



Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Sweden

## OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw

### Working session 2: Addressing factors contributing to the cycle of trafficking in persons, 3 October 2006

#### Speech by Ambassador Anders Oljelund

Mr/Ms Chairperson,

Sweden is a strong supporter of the OSCE, and not least the ODIHR. Sweden took an active part in the negotiations of the 2003 Action Plan to combat Trafficking in Human Beings, the establishment of a special anti-trafficking mechanism in the OSCE Secretariat, and the 2005 Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan Addressing the Special Needs of Child Victims. Sweden welcomes what has been achieved so far, but there is room for further action.

Allow me to say a few words about what Sweden is doing to combat trafficking in human beings, in the national and regional contexts. A longer version of my statement is being distributed to participants.

Like most states, Sweden has so far focused its work primarily on trafficking for sexual purposes, and we now have a strategy for that. But, as we all are aware of, the phenomenon of trafficking is much more complex and broad. Therefore, the Swedish Government has now appointed an interministerial working-group with the task to conduct a study on all other forms of trafficking in human beings, such as for forced labour and other types of exploitation. The aim is to arrive at an inclusive national strategy against trafficking in human beings.

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The newly created post as Swedish Ambassador for International Cooperation against Trafficking in Human Beings is an expression of the importance my Government attaches to combating trafficking and to the interlinkage between its different forms.

Sweden's commitment to combat human trafficking has grown rapidly in recent years, in Sweden and in our international cooperation.

Since January 1999, a Swedish law prohibiting the purchase of sexual services has been in force. Criminalization of the demand has resulted in decreased demand for and recruitment into sexual services. Therefore, Sweden is less of an attractive market for traffickers of persons for prostitution and other sexual purposes.

Since 2003, Sweden has a strategy for combating trafficking in human beings through the Swedish international development cooperation. Its aim is to address the root causes of human trafficking: poverty, denial of human rights for girls and women, and the demand for sexual and other services.

Sweden has, within the EU regional cooperation with Asia (ASEM), taken an initiative to combat human trafficking. An Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking was welcomed by the Foreign Ministers in Beijing in May 2001. The Action Plan focuses on preventive measures, law enforcement, and support to the victims. Sweden has been actively involved in the follow-up activities of the action plan.

The Nordic Baltic Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings - comprising Iceland, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia - which was appointed in August 2002, has become a successful model of regional cooperation. The main purpose of the Task Force, which was appointed at political level, was to facilitate coordination and oversee the work against trafficking in human beings, and to enhance the treatment of the issue on a political level in all participating countries. Its mandate ended in August 2006, but the Task Force will continue to work at a technical level during a transition period until 2008 in order to follow up a pilot project which aims to assist victims of trafficking by establishing sustainable structures for their safe return and reintegration.

The current Swedish Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) will facilitate the continuation of the Task Force within the

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framework of the CBSS and encourage a gradual transfer of the anti-trafficking work carried out by the Task Force into the CBSS structure. Thereby, the other Baltic Sea countries, Poland, Russia and Germany will also be included into this important work. The fight against trafficking remains a priority and an issue to be discussed in all regular forms of Nordic Baltic cooperation.

The eight member states of the Nordic Baltic Task Force have agreed to effectively implement the following benchmarks: regional cooperation against trafficking in human beings; status as state-parties to relevant international instruments; actions according to established national plans or state programmes to fight trafficking in human beings; regular reports on trafficking from national rapporteurs or focal points; sustainable structures for assuring the safe return and reintegration of victims of trafficking; interest and activity among shipping companies and other transport companies operating in the Baltic Sea region aiming to adopt policy guidelines against trafficking in human beings; manuals for police working in the field; cooperation between embassies in Nordic and Baltic capitals; education of diplomatic corps concerning victim-related issues; and exchange of best practices when it comes to fighting trafficking in human beings in all countries.

The Task Force has collected and disseminated substantial information on measures against trafficking in the eight Nordic and Baltic states. This information provides good practice models and covers the areas of identification of victims; return, assistance and protection of victims returning from abroad; return, assistance and protection of victims with other countries of origin; legislation regarding trafficking; preventive action against trafficking; activities in the neighbouring region; and education on issues relating to trafficking in human beings.

As a consequence of the Baltic Sea regional efforts there is also a close cooperation at operational levels between police, prosecutors, and social workers in the countries concerned.

The Nordic Baltic Task Force has inspired the West African region to develop similar forms of regional cooperation. A partnership has been established between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Tourism Organisation (ATO) in enhancing

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cooperation against trafficking in the sub region, and a West African regional network will be launched.

Sweden has initiated and undertaken several international projects to prevent and combat the trafficking of human beings for prostitution purposes. Among these is a joint initiative with the USA, called "Promoting preventive measures", currently being concluded in 14 countries within Europe, including new EU Member States and candidate countries. The project has, among other things, raised awareness among the public on the issue of trafficking for sexual purposes, with a focus on discouraging men from buying and exploiting women and girls for prostitution purposes, and promoted the model of the law that prohibits the buying of sexual service as a way to combat the demand for trafficking.

Also, Sweden has taken part in a recently concluded joint project to combat prostitution and trafficking in the Barents region together with Finland, Norway and Russia. The project has reinforced a network of authorities and organizations working against trafficking, and included several initiatives. One was the funding for a shelter for abused women in Murmansk that also houses and supports victims of trafficking, and a preventive measure has been an education program for young unemployed women in Murmansk, in order to provide alternatives for women to trafficking. Particularly successful was the focus on social aspects and on the connection between trafficking and other forms of violence against women and the need to enhance the economic, social and political status of women in society as a whole.

Mr/Ms Chairperson,

Combating trafficking in human beings is not an easy task. It is a complex crime that is rooted in a number of causes, for example poverty, marginalization and social exclusion as well as in the demand for sexual or other services. It is also a consequence of the subordination of women and children in our societies, and of the inadequate protection of human rights. The problem extends across national borders and must be addressed by international and regional cooperation through a broad range of actions and measures. Women and children are made especially vulnerable to natural disasters, political, social and economic crises and armed conflict, and are thereby easily victimized by traffickers.

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Trafficking is closely connected to other forms of transnational organized crime. Consequently, all governments are directly responsible for implementing the necessary measures to prevent and fight trafficking in persons, protect the victims and provide adequate support. To be truly effective these efforts must also involve international agencies, civil society and the private sector.

Those who are victims of trafficking should be treated as victims of a crime, and not as migration criminals. They should be given access to appropriate shelter, care, protection and assistance with safe return and reintegration in their countries of origin, as appropriate.

All States have an obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and take legal proceedings against perpetrators of trafficking in human beings, and to provide protection to the victims.

Mr/Ms Chairperson,

There are common denominators for all different forms of trafficking:

They are all crimes that have devastating consequences for the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The victims of all forms of trafficking are made vulnerable to exploitation through circumstances such as poverty and social exclusion, as well as the demand for sexual and other services.

Those involved in trafficking in human beings are often also linked to other international criminal activities, such as trafficking in illicit drugs and weapons.

Therefore, trafficking in human beings not only constitutes a threat to the personal security of individual victims, but also a threat to the security of our societies in a broader sense.

Let me conclude by saying that it is not the lack of international instruments that is the reason why we have not come further in the fight against trafficking in persons. It is not even the lack of national legislation that seems to be the main problem. But what is lacking is governments' resolve, clear instructions and provision of resources directed to the police,

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prosecutors, judges and social authorities, so that they can implement the policies. These efforts require cooperation with other countries in the region to be effective.