



## **COATNET statement for the Report On Prevention Of Human Trafficking by the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, 2010**

COATNET is an ecumenical network of organisations working with Christian Churches (Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox) which share a joint commitment to working together internationally, at regional and national level in combating human trafficking and in assisting people who are or have been trafficked. It is a project integrated in the working structures of Caritas Internationalis, a global Confederation of 164 members.

COATNET affiliates, present in over 30 countries around the world counter trafficking by implementing prevention, providing assistance to the trafficked and advocating for policy changes. They have committed themselves to adopt and apply a human rights approach to combating human trafficking and share the following experiences, good practices and challenges emerging in the process of the development of rights-based responses.

COATNET aims to add value to the individual action of its affiliates and to mobilize the potential and the resources of churches and their organisations.

**Prevention** is one of the main tools in the fight against trafficking in human beings. We emphasize the importance of developing education policies, which constitute a way to sensitize society and persons at risks, and also the professionals working against trafficking and other professionals such as journalists, lawyers, judges or medical doctors, etc. who may meet persons at risk or victims of trafficking.

We believe that

### **Trafficking in Human Beings is an issue for education on a large scale**

Trafficking in human beings should therefore be dealt with via:

- educational programmes on human rights
- sexual educational programmes
- educational programmes, which particularly insist on equality between women and men in society
- the promotion of educational programmes on children's rights
- awareness raising campaigns for risk groups and
- awareness raising for journalists, doctors and other professions potentially in contact with victims of trafficking

To be efficient, these preventive actions require curricula development, training of teachers and the implementation, at national level, of a concrete prevention policy, including education, in association with Human Rights associations and other non-governmental organisations.

## **Safe migration and the development of legal migration channels for both skilled and unskilled labour force should be promoted, as a means to prevent trafficking**

Movement of people in search for a better life has to be acknowledged as a fact. It is a dimension of human nature and over centuries people moved from one place to another to seek a better life.

Trafficking in human beings is essentially linked to the lack of democratic development in some countries, social inequalities in and between societies, inequalities between men and women as well as the lack of opportunities for safe migration.

Thus, our organisations promote the development and implementation of legal channels of migration that allow people to migrate without risking their lives. These channels should be open to both highly and low qualified workers.

The provision of accurate, clear and complete information on migration is an important measure for reducing risks in the migration process. This information should be easily accessible (via embassies, border crossing points, public authorities, schools...) for all potential migrants and for people already on the move.

**Churches, congregations and church-related organisations are active partners in raising awareness against human trafficking. Below and attached please find some summaries, finding and tools of prevention activities by COATNET affiliates and their partners.**

Identifying appropriate points of intervention to ensure that migrants and potential migrants are warned about possible dangers and consequences of trafficking

**Secours Catholique with Caritas organisations in Bulgaria and Romania**, conducts a cross-border project with the goal of creation of a safer environment on both sides of the Danube River in the new context of integration of Bulgaria and Romania in the European Union. Among other objectives, the project aims to promote and develop best practices for the protection of crime victims.

**Caritas Romania** and **Aidrom** have initiated several interrelated programmatic interventions with the aim of reducing the risk of youth becoming victims of trafficking. The primary objectives of the project were to help create an enabling and supportive atmosphere within the school communities allowing youth to make informed decisions about the risk of trafficking.

Ensuring that potential migrants, especially women, are properly informed about the risks of migration, as well as avenues available for legal, non-exploitative migration

**Caritas Sri Lanka** has produced and launched various materials (books, TV docudramas, etc.) aimed at promoting safe migration. One of them is a basic handbook detailing what a prospective Migrant Worker should do before migration. It gives information on training facilities especially for housemaids. Employment contracts, laws pertaining to employment in the different Middle Eastern countries, registration before migration, challenges facing migrants in migrant countries are some of the topics which are elaborated in detail. Also given in this handbook are instructions on what to do after migration and how to face problems arising out of migrant employment. Finally, there is a section on how to obtain insurance and other redresses in case of emergencies and other problems.

