



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

17 July 2017

Excellency,

Further to my letter of 24 May 2017, in which I invited Member States to participate in an Informal Interactive Multi-stakeholder Hearing, held on 23 June 2017 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, I have the honor to enclose herewith the Summary of the Hearing, prepared by the Office of the President of the General Assembly, for your consideration.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Thomson'.

Peter Thomson

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Summary of the President of the General Assembly

Informal Interactive Multi-stakeholder Hearing in support of the preparatory process towards the High-Level Plenary Meeting to Review the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons

23 June 2017, Conference Room 4, UNHQ

Introduction

The President of the General Assembly convened an Informal Interactive Multi-stakeholder Hearing in support of the preparatory process towards the High-Level Plenary Meeting to Review the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, in accordance with OP 9 of General Assembly resolution 71/287. The Hearing was attended by representatives of Member States and all observers of the General Assembly, national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, invited civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector.

The Hearing was opened by the President of the General Assembly, followed by statements from the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Belgium, the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations, with a vision to produce a political declaration on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Subsequently, introductory statements were heard from a trafficking survivor, the Executive Director of UNODC and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The full-day Hearing consisted of four panels, featuring distinguished panellists from various stakeholder communities, as well as interventions from the floor by stakeholders, Member States and other participants. The detailed Programme is attached.

Key Messages

1. Enshrine a victim-centred and survivor-based approach

Strong emphasis was laid throughout the session on pursuing a victim- and survivor-centred approach to combat trafficking in persons. The approach should prioritize the human rights of victims and survivors, take into account their special vulnerability, especially in the case of women and children, support their long-term reintegration and recovery as well as address the stigma associated with trafficking. Victims should be a part of the action plan to combat trafficking in persons and survivors should be at the core of the decision-making.

In support of all efforts to implement the “3 Ps” approach (“Prevention”, “Prosecution” and “Protection”) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the “Palermo Protocol”), victim protection is critical to ensure effective prosecution of perpetrators of trafficking.

2. Address Causes and Contributory Factors to Trafficking in Persons

Participants underlined the need to understand and address the root causes of trafficking in persons, crisis, gender, poverty, and abuse, among other factors. Attention must be given to the complex interplay of all factors. It was also noted that counter-trafficking measures should be implemented before, during and after a crisis in order to prevent trafficking.

Participants noted that, even though trafficking in persons takes different forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, or for the purpose of organ removal, all forms of trafficking and its linkages with other related aspects, such as crisis situation, migration, labour policy, public health and the protection of children, should be addressed comprehensively. It was stressed that children, especially in crisis situations, must be made aware of their vulnerability and the resources at their disposal.

Some speakers also argued that the “demand” factor for trafficked individuals as a root cause was not being sufficiently addressed.

3. Recognize Emerging Challenges and Address Particular Vulnerabilities

Underlining the critical need to recognize emerging challenges and address particular vulnerabilities, many participants stressed that specific measures should be taken to address human trafficking as a result of conflict situation, humanitarian crises and natural disasters. A systematic and predictable response with preventive and protective measures is needed from the UN system and all actors involved from the very start. The particular vulnerability of migrants and refugees to being trafficked warrants greater protections.

The panels highlighted the potential of innovation, technology, research and statistics in designing measures to respond to emerging challenges of trafficking in persons. On trafficking for the purposes of organ removal, panellists called for a multi-faceted approach to address prevention and tackle links with transnational organized crime.

4. Effective Enforcement and Implementation to Ensure Accountability

Speakers were of the view that the Global Plan of Action should reinforce the implementation of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. Stakeholders also emphasized the need for effective implementation, both of national legislation against trafficking and of the Palermo Protocol.

Participants also noted the need to establish mechanisms to appropriately identify victims and cases of human trafficking, ensure that victims are not prosecuted, that the perpetrators face adequate sentencing, and that prosecutors are fully aware of the factors leading to vulnerability and work with victims and witnesses in a way that would empower them to come forward to increase prosecution and initiate compensation claims. The prosecution mechanisms should further be child-friendly to protect children.

In addition, several panellists stressed the importance of tackling corruption as a key component of ensuring accountability and justice for combating trafficking.

