



Remarks by

**H.E. Suzanne Mubarak**

at the

**“YOUTH SPEAK OUT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING” WORKSHOP**

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Luxor, Egypt

Good afternoon to you all. It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to meet you in this informal setting, and to be able to personally welcome you to Egypt's magical city of Luxor.

I highly value and appreciate your efforts to be with us here today, travelling from near and a far, from 39 different countries – with the firm intent to speak out and act against human trafficking.

This for me is a testament of the fact that while human trafficking continues to be a growing worldwide crisis that affects us all, there is also an increasingly active global movement that is determined to put a stop to it.

Strengthening this global movement is one of the main goals of the Luxor International Forum, and there couldn't be a more meaningful way to begin our deliberations than by stressing the centrality of young people's participation in the fight against Human Trafficking.

We have a wonderful group with us today, outstanding young leaders from various organizations addressing human trafficking.

It is also wonderful to see so many familiar faces around the room.

We have with us Founding Members of our International Youth Network, which was initiated as an outcome of the "The Power of Youth for Peace" Forum we organized in 2007 in Sharm El Sheikh.

It's great to have you with us again. I have so many wonderful and vivid memories of this formidable experience that we shared. It represented a real milestone for our Movement, which gave us the opportunity to connect and join forces with youth leaders from 100 different countries.

Our youth network members from Egypt are also present – most of them have been working with us for more than four years now. They are such an inspirational group! – and we are so proud of their efforts in helping to make our communities more peaceful, united and secure.

And, of course, we are also fortunate to have many experts and activists with us from different sectors. In this respect, let me take the opportunity to extend my appreciation to "Stop the Traffik" for running today's workshop – which I am certain will help us to gain a better understanding of human trafficking.

Many people don't realize how the threat of human trafficking is everywhere. It's in the parks where children play, on the internet where they socialize and learn. We don't realize how easily people can be tricked into giving up their rights and freedoms, or the level of suffering, torture and abuse that victims are being subjected to.

And, although, there is a clear definition of human trafficking, the lines of exploitation are so blurred between child labour, migrant labour, exploitative labour, and illegal labour and trafficking, that it can be easy to lose sight of the issue at hand.

Traffickers exploit people's desire to lead better lives. The faces masked by human trafficking are those of young women and men trying to escape from the clutches of poverty, from the chains of abuse. They are those of innocent children – torn from their families and communities to serve in forced industrial and domestic labour, in agricultural work, and of course, in the sex industry.

What we are dealing with here, therefore, is a complex and multi-dimensional challenge – one that is linked to societal ills such as poverty, inequality and organized crime – one that for so long has been misunderstood and underestimated.

I know that for many of you the subject is not new. That you are already involved in programs against human trafficking and child exploitation (Stop the Traffik, ECPAT, OneChild, Nighight and many more). And, that you have gained international recognition for your efforts. I would like take this opportunity to commend you and applaud your courage and dedication in eradicating these criminal practices.

It is by working with young people like you over the years that I have come to realize how vital your participation is in peace and security processes, how you can positively impact your communities in so many different ways.

This is why I decided to have this pre-conference day today, because I wanted to get more time to listen to your ideas, learn from your views and initiatives. I wanted to be able to ensure that your recommendations will be shared with the rest of the Forum participants and incorporated in our strategies for action.

Our International Peace Movement works to engage youth as partners – real partners – in peace building efforts.

We are strong believers in empowering youth to shape their own vision, in their own language, based on their proper experiences.

An integral part of our efforts are also dedicated to creating platforms, where young people can make their voices heard, where they can promote innovative strategies and strengthen the roots of democracy in our communities.

In line with the End Human Trafficking Now campaign, our Women's International Peace Movement is adamant to ensure that young people play an active role in finding innovative solutions to stamping out human trafficking.

Our youth network members have really spread their wings in last couple of years: some are working hard through our Culture of Peace Program to raise awareness about the issue of human trafficking in schools, universities and community centres; others are mobilizing action through media campaigns and the use of ICT tools.

In fact, as many of you know, our Movement launched the Cyber Peace Initiative in September 2007 – as a means of developing the capacity of young leaders to tap into the infinite power of Information and Communication Technologies to enhance peace and tolerance.

CPI is about strengthening young people’s social movements, making their voices heard and translating their ideas into action.

CPI is also about maximizing the positive traits of the internet, while addressing its challenges.

In this respect, CPI works to mobilize young people to work alongside parents and educators to promote a culture of safety on the internet. Our youth focus group, called Net Aman, has taken on a leadership role in this regard, reaching out to their peers from around the world, raising awareness about the tools and solutions that exist to help them navigate safely through this great information highway.

As our Movement becomes increasingly invested in the fight against human trafficking, we will continue to engage more and more young people with us, as well as give them the space and opportunities they need to make a real impact.

CPI is also about engaging young people in protecting and upholding the principles of human rights and justice across our regions. For as we all know, while rapid advancements in ICT’s have brought unprecedented opportunities, they have also served to exacerbate various social challenges.

In this regard, the increased risk of violence against children and young people in cyberspace is a phenomenon that requires serious attention. As users of new technologies, you will undoubtedly understand therefore the importance of enacting practical measures to assure young people’s right to protection.

My Dear Friends,

The fight against human trafficking will not be won tomorrow, but every bit of progress, every step in the right direction can help to save lives.

It is only when we begin to understand how human trafficking affects our lives – how it impedes on the health and well being of our societies, how it negates the progress we have made towards gender equality, and how it raises the levels of violence and insecurity in our neighbourhoods – that we become more effective at fighting it.

It is when we start seeing the faces of victims behind the statistics, to listen to their stories and acknowledge their courage that we will make it a priority in our lives to make a difference.

We have a long day ahead of us, so let me invite the Stop the Traffik team to guide us through what we will be doing this afternoon.

Thank you.