



Introductory Remarks by

Mr. Yury Fedotov

Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC)

at the

Opening Session of the

**END HUMAN TRAFFICKING NOW: ENFORCING THE UN PROTOCOL
Luxor International Forum**

11 December 2010
Luxor, Egypt

Madame First Lady,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Right now, some 2.5 million women, children and men are being exploited by traffickers. They include women and children working as prostitutes; adults and children working as slave labourers; children forced to beg; people who have been tricked into having their organs removed; and child soldiers.

No part of our planet is immune to human trafficking. Almost every country in the world is affected by this crime against human dignity, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims.

In today's world, why is this happening?

There are two key reasons:

First, human trafficking is a low-risk, high-profit business for criminals. It is estimated that the total market value of human trafficking is **32 billion U.S. dollars** annually. Criminals don't care if their illicit activities harm people. All they care about is money. Strong enforcement of anti-trafficking laws and aggressive prosecution of trafficking will reduce the incentive for criminals.

Second, people are most vulnerable to trafficking when they have few opportunities to improve their lives. This is especially true in less developed countries, or countries emerging from conflict or natural disaster, but traffickers also find victims in developed countries. Building peace and stability and investing in development can help reduce vulnerability to human trafficking. When people feel safe and have opportunities and hope for the future, they are less likely to be exploited.

Human trafficking is a complex problem, and the challenges remain daunting. But all over the world, momentum is growing to stop this horrific crime. I expect that this forum will lead to new partnerships that will further strengthen this momentum.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon would like to welcome you and convey his best wishes to you. The Secretary-General's commitment to fight human trafficking is deep and longstanding. We are all very grateful for his dedication and support for this important cause.

[Airing of video statement by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon]