



INDIA भारत

Statement by

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Deputy Permanent Representative

At an

Open Debate on Trafficking in Persons in Conflict Situations

United Nations Security Council

20 December, 2016

Mr. President,

We thank the delegation of Spain for organizing this open debate and for sharing an informative concept paper. We appreciate the remarks made by Prime Minister of Spain H.E. Mr. Mariano Rajoy, the Secretary General and the other briefers.

2. Trafficking in persons across borders has been a cause for concern for some time. The UN Convention adopted by the General Assembly that entered into force 13 years ago, and its subsequent Protocols represent important steps taken by the international community in its collective fight against transnational organized crime.

3. The Global Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons that the General Assembly adopted by consensus in 2010 further recognized the global scale of this problem and outlines the coordinated approach required to deal with this. It reaffirms the central role of the UNODC in the global efforts to deal with this issue. It also recognizes the work done by other UN entities such as IOM, ILO, UNICEF and OHCHR in this context. Trafficking in persons is also recognized as a challenge to be overcome in the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

Mr. President,

4. India is a signatory to the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, and its Protocols, and has strongly addressed the various aspects concerning of trafficking in persons through a series of legislations and other measures. Article 23 of the Indian Constitution specifically addresses the issue.

5. As part of the continuing efforts to strengthen the relevant legal frameworks within India, earlier this year, India has unveiled a comprehensive draft legislation aimed at Prevention and Protection of Trafficking of Persons and the Rehabilitation of Trafficked persons. The draft legislation aims to unify our existing anti-trafficking laws, prioritise the needs of and to protect the victims. India continues to work closely with UN agencies including UN Women and UNODC on related issues.

6. India has entered into various agreements and MoUs with other countries to combat the crime. India also works closely with its neighbors to implement the 2002 SAARC Convention on preventing and combating trafficking in women and for prostitution.

Mr. President,

7. The nexus between organized traffickers and terrorist networks through illicit financial linkages is a dangerous phenomenon. Secretary General's report notes the low rates of conviction for crimes of trafficking across countries. This needs to change. The persistence of this transnational organized crime and its

links with terrorist networks despite the various collective efforts of the international community is a challenge that requires a stepping up of our efforts, more effectively using the existing counter-terrorism financing tools and mechanisms and sanctions regimes in this regard.

8. Situations of armed conflict provide fertile ground for trafficking in persons especially from the vulnerable groups, such as women, children and refugees, including for sexual slavery and forced labour including in mining sector or as fighters. In recent times, heinous actions of terrorist groups such as ISIL or Boko Haram specifically targeting vulnerable groups such as women and children in situations of armed conflict, as a deliberate tactic of war, add another even more serious dimension to such crimes. Such terrorist groups continue to act with impunity.

9. The primary focus of the Security Council is to address threats to international peace and security. While increased focus on addressing trafficking in persons and its linkages to terrorism and armed conflicts is timely, we must strengthen international collaboration to better implement the various existing mechanisms, including through more effective coordination of the various entities at the United Nations.

10. These UN entities and mechanisms have a more holistic character that seeks to address the legal, social and economic contexts of this problem. They provide strong legal and practical frameworks that can enable and facilitate joint responses against trafficking that involve multiple jurisdictions. Their autonomy of decision making needs to be further strengthened.

11. While the Security Council should retain its focus on situations of armed conflict, these broader mechanisms should be more fully utilized to strengthen national capacity building including in criminal justice capacities, regulatory frameworks of banking and financial institutions to disrupt illicit financial flows, improve research and analysis, improve regional and inter-regional cooperation and protection of victims.

Mr. President,

12. India remains committed to working with the international community in our joint endeavour to eliminate the global challenge of trafficking, including in situations of armed conflict.

Thank you