



IFUW Young Members

Newsletter of the
IFUW Young Members Network

Unity in our diversity
December 2009

The year 2009 is coming to an end and has no doubt been marked by important global challenges that would continue to affect humanity for decades to come. The question is how do we convert these challenges into opportunities, these crisis into gains? In just eight months we would be converging at the beautiful Mexico City for the 30th Triennial Conference of the IFUW. It does make me wonder about the dreams of IFUW founders after over 90 years; have they been fulfilled, and if not, how close are we to making these dreams come true?

Registration towards the 30th IFUW Triennial Conference in Mexico City, from 5-9 August 2010 is scheduled to begin January 08, 2010. Click www.ifuw.org/ifuw2010 for full details. The call for nominations to IFUW's Board of Officers and Standing Committees is now open. All nominations and candidate biographical data must reach IFUW Headquarters in Geneva no later than 5 February 2010. Visit <http://www.ifuw.org/nominations/index.shtml>

I would like to thank members for their support and commitment, for dedication and contributions. I take this opportunity to wish you a happy new year.

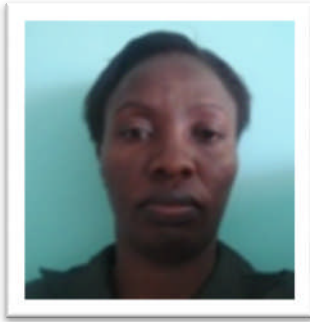
Evelyn Aremu, Editor

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The Information Super-Highway

Nyokabi H. WAITITU



The information age promises too much- a global village, news as they happen, friends are a click away and a quicker and cheaper way to transact business

among other revelations.

The very fast pace of technology development has with its numerous advantages also created a very wide divide between those compliant and those buried in the dust raised by the fast moving/ changing technology.

I am amazed when I watch news from the developed world and realize the extent of the role of technology in day to day lives- in health sector, communication and education. It is dismaying because in our part of the world (developing countries) sometimes, it appears we are stuck in the last century. By the time technology appears on our horizon, it is already obsolete in the developed world. We are still worried about basic

necessities to wit food, shelter and clothing. Ignorance abounds and illiteracy is still a concern not even forgetting that people die of preventable diseases like cholera and malaria. It is not all about gloom and hopelessness, no, I only want to lay a background of why though we appreciate technological advances, sometimes it fails to excite us. Mobile phones and money transfers though have revolutionalised our lives and created an appetite for more advances.

I believe that for us to be part and parcel of the technological revolution, the government has to undertake massive investment in education and infrastructure. You cannot tell people to apply for jobs online if they do not have access to a computer or the internet. Investment should include tax incentives so that companies can avail technology to the farthest corner of our country. Innovation should be encouraged and protected. We should strive to be more of producers rather than consumers of technology.

"It is more important to know where you are going than to get there quickly. Do not mistake activity for achievement. "

Mabel Newcomber

Women and Children as Disposable Articles of Trade in the hands of Peddlers of Human Misery

Victoria E. ONUOHA

The international trafficking in human beings – particularly of women and children for myriad criminal purposes is a growing global problem. Like the dreaded HIV/AIDS pandemic, it affects both poor and rich countries alike and represents the world's third largest area of organized crime – after drugs and arms trade – and a business that produces an estimated US \$7-12 billion annually. The Congressional Research Service of the United States of America estimates that every year, two million people are trafficked against their will to work in some form of servitude and that 35% of trafficking victims are under the age of 18.

The United States State Department also reports that an estimated 700,000 persons annually – primarily women and children – are kidnapped, tricked or coerced into leaving home and often cross international borders with the promise of bogus jobs that could benefit families back home. Some are sold into outright slavery while others end up trapped in some form of debt bondage. The personal costs to the victims and implications for nation states are enormous and checking the obnoxious trade has continued to pose serious challenges for the international community.

