



## Trafficking in Human Beings (THB)

Trafficking in human beings (THB) \* is a complex human rights issue, which shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs<sup>1</sup>. \*

Although governments and the international community have been responding to the growing incidence of trafficking, there is still a lot to be done to combat the problem.

### **The Dimensions of the Problem**

Statistics about trafficking are unreliable for a number of reasons, including the clandestine nature of the activity. Human trafficking has become a global business generating huge profits for traffickers. New trafficking routes are regularly established and the market for fraudulent travel documents, clandestine transportation and border crossing has become increasingly well-organized within Europe and on a global base. Trafficked migrants are vulnerable because of their irregular legal status, and may face deportation. They often cannot access legal assistance and medical care, and remain dependent on their agents and employers.

### **Causes and Solutions**

Poverty and inequity are root causes of trafficking. Gender discrimination within the family and the community, as well as a tolerance of violence against women and children come into play. Lack of appropriate legislation and political will to address the problem, restrictive immigration policies, globalization of the sex industry, and the involvement of trans-national organized criminal networks are other causal factors.

Governments and the international community have identified five interlinked areas of action for responding to the growing incidence of trafficking:

- ❖ Preventing and combating THB, paying particular attention to women and children
- ❖ Protecting and assisting the victims of such trafficking, especially women and children, with respect for their human rights
- ❖ Combating the globalization of THB by international policies and practices that encourage civil participation and cooperation with trafficking victims for prosecuting the traffickers
- ❖ Rehabilitating and reintegrating the victims taking into account psychological and social considerations
- ❖ Promoting and facilitating cooperation among the countries to meet the above-mentioned objectives.

As a part of its commitment to the human and reproductive rights **IPPF European Network** believes that:

1) The issue of THB should be dealt within the international socio-economic context. Relevant factors in this respect are: the present inequitable international economic order, the consequent economic and social conditions in the countries of origin, the protectionist economic and migration policies.

2) Measures should be taken at the national and international level to improve the general socio-economic conditions of women and the elimination of discrimination and gender inequality in laws and practices.

3) Measures should be taken to strengthen national and international cooperation between state departments and NGOs working in direct contact with the persons concerned to combat trafficking.

4) NGOs in countries of origin and of destination should be encouraged to cooperate in developing strategies to deal with the problem of THB and its consequences.

**IPPF European Network recommends its Member Associations to start developing the following strategies and interventions to address trafficking:**

- To undertake information campaigns, to generate public awareness about trafficking in its different forms, including the methods employed by traffickers and the risks to victims and ensuring that victims are not criminalized.
- To promote protection and assistance to victims of trafficking and to galvanize a public response against traffickers
- To raise the issue of trafficking at a political level in order to promote a human rights approach in dealing with victims of trafficking
- To advocate for and support national governments in the establishment of legal frameworks to promote and protect the rights of victims
- To provide technical assistance and training for governments, and stimulate cooperation between countries who are receivers and senders of trafficked individuals
- To help reduce the incidence of trafficking of women and girls by addressing in SRHR prevention the gender inequities and discrimination practices that make women and young people vulnerable
  
- To organise information and awareness raising campaigns about the health consequences of trafficking as women are specifically vulnerable to reproductive and other gender-specific health problems in trafficking situations and they have little or no access to RH care
- To provide SRH services and counselling, including referrals, to victims of trafficking

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<sup>1</sup> The broad definition of trafficking that has been adopted in the U.N. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime