

**Statement of UN Goodwill Ambassador Julia Ormond
United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, Vienna.
24th April 2006**

I'd like to thank Mr. Costa and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for giving me the opportunity as the UN Goodwill Ambassador to talk on Trafficking. Its an honor to be a part of your work and an honor to hear the testimonies. A strong focus of my role is to meet with victims and survivors in order to advocate as effectively as I can, and I know how unbearably hard it is for them to revisit their trauma. I am extremely grateful to you both that under such threatened circumstances you have helped us understand better.

I'd also like to thank all of you for coming, your presence reinforces the need for all governments and all political leaders to address one of the most egregious violations of human rights in the 21st century, human trafficking.

Trafficking is a problem that exists throughout the world; and although accurate figures are hard to come by because of trafficking's essentially covert nature, it has estimated that approximately millions of people are exploited each year.

Most of us have heard the stories of the trafficked women for example from Eastern Europe who believe that they are coming to the West for better opportunity and promises of decent salaries as perhaps household help, waitresses, teachers, that end up forced into prostitution. That is one horrific type of trafficking. *In fact forced prostitution accounts for less than half of all trafficking victims.* That is only one horrific type of trafficking.

Imagine being three years old and being trafficked to the United Arab Emirates, a completely foreign land to be used in the elitist sport of camel racing as a camel jockey. Imagine being starved so that your weight is kept down, brutalized so that you will work for nothing and sexually abused by your captors. Imagine knowing that as you grow older and bigger you become increasingly disposable. Imagine that life.

It costs as little as \$50 to buy a young healthy 18yr old boy in Mali, Africa, who can then be trafficked and shipped to the Ivory Coast and sold into modern day slavery. Once under the farmer's physical control the farmer gets the entire productive capacity, the embodied labor, of this young man for as long as the farmer can control and exploit him. In 1850 in the American Deep South an equivalent young male taken into agricultural work cost \$1000. That is approximately \$38,000 today.

\$38,000 to \$50 shows the shift in the price of a human life, a shift that shows that slaves are no longer seen as an investment by a legitimizing society, but quite simply as a disposable commodity.

Someone said to me that if people aren't finding trafficking, then they're not looking,

this is everywhere and it affects all of us. Imagine standing on the shores of Lake Volta in Ghana, not particularly looking for it, but finding it because of the numbers of children's bodies washed up on that shore.

Fishermen on Lake Volta were using the cheap labor of trafficked children, they would make the children fish for them and dive in brutally cold and dangerous water to untangle the nets; diving so deep they'd suffer bleeding noses, often suffering hearing loss from being beaten with oars as they surface for breath, some would dive in the darkness of night and some of them would drown; tangled in the nets.

My recent trip to Ghana gave me great hope however as now local NGOs are close to having rescued and rehabilitated a thousand children. Breaking this cruel cycle has been achieved by giving skills-training to parents and traffickers and schooling to the children.

Imagine checking into the Ramada Inn in Florida in the United States, only to discover that there's a slave camp for tomato pickers; male agricultural workers held by armed guards right next door.

Trafficking is one of the fantastically difficult problems that we face today. I am on a learning curve as the UN Goodwill Ambassador, however in a short amount of time I have been horrified by the extent of the problem, the searing depth of the outcome for the victims, and the extraordinary level of profit to the traffickers.

Trafficking is a 7 billion dollar business and growing.

That's 7 billion that should be going into the world's economy to make countries thrive rather than into the trafficker's individuals pockets. These victims are a silenced workforce who, given the right amount of care and rehabilitation to set them on the path to sustained freedom, become productive members of society, taxpaying members of society at that.

Tass, Russian News service, reported in 2002 that increasingly organized crime is moving away from guns, drugs and tobacco into children; especially pornography. This is due to its very low cost, ease to produce, and huge consumer demand. It is extremely profitable with very low risk. We now have the Trafficking protocol in place that will allow us to turn that around, and I ask all member States at a minimum to sign and ratify that Protocol. It is not acceptable that law enforcement in any country is understaffed, underequipped and underfunded to fight trafficking.

I would also advocate that solutions on trafficking cannot be effectively reached without embracing modern-day slavery globally, and seeing trafficking as a version of that.

It is certainly true that no one particular country is to blame for trafficking. Countries are either source, recipient or transit countries of trafficked victims, while some are combinations of all three. Every country in the world is affected by this. Equally there is no one solution – so it is all of our responsibility to find and implement the culturally appropriate solutions.

In the developed world, we are simply better placed to be able to make the eradication of trafficking and modern-day slavery a priority, and with the UN protocols in place on anti-trafficking that chiefly means making it a financial priority. We have a responsibility not out of noble obligation, but because the West is primarily creating demand, we are very much part of the problem.

Traffickers cannot create demand by themselves, were there no demand whatsoever, criminals would be unlikely to generate it, because criminal businesses tend to be opportunistic not developmental.

So, to the UN strategy list of three Ps; prevention, prosecution and protection I would advocate that we add a fourth P; prioritize.