This is primarily due to the absence of stringent legal and policy regimes in most nation states that are State Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime 2000, and its two supplementary Protocols: i.e. Protocol To Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children 2003 (Trafficking Protocol) and Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land,

Sea and Air 2003 (Smuggling Protocol).

The focus of this article therefore, is an advocacy of the use of law as a tool for resolving the moral, ethical, economic, social, political and other issues that human trafficking raise and to balance other competing societal interests affected by this human tragedy. The article is divided into three parts. The first part deals briefly with the human trafficking phenomenon; the second part deals with the effects of trafficking on women and children as well as its implications for states, while the third part proffers the use of legal and policy tools in checking the menace. This article concludes that unless nation states invoke the political will to co-operate and treat human trafficking for what it is – that is, a “crime against humanity” through honouring international treaty obligations and the effective use of domestic legislation and policies to curb the trade, then this 21st Century slavery will be around for much more longer than the notorious Trans-Atlantic Slave trade.

The Human Trafficking Phenomenon

The essential characteristics of human trafficking are succinctly stated in Art. 3(a) of the Trafficking Protocol thus:

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having

control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

The phenomenon of human trafficking is a modern slave trade controlled by organized crime, and perpetuated in a more sophisticated and globalised manner across the nooks and crannies of the 21st Century world. It is a complex phenomenon that cuts across the boundaries of sex, age, professional and occupational callings. It has nearly the same type of actors and characteristics as the transatlantic slave trade except that the new slave masters have modern tools of coercion, facilities and equipment for movement and communication. Though it shares common characteristics with alien smuggling and illegal migration, it has its own distinctive features and dynamics involving particularly grievous human rights abuses anchored on a wide spectrum of slavery-related activities that include forced prostitution of adult women, forced or voluntary child prostitution, domestic servitude, illegal and bonded labour, sweatshirt labour, organ harvesting, servile marriage, paedophilia, adoption racketeering, sex tourism and entertainment, pornography, organized begging, and other criminal activities.

By its very nature, trafficking in humans is not a discrete act, but a combination or series of events that takes place in the victims' home communities or countries, at transit points and at final destinations within the same country or across international borders. The clandestine nature of this type of crime makes it hard to detect and estimate its frequency, since its operators and victims are hidden from public view. Traffickers

actively recruit victims, facilitate their migration and deliver them to a place where they are held in bonded servitude for many years working for little or no pay at all for seven days a week and for as long as 18 hours a day. These victims often come from underdeveloped regions experiencing war, economic collapse, environmental degradation or ethnic conflict. They are usually in two categories: those who actually consent to going with the traffickers to do mutually-agreed specific jobs and those who are deceived about the nature and conditions of the work they would be required to do. In the case of the former, the victims generally know what they are getting into and the arrangements upon arrival. At some point however, the purported terms and conditions of the initial contract disappear and the victims are then coerced or forced into slavery or subjected to slavery-like practices. In the case of the latter, traffickers or their agents often lie to the victims about the kind of life that awaits them abroad. They are deceived about job opportunities and avenues of making quick and easy money. Traffickers also recruit victims through fake advertisement, mail-order bride catalogues and casual acquaintances. There have been reported cases of outright kidnapping and abduction of children and young girls on their way from work or schools or in war-torn countries.

Women and children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking because of their peculiar socio-political and economic status in source countries. Therefore, traffickers particularly prey on women and children and treat them as commodities to abuse, sell and move across borders like illegal drugs or stolen weapons. In some cases in the West African sub-region, small children are moved across international borders in cargo sacks, overloaded trucks and boats in treacherous waters. In Asia, it is not uncommon to find children as young as thirteen years old being purportedly married off to western suitors and later subjected to either forced labour or prostitution by their "husbands" upon arrival in the destination countries. While the sex industry is the main area of work for women and

adolescent girls, young children are usually put to work as in mines, plantations, street begging and domestic servitude.

