



The Suzanne Mubarak
Women's International Peace Movement

Global Coalition Women
Defending Peace



**Athens Roundtable
of
Business community
against the Trafficking of Human Beings**

Hosted by



Zappeion Megaron
Athens, Greece

23 January 2006

Organised by
The Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement
and
Global Coalition Women Defending Peace

*Under the auspices of
the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Co-sponsored by
DCAF, IOM, UNIFEM, UNODC, World Bank,
Foundation for the Child and the Family

« **END HUMAN TRAFFICKING NOW!** »

Business community against the Trafficking of Human Beings

The world's attention has become increasingly focused on the serious problem of human trafficking, the victims of which are overwhelmingly women and children, and usually migrants away from their countries or communities of origin.

A new global report on forced labour by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) suggests that the illicit profits realized per year from trafficked forced labourers- US\$ 32 billion - are far greater than has so far been understood. Half of this is made in industrialized countries and close to one third in Asia. Some US\$ 28 billion per year is made from sexual exploitation of women and US\$ 4 billion annually from other forms of economic exploitation.

It is estimated that there are 12.3 million victims of forced labour in the world today, of whom some 2.45 million are trafficked (ILO). Of these, most are trafficked into forced labour for commercial sexual exploitation, while one third are trafficked for other economic exploitation. Over half of the persons subject to forced economic exploitation, and almost all those subject to forced commercial sexual exploitation, are women.

The trafficking in human beings for the purpose of forced prostitution has increased at a furious rate in recent years. Every year hundreds of thousands of women and children from poor areas are deceived and forced to work as prostitutes. Those affected are poor, often unemployed. They are powerless and their human rights are violated.

Sexual exploitation represents a major part of the trafficking industry as shown by the data gathered by ILO, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the European Union, the State Department of the United States of America, many non-governmental organisations and others.

Most of this exploitation takes place in the underground economy, and done through the illegal sex industry. The traffickers have been linked with unscrupulous recruiting or contracting agencies.

There are many reasons why the business community and each CEO in particular should focus more on this issue.

- Recent reports by ILO, the US State Department and others indicate that trafficked people are subject to forced labour exploitation in a range of economic sectors in addition to the sex industry.
- This forced labour can even penetrate the supply chain of major companies, perhaps without board members being aware.
- In some sectors and countries forced labour represent a serious threat to legitimate business.

Opportunities

The involvement of the private sector in partnership with others is imperative in addressing the serious and growing problem of human trafficking, in particular of women and children for sexual exploitation. It is within this context that the Global Coalition Women Defending Peace is launching an initiative with representatives of the business community in the form of a roundtable to explore ways and means of moving forward. The roundtable will be held in Athens on 23 January 2006.

The link between the spread of HIV/AIDS and trafficking cannot be over emphasized. The leadership role and firm stand of the private sector and particularly companies in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS will be greatly enhanced through their active commitment and involvement in putting a halt on the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation.

Hotels and entertainment enterprises are an obvious starting place. They can be directly affected by the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation within their premises, and would need to exercise constant vigilance. Transport industries have a key role in prevention, alerting transport officials to the danger of cross-border trafficking, or disseminating information to all travellers on the subject.

A general commitment against human trafficking can be included in advertising and publicity brochures, together with advice on how to act in suspected cases of abuse. Companies can also support hot-lines established by national and regional authorities. Airlines and shipping industries have roles of obvious importance, with their capacity (as some countries have done in their major airports) to have high-profile publicity campaigns against forced labour and trafficking.

In short, there are many things that business can do to confront the various forms of human trafficking but as the issues are often complex, it is important to have a step-by-step approach.

The roundtable in Athens, organised by the Global Coalition Women Defending Peace in cooperation with the IOM, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the World Bank, together with representatives of the private sector and leading NGOs in this field will develop a set of ethical principles to fight human trafficking, in particular women and children. It is envisaged that some of the CEOs present would then address the forthcoming annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos which starts on 25 January 2006 as an essential means of alerting the global business community.

