

DELEGATION OF ARMENIA
Contribution to the 11th session of the
UNTOC Working Group on Trafficking in Persons

Vienna, 12 October 2021

Agenda item 2: Successful strategies for addressing the use of technology to facilitate trafficking in persons and to prevent and investigate trafficking in persons

Thank you Madame Chair,

At the outset, I would like to thank the panelists for their presentations and contribution to this panel.

On a general note allow me to present some information on the fight against trafficking in persons in Armenia. There are two overarching entities which review and coordinate the efforts of government authorities and civil society in this field. Those two entities are the Anti-Trafficking Ministerial Council and the Inter-Agency Working Group against Trafficking in Persons (IWGTP), which are monitoring and carrying out anti-trafficking efforts in close cooperation with civil society organizations and are taking necessary actions to adopt and implement the national action plan in this sphere and review the overall work of different agencies in the fight against trafficking.

It should be noted that the Criminal Code criminalizes sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribes penalties from five to eight years' imprisonment.

When it comes to the Police of the Republic of Armenia, it should be noted that the fight against trafficking in persons is coordinated and organized by a specialized anti-trafficking unit within the General Department of Criminal Police. This unit conducts initial investigations and refers cases to the Investigative Committee (IC) for in-depth investigation. Local police units also have designated officers as the main point of contact for trafficking within their jurisdiction. It is worth mentioning that in recent years the government has developed a manual for local police on monitoring risky businesses and interviewing vulnerable communities. At the same time the Police Academy and Justice Academy maintain trainings on fight against human trafficking for police officers, judges, prosecutors and investigators. Furthermore, a trafficking component has been added to the curriculum for newly formed patrol police officers of Armenia.

Now about the topic of current agenda item:

It is well known and was evident also from the presentations of our distinguished panelists that technologies have dual effect on the issue of trafficking in persons. On one hand they facilitate the trafficking in persons by allowing the criminals to advertise their criminal undertakings. On the other hand, technologies provide opportunities to combat this crime through social advertisement and different campaigns, carried out by relevant government authorities and civil society organizations.

When it comes to countering the abuse of ICTs for trafficking purposes, it should be noted that a constant surveillance of the internet advertisements is carried out by the Police of Armenia to reveal users and organizations with questionable job advertisements and commercials. When such commercials are detected, necessary measures are taken to find out the real nature of the job

offer, the possible criminal intentions of employers in order to prevent the crime.

When it comes to the use of technology for awareness raising and social campaigning it is worth mentioning that in 2020 the government of Armenia produced one radio and two television shows and funded a public service announcement on trafficking. Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports funded an anti-trafficking website and hosted an annual award ceremony for journalists publishing trafficking stories.

Another major undertaking in this field was the decision of the Government of Armenia to join the UNODC's Blue Heart Campaign on 30th of July 2021 to mark World Day against Trafficking in persons. With this, Armenia has become the newest member of the community of 35 states in supporting the global awareness raising initiative to fight human trafficking and its impact on society.

On this occasion, and as part of its ongoing anti-trafficking efforts, the Armenian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs launched a dedicated campaign on human trafficking and exploitation awareness and prevention and other actions to promote awareness.

Thank you Madame Chair and we look forward to the successful accomplishment of the working group's meeting.