



General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 July 2022

Original: English

Seventy-sixth session

Agenda item 108

High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons

Note by the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to circulate, pursuant to decision 76/511, of 29 October 2021, the present compilation document of the statements delivered by Heads of State or other dignitaries by means of pre-recorded statements during the High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and submitted to the President no later than the day on which the pre-recorded statement is played in the Assembly Hall. The statements contained in the present document were delivered on the morning of Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly (see A/76/PV.38).



South Africa (see also A/76/PV.38, annex I)**Statement by H.E. Mr John Jeffery, MP, Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development of the Republic of South Africa**

Delivered on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly

It is an honour to be part of this event to appraise the progress made in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Trafficking in Persons is a global problem that has plagued many countries. It is a serious crime and a grave violation of human rights.

South Africa has not been spared from this.

Whereas most crimes are generally reported to the police, trafficking is not, mainly because victims fear retaliation. Trafficking is a reality in South Africa, with our country being a country of origin, transit and destination for trafficking.

South Africa has also experienced that as poverty increases, vulnerability and desperation increase.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also created new risks and challenges to victims and survivors of trafficking. It has worsened the vulnerabilities of at-risk groups, especially women and children, to trafficking.

Our experience here tells us that Covid-19 has undoubtedly also had an effect on anti-TIP efforts — for example during the hard lockdown, fewer complaints

involving sexual exploitation were reported to the South African Police Services, however more tip-offs were received regarding labour exploitation.

In order to strengthen training initiatives and harness a common understanding of the intent and spirit of our Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act, our Government in partnership with the UNODC, has developed a Generic Integrated Training Manual on the TIP legislation.

South Africa is further in the process of developing an integrated information system to collect data as well as commissioning research on TIP so as to come up with tailored and targeted responses to prevent and combat trafficking in persons.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons has emphasized the need for countries to move towards an approach that is centred on human rights and victims and this is fully supported by South Africa in our anti-TIP efforts.

I would like to share some of the observations that have crystalized over the past year and a half in South Africa:

Firstly, the TIP risk factors changed during Covid-19, due to higher levels of unemployment and loss of income.

Secondly, although the numbers are not large, South Africa is seeing an increasing number of trafficking convictions.

Thirdly, TIP convictions provide significant insights. Victims are seldom kidnapped or taken by force, as traffickers prefer to trick and trap victims by misleading them with false promises of jobs or educational opportunities.

The current trend by traffickers is to recruit their victims over social media. After meeting with the trafficker, the victim would then be kept hostage, drugged, assaulted and/or raped.

In all TIP cases the release of the accused on bail was opposed and bail was denied in the majority of cases. From the data it is evident that females are most likely to be trafficked.

We need to do even more to combat and prevent trafficking in persons. We can only do that with the assistance of bodies such as the UN and international agencies such as the UNODC and others.

And that is why we are here today, to strengthen and support each other, as we fight trafficking in all its forms.

I thank you.

United Kingdom (see also A/76/PV.38, annex II)**Statement by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom**

Delivered on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly

Hello everyone, and thank you to the President of the General Assembly for this opportunity to discuss the Global Plan for Action.

When new global estimates on modern slavery are published, it will make for difficult reading.

The pandemic has had a devastatingly disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable and those already victim to modern slavery.

More critically than ever we must make immediate and lasting progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 to eradicate this scourge by 2030.

No one nation can do this alone.

In 2017, the UK led the Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

Over 90 countries have endorsed that Call to Action, taking a range of steps, and – crucially — collaborating internationally with others.

The UK continues to look for opportunities to collaborate, with governments, businesses, and survivors. It will take us all to end this menace.

For example, under our Presidency, the leaders of the G7 committed to tackling forced labour global supply chains.

Last month, G7 Trade ministers discussed steps to eradicate forced labour, protect victims and improve global supply chain transparency.

Meanwhile our efforts continue earnestly at home.

The UK is strengthening our already world-leading Modern Slavery Act.

A key focus is to increase transparency in supply chains. We were the first country globally to require businesses to report on tackling modern slavery in their operations and global supply chains.

Other landmark provisions include extending the reporting requirement to public bodies with a turnover of more than £36 million, as well as mandating that organisations publish their statements on the government registry.

