



Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

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Report on the meeting of the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons held in Vienna on 2 and 3 October 2023

I. Introduction

1. In its decision 4/4, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime acknowledged that the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, was the principal legally binding global instrument to combat trafficking in persons. In that decision, the Conference also decided to establish an open-ended interim working group on trafficking in persons. The Working Group on Trafficking in Persons met for the first time on 14 and 15 April 2009 and held a total of twelve meetings prior to its meeting in 2023.

2. In its resolution 7/1, entitled “Strengthening the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto”, the Conference of the Parties decided, *inter alia*, that the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons would be a constant element of the Conference, forwarding its reports and recommendations to the Conference, and encouraged the working groups of the Conference to consider meeting on an annual basis, as needed, and to hold their meetings consecutively, in order to ensure the effective use of resources.

3. The procedures and rules for the functioning of the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, which are annexed to resolution 9/1 establishing the Mechanism, envisage a significant role for the working groups of the Conference, including the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, in the Mechanism. According to paragraph 12 of the procedures and rules, the Conference and its working groups are to add the review process to their agendas as an item consistent with their areas of expertise and without prejudice to their respective existing mandates. In addition, in order to ensure that the working groups are able to contribute to the Mechanism while also carrying out their respective existing mandates, each working group should dedicate no more than one agenda item per session to matters pertaining to the functioning of the review process.

II. Recommendations

4. At its 4th meeting, on 3 October 2023, the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, noting that it would not be able to complete line-by-line negotiations of several draft recommendations proposed during the meeting, agreed to reproduce



those recommendations in the present report, in the form in which they were initially proposed to delegates, for possible consideration at future meetings of the Working Group or the Conference. Those recommendations are included in the annex to the present report as proposed recommendations of the Co-Chairs. In addition, the Working Group adopted the recommendations presented below for consideration by the Conference.

A. Recommendations on emerging knowledge and practice regarding the prevention of and response to corruption in the context of trafficking in persons

5. The Working Group recommended that the Conference of the Parties consider the following recommendations for adoption:

Recommendation 1

States parties are encouraged to effectively integrate efforts to respond to trafficking in persons and related corruption, including by strengthening cooperation between anti-trafficking and anti-corruption units and by incorporating measures to address issues related to corruption in all anti-trafficking strategies.

Recommendation 2

States parties, in accordance with the fundamental principles of their legal systems and applicable international obligations, are encouraged to enhance the investigation of corruption in the context of trafficking in persons, including by encouraging the lodging of complaints against corruption, initiating proactive information-based investigations that consider the possible involvement of public officials in trafficking cases, and undertaking comprehensive criminal investigations, with respect for due process, against officials alleged to have facilitated, abetted or otherwise committed trafficking.

Recommendation 3

States parties are encouraged to consider increasing the penalty for public officials who are found guilty of trafficking in persons or related offences.

Recommendation 4

States parties are encouraged to include in their training of anti-trafficking officials measures to build the capacity of those officials to prevent, detect, report and prosecute corrupt practices related to trafficking in persons.

Recommendation 5

States parties are encouraged to adopt measures to raise awareness and to develop public sensitivity by including corruption-related information in the relevant prevention activities and communication campaigns related to trafficking in persons.

Recommendation 6

States parties are encouraged to undertake systematic data collection on the crime of trafficking in persons and related crimes, in order to effectively assess the impact of corrupt practices in the context of trafficking in persons and also analyse the outcome of anti-corruption measures in such cases, in accordance with national legislation.

Recommendation 7

States parties are encouraged to strengthen bilateral, regional and international cooperation and national coordination, including information exchange, mutual

legal assistance, technical assistance and capacity-building, to more effectively prevent and counter trafficking in persons, including for the purpose of organ removal, the use of corruption as a facilitator of that crime.

B. Recommendations on national issues and priorities concerning child trafficking

6. The Working Group recommended that the Conference of the Parties consider the following recommendations for adoption:

Recommendation 8

States parties are encouraged to strengthen efforts to prevent child trafficking, including through consideration of the following, in line with the fundamental principles of their legal systems:

(a) Enhancing and facilitating the availability and flexibility of regular migration pathways and sharing such information with relevant stakeholders;

(b) Establishing standardized inter-agency measures for the interviewing and referral of unaccompanied, separated and undocumented migrant children, in particular in border areas, providing for their access to national child protection structures regardless of their migration status, and always taking into consideration the best interests of the child;

(c) Providing for the appointment of legal guardians or representatives to enhance the protection of child victims;

(d) Strengthening responses that engage all sectors, as appropriate, such as police and prosecutors, health care, education, sports, businesses, technology, trade unions, families, community or Indigenous leaders, media, civil society, religious institutions, and child protection and social protection systems.

