



UN.GIFT
Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking



Human Trafficking at the Crossroads

الإتجار بالبشر على مفترق الطرق

Private-Public Partnership to Fight Human Trafficking

الشراكة من أجل مكافحة الإتجار بالبشر

1 - 3 March 2009

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Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

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Concept Paper

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AT THE CROSSROADS

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Introduction

Human trafficking has become a growing concern throughout the world today, from which no country is exempt. While some countries have become major transit areas, others are important source countries and others still major destinations. Victims are enticed by offers of better jobs and paid work in other countries. They are often fleeing poor conditions in their home countries, which are increasingly exacerbated by global crises such as food shortages and diminishing work opportunities.

In view of its prime location between the east and the west, the Middle East has an important role to play in tackling human trafficking. Increasingly aware of the risk posed by this global scourge, Governments are stepping up their efforts to address the root causes of human trafficking and develop counter measures. The private sector is increasingly recognizing the magnitude of the problem and its share of responsibility in tackling this issue in its own sphere of influence. The involvement of civil society and nongovernmental organisations in highlighting the problem and calling for action has also increased.

The present conference is testimony to the region's commitment to build on these initiatives and energetically pursue ways and means of fostering public-private partnerships. Governments must create the legal frameworks necessary to tackle human trafficking, while the private sector must demonstrate its commitment to ending this global scourge by abiding with the legal frameworks developed and pursuing a zero tolerance approach.

Context

In January 2006, in Athens, the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement brought together committed personalities; business leaders (primarily from the MENA region); Governments; NGOs; experts and international organisations to address the issue of human trafficking. The outcome was a milestone achievement: the development and adoption of the "Athens Ethical Principles," formulated and endorsed by business leaders. They outline a zero-tolerance approach to the eradication of human trafficking to be implemented by the business community. Since then, the "End Human Trafficking Now" campaign has become synonymous with the business community's fight against human trafficking, with its stamp widely used as a sign of engagement.

A number of advocacy steps have been taken by the business leaders, in conjunction with representatives of the world community, who have aligned themselves with the campaign to end human trafficking. The momentum developed in Athens, was propagated at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, under the umbrella of illicit trade (2006); discussed during the WEF meetings in the Middle East (2006 and 2008); introduced at the International Organisation for Migration's roundtable in Geneva and its business advisory board meeting in Cairo (2006); promoted by the NGO campaign during the football World Cup in Germany (2006), and harnessed by United Nations Global Initiative against Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) during the Vienna Forum (2008). Recently, following the United Nations General Assembly Thematic Debate on Human Trafficking in New York, the African Union Summit took a bold step in adopting a resolution which urged the adoption of a global action plan to tackle human trafficking, reflecting the top priority this issue requires.

The Manama conference spearheaded by HRH Sabeeka Al-Khalifa of Bahrain, is joined by HE Suzanne Mubarak, government representatives, high-level officials from the United Nations, along with business leaders – founders of the Athens Ethical Principles and others who have since aligned themselves the campaign, partners from nongovernmental organisations and leading experts from civil society, exemplifies a significant moral, political and intellectual force.

The conference

The complex nature of the human trafficking problem requires the involvement of a multiplicity of stakeholders to work together towards effective solutions. The latter includes legislative frameworks; advocacy initiatives representing different age groups and professionals; security measures that have succeeded in uncovering trafficking networks; and effective victim protection services, all of which have their place in moving this agenda forward, and helping countries - governments, businesses and civil society – come closer to achieving the goal of ending human trafficking now. In this context, the sessions planned build on the previous stages of the campaign and areas identified for future action.

Overall objective: Enhance private-public partnerships with the objective of ending human trafficking.

Main themes:

1. National Strategies against Human Trafficking
2. Legal Framework and Criminal Justice Response
3. Engagement of Businesses against Human Trafficking
4. Prevention Strategy & Support

A Roundtable of the Media & Art/Culture will discuss media strategy for public awareness campaign.

Participants:

Governments and intergovernmental organisations;
Business community;
Civil society and national and international NGOs;
Media and culture.

Format:

In order to enhance maximum participation, the conference will be organised as a set of plenary sessions and break-out groups as follows. The first plenary panelists will open the conference by addressing the principal themes based on their concrete experiences. This will be followed by four parallel break-out sessions that will focus on the main themes. Each of these break-out sessions will be introduced by panelists, drawing from both the public and the private sector, to ensure that both perspectives are adequately dealt addressed. The break-out sessions will allow for questions and answers and full participation of the audience. Plenary sessions will follow that allow for sharing of the outcomes and full participation of the audience. The last session will be devoted to the formulation of future plans.

Outcome:

A solemn Declaration