



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

OSCE PA Vice-President Kari HENRIKSEN

Remarks to the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

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Combatting trafficking in human beings, especially women and children

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to focus on the situation of women and children, as they are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of human trafficking.

The persistence of gender-based violence in all its forms, including human trafficking, is one of the most pervasive human rights violations throughout the OSCE region. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) biennial Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, an estimated 71% of detected trafficked persons are women and girls. In the commercial sex industry women and girls account for 99 per cent.

Furthermore, the same social and economic factors causing vulnerability to trafficking also prevent victims from accessing rehabilitative care and from securing prosecution of their traffickers.

In Norway we have a saying: "You don't believe it before you see it." Regarding gender-based violence and trafficking, we have rephrased it to: "You do not see it before you believe it". And that is our first commitment – we have to prioritize this issue, in every country, in every society.

When on the move, women and children are made particularly vulnerable. For that reason, it is essential for OSCE participating States to put into place systems and enact the necessary legislation which protect female migrants and refugees, as well as children. They should be protected from trafficking, sexual and other forms of exploitation and violence, including by state authorities such as border personnel, police and immigration officials.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has put forth a number of recommendations which can offer guidance, such as the “Resolution on Implementing Trafficking-Free Communities”, which was adopted last July in Berlin following the initiative of OSCE PA Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues Chris Smith.

The 2018 OSCE PA Berlin Declaration also urges OSCE participating States to act together in order to fight and dismantle organized criminal networks that exploit human beings, particularly migrants.

As parliamentarians, we can initiate the necessary legislation to combat human trafficking for labour exploitation and to protect worker’s rights.

In order to dismantle organized criminal networks and to prevent the misuse of Internet as a trafficking facilitator, it is also essential that OSCE participating States act together and co-operate internationally.

We should also educate the broader public throughout the OSCE region on how to report suspected victims and train those who are likely to be in contact with trafficking victims to respond accordingly.

Thank you Mr. Moderator.