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HUMAN TRAFFICKING

BOOKLET FOR PARENTS

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IOM International Organization for Migration
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International Organization
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Dear parents,

This booklet was prepared with a mission to inform the public at large about human trafficking consisting in the exploitation of persons and prevent the rates and consequences of this crime which is today at the center of growing public attention worldwide.

*This booklet was published in the framework of the regional program **"School education on trafficking issues in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan"** implemented by International Organization for Migration (IOM).*

The booklet is written in the form of questions and answers and focuses on theoretical framework of main trafficking issues.

We wish you success.

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is a serious social problem because it poses a very large threat to fundamental human rights - right to life, to free movement, right to be free of torture. Human trafficking as a phenomenon has complete disregard for any human rights. As a result of growing globalization at different levels, human trafficking has become a global problem.

This problem equally hits:

a) Countries in political and economic transition and countries torn by war (we call them also **the countries of origin** when human trafficking is concerned), and

b) Economically developed countries (which at the same time appear as transit countries and the countries of destination/destination countries).

Although the majority of countries today claim that human rights and freedoms are fully observed there, the phenomenon of slavery has not disappeared yet - it still exists in the 21st Century. Millions of women and children, but also men, are forced into prostitution, domestic service, work on plantations, begging and other forms of coercion. People are trafficked within the borders of one country (internal human trafficking), but also inter-continently (transnational human trafficking), and therefore all countries are facing this serious problem.

According to the United Nations, 700,000 women, children and men end up in human trafficking every year.

Human trafficking is a severe transnational organized crime and is one of the three most profitable criminal activities (besides trafficking in drugs and arms). Profits gained through human trafficking are estimated at 7-60 billion US dollars.

Human trafficking is a modern slavery and its victims are

subject of severe and continuous physical and psychological torture and sometimes their full recovery is impossible. Due to its high profitability the number of victims of trafficking is increasing. The number of child victims is also tends to increase.

Forms of human trafficking:

- Sexual exploitation,
- Forced labour or services,
- Slavery or practices similar to slavery,
- Servitude,
- Removal of organs.

When we speak of human trafficking, the concepts of human trafficking and people smuggling are often confused and treated as the same phenomenon. It is important that you understand the difference between these terms.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	PEOPLE SMUGGLING
It may be international and internal	It always involves crossing the state border (it is always of international character)
It involves threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud	There is consent by persons who are smuggled.
Crime against person	Crime against state
Objective: exploitation of victim	Objective: material gain, no intention of exploitation

Many people also make mistake and confuse human trafficking with prostitution. Again, it is important that you understand the difference between the two concepts.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	PROSTITUTION
This always implies a slavery relationship - victim is owned by person who bought her/him.	Person practicing prostitution may dispose of his/her body and earnings.
Victim does not have the freedom of movement.	Person practicing prostitution has the freedom of movement.
Victim does not have the freedom of decision making.	Person practicing prostitution can decide whether he/she will continue with it or not.

Taking into account the need for a universal instrument providing for practical measures to combat exploitation of persons, especially women and children, as well as ensuring adequate protection for persons vulnerable to trafficking, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was signed on 12th December 2000 in Palermo. It can be argued that the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the International Instrument to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children contributes to the prevention and counteraction of such crimes.

Definition of human trafficking

Article 3 of the Protocol defines the concept of trafficking in persons.

'For the purposes of this Protocol:

(a) "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring 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 labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) "Child" shall mean any person less than eighteen years of age.

Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was signed by the Republic of Armenia on May 16, 2005 and ratified on April 14, 2008. The purposes of this Convention are to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, regardless of its form and nature, to protect the human rights of the victims of trafficking, to ensure effective investigation and prosecution and to promote international cooperation on action against trafficking in human beings.

Who are the most likely victims of human trafficking?

The victims/survivors of human trafficking are most often persons, who tend to be the most vulnerable, the poorest, and those whose rights are violated again and again. The largest groups are women, followed by children, but we certainly should not ignore the fact that men, too, could fall victim to trafficking.

Gender inequality and predominant role of men in their turn contribute to human trafficking. Beside poverty and gender issues, young age can be viewed as another primary risk factor.

Why youth is a risk group for human trafficking?

