

**STATEMENT BY MR. SERGEY LEBEDEV,
CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE
SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT
STATES, AT THE OPENING OF THE ALLIANCE AGAINST
TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS CONFERENCE ON PEOPLE AT
RISK: COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING
ALONG MIGRATION ROUTES**

Vienna, 6 July 2015

Mr./Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished Conference participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am most grateful for the invitation to participate in the work of such a prestigious OSCE forum.

Human trafficking in its various manifestations and forms remains one of the most dangerous types of transnational organized crime.

It is widely recognized that trafficking in human beings and labour exploitation are inextricably linked to illegal migration, the nature, scale and consequences of which have recently forced us to adopt urgent measures not only in individual countries but also at the regional and global levels.

In this respect, the topic of today's Conference is especially relevant, and the range of participants confirms the willingness of the international community to work together to counter these threats and challenges.

In this context, I should like to emphasize that safeguarding security and combating human trafficking and illegal migration remain a priority area of co-operation for the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This co-operation is based on the universally recognized principles and norms of international law and responds to national and regional interests.

The CIS has established a comprehensive legal and institutional framework to combat trafficking in human beings and illegal migration, which is now in operation and consistently being improved.

Legal instruments regulating co-operation among States in this area form the basis of this system, namely the Agreement on Co-operation in Combating Illegal Migration adopted on 6 March 1998, and the Agreement on Co-operation in Combating Trafficking in Persons, Human Organs and Tissues adopted on 25 November 2005.

The main principles, thrusts and forms of these activities are set out in the Concept of Co-operation in Combating Illegal Migration and the Concept of Co-operation in Combating Trafficking in Persons approved by the CIS Council of Heads of State on 16 September 2004 and 10 October 2014 respectively.

In turn, the specific measures to implement these strategic documents are included in medium-term programmes. The practice of preparing and implementing such programmes in the CIS has entirely proved its worth.

For example, the implementation of the latest Programme of Co-operation in Combating Trafficking in Persons for the period 2014 to 2018 began last year, and since the beginning of this year the CIS Member States and institutions have begun implementing the Programme of Co-operation in Combating Illegal Migration for the period 2015 to 2019.

These programmes provide for measures to develop a legal framework for co-operation and co-ordination of relevant national legislation. Joint preventive measures and special operations are planned. Steps are outlined for information, scientific, personnel, logistic and financial support of this work as well as co-operation with international organizations.

Furthermore, a significant number of measures to counter criminal activity connected with kidnapping, trafficking in persons, human organs and tissues, the exploitation of women and children, and the production and distribution of pornography are being carried out in accordance with the Inter-State Programme of Joint Measures to Combat Crime for the period 2014 to 2018 and other CIS programme documents.

Every year the CIS Executive Committee submits reports on the implementation of the adopted programmes to the Council of Heads of State and also co-ordinates the development of new programmes.

I should emphasize that the approaches contained in the aforementioned CIS documents are in line with the international principles and standards enshrined in universal documents adopted by the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The organizational component of the system for combating trafficking in the CIS is made up of competent authorities such as the Co-ordinating Council of Prosecutors General, the Council of Ministers of Internal Affairs, the Council of Heads of Security and Intelligence Services, the Council of Border Troop Commanders and the Anti-Terrorism Centre. Their complementary activities under the co-ordination of the CIS Executive Committee permit smooth and comprehensive operation and the use of various forces and resources, which ultimately increases the effectiveness of combating trafficking in human beings and illegal migration.

For example, in 2014 alone 13 simultaneous comprehensive preventive measures and two special operations, including activities to counter crime connected with kidnapping and trafficking in persons, human organs and tissues, and to block illegal migration channels, were conducted.

As a result of these measures and operations, over 2,700 crimes connected with human trafficking and associated illegal migration were identified, over 1,600 people brought to justice, the activities of 98 criminal groups terminated and 53 illegal migration channels blocked.

However, the CIS Member States understand that effective migration management aimed at the prevention of trafficking in human beings would be far more effective in the long term than a punitive policy.

The formalization in Russian federal legislation since 1 January 2015 of a patent system of temporary employment upon application by migrants without a visa, who are for the most part citizens of other CIS countries, can serve as an example.

The transparent employment mechanism, the provision of legal and social guarantees and the broad awareness-raising campaign in the CIS countries enable migrant workers to gain legal employment and considerably reduce the risk of them becoming victims of labour exploitation.

It is also worth mentioning the Unified Registration System (URS) for third country nationals and stateless persons entering CIS territory that is currently being established in the CIS. Its inter-State database will contain information on migrant workers and also on those who violate immigration law and organize illegal migration. The creation of the URS will help to improve the security of the CIS borders and the information exchange on migration issues, and increase the effectiveness of jointly combating terrorism, transnational crime, illegal migration and other threats and challenges.

Background information:

It is expected that the competent State authorities of the CIS Member States will enter the following information on citizens of third countries and stateless persons into the CIS URS database for processing and use:

- Passport and visa information;
- Data on crossing of State borders;
- Entry, exit and route of vehicles;
- Visas and invitations issued and changes to residence requirements;
- Purpose of visit;
- Host country;
- Work permits issued and types of employment permitted for migrant workers;
- Statistics on foreign labour migration;
- Data on persons wanted by the police;
- Offences committed.

In view of the importance of human resources capacity-building, the CIS countries co-operate actively in the initial, advanced and refresher training of the relevant specialists.

For example, the International Training Centre at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, the main organization for the initial, advanced and refresher training of personnel in the area of migration and combating trafficking in human beings, provided training in 2013 and 2014 alone for more than 600 specialists who received State certification.

In addition, over 800 people – not only from CIS Member States but also from Egypt, India, Ecuador, the Philippines and Qatar among other countries – participated in various training events and sessions at this Centre during the same period.

In view of the close link between illegal migration and trafficking in human beings, the CIS Executive Committee and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) regularly organize awareness-raising and training events under the Memorandum of Understanding and Co-operation signed in 2008.

In particular, with a view to intensifying partnership and co-operation in countering trafficking in human beings, the CIS Executive Committee and the IOM Bureau in Moscow held a conference on “Enhancing efficiency of co-operation among CIS Member States and bodies in counteracting human trafficking” on 10 and 11 February 2015.

Mr./Madam Chairperson,
Ladies and gentlemen,

To sum up, I can say that the CIS is taking co-ordinated and constructive action to combat trafficking in human beings, within the existing migration processes.

At the same time, we are perfectly aware that at the current stage in global developments combating human trafficking in the CIS countries can be effective only if it is an integral part of comprehensive international efforts to eradicate this form of human exploitation in the countries of origin, transit and destination of trafficking victims.

In that connection, we believe it necessary to enhance co-operation both within the OSCE and at the level of other inter-State organizations.

I firmly believe that today’s event taking place ahead of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons will foster the implementation of the provisions of the Global Plan of Action adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, and that the conclusions and recommendations of this Conference will have a practical focus and help to increase the effectiveness of our joint activities.

I wish all the participants a productive time at this Conference.

Thank you for your attention.