

**Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement and private sector
launch campaign to end human trafficking**

*Initiative to be presented to business community at the Davos World Economic Forum
on 27 January 2006*

On 23 January 2006, in Athens, 41 CEOs at the roundtable of business community against trafficking in human beings pledged to fight human trafficking and supported the Athens ethical principles under the motto 'End Human Trafficking Now'. H.E. Suzanne Mubarak, the President of the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement (SMWIPM), the organiser of the roundtable, hailed this 'giant step' and pledged to publicize the ethical principles further and elicit more support for them at the coming Davos World Economic Forum. She said 'the challenge that faces all of us today is to make sure that the ethical principles against trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, become powerful tools that we can use in the coming months to launch our campaign'.

The Athens roundtable, which was opened by H.E. Suzanne Mubarak, was addressed by Queen Silvia of Sweden. It was attended by Queen Sabeeka of Bahrein, as well as 120 participants, including such eminent personalities as Ronald K. Noble, the Secretary General of Interpol.

Trafficking in human beings is the third largest growing criminal activity in the world, just behind arms and drug trade. It is estimated that 2.5 million people are trafficked across international borders every year, the majority being young women and children for sexual exploitation. Forced labour of trafficked persons, according to the ILO, raises profits of US\$ 32 billion a year, including US\$ 28 billion from sexual exploitation of women and children, half of which in industrialised countries. The French music composer Jean-Michel Jarre stated that one person was being trafficked for sexual exploitation every 3 seconds. The victims are always the most vulnerable, children and women living in poverty, mostly in developing countries and in countries in transition, which are brought into this illegal traffic through force, deception and violence. This core problem has been exacerbated by globalisation, including the use of the Internet. Illegal trafficking also brings huge and quick benefits. Some participants recalled that traffickers are 'reimbursed' in three months of their 'investment', while the victims can be sold over and over again, making this crime highly lucrative. A participant recalled that the deep rooted causes of human trafficking were organised crime, the lack of opportunity to work in the source country, and governments as well as other actors turning a blind eye on the crime of using people as commodities.

Numerous legal instruments aiming to end slavery and human trafficking have been adopted at the international and national levels, but the phenomenon continues to grow.

As a global problem, human trafficking demands global solutions and requires all sectors of society to work together for its elimination. The SMWIPM considers that activities of governments and non governmental organisations in curbing human trafficking could be enhanced immeasurably by pressure from the business world. Its potential to make a difference is considerable and the chief aim of the Athens initiative was to convince business community to take an active part in ending human trafficking, especially sex trade in women and children.

As stated by H.E. Suzanne Mubarak at the close of the meeting: ‘this is the beginning of a long journey which today has involved you the business community who has decided to join the global effort in eliminating this scourge:

- by saying ‘no’ to human trafficking with zero tolerance
- by formulating an anti-trafficking policy that is implemented in all corporate activities and strategy
- by guaranteeing your reputation and integrity in ensuring the full compliance of your employees
- by rallying other business partners and suppliers to this cause
- and engaging in business that is not built on profits at any cost but on social responsibility that maximizes the well-being of all.

[...] Together we will work hard in diminishing incentives that makes this trade such a profitable one and we will mobilize the public at large so that they too become a powerful force thereby creating the conditions that will prevent it from flourishing’.

The Athens roundtable agreed on an action plan for the implementation of the ethical principles, including awareness raising among the business community, starting on 27 January 2006 at the Davos World Economic Forum. At the initiative of Mr. David Arkless, Senior Vice President Corporate Affairs of Manpower, Mrs. Deborah Cundy, Vice President of Carlson Companies, and Mr. Shafik Gabr, Chairman of the Arab Business Council, and Chairman and Managing Director of the Artoc Group for Investment and Development, the CEOs present in Athens decided to create a working group to follow up on the meeting, which ILO offered to host later in the year.

The Athens roundtable to end trafficking in human beings, a twenty-first century form of slavery, was attended by representatives of governments, international intergovernmental organisations and non governmental organisations, as well as the private sector, demonstrating that like-minded entities can make a difference when joining forces on world issues as is being done by the Global Coalition.

The roundtable was organised by the SMWIPM, under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mrs. Marianna Vardinoyannis, Member of the Board of the SMWIPM and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, hosted the event at the Zappeion Megaron, in Athens, on 23 January 2006.

The roundtable was coordinated by Dr. Aleya El-Bindari Hammad, a founding member and member of the board of the SMWIPM, and moderated in the morning by

Ms. Lyse Doucet, journalist of BBC World, and in the afternoon, by Ms. Zohreh Tabatabai, the Director of Communication of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The roundtable was co-sponsored by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), represented by Amb. Theodor Winkler, Director; the International Organization for Migration (IOM), represented by Mrs. Ndioro Ndiaye, Deputy Director General; UNIFEM, represented by Mrs. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Programme Director for the Arab Region; the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), represented by Mrs. A. Sumru Noyan, Deputy Executive Director; the World Bank, represented by Mrs. Nadereh Chamlou, Senior Advisor; and the Foundation for the Child and Family, represented by Mrs. Marianna Vardinoyannis, Founder and President.

As a background document to the Athens roundtable, the SMWIPM sponsored a book entitled 'Trafficking Women and Children, Overcoming the illegal sex trade', published by the Refugee Studies Centre of the University of Oxford. The Movement also organised the presentation of two films, 'Lilya 4ever' and 'Human Trafficking' produced by Lifetime.

The information material on the Athens roundtable, including the full text of the Athens ethical principles against human trafficking, especially women and children, is available on the SMWIPM website : www.womenforpeaceinternational.org. For further information, please contact Ms. Lea BIASON: +41 22 741 77 86, l.biason@gcwdp.org.



Ethical Principles against Trafficking in Human Beings, especially Women and Children

23 January 2006

We,

Members of the business community,

Being deeply concerned that the scourge of trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, inflicts enormous suffering in the world today,

Consider unacceptable that millions of people are treated as commodities and slaves, and therefore denied their basic human rights and dignity,

Welcome the efforts of the international community to eradicate human trafficking, including through public-private partnership, and envisage this initiative as an additional means to complement and reinforce such efforts,

Recognize the significant potential of the business community to contribute to the global fight against human trafficking, and inspired by business community members who are already applying ethical policies and codes of conducts concerning human rights,

Dissociate ourselves from such illicit practices by launching the following ethical principles in which we will:

1. Explicitly demonstrate the position of zero tolerance towards trafficking in human beings, especially women and children for sexual exploitation.
2. Contribute to prevention of trafficking in human beings including awareness-raising campaigns and education
3. Develop a corporate strategy for an anti-trafficking policy which will permeate all our activities.
4. Ensure that our personnel fully comply with our anti-trafficking policy.
5. Encourage business partners, including suppliers, to apply ethical principles against human trafficking.
6. In an effort to increase enforcement it is necessary to call on governments to initiate a process of revision of laws and regulations that are directly or indirectly related to enhancing anti-trafficking policies.
7. Report and share information on best practices.



ACTION PLAN

Awareness raising
Awareness raising for the business community and the wider public, including the media
Business plan
Elaborate a universal business plan
Integrate respect of human decency on the standards of social responsibility
Advocacy
Lobbying governments to adopt laws and policies related to trafficking and strengthen implementation
Investment in prevention and rehabilitation
Provide funds and assistance to international institutions especially law enforcement, ie Interpol
Invest on hotlines, shelters and rehabilitation
Sponsor training manuals
Working Group
Creation of a working group to follow-up