Negative Effects of Trafficking

The negative consequences of trafficking cannot be over-emphasised. For the victims, the mental and physical abuse suffered in the course of their economic exploitation more often than not lead to multiple trauma, anxiety and depression. Some also suffer from physical ailments, malnutrition, diseases (sometimes terminal) and sometimes death at the hands of traffickers or during transportation. They also suffer rejection and alienation from their families and communities particularly when they have failed to live up to their expectations and repay family 'investments'. It is no use narrating their experiences because of the effect of societal stigmatisation, which they suffer as a result of social taboos, and myths about money earned abroad, particularly where the victims returned empty handed or were trafficked into prostitution. To the families, which may have mortgaged family property to pay the traffickers' fees, the only feasible option to recover the money is often the re-trafficking of the returned victims.

Victims of human trafficking pay a horrible price. Physical and psychological harm often have permanent effects, ostracizing trafficking victims from their families and communities. Trafficking victims often miss critical opportunities for social, moral, and spiritual development. In many cases the exploitation of trafficking victims is progressive: a child trafficked into one form of labour may be further abused in another. In Nepal, girls recruited to work in carpet factories, hotels, and restaurants have been forced later into the sex industry in India. In the Philippines, and in many other countries, children who initially migrate or are recruited for the hotel and tourism industry, often end up trapped in brothels. A brutal reality of the modern-day slave trade is that its victims are all too often bought and sold many times over.

Human trafficking constitutes human rights violation and a crime against humanity. Fundamentally, it violates the universal human right to life, liberty, and freedom from slavery in all its forms. Trafficking of children undermines the basic need of a child to grow up in a protective environment and the right to be free from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Victims forced into sex slavery are often subdued with drugs and suffer extreme violence. Victims trafficked for sexual exploitation suffer physical and emotional damage from premature sexual activity, forced substance abuse, and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Some victims suffer permanent damage to their reproductive organs. Moreover, the victim is typically trafficked to a location where he or she cannot speak or understand the language, compounding the psychological damage from isolation and domination. The loss of family and community support networks renders the trafficking victim vulnerable to the traffickers' demands and threats, and contributes in several ways to the breakdown of social structures. Trafficking tears children from their parents and extended family, preventing their nurturing and moral development. It interrupts the passage of knowledge and cultural values from parent to child and from generation to generation, weakening a core pillar of society. Victims who are able to return to their communities often find themselves stigmatized and ostracized, and require continuing social services. They are more likely to become involved in substance abuse and criminal activity.

Trafficking of humans, particularly women and children, has negative cost implications on the economies of home countries of the trafficked persons. Some effects of trafficking include

depressed wages, fewer individuals left to care for an increasing number of elderly persons, and an undereducated generation. These effects further lead to the loss of future productivity and earning power. Forcing children to work 10 to 18 hours per day at an early age denies them access to education and reinforces the cycle of poverty and illiteracy that stunts national development. Most victims are also trafficked on fake travel documents and hence occasionally get apprehended by the law enforcement agencies of the destination countries leading to their forced repatriation, the cost of which is borne by their home government.

In conclusion, the impact of trafficking on victims cannot be adequately quantified. The situation can best be summed up by saying that those who are lucky to survive their experiences are never the same persons they were before they were trafficked.

Checkmating the Human trafficking Menace

Over the years, governments the world over failed to see trafficking in humans for what it really is - that is, gross violation of human rights - but treated it as a social problem. Till date, victims of trafficking continue to suffer not only in the hands of their traffickers and exploiters but from officials and agencies of transit and destination countries where they are mostly treated as illegal aliens. However, the last two decades have witnessed an unprecedented level of international concern over the trafficking of human beings especially women and children. It has become the world's biggest headache, after the dreaded HIV/AIDS pandemic. It has emerged on the global political and operational agenda, with an expanded meaning, informed by current discourse on migration, changes in prostitution patterns, the feminist and gender debate, increased attention to human rights and most recently, children's rights. Governments and private organisations all over the world, having recognized the dangers of this modern slavery, are coming together and working jointly and severally to fight the common monster at least at the level of the United Nations.

