New Zealand National Statement to the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons

10-11 September 2020

New Zealand extends its thanks to the UNODC for convening this tenth session of the Conference of Parties Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, both virtually and in person. This meeting takes place during a period of increasing global uncertainty and vulnerability for those at greatest risk of exploitation domestically and, as border restrictions are eased, internationally.

The fact that Working Group members have come together in these challenging circumstances demonstrates both the imperative for collective action, and our shared resolve to address this issue of global importance.

New Zealand is developing a new Plan of Action against Forced Labour, People Trafficking and Slavery. This is intended to update and supersede the current Plan of Action against People Trafficking, which was established in 2009. The updated Plan of Action will reflect the need for strong partnerships between domestic and foreign government agencies, civil society organisations and business groups in effectively addressing trafficking in persons.

New Zealand continues to actively investigate and prosecute people trafficking crimes. On 17 March 2020, New Zealand secured its second human trafficking conviction following a complex joint investigation by Immigration New Zealand and New Zealand Police, in close collaboration with international partners in the Pacific.

New Zealand is also increasing its domestic efforts to collaborate in support of investigations, activities and operations against people trafficking. In 2019 New Zealand established a Trafficking in Persons Operations Group, the purpose of which is to support lawful information sharing between government agencies and collaborate and coordinate investigations and prosecutions.

New Zealand reaffirms the importance of effective implementation of the relevant instruments which address these practices. This includes the 2014 Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, which recognises that the context and forms of forced labour have changed and that trafficking in persons for forced labour requires urgent action for its effective elimination.

New Zealand looks forward to continued engagement with the Working Group as we work together towards combatting this terrible crime.