We will introduce financial penalties for non-compliance under the Modern Slavery Act. We also became the first country to publish our own statement, and later this year we will publish individual statements for ministerial departments.

Looking ahead, the UK wants to make sure we continue to respond effectively to these terrible crimes.

For that reason, we are reviewing our modern slavery strategy now, and will publish a new strategy in Spring 2022.

I would like finish by paying tribute to the survivors of modern slavery, forced labour and human trafficking.

I urge you all to listen carefully to the most vulnerable in our societies, and to come together regionally and internationally to ensure this generation of victims is the last.

Thank you.

Chile (see also A/76/PV.38, annex III)

Statement by Mr. Juan Francisco Galli, Subsecretary of Interior of the Republic of Chile

Delivered on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly

[Original: Spanish]

The Government of Chile wishes to be part of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Since 2008, Chile has had an action plan against human trafficking, which was updated this year. The Action Plan ensures coordination among more than 22 institutions in our country to deal with that scourge. As a Government, we have promoted the treatment of especially vulnerable people so as to prevent them from being the victims of human trafficking and smuggling networks; from being subjected to both sexual and labour exploitation; and, along with private institutions, from becoming the victims of that serious crime.

Ukraine (see also A/76/PV.38, annex IV)

Statement by Ms. Olga Revuk, Deputy Minister of Social Policy of Ukraine on European Integration

Delivered on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly

Dear participants,

Contemporary challenges and threats, in particular on combating human trafficking, require the mobilization of a wide range of resources of each State, the establishment of inter-agency collaboration, and the development of national and transnational mechanisms for cooperation between Government and civil society.

Unfortunately, the military conflict caused by the ongoing Russian aggression on the territory of Ukraine was one of the first serious challenges for Ukraine on combating human trafficking.

The mass displacement of people from the occupied and war-torn regions, the search for a new place to live and work, the competition in the labour market, the search for and placement of children in educational institutions, all these have increased citizens' vulnerability and increased their risk of getting in human trafficking.

The pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus has become a serious challenge in the field on combating human trafficking not only for Ukraine, but also for the whole world.

Loss of income due to the forced stay at home orders, social contacts, closed borders, and fear for their own health and the health of loved ones has increased the people's vulnerability to human trafficking.

The State ensures the smooth operation of the social services and the institutions that provide support to human trafficking victims, the availability of information on the mode of services provision and assistance, the access to effective justice.

Children who are compelled to stay at home spend much more time on the Internet than they used to. As in real life, children face dangers and challenges there.

State policy in this area is aimed at protecting the child in the digital environment, combining national and international ways of responding and preventing, increasing children's knowledge of how to protect themselves from possible risks on the world wide web and how to act in case of danger.

On 1 June 2020, on International Children's Day, the Government of Ukraine appointed a Coordinator for ending sexual exploitation and violence against children on the Internet.

On the average, about 200 people receive the status of a human trafficking victim annually. Of course, this does not reflect the real situation, since there are many questions about the identification of such persons and their readiness to seek help from government authorities.

The legal status of trafficked person is provided regardless of whether the victim is cooperating with law enforcement.

The amount of one-time financial assistance to a person who has been granted trafficked-person status has tripled since its imposition.

The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine is working actively to motivate citizens to seek help from State authorities by conducting information campaigns and increasing the level of support and social services.

In order to effectively counter modern challenges and threats, the State Social Program for Counteracting Human Trafficking for the period up to 2025 is continuing to be developed.

The Program will contain tasks and measures aimed at improving the mechanism for preventing human trafficking, to increase the effective identification of persons who commit human trafficking crimes, as well as to ensure the protection of the rights of human trafficking victims and to provide them with complex assistance.

Thank you for your attention.

Canada (see also A/76/PV.38, annex V)

Statement by Mr. Rob Stewart, Deputy Minister of Public Safety of Canada

Delivered on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly

Mr. President, fellow delegates,

Thank you for allowing me to provide a few words on this important issue from Canada's perspective.

I want to begin by applauding the UN General Assembly for continuing to hold the complex, global issue of trafficking in persons as a priority for member states.

