



**Oral Statement for the 32nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to
the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the
Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children
(Item 3)
14th June, 2016**

Thank you Mr. President,

My name is Dr. Angela Reed and I am speaking on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy and the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd. We affirm the reports of the special rapporteurs and note in particular the health report which highlights the significance of providing comprehensive health services to adolescents, in order to influence future life trajectories. This is extremely relevant to our preventative work on human trafficking which seeks to address risk factors across the life course that render one vulnerable to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Our research privileges insights gained from narratives of survivorsⁱ specifically highlighting the interplay between personal life circumstances and the economic and social environments and structures that render women and girls vulnerable to exploitation. Survivors confirm that cumulative disadvantage, in the form of gender discrimination, displacement, stigmatization, racism, global inequalities and commodification of the body are core to their exploitation from childhood, to adolescence, to early adulthood.

So how can these findings instruct policy makers?

They call for:

1. A reframing of trafficking as a ‘random act of victimization’ to a ‘sustained exploitation of vulnerability over the life course’;
2. Addressing structural causes that impact the life course, including dismantling of power based structures that subjugate women and girls.
3. Prioritizing qualitative data on trafficking across the life course, given the imperative of the narrative and experience.

Mr. President, we thank the Special Rapporteurs for underscoring a preventative, gendered, rights based approach to addressing risk factors associated with human trafficking. Given our shared emphasis we strongly endorse this direction.

Thank you

ⁱ Reed, A. and M. Latonio, Eds. (2015). I HAVE A VOICE: Trafficked women –in their own words Melbourne, Australia, Our Community Pty Ltd.