5. Enhanced Coordination, Cooperation and Partnership

The general agreement was that building partnerships among governments, the UN system, civil society, the private sector, faith-based organizations, as well as victims and survivors is crucial to combat trafficking systematically. Such partnerships can be energized through the engagement of media, educators, research institutes, NGOs as well as businesses. The great potential for the use of technology, research and information-sharing in designing measures to prevent trafficking was also emphasized.

Speakers agreed on the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination across the UN system to ensure system-wide coherence, stressing that Member States must work in cooperation with civil society and the private sector in both the implementation and the appraisal of the Global Plan of Action. They also agreed on the need for humanitarian and development actors to join hands in combating trafficking through leveraged efforts of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Participants underscored the importance of political will to pursue multifaceted approaches to ending the crime of trafficking in persons. There was a renewed call for more resources and funding to combat trafficking in persons, especially given its scale and magnitude. Many speakers reiterated the important role played by the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, as an effective support instrument and called for enhanced contributions to the fund to allow its crucial work to continue.

Informal Interactive Multi-stakeholder Hearing

**In support of the preparatory process towards the High-level Plenary Meeting to Review
the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons**

Conference Room 4

United Nations Headquarters, New York

23 June 2017

Provisional Agenda

Time	Morning Meeting
10.00	<p>Opening of the Informal Interactive Multi-stakeholder Hearing by the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Peter Thomson, followed by statements of the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ H.E. Ms. Alya Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations. ▪ H.E. Mr. Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations.
10.15-10:30	<p>Introductory statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trafficking Survivor, Ms. Withelma “T” Ortiz Walker Pettigrew. ▪ UNODC Executive Director, Mr. Yury Fedotov. <i>ICAT Coordinator - Video message</i> ▪ UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein <i>In his capacity as 2017 ICAT Chair - Video message</i>
10.30-11.45	<p>Panel 1: A Human-rights-based, survivor-centred approach to trafficking in Persons</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ms. Kay Buck, Executive Officer of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking. ▪ Dr. Beatriz Mahillo, Director of the National Transplant Organization, Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain. ▪ Ms. Mira Sorvino, UNODC Goodwill Ambassador for Global Fight against Human Trafficking. ▪ <i>Video message</i> from Professor Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, Dean, Faculty of Law - University of Nigeria (<i>former UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking In Persons</i>). ▪ <i>Video message</i> from Hon. Mohna Ansari, Commissioner / Spokesperson, National Human Rights Commission, Nepal. <p>Moderator: Ms. Purna Sen, Director, UN-WOMEN Interactive Q and A</p>

Time	
11.45-13.00	Panel 2: Trafficking in Persons in armed conflict, humanitarian crises and natural disasters

	<p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan, former member of the Iraqi Council of Representatives and modern day abolitionist. ▪ H.E. Mr. Marc Van den Reeck , Head of International Cooperation and Programmes “The Smile of the Child”. ▪ Mr. Ashraf El Nour, Director of the IOM Office to the United Nations in New York. <p>Moderator: Ms. Grainne Ohara, Deputy Director of the Executive Office, UNHCR</p> <p>Interactive Q and A</p>
	Afternoon Meeting
15.00-16.25	<p>Panel 3: Trafficking in persons in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ H.E. Mr. Alexis Bethancourt Yau, Vice-Chair of the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. ▪ Ms. Nancy Rivard, President and Founder of Airline Ambassadors International. ▪ Ms. Ruchira Gupta, Founder/President of Apne Aap Women Worldwide. <p>Moderator: Mr. Vinicius Pinheiro, ILO Special Representative to the UN and Director of ILO Office in New York.</p> <p>Interactive Q and A</p>
16.25-17.50	<p>Panel 4: Effective prosecution of trafficking in persons</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professor Mohamed Mattar, Clinical Professor of Law & Director of the Law Clinic Qatar University - College of Law. ▪ Ms. Agatha Schmaedick Tan, Associate General Counsel, Coalition of Immokalee Workers. ▪ Mr. Kerry Neal, Child Protection Specialist, Justice for Children, UNICEF. ▪ <i>Video message</i> from Ms. Irina Alkhova, Chair of the Board of Gender Perspectives. ▪ <i>Video message</i> from Mr. Edward Santow, Australia’s Human Rights Commissioner’s. <p>Moderator: Mr. Claudio Formisano, Executive Programme Officer, OSCE.</p> <p>Interactive Q and A</p>
17.50-18.00	Closing of the hearing by the President of the UN General Assembly.