Canada shares the conviction that human trafficking is one of the most heinous crimes imaginable, preying on and trapping the vulnerable and marginalized.

Canada has also long recognized the importance of a comprehensive, coordinated and multifaceted approach to respond to human trafficking.

Since ratifying the UN Protocol, Canada has made significant progress in its fight against trafficking in persons.

In September, 2019, Canada launched the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking.

This provided us with a collaborative approach, which brings together all federal efforts under one strategic framework.

It also supports the Government's broader commitments.

That includes preventing and addressing gender-based violence and supporting the safety and security of at-risk and vulnerable populations, including indigenous peoples, children and youth.

Building on previous Government efforts, the Strategy focuses on prevention, protection, prosecutions and partnerships, as well as empowerment, to enhance support and services to victims and survivors, helping them regain control and independence.

It is backed up by major financial support, of \$57.22 million over five years, and \$10.28 million ongoing.

Mr. President, in the area of prevention, we have continued to develop information and awareness programmes aimed at our most at-risk populations.

We have made significant progress in our criminal justice system responses to trafficking in persons, through targeted training and legislative reforms.

The Government of Canada also continues to work with domestic partners to provide dedicated support and protection to victims, including trauma-informed services.

Internationally, Canada also continues to provide assistance to partners, working with UNODC and other organizations, including the IOM and INTERPOL, to provide technical assistance and capacity-building.

Canada also continues to work to address human trafficking within Government supply chains, including by expanding its Code of Conduct for Procurement to ensure that the Government's procurement supply chains are free of trafficking in persons.

A key challenge we all continue to face is that it is a crime that disproportionately affects women and girls.

Canada will continue to address the unacceptably high rates of sexual and gender-based violence experienced by women and girls, including through Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence, announced in 2017.

Canada agrees that a multidisciplinary and collaborative global response to trafficking in persons is critical.

And we remain committed to collaborating with the United Nations and all countries in order to prevent this crime, bringing those who commit it to justice, and to helping survivors go on to lead healthy and productive lives.

Thank you.

Portugal (see also A/76/PV.38, annex VI)

Statement by Ms. Rosa Monteiro, Secretary of State for Citizenship and Equality of Portugal

Delivered on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Portugal is fully committed to the prevention of and fight against trafficking in persons. We welcome the Political Declaration at this General Assembly on the appraisal of the Global Action Plan against trafficking in human beings.

Portugal is proud to have co-facilitated, together with Cape Verde, the very first Global Action Plan in 2010. All of our actions are in line with the most relevant international human rights instruments and development frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda.

Since 2012, Portugal has been part of the global awareness raising Blue Heart Campaign against Human Trafficking, and we have proudly used the blue heart ever since in all national campaigns and actions.

In spite of the anti-trafficking initiatives developed in Portugal over the last decade, much more remains to be done, in the face of such a complex, multidimensional and constantly changing phenomenon.

Portugal is currently starting to draft our 5th National Action Plan, which will consolidate the victim-centred, gender-based and child-sensitive approaches.

Portugal provides support to all victims of trafficking in persons — both national and foreign. Victims have the right to subsistence, access to medical treatment, psychological assistance, protection, translation and interpretation services, as well as free legal advice.

Portugal has five shelters that provide support to women and men identified as victims of trafficking, regardless of their nationality, age, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, political orientation, socioeconomic aspects or any other status. This support is also extended to minor children of the victims. This year we launched a National Referral Mechanism for Children.

The National Observatory of Trafficking in Human Beings continues to consolidate data collection systems, fundamental for the development of evidence-based policies.

In conclusion, all member states bear a collective responsibility in combating this heinous crime. To do so, we need to cooperate and implement the four “P’s” — prevention, protection, prosecution and, most important, partnerships, as they will allow us to be one step ahead of the criminal networks and traffickers responsible for this global scourge.

India (see also A/76/PV.38, annex VII)

Statement by Mr. Ajay Kumar Mishra, Minister of State for Home Affairs of the Republic of India

Delivered on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, we thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this high-level meeting and commend the adoption of the 2021 Political Declaration on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

India recognizes that human trafficking is a serious crime and accords high priority to combating trafficking. The Government of India is making continuous and concerted efforts to prevent and counter trafficking in persons.