- *Higher education becomes a common practice and requires expenses.* On the one hand, higher education makes it easy to obtain employment related to one's training or education, on the other hand, the number of state subsidized university places is rather low. Students mostly find themselves in a financial situation that makes it impossible for them to subsist and pay the tuition at the same time.
- *Unemployment among young people.* In Armenia, unemployment rates reach a high percentage among young people in the age group of 18-25 years, who cannot find jobs despite their big efforts and diligence. This may link back to the lack of previous work experience required by employers.
- *Gender-based division of work and discrimination existing on the labor market.* Researches reveal that the overall number of employed women is disproportionately lower compared to employed men. This is explained by the fact that many employers prefer to employ men rather than women as they believe that pregnant women and mothers are no longer properly committed to their work.
- *Loose morals among young people and minors.* Probably, this phenomenon comes to be a more serious problem for the developed countries of the West than for others. Minors and young women are used as sex objects in advertisements, motion pictures and music videos. Such depiction of minors in the mass media entails that a sexual contact with persons of much younger age is eventually viewed as a common practice, which in its turn promotes increased demand for child prostitution and contributes to the development of the sex industry.
- *Drug addiction, alcoholism and gambling.* Young drug addicts, alcoholics and gamblers easily fall victim to trafficking and are readily recruited as they are vulnerable to external influence.
- *Conflicts between standards applicable to young people and*

their real capacities. The society is transformed into a "consumer" society and the mass media - through advertisements and films - often highlight a lifestyle for the young person that largely exceeds their average financial capacity.

- *Social marginalization of certain groups.* Both homeless children and children, who left the orphanage and decided to start an independent life, are at risk as they lack essential social relations and support. It may be quite easy to gain the confidence of such children and abuse them in case they have no permanent residence or supporting adults.
- *Additional difficulties faced by young people living in remote regions or villages.* Young people living in remote regions or villages mostly lack necessary relations to obtain well-paid employment.
- *Insufficient activity of educational institutions supported by the mass media to prevent trafficking.* Young people are often naive or too optimistic. They are overly self-confident and are convinced that they can stand up for themselves even in new and extraordinary situations. Young people sometimes are unaware of risks they can face in a foreign country if working without appropriate permits or contracts.

What Does the Process of Human Trafficking Look Like?

Trafficking in persons involves three key elements:

Action: recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons;

Means: threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerable position or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person;

Purpose: Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to

slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Trafficking in persons is the combination of above three elements rather than their individual occurrence. For instance, 'harboring' of people (action), which includes 'threat or use of force' (means) for the purpose of 'forced labor' (objective) attest characteristics that can be classified as trafficking in persons. Recruitment of persons (action) by deception (means) for their involvement in prostitution (objective) must also be viewed as trafficking.

Thus, trafficking cases must entail one element of each of these three categories (action, means, objective). However, there are some exceptions concerning children. Article 3 (c) of the Protocol reads as follows: the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article.

How Do Traffickers Control and Exploit Their Victims?

The main goal of human traffickers is to make money off the long-term exploitation of victims. To succeed, they will do anything to protect their investment, i.e. to make sure that the victim will keep doing as she/he is told without trying to run away. This means permanent surveillance of their victims, too. The consent of a trafficked victim to exploitation is irrelevant whenever any form of coercion is involved.

Numerous mechanisms are used, usually in combination, to control trafficked victims during the exploitation phase.

Most widely used control mechanisms are:

"Debt slavery"

One primary mechanism for control is debt bondage, where the victim is required to pay back money that the trafficker invested in her/his move to the country of destination. The initial amount builds up when traffickers tack on huge interests, in addition to the alleged costs of advertising services, transportation, accommodation and food. All these debts quickly pile up to an amount that is impossible to pay back.

Isolation - the removal of identification and/or travel documents

Human traffickers take away identification and travel documents from their victims usually right after they arrive to their final destination. This deprives victims of their identity, affirms their illegal status in the country and prevents them from seeking help or running away to another country or another address.

Human traffickers may tell the victim that it is no use to seek police protection because the police officers are corrupted and on friendly terms with traffickers.

Not having documents nor money, not knowing the language, illegal status, shame and isolation, fear of the police - these are just a few of the mechanisms traffickers use in order to make it unlikely for the victim to try to escape or complain to authorities, which then contributes to increased dependence of victims on their abusers.

The use of violence and fear

Human traffickers use violence and the threat of using violence as an effective means of control.

Victims are often beaten up and raped, restricted from movement, kept in isolation, deprived of food and water, drugged and tortured with sharp objects and cigarettes, all in order to subjugate them.

The human trafficker may threaten to tell the victim's family that she works as a prostitute.

The use and threat of repercussions against victim's family

Human traffickers often attempt to find out specific information on the victim's family or persons close to her/him and the very threat exerts control over the victim.

Traffickers use such threats as a very efficient way to ensure a victim's obedience, as well as to prevent any attempts to run away.

How do victims get out of human trafficking?

Most often, victims get out of human trafficking thanks to:

- Police raids
- Help by clients or citizens

- Managing to organize and execute escape by themselves.

How to avoid becoming a victim of trafficking?