### Developing information campaigns for the general public aimed at promoting awareness of the dangers associated with trafficking

The **SRTV** - Stichting Religieuzen Tegen Vrouwenhandel is for already 20 years active in prevention with a leaflet campaign. Religious and lay people inform vulnerable young people in schools, health centres or community centres in countries of origin about the possible dangers of being trafficked.

### Empowering the vulnerable groups

The project “A Women’s rights in Albania for Freedom, Justice and to speak their Truth”, co-founded and financed by the **IBVM (Loreto) Congregation**, will develop a network of women’s groups throughout Albania and the Balkans. It will also look at the inclusion of men’s voices and the different forms of communication networks which will be set up in keeping with modern media techniques and tools of communication.

**Caritas Pakistan** conducted Research Study on camel jockeys to find out the root causes and assess the future vulnerability of children to trafficking. Their next steps are to involve the camel jockey children and their parents in the non-formal education and livelihood programs to minimize their vulnerability to human trafficking.

### Addressing demand

**Caritas Czech Republic** distributed posters addressing public/men to discuss possibilities of being trafficked with a sex worker and inform her of available assistance. The posters had a hot line number and were distributed on buses and trams in Prague and Brno.

During the World Cup football competition in Germany in 2006 **German Diakonie** distributed awareness materials in public, especially among men, on forced prostitution and trafficking. Men were sensitized on the phenomenon and encouraged to assist victims.

### Some general considerations about prevention campaigns

All activities should be developed and implemented according to the internationally acknowledged and recommended standards and guidelines.

It is important to avoid sensationalism and stereotyping in prevention campaigns. Too often the campaign message gets lost as the potential victim sees no connection with his/her situation.

It is necessary to spread campaigns beyond the urban centers into the countryside, where vulnerability is often the highest and no NGO present.

### Role of Churches and faith based communities

**Churches and faith communities** are often the first places, where trafficked persons seek consolation and compassion. Moreover with their capillary network churches can reach out to inform the public, but also to get to know about situations of trafficking.

**A pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India** was sent to many dioceses in India to which belongs the responsibility for the pastoral care of migrants and trafficked persons. The letter requested tribal families decently settled in the big cities to help immigrants from their home area, requested to every parish to inquire into the matter of trafficking, collect facts and

figures, names and addresses, and appealed especially to Women Religious congregation to come forward with new initiative so as to provide for migrant and trafficked women/girls welcome, accommodation, needs, concerns, faith, formation and pastoral centre.

**Caritas Pakistan** organized a Day of prayer in Press Club Rahim Yar Khan involving people from different faiths/religions with the aim of promoting interfaith harmony, showing solidarity and praying for the victims. Also, Caritas Pakistan organized sessions with religious and civic leaders in different dioceses in order to sensitize the leaders on this issue and promote inter-faith harmony.

Members of the **Inter-confessional Coalition for the Prevention of Trafficking in human beings** and the International Organization for Migration, Mission to the Republic of Moldova organized the National Prayer Day for all those affected by migration. The event coincided with the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. All places of worship held a religious ceremony based on a compilation of sermons, especially elaborated and distributed for the National Prayer Day . The aim of this was to unite the Churches, the representatives of the main Christian confessions from Moldova in prayer for those who were away from home, for those who stayed behind, for those who have suffered and for the victims of human trafficking.

The role of churches and civil society in prevention of human trafficking is essential. In recent years, the Holy See has increasingly called for global action on this issue and has participated in the organization of a number of counter-trafficking related events, as well as consistently calling attention to the concern in international fora. In the 2006 annual statement on Migration, entitled Migrations: A Sign of the Times, Pope Benedict XVI deplored the "trafficking of human beings - - especially women -- which flourishes where opportunities to improve their standard of living or even to survive are limited".

Trafficking has also been a major preoccupation for churches of the Protestant, Orthodox or Anglican tradition. Based on the respective theology and its reasoning on Christian responsibility and social Ethics, Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox Churches across the world have spoken out against trafficking.

On a global level, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) a fellowship of 340 churches worldwide in 2005 raised the issue of trafficking. Its Central Committee in February 2005 in the statement on Practicing Hospitality in an Era of New Forms of Migration calls upon its member churches and all Christians to combat the trafficking of human beings.

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