



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Secretary General

***Human Trafficking for Labor Exploitation/Forced
and Bonded Labor: Prosecution of Offenders, Justice for Victims***

**Speech of the Secretary-General of the OSCE at the
“Alliance against Trafficking in Human Beings”
November 16, 2006
Vienna**

Ms. Special Representative,
Mr. Chairman,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a welcome challenge to address the participants of this high level conference on *Human Trafficking for Labour Exploitation/Forced and Bonded Labour*. Please allow me to draw your attention to the particular importance of the sub-title of the conference: **Prosecution of Offenders** and **Justice for Victims**.

Pushing forward on prosecuting offenders and ensuring justice for victims of human trafficking lies at the heart of OSCE activities in this area since we adopted the December 2003 *OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings*.

In order to remain true to the principles that participating States have all entered into, we must move in both directions at the same time, moving in manner that is clear and balanced.

This high level conference is one more step in these directions, and I wish to thank the Office of the Special Representative for the excellent and hard work that has gone into making this event a success.

Much has been achieved since the 2003 Action Plan. Significant strides have been taken by participating States to address the trafficking of human beings (THB) and to implement the commitments to eradicate this offense to our shared OSCE values.

As Secretary of State Donfut just reminded us, the particular question of THB for labor exploitation has been insufficiently addressed in State legislation and practice. This is an important gap in our thinking and policy towards addressing THB.

As a first step to tackling this dimension of THB, the first OSCE Special Representative hosted in **2005 a high-level conference** under the auspices of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, entitled *Human Trafficking for Labor Exploitation/forced and Bonded Labor: Identification, Prevention, Prosecution*.

The 2005 conference sought to raise the visibility of this form of trafficking. To do so, the OSCE brought together prosecutors and judges with a record for addressing labor trafficking as well as NGOs working with trafficked persons in many sectors.

If I may say so, this conference marked an important first step in bringing this form of trafficking to the attention of participating States.

Recommendations from the 2005 conference were clear. These included:

- Broadening the circle of actors for combating trafficking for labor exploitation;
- Calling for closer collaboration between law enforcement and human rights agencies;
- Underlining the need for proactive collaboration between countries of origin and destination;
- Encouraging the ratification and implementation of relevant international conventions.
- Improving the identification of victims of trafficking for forced and bonded labour, and their access to assistance.

Our conference today builds on these achievements and seeks to add ever more momentum to OSCE deliberations.

Our focus today falls on the implementation of international obligations and OSCE commitments and national legislation relevant for **bringing perpetrators to justice and for ensuring legal redress for victims of this crime**.

The importance of these issues should not be under-estimated. A major finding in the Annual Report, indeed, identified prosecution and access to justice as major challenges facing participating States.

I wish to add also that this conference reflects one of the priorities of the current CiO, which is the fight against organized crime. Trafficking in persons is recognized as a form of transnational organized crime, as well as a form of organized criminal activity occurring within the borders of many countries.

It is significant that this conference moves the OSCE agenda **from Policy to Practice** -- by providing specific examples of prosecution and restorations of victims' rights.

What are the goals of the conference?

The first goal is to mobilize greater political will by all relevant actors in countries of destination as well as countries of origin with the aim of eradicating human trafficking for labor exploitation.

Second, I am certain that this conference will provide a forum for the exchange of concrete experiences in addressing human trafficking for labor exploitation -- such exchanges are vital tools to advance the implementation of anti-trafficking commitments.

Finally, this conference seeks to strengthen understanding of the need to involve numerous stakeholders in the design and implementation of responses to human trafficking for labor exploitation.

Addressing such a difficult challenge as THB places, indeed, a premium on coordination. Coordination within the OSCE between participating States and within them, coordination with State and non-State actors, and coordination with our partners in the *Alliance against Trafficking in Persons*.

These goals highlight precisely the value added of the OSCE in building co-operation on such complex, cross-cutting issues as the trafficking of human beings.

The OSCE is here acting as a **network generator** between States and a range of other relevant actors – in order to mobilize innovative thinking and the will to act by all concerned.

I am sure you will address all these issues fully and wish you all the best for this conference.