India's anti-trafficking legislative framework is based on the bedrock of article 23 of the Constitution of India. With the amendment to our criminal law in 2013, trafficking has been defined comprehensively and provisions have been made for the stringent punishment of traffickers.

In 2019, the National Investigation Agency Act of 2008 was amended whereby the National Investigation Agency was authorized to investigate cases of human trafficking.

A number of schemes focusing on the rescue, rehabilitation and repatriation of victims of trafficking have been instituted by the Government of India which address specific areas that are victim-centric.

The Government of India, in association with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), had initiated a multi-year project training for law enforcement officers on human trafficking.

The Government of India supports the country's state governments in strengthening the institutional mechanism to combat human trafficking.

A national level communication platform — the Crime Multi-Agency Centre (Cri- MAC) — was launched by the Government of India in March 2020 to facilitate the dissemination of information about significant crimes, including human trafficking cases across the country, on a real-time basis, and to enable effective inter-State coordination by police officers.

India is determined to combat the scourge of human trafficking and remains committed to extending cooperation to all Member States in preventing and countering human trafficking.

Thank you.

Egypt (see also A/76/PV.38, annex VIII)

Statement by Ms. Naela Gabr, Chair of the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Delivered on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly

[Original: Arabic]

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since 2007, Egypt has striven to eradicate trafficking in persons by establishing an effective national legal and institutional framework that is based on punishing perpetrators, providing protection and support to victims and strengthening the national referral mechanism.

According to various national and international reports, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has been a significant factor in the rising incidence of trafficking in persons. Informal workers in Egypt are one of the most marginalized groups because they are vulnerable to threats and shocks in the workplace and ineligible to participate in social security or insurance schemes. In response, President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi has issued a number of decisions, such as allocating 1 billion Egyptian pounds to fund the comprehensive plan to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The Hayah Karimah or “Decent Life” presidential initiative, launched in 2019, has gone a long way in alleviating the burden on members of the most impoverished communities in rural areas and urban slums. Moreover, national institutions have bolstered their capabilities by forming units to combat various forms of crime perpetrated through social media.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to underscore the role of the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons, which I am honoured to preside over. It is a consultative body that reports to the Prime Minister of Egypt in accordance with Act No. 82 of 2016, with a current membership comprising 30 national agencies. The National Coordinating Committee is dedicated to providing all forms of protection to those groups that are at greatest risk of exploitation, extending support to victims and facilitating their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. During the pandemic, the National Coordinating Committee successfully addressed the repercussions of the pandemic by conducting campaigns to raise awareness of the various forms of trafficking in persons and setting up hotlines to report trafficking cases. The Committee opened a new dedicated shelter for women and child victims compliant with the highest international standards. We have also trained our staff and provide them with continuous training to build the capacities of persons responsible for the administration of justice, social workers, workers in the field, medical examiners and labour inspectors.

In conclusion, I wish to highlight that an “alternative opportunities” unit has been established, providing an updated database of employment opportunities on a single electronic platform that brings together all data. We have also signed a protocol on cooperation between the National Committee and the General Union of Associations and Civic Foundations, which represents more than 52,000 non-governmental organizations, to raise awareness of the dangers associated with all

forms of exploitation. The President's decision to declare 2022 the year of civil society attests to the importance we attach to civil society and illustrates the country's integrated approach to the pandemic, addressing legislative, institutional and social aspects, in order to protect the people and society from all forms of exploitation.

Thank you.

Australia (see also A/76/PV.38, annex IX)

[no statement submitted]

France (see also A/76/PV.38, annex X)

Statement by Mr. Jean-Claude Brunet, Ambassador for Transnational Crime Threats of France

Delivered on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly

[Original: French]

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

France welcomes the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Global Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

We are convinced that this text will make it possible to draw attention to the urgent need to further strengthen concretely and collectively our effectiveness in action and cooperation against these transnational organized crimes at a time when this scourge, as Ms. Ghada Waly, Executive Director of the UNODC, pointed out this morning, is growing in strength throughout the world. France has made this fight a major priority in the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms and in the fight against organized crime. Trafficking in human beings, which seriously affects the integrity and dignity of millions of people around the world, has become one of the most lucrative activities of organized crime.