Secretary General, the Global Coalition, Women Defending Peace,
Geneva, 27 October 2005

Draft - Ethical Principles against Trafficking in Human Beings, especially Women and Children

We,

Members of the business community,

Being deeply concerned that the scourge of trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, inflicts enormous suffering in the world today,

Consider unacceptable that millions of people are treated as commodities and slaves, and therefore denied their basic human rights and dignity,

Welcome the efforts of the international community to eradicate human trafficking, including through public-private partnership, and envisage this initiative as an additional means to complement and reinforce such efforts,

Recognize the significant potential of the business community to contribute to the global fight against human trafficking, and inspired by business community members who are already applying ethical policies and codes of conducts concerning human rights,

Dissociate ourselves from such illicit practices by launching the following ethical principles in which we will:

1. Explicitly demonstrate the position of zero tolerance towards trafficking in human beings, especially women and children for sexual exploitation.
2. Develop a corporate strategy for an anti-trafficking policy which will permeate all our activities.
3. Ensure that our personnel fully comply with our anti-trafficking policy.
4. Encourage business partners, including suppliers, to apply ethical principles against human trafficking.
5. Report and share information on best practices.

Commentary to the Draft Ethical Principles against Trafficking in Human Beings, especially Women and Children

Human trafficking is an increasing global scourge affecting all sectors in society. It aims at the exploitation of human beings, particularly, but not only, for forced labour and sexual services. As a modern form of slavery, it represents a violation of virtually all human rights and dignity.¹

Among the victims, women and children form the primary targets worldwide amounting to 700'000 to two million trafficked across international borders annually.²

Trafficking in human beings is a serious form of organised crime. It ranges from small local networks operating within one country to a highly organised trade by significant criminal groups transporting individuals across continents.³ Occurring within the underground economy combined with the relative lack of national laws and penalties, human trafficking has the potential to earn huge profits with relatively low risks. Most recent estimates suggest that illicit gains realised per year from trafficked forced labour amounts to US\$32 billion. Sexual exploitation of trafficked women earns US\$28 billion annually.⁴

Human trafficking deeply affects economic relations. As an illegitimate form of business it negatively impacts the functioning of the business sector and puts the development of sound economic systems into danger. For example, it is a ground where corruptive practices and money laundering proliferate.⁵

Human trafficking undermines the realisation of overall development objectives by siphoning out valuable resources. These resources could have been put to better use by investing them in the improvement of the quality of life and productivity of community members. Furthermore, the significant increase of trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation has contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The business sector is a vital link in the global fight against human trafficking. It is increasingly recognised that companies have a corporate social responsibility in upholding human rights principles in the conduct of their business in the local and international sphere. While most

¹ The international community has recognised the seriousness of human trafficking. International instruments, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2003) have been adopted to strengthen the law enforcement response and protection of victims of trafficking. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court added human trafficking to acts that may constitute crimes against humanity or war crimes in some circumstances. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights established a Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children to focus on the protection of the human rights of victims of trafficking and policies affecting them.

² United Nations Population Fund, *State of World Population* (New York, 2003). Adding domestic trafficking would bring the total much higher to perhaps four million per year. Recently, cases of trafficked men and boys have also become visible in reports.

³ Louise Shelley, Professor and Director, *Statement to the House Committee on International Relations*, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center, American University (USA, 25 June 2003).

⁴ ILO, *A Global Alliance against Forced Labour* (Geneva, 2005).

⁵ Eleventh OSCE Economic Forum on 'Trafficking in Human Beings, Drugs, Small Arms and Light Weapons: National and International Economic Impact' (Prague, 20-23 May 2003).

international initiatives address the actions of governments and non-governmental organisations, only a few programmes engage the private sector, such as the Global Compact launched by the United Nations Secretary General in 1999, which specifically refers to the elimination of all forms of forced labour and compulsory labour.⁶

A commitment to an anti-trafficking policy would lead to potential gains for the business community. It would ensure the safe operation of the company and the irreproachable conduct of its personnel at all levels, thus guaranteeing the highest distinction of its corporate image. Moreover, it would build trust and develop good working relations, especially contacts between multinationals and local communities. A company's responsible behaviour would also ultimately contribute to the maintenance of a sound economic environment.

We can all contribute in ending this unacceptable practice whether in our individual or organisational capacity.

The following are suggested basic ethical principles for the business community in taking leadership in the fight against human trafficking. While being simple their implementation may have a significant impact in the global community.

1. Explicitly demonstrate the position of zero tolerance towards trafficking in human beings, especially women and children for sexual exploitation

It is important to explicitly repudiate human trafficking. Such a firm position may be demonstrated through statements, brochures, leaflets etc. This would help to create an environment that is aware of the problem and compassionate about the suffering of victims. It would express a determination in mitigating the negative consequences of trafficking in human beings and ultimately to ending this unacceptable practice.

