

UNTOC Working Group on TIP

Canadian Intervention on Agenda item 3: “Best practices in joint investigations and specialized prosecutions”

June 29-30, 2022

Thank you Madams Co-Chairs.

At the outset, I would like to thank the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for organizing this timely event. I would also like to thank the panelists for their interesting and insightful presentations.

Collaboration is critical for most anti-human trafficking work, including investigations. We would like to provide an example of a joint investigation, which was launched in Canada in 2018, that exemplifies best practices in cross-sectoral collaboration and integration of victim-centered approaches in investigations.

The case involved 43 foreign nationals who had been trafficked into an exploitative labour situation.

The joint investigation consisted of three law enforcement agencies at the federal, provincial, and municipal level.

A memorandum of understanding was signed between the three law enforcement agencies, allowing for effective information sharing and eventually the establishment of a Joint Forces Operation. Case managers and lead investigators from each agency coordinated information sharing and assigned investigative roles to each agency.

Crown prosecutors at both the federal and provincial level were involved to develop a prosecutorial strategy.

Adopting a victim-centered approach upfront, starting at the operational planning stage, was vital to the investigation. Prior consideration was made

for cultural needs, vulnerabilities, and maintaining the victims and survivors' confidence through open communication.

The operation was then conducted at five residences over the course of a single day. Victims and survivors were brought to one central location where medical staff, victim services, translators, and investigators were ready to care for the victims and survivors' needs, while collecting and preserving evidence.

Mesdames les co-présidentes,

L'engagement des services d'aide aux victimes était primordial pour le succès de l'opération. Grâce à des partenariats avec des organisations non gouvernementales locales, des agences fédérales et des unités de services aux victimes, les victimes, survivantes et survivants ont reçu de la nourriture, un logement, un soutien médical, des services juridiques, des vêtements et des produits d'hygiène, des services d'assistance judiciaire, des conseils et une planification des compétences de vie.

Ces mesures favorisent la guérison et la résilience des victimes, leur permettent de se sentir entendues et de participer de manière significative. Elles contribuent à instaurer la confiance mutuelle, augmentent la probabilité de participation des victimes, survivantes et survivants aux enquêtes, réduisent le potentiel de préjudice supplémentaire, de revictimisation et de retraumatisation, et créent une norme plus cohérente de réponse aux victimes.

Nous espérons que cet exemple en matière d'enquêtes conjointes et d'intégration d'approches axées sur les victimes et de collaboration intersectorielle sera utile aux autres délégations. Le Canada serait heureux de discuter davantage de cette approche axée sur les victimes avec les délégations intéressées.

Je vous remercie.