

**Update on Anti-Trafficking work at Mercy International, MGA at the UN -  
September, 2017  
Angela Reed RSM**

1. Preparation work for the Review of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons

Preparation work for the review of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons has formed a large part of our work over the last 12 months. Last year, I **attended the COP 8 on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime**. This was significant as it helped formulate advocacy points for the review of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking, in particular, the need for there to be a review mechanism in relation to the human trafficking protocol (I'm happy to speak more about this during our conference call if you are interested).

As you know MIA at the UN (Global Action) has been **part of a small ad hoc advocacy group from the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons (CSTIP)**. The purpose of this group was to participate in the Review of the Global Plan of Action on Human Trafficking. Representatives in the group included, Good Shepherd Sisters, IBVM, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, Salesians and the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW). As I have shared before, the attached pdf outlines our advocacy points. Many of us have shared these points with Member States and we were given very positive feedback from the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC). These points have been widely circulated and we will continue to use them where appropriate. Feel free to use these advocacy points wherever you deem appropriate.

MIA at the UN (Global Action) also **participated in all the intergovernmental meetings preceding the adoption of the Political Declaration on Human Trafficking** over the last 18 months.

Immediately prior to the Review, on September 26<sup>th</sup> MIA at the UN (Global Action) **co-sponsored an event entitled 'Children on the Move: Preventing Child Trafficking by Implementing the UN Global Plan of Action**. A copy of the Flyer can be accessed here: <https://un.goarch.org/documents/1676217/3739140/Children+on+the+Move+-+FINAL.pdf/dcac6b9b-5691-4b47-9141-b2e75db79c18> . The event was held at the UN headquarters and was hosted by the Ambassadors of Guatemala and Cyprus. We were delighted to work with both Ambassadors and their staff. I represented the Mercy International Association as a panelist and focused largely on the need for prevention. You can view the event here: <http://webtv.un.org/%E2%80%A6/transforming-the-world-%E2%80%A6/4930324186001/watch/children-on-the-move-preventing-child-trafficking-by-implementing-the-un-global-plan-of-action/5588262537001/?term=&page=2&sort=date>

2. High Level Meeting of the General Assembly to Review the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons – September 27<sup>th</sup>& 28<sup>th</sup> 2017

**'We are not having this meeting to cross it off our "checklist". We are here to track the progress we have made so far. And to see how much further we have to go to eliminate human trafficking forever'**

These were the words spoken last week by the President of the General Assembly at the opening of the High level Meeting to appraise the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (You can read his full statement here

<http://www.un.org/pga/72/2017/09/27/global-plan-of-action-to-combat-trafficking-in-persons-2/> ).

For a copy of the Final Political Declaration that was agreed to at the commencement of the meeting see <http://undocs.org/A/72/L.1>. Although the declaration is commendable, I believe that it is lacking in its commitment to address root causes and preventative measures (I'm happy to speak more about this point during our conference call).

There are also some Member States that have not ratified the Convention as yet. (I'm also happy to discuss this further in our meeting.)

During the Deliberations, Sr Winifred Doherty rgs had the opportunity to present a very powerful intervention. To view her intervention click here and go to (56.58)

<http://webtv.un.org/search/panel-discussion-2-on-the-side-of-global-plan-of-action-to-combat-trafficking-in-persons-general-assembly-72nd-session/5590695031001/?term=global%20plan%20of%20action&sort=date>

### 3. Reception at Holy See Mission

During the Review of the Global Plan of Action to combat trafficking in Persons, Colleen Cloonan (MGA UN Fellow) and I were invited to a reception at the Holy See Mission to engage in a conversation with His Excellency, Archbishop Gallagher, the Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See. As I had been asked by the Holy See Mission to speak on behalf of Religious at the UN, I was able to state my thanks to Archbishop Gallagher for his interventions at the UN in relation to climate change, nuclear disarmament and human trafficking. I also **took the opportunity to thank him on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy for his statement in which he noted the significant work religious women have done to combat trafficking.** Here is a link to his intervention at the review of the Global Plan of Action <http://webtv.un.org/search/panel-discussion-2-on-the-side-of-global-plan-of-action-to-combat-trafficking-in-persons-general-assembly-72nd-session/5590663824001/?term=2017-09-27&lan=english&sort=date> <http://webtv.un.org/search/panel-discussion-2-on-the-side-of-global-plan-of-action-to-combat-trafficking-in-persons-general-assembly-72nd-session/5590663824001/?term=2017-09-27&lan=english&sort=date> . (Scroll to 34.32)

### 4. NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons (CSTIP)

I am now a member of the NGO Steering Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons (CSTIP). This involves planning agendas and setting directions for advocacy and networking with UN Member States and Missions.