We have seen very worrying developments in recent years, both in terms of the degree of violence and the highly organized and increasingly transnational nature, particularly in the context of migration, of which trafficking is one of the related phenomena, clearly linked to the smuggling of migrants.

The COVID-19 pandemic initially had the effect of curbing some trafficking activities, in the context of the drastic containment measures. However, the increased use of the Internet then had a lasting and multiplier effect on the increased capacity of these criminal services to reach and expand their target group. The pandemic has therefore multiplied the fronts on which our fight against trafficking must now be waged. We hope that the Global Action Plan will enable us to further mobilize, in each of our countries and collectively, through cooperation and international assistance and mutual police and criminal assistance so as to make the relevant provisions of the major international instruments, such as the Palermo United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, together with its protocols against the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, even more universal and effective. France is also committed through European directives, its participation in the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the norms and mechanisms for peer-to-peer exchanges within the OSCE. Since 2013, France has particularly mobilized against this scourge through a better coordinated inter-ministerial approach, led by an inter-ministerial mission (MIPROF), and based on two successive national action plans. The current second national action plan (2019-2022) covers a holistic and broad approach to action, integrating all aspects, from prevention, the identification of victims, their protection, education and the training of specialists to enforcement and international cooperation.

The national action plan is fully in line with the new EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025), in its national and international aspects.

France has been following this approach since its first national action plan: the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs has been providing support in a number of ways to both:

1/ promoting the universalization of international standards

2/ promoting good practices, particularly through the laws of 13 April 2016 aimed at strengthening the fight against the prostitution system and the protection of victims and of 27 March 2017, on the duty of care of parent companies and contractors with regard to the human rights, health and safety of personnel.

3/ lastly, the development and financing (particularly also through co-financing with the EU) of cooperation and assistance programmes in two major regions in particular: South-East Europe and West Africa/Gulf of Guinea.

With the aim of combating all forms of trafficking, in 2019 we joined the international Blue Heart Campaign, which now includes some 30 countries, and we have strengthened political dialogue with many partners on these issues. Foreign Ministers Jean-Yves Le Drian and Margot Wallström adopted a Franco-Swedish strategy to combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation on International Women's Rights Day, 8 March 2019.

As the President of the Republic stated at the Paris Peace Forum on 11 November, "it is our responsibility, both Government and private actors, to set out a clear framework to better protect minors, children, in the digital world". President Macron called for action in this area. As proof of its commitment, France is a candidate for the status of "pioneer country" within the Alliance 8.7, a global partnership against child labour, forced labour, human trafficking and contemporary forms of slavery. It has also just launched a national plan on the protection of children against prostitution and sexual exploitation, which will also develop a comprehensive, cross-cutting and concrete approach, mobilizing all inter-ministerial partners in a targeted action and in close collaboration with civil society, for prevention, the identification of victims and a more systematic and organized fight against criminal networks.

Mr. President,

The common objective of all our actions, those developed by France in its national action plans and those of our international cooperation, is really twofold: on the one hand, the earlier and more systematic identification of victims, their protection and the assistance provided to give them a better future; on the other hand, a genuine end to impunity for the criminals who exploit them, who must be dealt through all the channels and means of investigation and prevention and with international support, including from civil society and the private sector.

That is why the idea of a Global Action Plan, a genuine pact by the entire international community to support these fundamental objectives and human dignity, seems to us to be particularly important today and to be in line with the highest standards and values held by the United Nations.

Thank you for your attention.

Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (see also A/76/PV.38, annex XI)**Statement by Mr. Joel Adrián Mena Sorett, Head of the National Office to Combat Organized Crime and Terrorism Financing of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela***Delivered on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: Spanish]

Mr. President,

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomes the convening of this high-level meeting on the appraisal of the UN United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons — a heinous crime that violates human dignity and human rights — the prevention and eradication of which are the urgent duty of the international community.

Mr. President,

This fitting opportunity to appraise the Global Plan compels us to renew our resolve to fully comply with international law and strengthen our focus on dialogue and cooperation, in strict adherence with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the principle of the non-politicization and non-selectivity of the issue, while prioritizing prevention as the cornerstone of public policies in the area.