It is certainly true that trafficking and modern-day slavery are intimately linked with poverty, corruption and an ever increasingly visible gap between rich and poor. Trafficking is the ugly face of globalization. I have to join my voice to others around the world calling for the eradication of world poverty, indeed this is written into the anti-trafficking treaty as an underlying cause of trafficking, and we are therefore legally obligated to do what we can. I believe that the eradication of poverty is doable maybe not tomorrow but in our lifetime, but it takes our continued commitment to the alleviation of debt and the support for the Millennium Development Goals. Poverty is the primary issue that keeps humanity from its potential.

It takes a tenacity and readiness to embrace and support governments around the world that demonstrate a determination to eradicate corruption on their side and achieve transparency. And while the onus is on us to keep that door open as they struggle to reach a higher goal, so we have to hold ourselves to the highest possible standards. The UN itself has struggled with it's own issues with peacekeeping troops who have gotten involved in trafficking. While I commend the zero tolerance advocated by the UN, we have to be more vigorous in implementation and heed the Prince Zeid AI-Hussein's recent report showing that this policy is not yet effective enough, although things are getting better by recognition of the problem and a strong strategy to combat it.

Poverty and corruption frequently go hand in hand; trafficking and modern-day slavery thrive in corrupt environments. While trafficking cannot exist without a degree of participation from government, the police and the judicial systems, so the lack of economic opportunity and lack of free mandatory education worldwide are also key contributory factors.

The vast majority of trafficked victims are those who seek to better their lives or those of their children and families. Many families are duped into believing that their children are being taken to receive an education.

All trafficked victims by definition are then coerced, forced, or in more brutal circumstances kidnapped, transported into slavery where they are at least horrifically exploited and at worst killed.

They can be trapped in this state for many years. It is very common that they are convinced that local police will punish them, deport them, throw them into jail or worse if they try to escape.

They are frequently convinced by traffickers that they are there to pay off the debt accrued by their transportation, room and board. In reality this is an illegal debt that they can never pay off because if they are lucky, they are only given a meager subsistence.

Trafficked victims of all types are often held by psychological threats to their families or to themselves, and are subjected to all manner of abuses.

I heard the first-hand story of a domestic help who was physically, emotionally, spiritually and sexually abused on a daily basis, who was given a spade after one particularly brutal beating and told to dig her own grave, when she said she didn't care the police would find her body, he told her that he would use a special liquid to dissolve her bones so that no one could tell she'd existed. It's not what you expect when you dream of coming to California.

Trafficking has many faces, but follows very strong patterns with almost identical outcomes. We need much more research in order to create a better picture of the varying guises of the beast we are dealing with.

We can then better support victims by educating police on how to identify trafficking victims, be knowledgeable about victims rights, having them work with NGO's to be supportive, and briefing them on how to deal with rape victims, battered wives syndrome and Stockholm Syndrome; states that victims are often in when and if they are discovered. It is not always a function of police corruption, so much as lack of police training.

The Trafficking protocol states an agreed upon definition of trafficking. Now I feel focus has to be on a continual gathering of concrete data and research by unbiased parties on the scale and scope of the problem. Because of the nature of trafficking this means a pooling of many studies that are constantly updated, each of which is culturally sensitive to the type of trafficking.

The jury is still out on whether legalization has a positive or negative impact on the numbers of women and children trafficked into prostitution, and while one might argue that surely that depends on how it is done, we are living in an era where different governments are taking radically different approaches; from Sweden's criminalization of the client but legalization of the prostitute, to Holland's all out legalization, to other countries' total criminalization. This is fertile ground for unbiased research to determine which is the better policy. Such data will never be absolute in the links between causality and outcome, yet we must work with the best data we can get. We cannot as a community come together and formulate the big picture and therefore the big financial ask without this research.

We should all come together and devote all of our energies, values and opinions to finding concrete ways to fight this – we have to find synergy not compromise..

Trafficking is a human rights issue, from child soldiers asked to fight, kill and die for someone else's cause, to camel jockeys strapped to camels in blistering desert heat, to young fishermen boys forced to dive in the dark and drown, to the crushed domestic worker, to the child raped and filmed to be abused again and again and again in internet porn.

It is clear to me that you cannot separate trafficking from modern-day slavery..

It means the abuse over and over and over again of its victims, it means that a multitude of crimes are committed to reach the end result. Such offenses include but are not limited to trafficking in human beings, forgery, involuntary servitude, forced or compulsory labor, debt bondage, forced marriage, forced abortion, forced pregnancy, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, rape, sexual assault, bodily injury, murder, kidnapping, unlawful confinement, labor exploitation, withholding of identity papers and corruption. We have to make this a priority.

There are solutions out there that provide models that are working. The Cocoa protocol put together by Free the Slaves demonstrating the Cocoa Industries commitment to bringing fair labor practices to the Ivory Coast and Ghana; Microsoft's initiative of worldwide training for police on computer facilitated crimes against children. They deserve our thanks, our respect and our attention.

The media has played a phenomenal role in bringing this issue to the public's attention as Nicholas Kristofs work and Aisha testimony shows.

So often issues don't get traction because politicians feel that the public hasn't shown that it cares enough - the media has ensured that the public knows about this issue, and the public definitely cares.

We have to appreciate that while modern-day slavery and trafficking is a global issue it is also in our backyard.

We have to make trafficking the priority it deserves to be. We have to focus on solutions.

We have to allocate the resources needed to achieve the vision allowed by the anti-trafficking protocol.

This is very, very strategically, and financially doable, and I look forward to working with you all on this issue.

Thank you.