In my last report I mentioned a **letter to the Secretary General that we had signed onto in relation to UN Peacekeepers and Sexual Exploitation.** See attached pdf. Significantly, the Secretary General spoke powerfully on this issue at a high-level meeting on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017. See link below

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57547#.WdKbGWhSzDc>

### 5. The New York Declaration and the Global Compact on Migration

As stated in my last report, during the September 2016 UN Summit in New York, Member States agreed on a powerful set of plans to address the issue of Migration. The outcome

document is referred to as the New York Declaration and can be viewed here:

[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/L.1](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/L.1)

A key initiative within this declaration for Refugees and Migrants was the commitment to undertake intergovernmental negotiations during 2017 in order to create a *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*. This Global Compact is set to be adopted at an international migration conference in 2018.

**Mercy Global Action at the UN has been attendance at all of these governmental negotiations** which have consisted of thematic sessions and multi-stakeholder sessions which began in May 2017.

The themes for the sessions include the following

- 1) Addressing drivers of migration, including adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and human-made crises, through protection and assistance, sustainable development, poverty eradication, conflict prevention and resolution (May 2017).
- 2) International cooperation and governance of migration in all its dimensions, including at borders, on transit, entry, return, readmission, integration and reintegration (June 2017).
- 3) Contributions of migrants and diasporas to all dimensions of sustainable development, including remittances and portability of earned benefits (July 2017).
- 4) Smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery, including appropriate identification, protection and assistance to migrants and trafficking victims (September 2017).
- 5) Irregular migration and regular pathways including decent work, labour mobility, recognition of skills and qualifications and other relevant matters (October 2017).

The most recent session was the fourth session on trafficking and smuggling which took place in Vienna. I attended this event which I found most informative and once again assisted with advocacy efforts. The focus of the two day session was smuggling and trafficking of migrants. Numerous NGOs and faith based organizations, including MIA at the UN participated in the sessions.

The issues brief highlighted that in the absence of regular migration pathways, many migrants are subject to often perilous journey and forced to engage a smuggler whilst seeking peace and safety. This can also result in migrants being trafficked. Reaffirming the New York Declaration, the issues brief highlighted the importance of existing international instruments on preventing and combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of persons; two distinct but often interrelated problems. The brief also draws attention to the abuse and exploitation that many migrants face and calls for identification and support of victims of trafficking.

Over the two days, three panels explored particular issues related to the brief

- Panel 1 – Smuggling of Migrants
- Panel 2 – Trafficking in Persons and Contemporary forms of slavery
- Panel 3 - Appropriate Identification. Protection, assistance to migrants and trafficking victims

Consisting of experts in the field, academics and long term policy advocates, the panelists provided information and perspectives that challenged often long held myths about smuggling, smugglers, traffickers and those experiencing trafficking. Key to the ongoing dialogue was an understanding of the nexus between trafficking and smuggling.

Significantly, there was a strong call for better information and inter linkages about both phenomena, whilst at the same time recognizing the need to differentiate between the two.

Several member state delegations in responding to the panels called for a holistic response to the issue, with respect to human rights and attention to the 2030 agenda. Many maintained that migrants who are smuggled should not be criminalized and that there is a need to address the root causes of migration. Some states underlined the right to manage their borders and migration flows. This was often accompanied by a discussion on the need to realize the rights and protect the lives of migrants.

In the final session, thematic expert, Ms Joy Ngozi Ezeilo provided a synopsis of the main conclusions and outcomes. Key points made by Ms Ngozi Ezeilo included;

- The two crimes whilst distinct, often overlap
- States have a sovereign right to manage entry into their country but must respect human rights and international law
- We need more data to better understand the how and who is involved in both people smuggling and human trafficking
- Trafficking prosecutions remain very low, while the number of trafficking victims is high
- There must be a commitment to victim centered approaches
- We must confront the demand for goods produced through exploitation
- Using the term 'modern slavery' may detract from what we have enshrined in law ie. Human trafficking
- All policy actions must be guided by the International Legal Framework
- There is a need to look at how exploitation is an outcome of existing economic models
- State anti-trafficking policies must not impinge on the human rights of victims
- There should be more opportunities for safe migration

Finally, Ms Joy Ngozi Ezeilo encouraged all stakeholders to be clear in their absolute rejection of exploitation in migration. Statements from the floor including member states and other stakeholders can be accessed [here](#).

In a few weeks the fifth session will take place in Geneva but we will not be attending. However you may be interested in the issues brief for this session and the response written by the NGO Committee on Migration (of which we are members). Please email me if you would like a copy of this.

### Other Human Trafficking Events

*Colleen Cloonan (MGA Fellow at the UN) prepared this report of the event*

On September 18<sup>th</sup>, Colleen Cloonan and Angela Reed rsm attended an event titled " Modern Slavery in the Americas: From here to elimination" hosted by the Business and Human Rights Resource Center at the Roosevelt House in NYC. While the conversation was directed towards modern slavery and human trafficking in industries around the world, the Resource center wanted to recognize that 'modern slavery is the sharp edge of a far more endemic problem: deep inequality that leads to widespread exploitation of workers, many of whom are migrants and refugees who face intimidation in a climate of growing Xenophobia".