Recommendation 9

States parties are encouraged to enhance efforts to prevent and counter child trafficking online through:

(a) Increased awareness-raising with regard to online safety and risks and the availability and use of standardized referral measures;

(b) Introducing appropriate measures aimed at requesting online platforms to quickly remove child sexual abuse material, including material related to child trafficking, to avoid the revictimization of child victims;

(c) Ensuring that national laws cover all trafficking in persons offences specified by the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, regardless of whether or not the offences are conducted or facilitated online, and ensuring that those efforts address the distinct challenges presented by such offences;

(d) Undertaking awareness-raising campaigns to prevent and combat the abuse and exploitation of children, especially through child trafficking;

(e) Calling upon online platforms and social media providers, where appropriate, to facilitate and contribute to the efforts of States parties in cases of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, especially through child trafficking.

III. Summary of deliberations

7. The following summary of deliberations was prepared by the secretariat after the meeting, in close coordination with the Co-Chairs. The summary of deliberations was not subject to negotiation and adoption during the meeting and is, instead, a summary by the Co-Chairs.

A. Emerging knowledge and practice regarding the prevention of and response to corruption in the context of trafficking in persons

8. At its 1st and 2nd meetings, on 2 October 2023, the Working Group considered agenda item 2, entitled “Emerging knowledge and practice regarding the prevention of and response to corruption in the context of trafficking in persons”. The discussion under the agenda item was facilitated by Hernán Santiago Andrade, Prosecutor, Office of the Deputy Attorney General (Colombia); Ahmed Adel Basha Shahat, Member of the Administrative Control Authority (Egypt); and Niyazi Ulugölge, President of the Department of Guidance and Inspection, Presidency of Migration Management (Türkiye).

9. Mr. Andrade presented the work of the Office of the Deputy Attorney General of Colombia in addressing corruption facilitating trafficking in persons and noted the complexities associated with investigating corruption in the context of trafficking in persons. He also noted that the penalties for civil servants involved in the crime were severe in Colombia, and that corruption could be identified at any stage of the trafficking process and could facilitate the commission of the crime, for example through civil servants being paid for intimidating victims to deter them from reporting trafficking in persons. A strategy to counter corruption in the context of trafficking in persons had been developed, with an emphasis on the importance of cooperation between different entities both within the country and internationally. He concluded by highlighting the importance for law enforcement authorities to investigate and prosecute corruption related to trafficking in persons cases, and by stating that corruption was often not reported because people did not have sufficient trust in public institutions.

10. Mr. Basha Shahat noted that trafficking in persons was a prevalent crime globally. He gave an overview of the national legislative framework and international agreements that his country used to counter trafficking in persons, and he noted that trafficking in persons for organ transplantation was prevalent in Egypt. The criminal groups involved were complex, and related actors might include the patient, the organ donor, medical staff, the medical centre and the medical laboratory. A holistic approach targeting the different groups involved in the crime had been implemented, including raising awareness among medical staff of the existence of trafficking in persons for organ removal. That had resulted in a decline in illegal organ transplantation operations and an increase in reporting by citizens. He then underlined the importance of international cooperation on that matter to facilitate information exchange.

11. Mr. Ulugölge spoke about the issue of corruption in Türkiye and efforts to fight it through stringent penalties such as dismissal or imprisonment, without recourse to immunity mechanisms. He noted that the impact of corruption was a factor in facilitating the invisibility of trafficking in persons by masking the crime. He further highlighted the importance of witness protection to increase the reporting of corruption. He then described a women’s emergency support application used in Türkiye that promoted the protection of women and girls through alert buttons, rapid responses and the possibility of reporting corruption. He also emphasized the importance of working together with and providing sustainable assistance to civil society organizations involved in countering trafficking in persons and corruption.

12. Following the presentations, numerous questions were raised, including with regard to protection measures afforded to victims of trafficking in persons for organ removal, and speakers noted the importance of maintaining transplant registries in each country. Speakers also discussed ways to increase trust in public institutions and how to best use assets recovered in cases of trafficking in persons facilitated by corruption. Several delegates stressed the importance of protecting witnesses and whistle-blowers from reprisals. The importance of gender-responsive measures and the essential role of civil society organizations were underlined on various occasions.

