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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Maria Grazia Giammarinaro

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 9, 2010

We welcome you to the Permanent Council today, Special Representative Giammarinaro, and thank you for your thorough report detailing the excellent work you and your staff have done since you started in your position in January of this year.

The United States stands committed to combating human trafficking in all its forms. We fully support the important role your office plays in this regard, and we commend your efforts to help participating States meet OSCE anti-trafficking commitments and relevant recommendations from the OSCE's 2003 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. We recognize your office's valuable work with governments, including assistance in developing victim-centered national action plans, monitoring and reporting mechanisms and referral systems.

We appreciate your cooperation with other OSCE entities; in particular, with the ODIHR, the Secretariat's Gender Section, SPMU, OCEEA and field operations, your addresses to the Security and Human Dimension Committees and other conferences and meetings, as well as your activities with other multilateral organizations and NGOs, which play an important role in combating trafficking. We applaud your leadership in organizing the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons conference on trafficking for domestic servitude this past June.

The last decade was marked by a substantial increase in human trafficking and its implications. Thus, we must strengthen our political will and provide resources to stem this growing tide.

We agree that a human rights-centered approach must underlie all efforts to fight this modern-day slavery including the implementation of existing anti-trafficking legislation, criminalizing trafficking in persons and protecting its victims, proactive identification systems, victim assistance, access to justice and social inclusion programs.

In Warsaw and Astana this year, we highlighted our support for policies and programs to eradicate child trafficking in the OSCE region. We believe this could be undertaken within the OSCE under your stewardship. We also see merit in the conduct of country assessments to help specific participating States deepen their implementation of anti-trafficking commitments.

The United States remains concerned by reports that highlight the deeper vulnerabilities of Roma and Sinti populations to being trafficked and their continued marginalization in the

OSCE area. Your work to combat these phenomena and your call for research on trafficking for forced begging and illicit activities is welcome.

We note with appreciation the recommendations of your report and we strongly agree that we must strengthen our efforts to combat trafficking in persons and punish the perpetrators. In particular, we must increase the effectiveness of our law enforcement and criminal justice responses. Several presentations in Warsaw and Astana highlighted the need to broaden our fields to identify victims in less traditional areas, such as children in institutions and orphanages and persons with drug addictions or living in poverty or in abusive situations. The OSCE is in a unique position to facilitate enhanced cooperation at the national, sub-regional and cross regional levels in order to carry-out a comprehensive and multi-dimensional response that addresses both victims' rights and the urgent need for criminal prosecution. NGOs and civil society can play an invaluable role here as well, as they are often in the front line.

As we meet after the conclusion of the Astana Summit, the United States looks forward to participating in the follow-up process with the incoming Lithuanian chairmanship to develop a concrete action plan that delivers measurable steps to implement OSCE commitments. As we work on revitalizing this organization in the months and years to come, we hope to see a renewed spirit of collaboration and strengthened implementation of OSCE commitments and recommendations to prevent and combat human trafficking in all its forms, as modern-day slavery and a transnational threat, including the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. We count on your experience and guidance, Special Representative, to assist participating States in completing the work we started in Astana and strengthening our response to human trafficking as part of the OSCE's Human Dimension commitments and activities.

Special Representative Giammarinaro, thank you for continuing the fruitful dialog with delegations and for your dedication working with parliamentarians and government authorities to help put an end to human trafficking. We wish you all the best for the coming year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.