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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE
TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

**STATEMENT BY THE HOLY SEE AS DELIVERED BY
MONSIGNOR MARINKO ANTOLOVIĆ
AT THE 953rd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL
16 MAY 2013**

**RE: REPORT BY THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AND CO-ORDINATOR
FOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS**

Mister Chairman,

1. The Delegation of the Holy See willingly joins the previous speakers in warmly welcoming the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, and thanks her for the presentation of the detailed report of the activities and priorities of her Office.

2. The interest and efforts of the Holy See and the Catholic Church in combating trafficking in human beings and in assisting the victims of this heinous crime not only against a human being, but rather against the essence of what it means to be human, namely his or her freedom, self-determination, reason and love, were recently strongly confirmed in the words of His Holiness Pope Francis, who on the occasion of his Paschal address *Urbi et Orbi* ("To the City and to the World"), invoking peace to the whole world, exclaimed:

"Peace in the whole world, still divided by greed looking for easy gain, wounded by the selfishness which threatens human life and the family, selfishness that continues in human trafficking, the most extensive form of slavery in this twenty-first century!"

Trafficking in human beings indeed degrades the inherent human dignity of both perpetrators and especially victims, turning the relationship of dutiful brotherhood, respect and love between human beings, into a reality profoundly contrary to it, not only of slave owner and slave, but also of predator and prey.

3. With this in mind, my Delegation welcomes the activities undertaken by the Office of Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in all priority areas, namely: Prosecution and Criminal Justice Response; Protection of Victims; Prevention; and Partnership.

Even though it is not mentioned in today's presentation, my Delegation wishes to call attention to the crimes of trafficking of children, probably the darkest side of trafficking in human beings. The global increase in trafficking of children is an especially worrying trend. Hence, all necessary measures should be put in place to counter this horrifying crime where even the most innocent ones are not spared from the insatiable race for profit or extremely deviated wishes for pleasure. Ms. Giammarinaro, my Delegation encourages you and your able team of collaborators to engage with this form of trafficking with all your energy.

The disturbing tendency to treat prostitution as a business or industry not only contributes to the trade in human beings, in particular for the purposes of sexual exploitation of women and girls, but is itself evidence of a growing tendency to detach freedom from the moral law and to reduce the rich mystery of human sexuality to a mere commodity.

Speaking of the victims of force labor, children, women and men, I wish to recall the words that the Holy Father Pope Francis pronounced just two weeks ago on the occasion of the feast of St. Joseph the Worker:

“I would like to add a word about another particular work situation that concerns me: I am referring to what we could define as “slave labour”, work that enslaves. How many people worldwide are victims of this type of slavery, when the person is at the service of his or her work, while work should offer a service to people so they may have dignity. I ask my brothers and sisters in the faith and all men and women of good will for a decisive choice to combat the trafficking in persons, in which “slave labour” exists.”

4. My Delegation is strongly convinced that in order to counter the trafficking in human beings more effectively, more focused actions are required to counter the root causes of these crimes. They certainly could be found in the relation between “the offer” and “the request”. It is not only about the traffickers but also those who accept their crime as a service, being in this way a part of this vicious circle of crime. Both are often, if not exclusively, driven by profit, on one hand, and hedonistic, self-centred interest on the other hand.

Hence, trafficking in human beings has to be tackled not only by redefining or creating new legislative norms and fighting crime and criminals, but also by saving the poor from often desperate conditions that poverty leads them into, driving them to the point where they choose even to sell their own bodies or parts of it (organs) or even their own children. On the other hand more has to be done through the media, internet and education in combating the culture of self-centeredness and hedonistic approach to others.

5. On this occasion, I would also like to underline that the Catholic Church, through its global presence and network of charitable, educational, social and pastoral institutions, has been on the front line in combating trafficking in human beings. It has joined its capacities and efforts with other partners in this field, religious and civil, and will remain committed to give its specific contribution to the common engagement in countering the scourge of trafficking in human beings on a national, regional and international level.

6. In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my Delegation's support to you, Ms. Giammarinaro, and to your team while assuring you that the Holy See and the Catholic Church will remain a reliable ally in combating trafficking of human beings and restoring the human dignity to those who suffered forceful attempts to be deprived of it.

Thank you, Mister Chairman!