



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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Check Against Delivery

**Conference “The Public-Private Partnership in the Fight
Against Human Trafficking”**

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Moscow State Institute of International Relations

Concluding speech

Dear Excellency, dear participants,

I would like to thank you once again for actively participating in our Conference on “Public-Private Partnerships in the Fight against Human Trafficking”. I hope the speeches and presentations made by our excellent speakers and the discussions allowed you to learn new useful information which will enable you to develop new approaches to prevent and fight human trafficking that you could apply in your work.

It is heartening to hear from the experts and participants about the wide array of initiatives already being undertaken by international organizations, by governments, by businesses and by civil society to tackle various forms of THB. Speaking of partnerships, it is recommended to strive for more cohesion and coherence of these initiatives. At the OSCE we have started to map some of the initiatives which we plan to include into a compendium of resources that our office is developing, and we hope that others will conduct mapping, so that businesses who are approached by different actors can understand which suit their needs best.

One of the strongest conclusions of the Conference in my opinion is that the public sector and private companies have to complement each other. It is important that the primary responsibility to tackle human trafficking lies with governments, as there is no international regulatory mechanism for multi-national businesses. While it is the obligation of the state to protect human rights and to prevent people from being trafficked and exploited, it is also true that it is the private sector, in particular the unethical companies, that benefit financially from the exploitation of people and also have to be responsible from this point of view. In addition, companies have access to their supply chains and can more easily identify cases of trafficking and exploitation in their supply chain. Therefore, the public and the

private sectors have to work together to share expertise, knowledge and information.

Another critical recommendation is the importance of taking into account the voice of workers. We heard examples of NGOs who have formed around labour migrants who were exploited, those using technology to listen to workers, and of trade unions, who are the front line in the prevention and fight against THB as an economic issue. One key recommendation was the employer pays principle in this regard.

Another point I would like to make is that public-private partnerships will be sustainable only if companies are not afraid to report trafficking cases to law enforcement authorities. State institutions have to encourage businesses to report exploitation cases and not punish companies but have to work with them to ensure remedy and provide guidance on how to prevent future cases. Otherwise, private sector might be discouraged to report such cases.

In promoting public-private partnerships, we as international organizations or state institutions have to understand that working with the private sector implies changing our traditional approach toward fighting human trafficking. We have to speak the business language, we have to develop concrete and practical approaches, we have to understand how businesses operate. Therefore, we have to develop new skills and acquire additional knowledge on how private markets work, how companies identify and manage risks, how trafficking is quantified and how fighting trafficking could impact the cost of goods productions of companies. It was great to hear about the concrete resources for NGOs developed on guidance on how to work with businesses.

At the OSCE we are also trying to serve as an example for others and develop private public partnerships to fight trafficking. In particular, we are trying to determine how to leverage the OSCE's procurement practices to prevent that goods and services sold and provided to the OSCE are not made by victims of human trafficking and exploitations. We are engaged currently in a supplier mapping exercise for our own procurement, which will allow us to better understand where is the risk in the OSCE supply chains. We recommend that governments, international organizations and businesses also put measures into place, ensuring that they do not inadvertently procure tainted goods or services, to encourage transparency, and to ensure that workers do not pay recruitment fees.

This year I have had a special focus on child trafficking. It was heartening to hear from some governments, agriculture and hotel businesses, and NGOs, such as ECPAT about their concrete efforts to work together to prevent and fight this especially abhorrent form of THB. It was also good to hear about public private partnerships leveraging anti-money laundering regimes to fight human trafficking, to follow the money to make this a low profit high risk crime. It was important also to learn about the work of a few governments to address trafficking for organ removal, which operates between the illicit and licit economies, and may involve both public health care institutions and private medical companies.

Allow me to touch upon the *role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)*, which is a subject gaining an increasing importance in the human trafficking area, including in cases of labour exploitation.

As you know, developing complaints and reporting mechanisms to be used by victims of labour exploitation is one of the challenges faced by state authorities in their endeavour to identify possible human trafficking cases. Fortunately, ICT can

provide solutions to this problem and I am happy to acknowledge that applications and systems have been already developed to help victims to report cases of forced labour or human trafficking for labour exploitation. For example, voice-operated apps let workers share feedback anonymously on their working conditions. An app crowdsources factory reviews from workers via their mobile phones and communicate this intelligence in real-time to brands and factories, while enabling workers to identify the best factories to work for. The app looks at serious labour issues such as wages, overtime, child labour, abuse and harassment and fire safety.

This is just an example of how technology plays a role to and can contribute in stepping up efforts in tackling human trafficking in all its forms. The way tech businesses and human rights organizations can find synergies and work on joint solutions is an element that my Office will surely keep a focus on in the near future.

We have to admit that there is a lot more work to be done by each of us. But I am strongly convinced that only through our collective action and joint efforts we can make a positive difference in our endeavor to prevent and eradicate all forms of human trafficking.

I would like to again express my deepest gratitude to the Russian MFA and to MGIMO for hosting the Conference, to my staff for their tireless work together with the Russian colleagues (Dariya, Nikolay, Maria and Stepan), and I would like to thank you for participating in our event, and look forward to continued fruitful collaboration.