B. National issues and priorities concerning child trafficking

13. At its 2nd meeting, on 2 October 2023, the Working Group considered agenda item 3, entitled “National issues and priorities concerning child trafficking”. The discussion under the agenda item was facilitated by Hilary Axam, Director, Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit, Department of Justice (United States of America); Paulene Kaye Bucag-Lopez, Chief of the Policy and Programme Division, Inter-Agency Council against Trafficking Secretariat, Department of Justice (Philippines); João Freitas de Castro Chaves, Federal Public Defender, Coordinator of the Migration and Refugee Department of the Federal Public Defender’s Office (Brazil); Sandy Guadalupe Recinos Acevedo, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking (Guatemala); and Diane Schmitt, European Union Anti-Trafficking Coordinator.

14. Ms. Axam outlined the challenge of child trafficking for purposes of child labour as identified in the United States and described two recent court cases, one involving labour trafficking of children within the United States and another involving the transnational trafficking of migrant children for the purpose of labour exploitation. In that context, she underscored that while some traffickers targeted strangers, many exploited familial bonds or social ties to the victim’s community. Ms. Axam identified challenges affecting the response to child trafficking, including that child victims of labour trafficking were often exploited in relative isolation, that it could be difficult to detect any suspicious indicators of child trafficking in areas and sectors where children were allowed to work, and that children could often be exploited without the use of overtly coercive means owing to their inherent vulnerabilities. She indicated that proactive detection and investigation activities were helpful in identifying more child victims and required a robust exchange of information across different sectors. Ms. Axam emphasized the importance of using trauma-informed techniques to help earn the trust of victims. Lastly, she underlined the importance of pursuing a range of measures for holding perpetrators accountable for exploitative labour practices and securing meaningful remedies for victims.

15. Ms. Bucag-Lopez gave an overview of the measures taken in response to child trafficking in the Philippines, with a particular focus on technology-facilitated child trafficking, including, for example, online grooming of children for sexual purposes, sexual extortion of children, commercial sexual exploitation of children, exploitation of children through online prostitution and live-streaming of sexual abuse. She noted with great concern that the Philippines had emerged as the centre for the production of child sexual abuse materials in the world. The panellist highlighted, inter alia, the prevalence of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children in her country, showing that 80 per cent of Filipino children were vulnerable to sexual abuse, sometimes facilitated by their own parents. She identified the factors contributing to child trafficking, among them extreme poverty and lack of parental guardianship. She stressed limitations in the monitoring of online platforms as one of the challenges encountered in combating child trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

16. Mr. Freitas de Castro Chaves noted the challenges exacerbating the vulnerability of children to trafficking, which included a lack of identity documentation for children, especially those from neighbouring countries or from Indigenous populations, making parental connections difficult to establish. He gave an overview of the national response to child trafficking and highlighted the framework that had been established to enable identification, family tracing, assistance, documentation and early detection of child trafficking in Brazil. In particular, he mentioned measures taken to address the vulnerability of Indigenous children, as well as efforts to strengthen the capacity of child protection actors, including social workers, community counsellors, prosecutors and judges. In addition, he acknowledged the support provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in addressing trafficking in persons, in particular through the Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of

Migrants (GLO.ACT) and the Transforming Alerts into Criminal Justice Responses to Combat Trafficking in Persons within Migration Flows (TRACK4TIP) initiatives, since 2017.

17. Ms. Recinos Acevedo outlined national issues relating to child trafficking in Guatemala, noting that the number of people vulnerable to trafficking in persons had increased particularly during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. She highlighted that most victims of trafficking were exploited domestically. The panellist further stressed that Guatemala had implemented a comprehensive multidimensional approach to child trafficking, which included crime prevention, victim protection and prosecution, among other activities. The panellist also referred to the support provided by UNODC in building the capacity of national authorities to effectively respond to trafficking in persons, in particular child trafficking.

18. Ms. Schmitt highlighted the importance of a coordinated approach in responding to trafficking in persons. She referred to the prevalence of child trafficking in the European Union, where victims of trafficking were trafficked largely for sexual exploitation, with others trafficked for labour exploitation and forced criminality. In 2021, 23 per cent of victims of trafficking detected in the region were children (17 per cent girls and 6 per cent boys). She also referred to the revision of directive 2011/36 of the European Parliament and of the Council, on preventing and combating trafficking in persons and protecting its victims, with a view to making the directive more responsive to emerging trends. She added that more needed to be done with regard to the online dimension of the crime. She emphasized the importance of utilizing technology-neutral legislation, as well as appointing legal guardians or representatives to enhance the protection of child victims. In particular, Ms. Schmitt emphasized the need to assume that a victim is a child if the person's age is unknown.