2. Develop a corporate strategy for an anti-trafficking policy which will permeate all our activities

Companies should make it clear that any involvement of its employees in human trafficking will be sanctioned. Similarly, any involvement of its partners in such practice would result at least in the rupture of co-operation.

Further steps may include the elaboration of specific self-regulatory measures, such as codes of conduct and pro-active policies which are adapted to the activities of companies. For example, the transport industry would have the capacity for developing high-profile campaigns against human trafficking. Companies may provide information to travellers by means of catalogues, brochures, in-flight films, ticket-slips etc. Travel operators may help to prevent human trafficking by checking the identity of passengers and alerting border officials of suspicious cases. The same

⁶ One of the few programmes on human trafficking that specifically involves the private sector is the OSCE Anti-Trafficking Programme on Public-Private Co-operation in the Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings launched in 2004. Some governments have initiated partnerships with the private sector in engaging them in the campaign against human trafficking such as Sweden and Switzerland. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) also works with the private sector in Hyderabad, India, on reintegration opportunities. See also NGOs such as ECPAT and partners (Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism) and Kvinna till Kvinna.

would apply to job placement agencies. Hotels and entertainment facilities should also exercise constant vigilance as the hidden exploitation of trafficked persons may take place in such facilities. The banking sector may be helpful in tracing the money flows of the traffickers. And finally, the media would be an important channel of awareness-raising. Such examples are but a few illustrations of the potential of the business sector in undertaking anti-trafficking initiatives.

3. Ensure that our personnel fully comply with our anti-trafficking policy

Raising awareness on the problem of human trafficking within a company is an important initial step in any anti-trafficking policy. This would enable to elaborate more specific measures to prevent and combat human trafficking and to assist the victims. For example, training sessions, seminars, brochures, leaflets and posters could initiate this process.

4. Encourage business partners, including suppliers, to apply ethical principles against human trafficking

By demonstrating zero tolerance towards human trafficking, companies dissociate themselves from any entity involved in such practices. Companies may also introduce a clause in contracts with their business partners and suppliers stating a common stand on the repudiation of human trafficking.

5. Report and share information on best practices

Information sharing is an important part of the follow-up to the commitment to the ethical principles. This may include information concerning the implementation of the ethical principles, including best practices and experience. Modalities for this information sharing and reporting will be discussed by the relevant actors involved.

Preliminary Programme

Sunday 22 January 2006

Welcome Dinner

hosted by Mrs. Marianna V. Vardinoyannis

Monday, 23 January 2006

Roundtable

Morning Session

09.00- 09.30 Opening Remarks

Speakers: H.E. Suzanne Mubarak and Mrs Marianna V. Vardinoyannis

09.30- 11.00 *Presentations and Discussion on the issue of trafficking and its magnitude.*

11.00-11.15 Coffee Break

11.15-13.00 *Presentation and Discussion of the Ethical Principles*

Press Conference

13.00- 14.30 Lunch

Afternoon Session

14.30- 15.30 *Adoption of the Ethical Principles and Launching*

15.30 – 16.00 *Discussion on follow-up action*

Closing

Fundraising Dinner

Venue of the Round Table

Zappeion Megaron - Athens, Greece



The Round Table will take place in the Zappeion Megaron (pronounced /'zapion 'megaron/ - the stress is on the syllable following the mark). This historical building was erected in 1874 – 1888 and was designed by the architect Theophil Hansen. It has hosted the first modern Olympic Games which took place in Athens in 1896. In recent years, Zappeion Megaron has witnessed important moments in Greece's political history: the Treaty of Accession by which Greece became a full member of the European Community was signed on its premises on May 29, 1979. It normally serves as an international exhibition hall according to the original plan of its designers.

Zappeion Megaron is located in the very center of the city, next to the National Garden and just off Syntagma (/syndagma/) Square, the central square of Athens and the Parliament. It is within walking distance from the major archaeological sites of Athens, the old quarters of the city and the administrative and business center and, last but not least, close to the central shopping and recreational areas.

More Information: www.zappeion.gr

Panoramic multimedia view: www.mellow.gr/weekpan/pans/weekpan036.htm



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