



## **Statement by Ambassador Claude Heller, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations at the General Assembly Thematic Debate on Human Trafficking**

New York, 3 June 2008

It is a matter of great concern to Mexico that despite the profound human, social and economic impact of human trafficking the international community has not been able to establish an international regime of universal scope to fight effectively against this scourge.

Nearly five years after the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children, which supplements the Palermo Convention against trans-national organized crime, almost a third of U.N. member states have not yet ratified it and many other countries still face important delays regarding its implementation.

The Vienna Forum to fight human trafficking of the UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking was very successful in terms of raising awareness and elevating the profile of this subject at the international level.

Now, the time has come to move from denouncing to taking action. This is why the Government of Mexico supports the initiative of a U.N. Global Strategy against human trafficking.

Just as it was the case with international fight against drug trafficking, it is a priority that we adopt an integral approach that, in Mexico's view, should contain the following elements:

Firstly, work simultaneously to fight the supply and demand factors underlying human trafficking in order to eradicate this crime. It is as important today to confront poverty, discrimination, lack of opportunities, as it is to deter and penalize demand for all products and services derived from human trafficking.

Secondly, campaigns to raise social awareness aimed at achieving a "zero tolerance" response towards this heinous crime as well as towards all expressions of discrimination and exploitation against human beings.

Thirdly, extensive and comprehensive programs to protect victims and their families that include: measures to damage reparation, mechanisms to facilitate their social reintegration, due protection to victims and witnesses during the trial procedures, and public policies oriented to prevent re-victimisation and/or their criminalization through an adequate coordination between social assistance agencies and law enforcement authorities.

Fourthly, harsher penalties to traffickers along with further actions against corruption and impunity. We also want to reinforce the fight against organised crime gangs by improving our ability to detect, freeze and seize assets and resources that are the product of human trafficking; and

Finally, cooperation and coordination among the numerous international agencies and organizations in order to avoid excessive fragmentation, duplication of efforts, discrepancy between projects and inefficient use of resources in combating human trafficking.

Mexico's Government is committed to implement all necessary measures both, at the domestic and at the international level to contribute to achieve our common objective to eradicate this modern form of slavery as soon as possible, based on the principle of co-responsibility.

Given the importance of this issue, that constitutes a serious threat to human security, my delegation congratulates itself for having sponsored the initiative to celebrate this thematic debate.

