

21 December 2016

**71<sup>st</sup> session of the General Assembly**

**Statement by H.E. Peter Thomson,  
Launch of the 2016 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons**

Ambassador Delattre,  
Under-Secretary-General Fedotov,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to speak to you at the launch of the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016.

Allow me to especially congratulate UNODC's Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking Ms Nadia Murad for being present today.

Your fearlessness is a beacon of light for everyone who has ever suffered enslavement and appalling sexual violence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Trafficking in persons is increasingly recognized as a dire threat to millions of vulnerable and fragile people across the world.

The problem of trafficking is woven into many other challenges: conflict; terrorism; organized crime; grinding poverty; sexual violence, especially against women and young girls; and migrant smuggling.

This is why the international community's concern has found expression in a series of resolutions at both the General Assembly and the Security Council, and in the New York Declaration adopted at the Summit for Refugees and Migrants.

It is why the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda contains three goals— SDGs 5, 8 and 16 — that call for action to end trafficking; and it is also why we are here today at the launch of a report that is fundamental to these efforts.

Awareness must come before action. It generates the demand that leads to change. It builds the foundations of knowledge that propel policy.

Today's Global report offers an excellent insight into the scope of trafficking in persons.

It is difficult to convey the full horror of the suffering and the misery that this multi-billion-dollar crime causes around the world, but the report's finding that more than a quarter of all trafficking victims in 2014 were children, is both compelling and disturbing in equal measure.

Coming ahead of next year's General Assembly evaluation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, this report will also help to bring countries together to forge the international cooperation necessary to chase down the traffickers and their networks, and to protect and support the victims.

In addition, it will help Member States and others to work together to tackle the root causes of this crime, particularly, by advancing comprehensive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals – my principal priority for this 71st session.

As we know, crimes feed on poverty and instability. Poverty grows where discrimination is rife, opportunities are few and environmental threats are plentiful. And each of these combines to leave people vulnerable. To end trafficking, we need to end this depressing cycle.

The UN's daily work of helping to lift people out of poverty and to improve their lives can eradicate trafficking in persons and improve lives.

Just as importantly, our responses, particularly in the area of justice, must be centered on the victims. They desperately need our help to overcome their experiences, and to become strong and healthy survivors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Trafficking in persons is a crime that rightfully shames us all and impacts every country. Next year's appraisal of the Global Plan of Action offers a tremendous opportunity that must be seized by everyone.

I will shortly appoint the facilitators to lead consultations on the modalities of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly that will take place in October 2017.

Working together, we can forge the appropriate responses in law enforcement, in justice systems, in our essential work on gender and equality, and in many other areas to assist and to protect people – to eradicate trafficking; to advance the SDGs.

Let us begin that journey today.

Thank you.