19. In the rich discussion that followed, States discussed the particular vulnerability of children to trafficking in persons, including when parents were involved as traffickers, when children were unaccompanied in border zones or when children from Indigenous communities spoke only the language of their respective communities. Migrant children were said to be "invisible" owing to the lack of information about them and the lack of inter-agency coordination, for example between migration and child protection agencies. Speakers subsequently highlighted their various efforts to prevent and combat child trafficking, including by strengthening prevention and victim detection and fostering national coordination. Several speakers stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation across sectors, including between law enforcement agencies, immigration authorities, labour authorities, safety inspection agencies, non-governmental organizations and other relevant actors. Some speakers referred to bilateral cooperation agreements that their Governments had signed with neighbouring countries. Among other topics, speakers mentioned the use of child hotlines, access to counselling, financial support for victims of child trafficking, strengthening legal frameworks, adopting policies and strategies, raising awareness of child trafficking in schools, using technology to counter child trafficking, in particular by regulating illicit content on online platforms, enhancing the implementation of the principle of non-punishment, strengthening the protection of the rights of children, the vulnerability of children, especially those who are unaccompanied, to trafficking, and the importance of cooperation with various stakeholders, such as civil society and the private sector. Trauma-informed care and interviews were highlighted as important measures to avoid harming child victims of trafficking.

20. A speaker briefed the Working Group on the outcomes of the ministerial conference on the twentieth anniversary of the Organized Crime Convention, held in Palermo, Italy, on 29 September 2023, and emphasized the link between trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, especially in relation to addressing child trafficking in the context of migrant smuggling.

21. The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, made a detailed statement calling for, among other things, specific measures to protect children and prevent child trafficking, and highlighted the importance of disability inclusion in responses. She observed that children with disabilities, Indigenous children, children from minority communities, and refugee, migrant, stateless and internally displaced children may be at increased risk of trafficking. In addition, she emphasized that discrimination, inequalities, conflict and weak child protection mechanisms contributed to failures in prevention and in the identification, assistance and protection of child victims. Furthermore, she noted that ineffective investigations limited accountability for child trafficking and consequently also limited access to justice for child victims. She recalled that States had a positive obligation under international law to protect children, to prevent the trafficking of children and to assist and protect child victims, without discrimination.

C. Matters pertaining to the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto

22. At its 3rd meeting, on 3 October 2023, the Working Group considered agenda item 4, entitled “Matters pertaining to the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto”.

23. Given that no lists of observations resulting from country reviews had yet been compiled, the Working Group was unable to consider substantive issues arising from reviews of the implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol or of the Organized Crime Convention. Instead, a representative of the secretariat delivered a presentation on the status of the review process, providing up-to-date information and an overview of the main challenges identified during the initial years of the review process and of the support provided by UNODC. Only 31 per cent of the reviews (60 out of 189 country reviews) had been initiated. The delays in the review process were associated with late nominations of national focal points, turnover or unresponsiveness of focal points, the limited resources available to the secretariat, requirements relating to multilingualism, and the predominantly online nature of the peer review process. The representative also reminded States parties of the 70 per cent completion rate required of each group of States parties under review in order to advance to the next thematic cluster, as set out in paragraph 10 of the procedures and rules for the functioning of the Mechanism.

24. Subsequently, several speakers expressed their appreciation for the support provided by the secretariat and noted the impact that the described difficulties had on the planned progress of the review process. Challenges identified by speakers included a lack of timely nominations of focal points, repeated changes in focal points, the absence of provisions for country visits and the limited resources available to the secretariat. Some speakers suggested that the Working Group consider referring to the next session of the Conference of the Parties to the Organized Crime Convention the discussion on implementation, and possibly the revision of the procedures and rules for the functioning of the Mechanism, including with regard to paragraph 10. Several speakers shared information on the progress of their respective country reviews and provided examples of good practices and of responses to the challenges faced during the process.

25. One speaker enquired about the efforts made by the secretariat to share information with and to secure the involvement of States parties not represented by a permanent mission in Vienna, in particular regarding the nomination of focal points. The secretariat informed the Working Group that since May 2023, the majority of initial nominations of focal points had been received from States parties that did not maintain a permanent representation in Vienna.

