

Working Group on Trafficking in Persons

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

Brazilian intervention

Thank you, Chair,

Human trafficking is a crime with strong affinities to digital media, and the COVID-19 pandemic has created further incentives for human trafficking networks to adapt their strategies, spreading more intensely into the internet and among social networks.

A vivid illustration of their use of the computer network was given by a social experiment carried out in partnership between the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP) and the Brazilian Association for the Defence of Women, Children and Youth (ASBRAD). The project involved the creation of a fictitious recruitment agency page to attract young people interested in working abroad. During the course of the experiment, places for football players in Europe; seafarers on international cruises; and models were particularly sought. As was the objective of this project, those who were drawn in were then in the position of alerting their families and other potential victims about the false promises spread over the internet.

This sheds light into the relevance of disseminating useful information to potential migrants through government portals, official social media pages and other digital platforms. In this connection, Brazilian government entities have published several booklets aimed at migrants, prepared with the objective of informing them about different foreign norms and requirements and alerting them about criminal actors which may prey on them. These materials are particularly important in the case of groups whose interests could make them more vulnerable, as in the case of new face models and football players.

We then witness the growing use of the same technologies by public agencies involved in combating trafficking in persons, both in their daily and operational work, and in the coordination between different organisations. Indeed, the collaboration and the exchange of information between different countries, the strengthening of direct cooperation among their competent authorities, especially at the borders, are of paramount importance for the investigation, the prosecution and the prevention of such crimes.

Concerning the successful networking of government agencies by means of information technology, I would like to point the example of the Ibero-American Network of Specialized Prosecutors against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants. This network is composed of members from 22 countries, including Brazil. The network allows for the exchange of information between Public Ministries of member States and the organisation of joint actions focussed both on the prosecution and on the assistance to victims.

As a further illustration of the use of technology for facilitating and for improving investigations and related prosecutorial activities, the network relies on periodic meetings, mostly by videoconference, among its members. In addition, it holds hearings, also by videoconference, of those who are being investigated, are accused or are victims of crimes.

Within the same network, we have regional cooperation projects among which is included the creation of an electronic tool for the exchange and systematization of information for the identification and recognition of transnational routes, agents and criminal organisations, among others.

~~Thank you.~~

Addendum:

Madam Chair,

As an addendum, I would like to turn to the subject of protection of human rights in the use of technology. The Constitution of Brazil enshrines the protection of intimacy, private life, honour and the image of persons. The law 13.709, the general law of protection of personal data, which entered into force last year, has as core values the respect to privacy; to freedom of expression and opinion; and the human rights, among others. The law is based on the concept of consent and limits the data that can be gathered without one's consent, such as in the cases of the preservation of the life and the physical integrity and the protection of rights. It considers as sensitive data, subject to a different form of treatment, the data concerning race; belief; political opinion; participation in an union; sexual orientation; and genetic or biometric data. The law also provides for the deletion of data at the request of the person it pertains to. Recognising that such rights should not be abused to commit or hide criminal actions, the previous guarantees are, however, not applicable to criminal investigation and prosecution.

Thank you very much.