

## WORKING GROUP A

21 and 22 May 2002

### **Anti trafficking and the role of the business community – How to keep negative economic effects of trafficking out of legal business**

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The moderator opened the meeting saying that illegal activities can contribute to an economy but it is a deterrent in sustainable economic development. He proposed to focus on three questions: Is there a role for the private sector; What this role is and how could a government provide a framework for the private sector to improve the situation.

The first presentation outlined: Analysing illegal markets; the lack of reliable data both on macro and micro level; and to focus on the demand and not on the supply side. It introduced three non-traditional approaches: 1] Community approach, 2] regulatory disruption/non justice approaches and 3] Private sector involvement, ranging from individual to industry associations such as, development of special software and private policing.

The second presentation summarised the country reports that revealed a commitment to and concrete plans for dealing with the problems that allow traffickers to abuse legal businesses.

During the second meeting of workgroup the presentation on Crime-Stoppers an initiative in the UK and the Netherlands provided an excellent example on how a public/private partnership operates and provides the community to pass anonymously information on crime.

#### **Issues discussed.**

##### **Information on trafficking:**

The information on trafficking is unreliable and does not provide a true picture of the situation. However the Crime-Stoppers example shows that if the public is offered a possibility to pass information on crime anonymously it can be very effective in fighting trafficking. A UK representative speaking from his experience in Bosnia warned that this example might not work in countries where one has no confidence in the receiving side. Indeed existing police/customs hotlines in the UK are less effective because the public prefers to inform non government organisations. Community-based Hotlines seem to be more efficient.

##### **Definitions**

The ILO and Slovenia stated the need internationally to consistently use the same set of definitions for human trafficking and smuggling of humans. To arrive at that, it was suggested to make use the know-how of the ILO.

##### **Confiscation/seizure of assets**

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia proposed to put more emphasis on the confiscation of the assets like cars, houses, etc. of criminals, especially in countries which have a legal framework in place but still lack implementation capacity for anti corruption policies. Good examples of governmental policies in the seizures of

criminal assets in Denmark, Italy, Brazil and the Netherlands provide financial resources to fight trafficking.

#### **Education/awareness raising at the destination side.**

A NGO director of the US drew the attention to the fact that many respectable newspapers in the West show advertisements for escort services; the real estate and hotel sectors create opportunities for trafficking activities; tour operators play a role in organising trips and visa for human traffickers. She stressed the importance of education and raising awareness in these sectors in the destination countries.

#### **The role of the private sector.**

- The private sector has an interest in good governance and a sound investment climate. It was suggested to bring in business associations and use the experience gained by firms like foreign banks and accountancy firms already operating in countries in transition to improve the implementation of rule of law.
- Albania gave an example on how a private Italian firm in cooperation with IOM employed 20 victims of trafficking, provided them with training and assisted them to integrate into the society.
- A representative of the chemical sector stressed the importance of partnership between government and the private sector to facilitate information on trafficking, but that it only works when legislation is in place. She mentioned a successful project under PHARE that developed codes of conduct and guidelines in Central Europe for self regulation of the chemical industry.
- US emphasised the role of the media and having journalists educating instead of criticizing government.

#### **Recommendations for possible follow up mentioned in the discussion.**

- It was commonly agreed that a conference should be held this year to raise awareness on how to launch a programme to promote partnerships between private sector, NGOs and government in fighting trafficking. FYROM volunteered to host such conference
- Azerbaijan and Sweden put forward the promotion of SMEs to enhance socio-economic environment and to create job opportunities for potential victims of trafficking of human beings.
- Workshops on how to involve the private sector in anti trafficking activities should be sector focussed like on agriculture, clothing, chemicals, arms, construction and sex and entertainment.
- The Russian Federation underscored that the responsibility lies with all OSCE countries and trafficking should be tackled in source, transit and destination countries. It was emphasised that measures should be country/region and sector specific to address the particular different needs.
- Provide information on examples of best practices on how the business community was active in the fight against trafficking.
- The NGO Fund for Peace emphasised to create a system of disincentives for arms-brokers caught in illegal actions like the withdrawal of credit, driving licences.