

Delegation of the Holy See

**STATEMENT BY MONSIGNOR MICHAEL W. BANACH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOLY SEE, AT THE  
857th PLENARY MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 April 2011

**In response to the report by the Special Representative and Co-ordinator  
for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings**

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of the Holy See is glad to join the previous speakers in extending a warm welcome to Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, and thanks her for her report, in which she has made some important comments on the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings and on the work of her office.

Without going into details as regards all the activities involved in preventing and combating trafficking and protecting its victims as mentioned in Ms. Giammarinaro's report, I should like to offer a few thoughts on this dire phenomenon.

In order to effectively combat trafficking, we must understand the causes of this scourge, which is rightly called a new form of slavery. As Pope Benedict XVI observed in one of his messages for the World Day of Peace: "At the origin of many tensions that threaten peace are surely the many unjust inequalities still tragically present in our world. Particularly insidious among these are, on the one hand, inequality in access to essential goods like food, water, shelter, health; on the other hand, there are persistent inequalities between men and women in the exercise of basic human rights" (Benedict XVI, message for the 40th World Day of Peace, 2007). In fact, frequently it is a person's difficult living conditions that make them vulnerable to trafficking, and we must also bear this in mind when determining the policy for combating trafficking in human beings.

In his message, the Pope also emphasized the need to counter "the exploitation of women who are treated as objects, and the many ways that a lack of respect is shown for their dignity". In this context, we appreciate the attention paid by Ms. Giammarinaro in her statement to the urgent need to reduce the vulnerability of women to trafficking.

Another important aspect is the protection of children. In fact, if we condemn trafficking as such, we must all the more condemn trafficking in children, who are the weakest and most defenceless human beings, and our efforts to eliminate this evil

phenomenon must be all the greater. My delegation believes that in this area attention must be focused first and foremost on prevention. In this context, the strengthening of families to reduce the exposure of children to the danger of trafficking is of fundamental importance.

The link between migration, rights and trafficking in human beings cannot be ignored either. While those who emigrate to find a better life and the victims of trafficking share many aspects of vulnerability, there are also pertinent differences between migration, trafficking and smuggling of human beings. The OSCE has adopted numerous decisions on both, and the time has come to seek to put them into practice. My delegation would like to underscore that, when preparing the relevant policies, respect for the rights of the trafficked persons, migrants and their families must always be duly observed.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate the commitment of the Catholic Church to respect the dignity of each human life and to contribute to the efforts of the international community, States, civil society and people of good will to combat trafficking in human beings. I should also like to assure Ms. Giammarinaro of our full support for her efforts to eradicate the scourge of trafficking in human beings, especially in women and children.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.