- Turn down any tempting offers of employment, study or marriage abroad made by casual acquaintances or friends.
- As a rule, offers on quick, easy and high income are fake. One should be prudent.
- Do not trust announcements offering job, study or marriage abroad, posted in different parts of the city (village) or published in the newspapers and on the Internet. First of all, verify and check information provided in such announcements.
- Find out whether companies inviting you abroad and their local partner agencies (tourism, marriage, and employment and students exchange agencies) are engaged in legal activity.
- Surf the Internet to find the address of the inviting company; consult representatives of organizations fighting human exploitation¹.
- When abroad, do not accept any suspicious gifts. Do not undertake additional obligations.

If you are going to sign a contract to work or study abroad:

- Sign the contract in Armenia and not after arriving in the country of destination;
- Make sure that the contract is drawn in your native language or another language you know well enough to understand all details and provisions;
- Do not sign the contract on the spot; take it away with you from the agency, re-read it calmly and show it to relevant experts;
- Make sure that your contract stipulates the exact terms of your

¹ See the Annex

future work (study), place and time as well as your remuneration in case of a labor contract;

- If dissatisfied with contract provisions, do not sign it;
- Make sure that the contract is signed by the director or the president of the recruiting company. If signed by an interim officer, for example, the deputy director, vice-president or other person, ask for documents attesting that the person is authorized to sign the contract, i.e. director's or president's order, the power of attorney (notarized and stamped);
- Make a copy of the signed contract (preferably of all relevant documents) and leave it with your family or relatives.

What are the consequences of human trafficking for victims?

The nature of trafficking implies very negative consequences for its victims. Even if they manage to escape from the captivity and return home, still their problems remain unsolved. Victims need rehabilitation treatment to restart a normal life and leave behind the painful experience of the humiliation, negligence, physical and psychological violence they have gone through.

Upon returning home victims of trafficking often have to face not only financial problems, lack of accommodation and unemployment but also fear for their own life and safety of their family members.

Victims of trafficking often have serious **health** problems. Living and working in densely populated accommodations and unsanitary conditions, victims easily catch infectious diseases with constant starvation bringing about indigestion, stomach ulcers and falling of teeth. Heavy and permanent toil results in cardiovascular and spinal damage. Victims of trafficking are exposed to violence and beating, which are likely to cause damage to their internal organs. This mostly concerns prostitutes who are severely beaten in a way that does not affect their good looks. Victims of sexual violence often suffer from incurable sexually transmitted diseases (HIV/AIDS).

Besides, victims of trafficking face grave **mental health problems**. They frequently find themselves isolated from the society as

they avoid sharing their experiences or keep them in secret or behave as if nothing happened. Many victims are terrorized and live in constant fear of violence; they are unable to relax and rest and refuse to trust others. They frequently fall into fits of depressions and are haunted by the idea of suicide. Strangely enough, women still engaged in prostitution or already out of this business mostly hate themselves and, therefore, understandably often try to inflict self-pain or self-mutilation. Among prostitutes, incidence and rates of suicide attempts exceed similar indices for ordinary people.

In some cases, victims of sexual exploitation suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome which results in:

- Tendency to relive traumatic events, recurring memories of experienced terror, apathy about thinking and speaking of trauma, emotional numbing and inability to recall details of negative experiences.
- Indifference and self-isolation, lack of interest in activities that used to bring pleasure and satisfaction, feeling of isolation and alienation, insensitiveness (emotional numbing), inability to show the care they feel for their close relatives, despair.
- Nervousness, sleep disturbance, short and interrupted dream, hyper arousal, fits of uncontrollable anger, concentration related problems, hyper vigilance.

How to support and protect the victims of human trafficking?

Upon returning home victims of trafficking face numerous problems and difficulties. Moreover, due to lack of proper support and opportunities, some of them are again exposed to violence and exploitation and return into the vicious circle of trafficking.

Considering that victims of trafficking need sympathy and compassion and should by no means be condemned or prosecuted, the above programs and services must be in line with the following order of coherent and consecutive actions:

- Repatriation of victims of trafficking, their reception at the

airport, and if necessary, escort throughout travel

- Personal protection and security
- Social, psychological and medical help
- Legal aid
- Restoration of documents
- Assistance to resume and continue education in appropriate educational institutions (school, higher education institution)
- Vocational training or assistance with obtaining a new vocation
- Assistance with reintegration into the labor market
- Assistance with other personal needs

International Organization for Migration plays a great role in anti-trafficking efforts by providing direct assistance to the victims. IOM is the only international intergovernmental organization to identify and repatriate victims of trafficking through its network of representatives in various countries. Today, victims of trafficking are identified by means of a test developed by IOM. Direct assistance to victims covers the following measures:

- Safe accommodation;
- Medical, psychological and social help;
- Development of skills and provision of vocational technical training;
- Support in reintegration;
- Opportunities for voluntary, safe and decent return home or at least settlement in a third country;
- Special protection for minor victims.

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