Over 180 nation states have signed and/or ratified the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime 2000*, and its two *supplementary Protocols* as the skeletal legal framework upon which to build viable and enforceable laws against human trafficking. Unfortunately most member states have chosen to ignore the implementation of the guidelines set therein to combat the scourge. A good number of countries endemic for trafficking have no anti-trafficking laws and have consistently demonstrated a lack of will or disinterest in combating human trafficking.

Since law is the foundation upon which governments run and execute policies, it has become imperative for all nations of the world to enact the laws needed at the domestic level to tackle the traffic in women and children irrespective of the status of such nations in the trafficking chain, i.e. source, transit or destination. Having acquired the status of a crime against humanity by virtue of Article 7(1) and 7(2) (c) of the Statute of the International Criminal Court, nations of the world should approach the issue of dealing with traffickers like they would genocide and terrorism. The transnational character of this crime means that countries of origin, transit, and destination must work in partnership to prevent trafficking, protect its victims, and prosecute those who are responsible for trafficking.

Governments should also institute bilateral and multilateral agreements and protocols, where they do not already exist, to promote contact and close collaboration between law enforcement agencies of source, transit and receiving countries, especially in the area of investigation, prosecution and recovery of assets of traffickers. Above all, national governments should also ensure that all anti- trafficking programmes are based on human rights principles and protect the rights of victims. At domestic levels, where applicable governments should, as a matter of priority and urgency, eliminate discriminatory legislation and gender-based customs and practices, which perpetuate the exploitation of

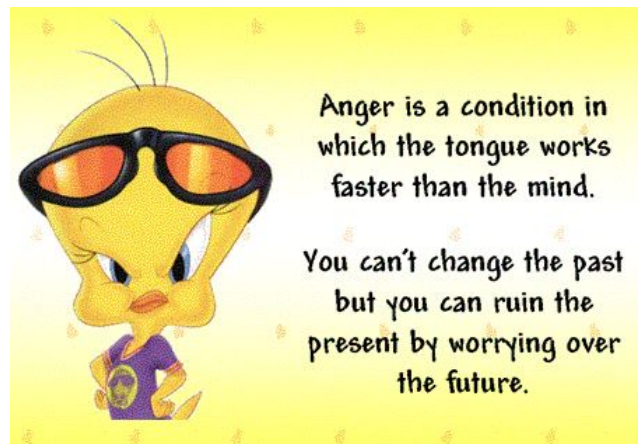
women and children and subject them to violence.

The tragedy of trafficking in women and children stares the world in the face and demands a concerted effort by all to deal with. Try as much as it can, the UN and its special agencies can only

achieve what they can within the limits set by national governments. Unless these governments exercise sufficient political will, to back the right anti-trafficking laws and policies and their enforcement, this hydra-headed 21st Century Slavery will continue to thrive for generations to come.

"The greatest challenge is to lead the world into a new era of peace and humanism, to create more inclusive, just, and equitable societies through sustainable economic and social development, based on science, innovation and new technologies that will serve mankind and will preserve the environment."

Irina Gueorguieva Bokova, First Woman Director-General,



PERSISTENCE NOT FAILURE

Everyone meets failure in their journey through life. To overcome failure, you need to concentrate and focus your energy on your goal. If you don't succeed the first time, try another way.

We are easily distracted or side-tracked by working on areas that bear no relation to our goal. Keep your goal focused in your mind at all times.

Put your energy and effort into completing tasks that move you closer to your goal. Even if you set aside only 30 minutes a day, you are being persistent and consistently moving closer and closer to your goal.

Ask yourself if you have been defeated by your own lack of persistence without realizing it.

Step back and take a hard look at how persistent you have really been.

by Catherine Pulsifer