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**OSCE Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference:
"People at Risk: Combatting Human Trafficking Along Migration Routes"**

Keynote Address
H.E. Ambassador Laura Thompson
Deputy Director General
International Organization for Migration

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Excellencies,
Ladies and gentleman,

It is an honour and a pleasure for me personally and for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to be here to address this gathering intended to enhance our capacity to improve the lives of migrants and combat the pervasive crime of human trafficking. My special thanks to Ambassador Jarbussynova for the invitation to address you all this afternoon.

At the International Organization for Migration, we have a clear understanding of the increasing importance that migration has taken globally to individuals, governments businesses and policy makers, and within the political agendas, both internally and internationally, for a large number of countries.

The XXI Century is the century of human mobility and migration. It is estimated that there are currently more than 247 million international migrants. Human mobility is expected to increase. The World Bank estimates that by 2050 there will be more than 400 million international migrants. So we can no longer think about our economies, societies or cultures without thinking about human mobility. Migration is inevitable, necessary and desirable -- when well governed.

However, we also observe that the abuse and exploitation of migrants remains all too prevalent. Negative perceptions about migration and migrants, and the rising in discrimination, xenophobia, exclusion, and human rights violations of migrants throughout the world do not facilitate the protection task.

Globalisation, economic disparities, demographic imbalances, increased interconnections, technology and telecommunication revolutions, new political and economic dynamics, and urbanisation are some of the factors that have impacted the migration phenomenon.

Moreover, we are confronted today with a large number of political and ethnic conflicts that have resulted in the greatest conflict displacement since the Second World War. Sixty million people according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen, Mali, and Central African Republic, are only some of these crises.

Environmental degradation and climate change have also increased the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, impacting the lives of more people every day. Globally, there are an estimated of 50 million people who have been forcibly displaced for natural disasters.

All these humanitarian crises force people to flee their homes in search of safer places and frequently generate prolonged displacement.

Forced human mobility coupled with the migratory flows generated by the search of better economic, labour, social and security conditions described above, have shown us in 2015 the great risks that migrants are willing to take when regular channels for migration are not available. Only during this year, between January and June, 1,829 individuals have lost their lives in the Mediterranean, compared with 425 individuals in 2014. In the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea, from 2005 to the present, an estimated 1,000 people lost their lives at sea due to the conditions of the voyage, while another 1,000 died because of mistreatment and privation at the hands of traffickers and abusive smugglers.

Migration flows have also become increasingly complex. Today South-South migration is slightly more important than South-North migration and we are witnessing new North-South migration trends of young qualified people due to unemployment and lack of opportunities caused by the economic crisis in some developed countries. Furthermore, this complexity is reflected in the composition of the current migration flows, that are today composed of a diversity of categories of migrants that include economic migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking and unaccompanied migrant children, to name a few. The set of factors pushing migrants to leave and those pulling migrants toward particular destinations are also more complex and interlinked.

There is a link between the tragedies described above and the abuses and exploitation suffered by victims of trafficking that hinges on two factors: first, the vulnerability of those who choose, or are forced, to migrate irregularly; and second, the risks those individuals are willing to take in order to leave from one place and arrive at another.

The populations moving voluntary and forcedly into and through the OSCE region reflect these global trends. As a point of reference, over one-third of the total victims of trafficking and exploited migrants assisted by IOM in 2014 were within this region.

Existing vulnerabilities and protection challenges are likely to become more acute in emergency situations. Disasters generate mass internal and cross-border movements, significantly increasing the number of vulnerable people on the move. Furthermore, when disasters strike, undocumented individuals, asylum seekers and other migrants may also become stranded, with a potential of severe and cumulative vulnerabilities.

The status of these groups as non-nationals, particularly those in an irregular situation, may mean a de facto exclusion from the humanitarian assistance provided. Key practical impediments may prevent access to needed support, such as language barriers or lack of information about and access to local available assistance, emergency shelters, and knowledge about evacuation procedures. Discrimination or xenophobic attitudes, which as I mentioned before are on the rise, are also likely to complicate further vulnerable migrants' access to assistance.

As one response to this, I would like to mention the State-led initiative, "Migrants in Countries in Crisis" (MICIC), which was launched in 2014 and for which IOM serves as the secretariat. The initiative aims at improving the ability of States and other relevant actors to prepare for, respond to, and alleviate the suffering of migrants caught in situations of acute crisis, as well as to protect their dignity and human rights.