26. Several speakers expressed concern for the delay in the progress of country reviews and called for increased engagement on the part of States parties to address that concern. One speaker invited States parties to inform the secretariat of difficulties encountered in fulfilling their obligations as States under review and as reviewing States in a timely manner.

27. One speaker encouraged States parties to consult the outcomes of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption that would be relevant or similar to those under the Implementation Review Mechanism for the Organized Crime Convention and mentioned that the legislative guides for the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto provided helpful guidance for the reviews.

28. Several speakers invited States parties to consider providing voluntary contributions to ensure the continued functioning of, and discharge of duties by, the secretariat. Some speakers recognized the value of the involvement of non-governmental stakeholders in the Implementation Review Mechanism, in line with the procedures and rules, and one speaker referred to the organization of a round table with civil society in the context of a voluntary on-site visit as part of a country review process. One speaker encouraged the secretariat to continue to provide updates on the status of the review process for the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto, including with regard to nominations of focal points.

D. Other matters

29. At its 3rd meeting, on 3 October 2023, the Working Group considered agenda item 5, entitled “Other matters”.

30. States proposed possible topics for future meetings of the Working Group, which were captured in a draft recommendation included in the annex to the present report.

IV. Organization of the meeting

A. Opening of the meeting

31. The Working Group on Trafficking in Persons met in Vienna on 2 and 3 October 2023, holding a total of four meetings. As agreed by the extended Bureau of the Conference of the Parties by means of a silence procedure on 17 May 2023, the meeting was held in a hybrid format.

32. The meeting was opened by Germán Andrés Calderón Velásquez (Colombia), Ignacio Baylina Ruiz (Spain) and Virginia “Patt” Prugh (United States), Co-Chairs of the Working Group. They addressed the meeting and presented an overview of the mandate of the Working Group, its objectives and the subjects under its consideration.

B. Statements

33. General introductory statements were made by the secretariat under agenda items 2, 3 and 4.

34. With the Co-Chairs presiding, the discussion under item 2 was led by Hernán Santiago Andrade (Colombia), Ahmed Adel Basha Shahat (Egypt) and Niyazi Ulugölge (Türkiye).

35. With the Co-Chairs presiding, the discussion under item 3 was led by the following panellists: Hilary Axam (United States), Paulene Kaye Bucag-Lopez

(Philippines), João Freitas de Castro Chaves (Brazil), Sandy Guadalupe Recinos Acevedo (Guatemala) and Diane Schmitt (European Union).

36. Under agenda items 2, 3 and 4, statements were made by representatives of the following parties to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol: Algeria, Bangladesh, Belarus, China, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, European Union, France, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, United States and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

37. The observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran also made a statement.

38. The Working Group also heard a statement by the observer for the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

39. The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, also made a statement.

40. The observer for the Sovereign Order of Malta, an entity maintaining a permanent observer office, also made a statement.

41. Under agenda item 5, statements were made by representatives of the following parties to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Colombia, Russian Federation and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

42. The Working Group also heard a statement by the observer for the International Development Law Organization.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

43. At its 1st meeting, on 2 October 2023, the Working Group adopted by consensus the following agenda:

1. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Opening of the meeting;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Emerging knowledge and practice regarding the prevention of and response to corruption in the context of trafficking in persons.
3. National issues and priorities concerning child trafficking.
4. Matters pertaining to the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto.
5. Other matters.
6. Adoption of the report.

D. Attendance

44. The following parties to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol were represented at the meeting, including those connected remotely: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eswatini, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar,

Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

45. The following States that are not parties or signatories to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol were represented by observers, including those connected remotely owing to the specific format of the meeting: Iran (Islamic Republic of), South Sudan and Yemen.

46. The Holy See, a non-member State maintaining a permanent observer mission, was represented by observers.

47. The Sovereign Order of Malta, an entity maintaining a permanent observer office, was represented by observers.

48. The following intergovernmental organizations and United Nations entities were represented by observers, including those connected remotely: Commonwealth of Independent States, Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, INTERPOL, International Development Law Organization, International Organization for Migration, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Organization of American States.

49. The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, was present at the meeting.

50. A list of participants is contained in document [CTOC/COP/WG.4/2023/INF/1/Rev.1](#).

E. Documentation

51. The Working Group had before it the following:

(a) Annotated provisional agenda ([CTOC/COP/WG.4/2023/1](#));

(b) Background paper prepared by the Secretariat on emerging knowledge and practice regarding the prevention of and response to corruption in the context of trafficking in persons ([CTOC/COP/WG.4/2023/2](#));

(c) Background paper prepared by the Secretariat on the status of the functioning of the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto ([CTOC/COP/WG.3/2023/3-CTOC/COP/WG.4/2023/3-CTOC/COP/WG.7/2023/3](#));

(d) Background paper prepared by the Secretariat on national issues and priorities concerning child trafficking ([CTOC/COP/WG.4/2023/4](#)).

