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ENGLISH only

PERMANENT COUNCIL, 13 May 2004

Statement

I consider it a great honour having been appointed to the position of the Special Representative on Trafficking in Human Beings to the OSCE Chair-in-Office.

To help translate the OSCE Decisions and Action Plan on Trafficking in Human Beings into practice is certainly a major challenge which I will find extremely exciting to face.

It is certainly anything but an easy task, since it involves so many countries and their diverse problems with and approaches to human trafficking. On the other hand, the commitment of all participating States of the OSCE to effectively tackling human trafficking will greatly facilitate cooperation with the Special Representative.

If human trafficking is to be counteracted effectively and the fight against it is to be taken forward, we will have to pool all our forces. The OSCE has the capability to interact with the various players and stakeholders and to provide guidance on anti-trafficking management through its existing structures and institutions and through cooperation with other international organisations and agencies. And the OSCE is very well placed to help disrupt the chain of human trafficking because within its sphere of responsibility there are countries of origin, transit and destination.

Although the problem of human trafficking is different in different countries, there are common features which the experience I have gathered during my anti-trafficking work in South-Eastern Europe will help me to address and to deal with effectively.

To my mind, close contacts with governments and authorities will be vital in raising awareness of the complexity of the problem of human trafficking and in developing or further developing existing structures which will permit

appropriate responses. It will be equally vital to uphold and to enforce the principle of national ownership and to involve civil society.

In the years I was active as a member of government and parliament I have come to understand the need for consensual solutions. And in my political work at the local level and, for many years, as the manager of an NGO I've come to understand the importance of shared responsibility.

I perceive the OSCE's Action Plan on Trafficking in Human Beings as a living document and believe that I can facilitate its implementation in my capacity as Special Representative.

I think I can provide high visibility and a dynamic public presence that commands attention to the issue.

I trust that I will be able to provide dynamic leadership instead of slow, reactive response, and intend to come up with approaches tailored to the needs of the OSCE countries and regions.

My actions will be and must be informed by facts based on reliable research findings. With this in mind I shall cooperate with renowned researchers and institutes.

There is, at present, a general lack of information and, therefore, inadequate response to the question of why certain groups are particularly vulnerable and why certain individuals find themselves within these groups. Therefore, there is an urgent need for developing a clearer profile of potential victims of trafficking, differentiating between children and adults, including numbers, the purposes for which they are trafficked (sexual exploitation, forced labour etc.), the situation of victims before they are trafficked, countries and areas they are trafficked from and to, and analyses of the specific factors that make people at high risk being trafficked.

In compliance with the OSCE action plan and in line with the UN Protocol on Trafficking in Persons it is my intention to tackle all the dimensions of human trafficking, that is obviously trafficking for sexual exploitation but also

trafficking into forced and bonded labour and in particular trafficking in children and minors.

I shall do my best to provide guidance, support and leadership to participating States and bring together all parties to work as one on this issue.

In addition, I shall support the efforts of law enforcement to match the traffickers sophistication and effectiveness.

I shall seek to mainstream the anti-trafficking work across the OSCE region and to muster the support of NGOs by encouraging effective networking and partnerships with and within participating States.

As human trafficking is a chain of criminal behaviour – often, though not always involving various countries – I would address it as a continuum from the countries of origin to the countries of destination, involving all the relevant actors from governments, to law enforcement, the judiciary, to the NGOs as the main service-providers for victims of trafficking, and I should try to help set up concrete mechanisms for transnational cooperation. Moreover, increased attention will have to be paid to internal trafficking which is on the rise.

After consultations with the Anti-Trafficking Assistance Unit and the Anti-Trafficking Unit in the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), with the Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU), with the Office of the Economic and Environmental Coordinator (OCEEA) and with the Senior Gender Advisor, and after a first discussion within the Informal Working Group on Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking, I shall be happy to present a detailed work plan to the Permanent Council.

In conclusion let me briefly comment on the future of the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings which has been established under the auspices of and working in close cooperation with the OSCE:

After four years of intensive work, the SPTF – with a view to providing for regional ownership - will begin the process of turning over more responsibility and accountability for continued regional progress in anti-trafficking

management to the governments of the South-Eastern European countries themselves, and especially to their governmental anti-trafficking coordinators. In the upcoming weeks and months the SPTF will seek to facilitate a smooth transition and wind down its office in Vienna. The support for combating trafficking in human beings that will be forthcoming within the region itself will be complemented by assistance from the OSCE Special Representative on Trafficking in Human Beings, as part of my overall responsibility in working with all 55 OSCE participating States.

I look forward to closely cooperating and collaborating with you and your governments.