Let me underscore that human trafficking may also flourish in emergency and crisis situations, an issue that will be addressed during one of the panels of this conference. Along with the UN Special rapporteur on Trafficking, especially Women and Children, we have recently presented in the margins of the current Human Rights Council in Geneva, a new research on human trafficking in crisis that points to a direct link to human trafficking and crisis situations. In the same context CARITAS presented a complementary report highlighting how much trafficking flourishes during and immediately after armed conflicts and national disasters.

The vulnerabilities of migrants are also compounded by the breakdown of traditional support structures, and the weakening of both infrastructure and social service support systems, making stranded and vulnerable migrants easy targets of unscrupulous people. The trafficking of crisis-affected individuals is often ignored in emergency situations and rarely prioritised.

We, as IOM, have therefore been campaigning to make sure this issue is not overlooked and that appropriate actions are taken. As a response to some of the experiences IOM had in some of these emergencies, the organization developed in 2012 the Migration Crises Operational Framework (MCOF) which is a practical, operational and institution-wide tool to improve and systematise the way in which the IOM supports its Member States and partners to better prepare for and respond to migration crises. The MCOF intends also to address the protection gaps that we have identified in the current humanitarian response system and provide practical solutions to those gaps.

While a portion of those individuals who experienced abuse, physical violence or who lost their lives during their journeys fall within established categories of individuals entitled to protection under specific international law treaties or conventions; many migrants involved in these complex flows fall outside these established legal categories.

Since human rights are vested in all individuals universally, an individual's rights must be upheld regardless of where they are in the world or whether an individual is a national of the State in which he or she is present. Therefore, migrants' rights protection does not and should not depend on where one is in the world and in what administrative situation. It is the State's responsibility to uphold human rights through their laws and enforcement.

The protection of the human rights and dignity of all migrants is also an essential component of good migration governance. It is important both as an end and as a condition for harnessing the benefits of migration that I mentioned at the outset. Legislative and policy frameworks to ensure the protection of migrants' rights, as well as practices related to their implementation, remain underdeveloped in many parts of the world, including within the OSCE region. Access to information about the mechanisms that are in place to protect them and to remedial measures is also essential.

Unfortunately, in the current context, we have seen a rise in anti-migrant sentiment; physical and mob violence carried out against migrants; politicians touting anti-migrant policies to appease their constituents; and a wide variety of proposed hard line policies, that have only increased irregular migration and migrant vulnerability throughout the world. These trends are not specific to one location, but have been seen in all regions of the globe.

It is therefore of the utmost importance to incorporate a victim-centred and rights based approach in assisting and protecting vulnerable migrants who have been trafficked, exploited and/or abused. Despite the progress that has been made globally, only a small percentage of exploited and abused migrants - including victims of trafficking - receive the necessary assistance and protection to which they are entitled. Our efforts to combat both crimes have tended to focus on law enforcement and prosecution, but we must strengthen our responses to trafficking and migrant smuggling by putting the victims at the forefront of government efforts to address trafficking in human beings, as well as abuse and exploitation of vulnerable migrants more broadly. This approach is incorporated into IOM's overall approach towards addressing trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of vulnerable migrants throughout the myriad of activities we implement around the world. But more needs to be done!

Efforts to ensure that victims are protected throughout law enforcement and judicial processes need to be strengthened and measures related to the safe return or granting of temporary or permanent protected status to exploited and abused migrants should be expanded. Such measures ensure that victims are not further harmed or re-victimised by the processes we have put in place to pursue the perpetrators of these crimes. We should also continue to monitor

and evaluate our work in order to identify where the gaps remain in ensuring victim safety and that victims' human dignity and rights are protected.

Our work on addressing the vulnerability of migrants by combatting human trafficking and migrant smuggling is not possible without on-going and sustainable cooperation with all of our partners working on this issue. Cooperation is critical in ensuring that our efforts become more successful and sustainable. In this time of multiple crises, we must also look beyond our traditional partnerships and re-think our approach to include as broad a network of actors as possible. We must recognise the essential role of private sector and other non-traditional actors. Multi-sectorial partnerships are critical to adapting our approach to meet one of the greatest challenges of our time.

I wish you a fruitful discussion in the days ahead and hope for concrete actions and responses as a result.