V. Adoption of the report

52. At its 4th meeting, on 3 October 2023, the Working Group adopted chapters I, II, IV and V of the present report.

53. One State highlighted the importance of clarifying the process of considering input from States when drafting the proposed recommendations during the meetings of the Working Group.

Annex

Recommendations proposed by the Co-Chairs of the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons

1. The Co-Chairs note the following recommendations that they proposed but, owing to time constraints, that were not agreed upon by the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons at its thirteenth meeting.
2. The Working Group had begun to consider the proposed recommendations below concerning corruption in the context of trafficking in persons, with States expressing various views. The text below reflects only the original proposals made by the Co-Chairs. All of the other proposed recommendations set out below were tabled and disseminated to delegations during the thirteenth meeting but were not discussed by the Working Group.

A. General recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Working Group recommends to the Conference that the following topics, inter alia, be considered for future meetings of the Working Group:

- (a) Prevention of trafficking in persons: evaluation of the effectiveness of preventive measures;
- (b) Indigenous and cultural aspects of the prevention of trafficking in persons: how to best take into account the specificities of Indigenous and rural populations;
- (c) Forms of exploitation not specifically mentioned in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol: taking stock of national, regional and international developments 10 years after the discussion of the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons on this topic at its fifth meeting;
- (d) Trafficking in persons for the removal of organs and related conduct;
- (e) The use and return of criminal proceeds and assets recovered in trafficking in persons cases.

B. Recommendations on emerging knowledge and practice regarding the prevention of and response to corruption in the context of trafficking in persons

Recommendation 2

States parties should provide support, assistance and protection measures for civil society, whistle-blowers, witnesses, survivors, and media representatives reporting on corrupt practices related to trafficking in persons, including confidential and anonymous reporting mechanisms to incentivize the reporting of possible corruption.

Recommendation 3

States parties should address money-laundering related to corruption in the context of trafficking in persons by establishing comprehensive and robust anti-money-laundering laws, providing training and assistance to Governments and financial institutions to enhance anti-corruption and anti-money-laundering efforts and ensuring that trafficking in persons is considered a predicate offence to money-laundering, in line with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Recommendation 4

States parties should consider addressing the transnational elements of corruption in the context of trafficking in persons through the provision of human and financial resources, foreign assistance and robust public-private partnerships that include multilateral organizations, banking institutions, civil society and media actors, with a view to eliminating safe havens for corrupt actors and their criminal proceeds.

C. Recommendations on national issues and priorities concerning child trafficking*Recommendation 5*

States parties should enhance responses to child trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, including through increased data-sharing, proactive, intelligence-driven and multidisciplinary cooperation, the strengthening of remedies for child victims, increasing penalties for related offences and expanding the development of specialized expertise in trauma-informed techniques for stabilizing child victims, dispelling their distrust and enabling them to confide in relevant anti-trafficking and child protection actors.

Recommendation 6

States parties should ensure that measures for the repatriation of child trafficking victims or the children of victims are guided by the best interests of the child, enable a protective environment for children, provide consular assistance to all child victims without discrimination and strengthen related international cooperation efforts.

Recommendation 7

States parties should uphold the rights of children with disabilities, including access to justice, by ensuring that all anti-trafficking measures are disability-inclusive and providing effective child protection measures that specifically address the rights of children with disabilities to be protected against child trafficking.

Recommendation 8

States parties should enhance criminal justice responses to child trafficking by strengthening the capacity of law enforcement to collect, handle and store electronic evidence in compliance with international human rights law, and undertake secure forms of electronic cooperation and joint investigations into child trafficking with counterparts in other jurisdictions.

D. Recommendations on matters pertaining to the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto*Recommendation 9*

States parties that have not yet done so are called upon to nominate national focal points for the purposes of the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto in a timely manner, and to ensure that they have the necessary technical and organizational expertise as well as the ability to commit to the role.

Recommendation 10

States parties are invited to consider ways of addressing delays in the progress of country reviews, including in relation to paragraph 10 of the procedures and rules for the functioning of the Implementation Review Mechanism.