, it is equally important to provide comprehensive services for victims/survivors of TIP.

In her remarks, UN Eswatini Resident Coordinator, Ms. Nathalie Ndongo-Seh reiterated the commitment of the UN in supporting the Government in a range of strategic areas as guided by the needs of the country and the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). “We remain committed to preventing and suppressing trafficking in persons as well as assisting Eswatini in bring traffickers to justice and providing adequate support to the victims,” she stated. She added that the theme highlights the urgent need to step up responses to the trafficking of children and young people across the world. “The call to action is primarily addressed to Governments; however, we do encourage every individual, every group, every organization to take action to prevent and combat prevent this heinous crime,” she said.

The United States Embassy Political/Economic Chief, Mr. Mich Coker congratulated Eswatini for upgrading to Tier 2 on the U.S. Government 2019 TIP Report. He recognized that Eswatini had demonstrated measurable improvements in anti-trafficking efforts through interventions such as the enactment of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act and expediting prosecutions of perpetrators of sex trafficking.

As part of the way forward the UNODC committed to continue its support to the Kingdom of Eswatini in areas of legislation as part of the efforts to respond to TIP. The Legislative work will involve amending the current trafficking in persons legislation in the Kingdom of Eswatini in order to align it to all the requirements of the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.



Commemoration of the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons and Launch of the Kingdom of Eswatini National Strategic Framework and Action Plan to Combat People Trafficking (2019-2023)