With regard to Venezuela, it maintains that the complexity of the issue demands that its victim-centred approach be focused on human rights and international law, not security, which is used by some States for political ends, while they refuse to maintain transparent cooperation.

Venezuela shares 2,219 kilometres of border with Colombia, and the latter's Government attacks Venezuela, protects criminals and is unable to control its borders.

The Venezuelan State is continuously and directly engaged in combating criminal networks involved in human trafficking. Certain States must act with political and moral consistency and stop efforts aimed at political and economic destabilization, invasions and wars in sovereign States to further their geopolitical interests in order to avoid regretting later the tragic consequences of such actions seen throughout the world today, such as the increase in human trafficking.

Within that context, we must draw attention to how the destabilization campaign against Venezuela, based on the illegal imposition of Unilateral Coercive Measures, coupled with the unwillingness of some of those States to comply with their international obligations and cooperate with our country, only benefits and strengthens the illegal trafficking networks, in addition to fostering discrimination, xenophobia, slavery, exploitation, basic rights violations and increased suffering for the victims. That is why we emphasize the fact that only respectful dialogue, cooperation among actors on an equal footing and the lifting of those measures can constructively contribute to ending the criminal networks.

Similarly, Venezuela rejects all reports and unilateral lists established with the purpose of criminalizing other States, based on subjective and political perceptions that, instead of contributing to, only weaken multilateralism, increase the politicization of the issue and undermine national and international efforts in combating this scourge.

Mr. President,

Statistics in recent years reflect the alarming increase in this category of crime, which counts mostly women and children among its victims. The commodification of people constitutes a heinous offence and a crime against humanity condemned by the Venezuelan State under our Constitution. In addressing this reality, as part of its commitment to combat human trafficking, the Venezuelan Government adopted this year the 2021-2025 national plan to combat human trafficking and established the National Council to Combat Human Trafficking, which provides continuity and impetus to developing our national institutions' comprehensive policies, together with the People's Power and the relevant international organizations, in order to prevent, address, suppress, punish and eradicate this crime, with a focus on gender and the most vulnerable populations, which are accorded the highest priority on a daily basis.

The Global Plan of Action continues to serve as an important guide in the implementation of various strategies to strengthen prevention and enforcement in specific areas of action and takes into account new modus operandi, including the quintessential tool of cybercrime, on which progress must be made through international agreements.

Lastly, Venezuela reaffirms its commitment and resolve to continue upholding its obligations under the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto in order to eliminate definitively situations leading to this crime, while guaranteeing the protection and recovery of its victims and survivors in line with their rights and dignity.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Romania (see also A/76/PV.38, annex XII)

Statement by Ms. Madalina Turza, Counselor of State of Romania

Delivered on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly

Your excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In Romania, the anti-trafficking system has constantly evolved over time, both in terms of legal, institutional, operational framework but also from the viewpoint of how the institutions positioned themselves, understood the phenomenon in an evolving manner and acted upon it.

Presently, our system of fighting human trafficking is a coherent one, aligned with the principle of the 4 Ps (Prevention, Prosecution, Protection, Partnership) and has proven, on numerous occasions, its functionality. Still, there are things to be done as we are speaking about a process in which both the desire and the capacity for improvement are important.

The global pandemic context in the past two years challenged us on multiple levels, including in terms of fighting this phenomenon. Data showed us that trafficking in persons has evolved more insidiously towards online recruitment and exploitation, and vulnerable persons, including children, became even more vulnerable and exposed.

In this context, the Romanian Government at the initiative of our Prime-minister, made a strategic decision: the coordination of the fight against trafficking in persons was taken over, directly, at the level of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister.

Moreover, the new pandemic context showed us that we need to strengthen our response when it comes to online threats, especially when it comes to children, and this is why we have invested in a state-of-the-art system of cybercrime forensics for the National Police. We are currently developing an Amber Alert for missing children and a national toll-free number for exploited and abused children and teenagers, as well hearing rooms with dedicated multidisciplinary teams, as well for children victims of crimes.

From a different perspective, Romania has now a dedicated section of prosecutors for trafficking in persons' cases, and thousands of hours of specialized training have been delivered to various front-liners working with victims. Prevention activities are constantly implemented in schools and in communities together with civil society, which plays a crucial role in our fight.