Speakers highlighted the importance of due diligence throughout the supply chain as well as buying food from transparent and ethically sound companies that have made commitments to stop slavery.

<https://business-humanrights.org/en/modern-slavery-in-the-americas-from-here-to-elimination>

Keynote speaker, Leonardo Sakamoto- journalist, director of NGO Reporter Brasil and TIP Person of the year – spoke about his efforts educating individuals across Brazil by providing financial and technical support for communities vulnerable to forced labor. We ourselves, must take a stand against companies that are not meeting ethical requirements and commitments, including food and clothing companies. [What is your footprint?](#)

**Trafficking in persons is a human rights violation that shames us all. In order to ensure that all forms of modern-day slavery are addressed we recommend:**

**Adopt** an action oriented outcome document committing to the full implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically adhering to the requirements of Targets 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2

**Adhere** to the recommendations of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, specifically the universal ratification of the Convention and Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

**Actualize** by December 2018 a robust review mechanism for the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

**Allocate** significant resources at the national and international levels towards prevention strategies and exit services to reverse what “constitutes a serious threat to human dignity, human rights, and development.”

**Address DEMAND.** Without demand there is no trafficking of persons. Addressing this root cause is essential. Demand for high profits, cheap goods and labor, and commercialized sex is the driving force behind human trafficking.



June 9, 2017

His Excellency  
Mr. António Guterres  
Secretary- General of the United Nations  
405 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

The under-signed members of the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons (NGO-CSTIP) commend the United Nations for its enduring commitment and for making intensive efforts to eradicate sexual exploitation and abuse by UN Peacekeepers and reaffirming that UN's zero tolerance policy be enforced. The adoption of S/RES/2272 (2016) and most recently A/71/818 (2017) are important measures to increase the UN's accountability in preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Sexual exploitation and abuse is often a form of human trafficking, with women and children the vast majority of victims of such crimes. We remain, therefore, seriously concerned about the news of ongoing abuse and impunity. Unfortunately, as recently as 12 April, 2017 the Associated Press reported that between 2004 and 2016, 150 allegations of abuse and exploitation by U.N. peacekeepers and other personnel had been reported in Haiti alone, out of the worldwide total of nearly 2,000.

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/C/CB\\_UN\\_PEAKEEKEEPERS\\_CHILD\\_SEX\\_RING\\_ASOL-?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/C/CB_UN_PEAKEEKEEPERS_CHILD_SEX_RING_ASOL-?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT)

After review of S/RES/2272 (2016) and A/70/729 (2016), we offer the following recommendations and ask the following questions:

1. Prevention – As pre-deployment training is the best mechanism to prepare peacekeepers to uphold the standards of conduct of the United Nations, training and e-learning programs should be drastically improved, updated and clearly articulate standards of behavior that are expected of everyone who operates under the UN flag. Ongoing training should be a priority and required.

Risk management measures should be standardized and include inspection of bases, enforcement of curfews and monitoring access to local populations. (A/70/729 para 74).

Question-Has there been an increase in the number of mobile-training teams? (A/70/729 para 43).

2. Investigation and Impunity – A critical review of The Independent Special Courts Mechanism proposed by the Code Blue Campaign (<http://www.codebluecampaign.com>) should be conducted including a comprehensive plan to address the impunity currently enjoyed by non-military peacekeeping personnel. The proposal also addresses: 1) the problem of Troop Contributing Countries who lack the ability or will to investigate allegations of sexual abuse: 2) the dilemma of UN staff who find themselves in sometimes unqualified roles: “legal advisors”, “investigators”, and other roles.

3. Member States – S/RES/2272 (2016) and A/70/729 (2016) recommend the implementation and adoption of several measures by Member States.
  - a) Adoption of 6 month timeline to conclude investigations; b) develop uniform standards of investigation; c) assess existing national legislation to determine its applicability to sex crimes committed by nationals; and d) agree to obtain DNA samples.

Question- Have these measures been implemented and adopted?

This is a short list of concerns and recommendations. We will continue to monitor the progress of recommendations and changes applicable to the United Nations strategy of prevention, enforcement and remedial action to address sexual exploitation and abuse. We also look forward to the outcomes and successes of Special Coordinator Jane Holl Lute and the recently appointed High Level Task Force.

Please accept Mr. Secretary- General, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Casa Generalizia della Societa del Sacro Cuore (Society of the Sacred Heart)  
Company of the Daughters of Charity  
Congregation of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd  
Congregation of the Mission  
Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America  
Edmund Rice International  
Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey  
Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Loreto Generalate  
LifeWay Network, Inc.  
Organization: International Presentation Association  
Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association / PPSEAWA.  
Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary  
Sisters of Charity Federation  
Sisters of Mercy, Mercy International Association  
Sisters of Notre Dame De Namur  
Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries  
Soroptimist International  
UNANIMA International  
Ursulines of the Roman Union - Eastern Province  
VIVAT International  
Zonta International