

**Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends
United against Human Trafficking
New York, 22 September 2010**

**Statement by H.E. Sergei Martynov
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus**

Dear Friends,

I am honored to welcome you here today at the First Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking. This meeting is being held at a very prominent and crucial moment not only for us as the Group but for the United Nations as a whole.

Very recently, the General Assembly has adopted and launched the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons – a document, which united all of us in our inspiration to strengthen and raise the effectiveness of the international efforts to curb the heinous crime of human trafficking.

For the first time in the United Nation's history human trafficking becomes a stand-alone item on the GA agenda.

For the first time in the United Nation's history we have managed to create a mechanism capable of bringing together efforts of all stakeholders in a manner that would ensure a comprehensive and resolute response to traffickers and a long-awaited support to victims.

The Group has played a pivotal role in the drawing-up of the Global Plan and should be credited for its adoption. Today we can proudly confirm, that despite the relatively short time of its existence, the Group has been able to make a difference.

However, there is no room for complacency. It is no secret, that throughout the process of the consultation on the Global Plan our efforts have been misconstrued and even misinterpreted.

With the consensual recognition by the General Assembly of the added value of the Global Plan we have a chance to put our ideas into practice and ensure that they are worth of the appraisal and confidence they have received.

It will be only right to stress the role of the President of the 64th sessions of the General Assembly in keeping the topic of human trafficking in the focus of the UN agenda. We believe that the President of the 65th GA session will continue this good tradition and look forward to close cooperation between him and the Group of Friends in promoting the full and effective implementation of the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to UNODC for amazing work and invaluable support of all initiatives that might contribute to the adoption of the Global Plan of Action, including the expertise assistance during the process of consultations on the adoption of the document.

Our special thanks also go to Cape-Verde and Portugal for their dedicated work in the capacity as co-facilitators of the consultations on the Global Plan of Action.

Special honourable mention should be made of the good job done by our Permanent Representatives and the staff of the Missions of our countries to the UN.

The outcome of the process that will follow the adoption of the Global Plan will depend to a great extent on the level of activity that our Group should continue to demonstrate within the United Nations, ensuring expedient and effective implementation of the Global Plan.

I hope you will share my conviction that the Group should remain open-ended so that each of us could attract more like-minded partners from their respective regions. At the end of the day, the broader support we gain, the more of our ideas will see their successful realization. It is

also crucial that the efforts in New York related to the implementation of the Global Plan are supported and complemented, where necessary, by our colleagues in Geneva and Vienna.

Dear Friends,

I would like to suggest adopting a short joint declaration, which was agreed by the Group in advance. This declaration will serve as a token of our resolution to remain at the forefront of the global fight against trafficking and will be used as a road map for the Group's position and activities in the future. Belarus on behalf of the Group will submit the text of this declaration to the Secretariat for distribution as an official document of the 65th session of the General Assembly.

Certainly, this declaration is of a framework nature. Concrete ideas and detailed proposals for action should continue to be elaborated by the Group at its regular meetings alongside the process of the implementation of the Global Plan.

It would be of a great value to hear today your ideas and thoughts about what the Group has been able to achieve so far and what it can do in the future to ensure that the objectives we have set for ourselves are successfully achieved. Please be free to share your comments and ideas with us for the benefit of our common goal.

In conclusion, I would like to propose a toast to the success of our past and future endeavors, to longevity and efficiency of our Group!