As well, Romania is currently developing alongside public, private and NGO partners a national plan for adequate medical assistance for victims and proactive identification of victims through medical workers because we understood that just the free access to medical services for this category of persons is not enough.

But there is still much to be done. Because fighting against trafficking in persons is not a matter JUST of national involvement.

The means and methods of reducing "supply" will never be entirely effective without sustained actions to reduce and discourage "demand" for human trafficking.

And Romania made this point also at the European level.

We need a coherent approach to the impunity and deterrence of demand that underlies this phenomenon, and for this we need international solidarity.

In the end, I would like to encourage you, the world leaders, to think at the words of Gary Haugen, IJM President:

When our grandchildren ask us where we were when the voiceless and the vulnerable of our era needed leaders of compassion and purpose, I hope we can say that we showed up IN TIME.

Thank you!

Azerbaijan (see also A/76/PV.38, annex XIII)

[no statement submitted]

Syrian Arab Republic (see also A/76/PV.38, annex XIV)**Statement by Mr. Kifah Al-Naddaf, Head of Investigation in the Department of Anti-Trafficking in Persons at the Ministry of Interior of the Syrian Arab Republic***Delivered on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, at the 38th meeting of the General Assembly*

[Original: Arabic]

National data on crimes of trafficking in persons in the Syrian Arab Republic

Trafficking in persons in its various forms at the international, regional and global levels has become one of the most pressing legal issues of the day, garnering the concern of all countries and numerous international and regional organizations. Through its various organs, the United Nations has called for addressing this offence, which is considered a form of organized crime. The Organization has also concluded several agreements, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

The Syrian Arab Republic has contributed to the international effort to combat trafficking in persons by, inter alia, acceding to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the two Additional Protocols thereto, namely, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. It has also remained abreast of practical research on crimes of trafficking in persons. Syria recently participated in Operation Liberterra, an operation carried out in coordination with the International Criminal Police Organization to root out trafficking in persons and human smuggling. In addition, Syria issued Legislative Decree No. 3 (2010) on the prevention of trafficking in persons as part of its comprehensive approach to tackling those crimes.

The 22 articles comprising the decree set forth a comprehensive strategy to combat trafficking in persons. The international planning of trafficking crimes is a central element of the phenomenon, which is global in nature and spares no society or country. The strategy is centred on principles, objectives, criminalization, prosecution, victim protection, strengthened international cooperation and robust partnerships.

The security services draw upon scientific research on criminology, research on criminal phenomena in general or on particular crimes. The many data-gathering methods in criminology research include experimental research, observation, cohort studies, case studies, questionnaires, comparative studies, social surveys and statistical verification.

Law enforcement authorities in Syria have found statistical indicators to be negative because of the terrorist war being waged against Syria and the spread of trafficking in persons. This phenomenon was not known in its current form before 2011 and has since emerged as a result of migration, the absence of family supervision and the unjust economic sanctions imposed on Syria. Consequently, law enforcement authorities have had to redouble their efforts to prosecute these offences on the ground. Between 2010 and October 2021, there have been 1,222 cases of trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation, 100 cases of smuggling of girls for sale into prostitution and 284 cases of exploitation of domestic workers. There are 47

cases of trade in human organs, 22 cases of trafficking in persons involving the sale of children, 540 cases of trafficking in persons for begging and 136 criminal cases of human smuggling being investigated.

Attempts to ascertain the actual, real incidence of trafficking in persons worldwide fail to capture the full magnitude of the phenomenon. Owing to varying definitions of certain terms related to trafficking in persons, and to the absence of adequate oversight in areas where exploitation occurs and where the monies and proceeds of those crimes are laundered, statistics concerning the number of victims vary and cannot be estimated effectively. This can be attributed to the lack of a uniform international database standard. For instance, the use of children in begging is considered a form of trafficking in certain States, while in others, begging is considered a crime but not a form of trafficking. Moreover, understanding varies as to the circumstances that place illegal migrants at risk of being trafficked.

We attach a detailed table for each year containing statistics on crimes of trafficking in persons that were committed between 2010 and 2021.
