

Preparing for 2017 Review of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons: How to Bring Partners and Ideas Together?

Dear colleagues,

I am immensely delighted to deliver a few remarks on behalf of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking on the topic we discuss today.

Next year, the General Assembly is set to review the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. I understand that this will be the first time that the Global Plan will be appraised in a serious manner and that the General Assembly will continue doing so once in four years thereafter.

In my view, the **Global Plan's review is likely to be the most crucial human trafficking event throughout 2017.**

The key question is how to carry out this task in a proper manner? I think, at present this is still an open question. So, I would like to suggest that we look first at how similar efforts are done with regard to other human trafficking tools and, bearing on available experience, attempt to outline a possible framework for the next year's event.

Let us briefly consider the so-called **Palermo Human Trafficking Protocol** that supplements the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime or the UNCTOC. The implementation of the Human Trafficking Protocol rests with the conference of the State Parties, which meets once in two years. The last one took place very recently, in October. In the period between the conferences, the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons established by the conference also discusses issues related to the Protocol's implementation. Finally, there is an ongoing process in Vienna to develop a review mechanism for the UNCTOC and its supplementing Protocols, which is supposed to review how the State Parties implement these tools' specific provisions in their national legislation.

I think, we cannot fully emulate this three-tier framework in the context of the Global Plan's review. Mainly, because the two tools have different status. The Protocol is a legally binding instrument, **the Global Plan is,**

above all, a political tool. So, while a legally binding tool can be appraised through a rigorous technical review mechanism, a political one cannot be reviewed in a similar rigorous and technical way.

But there is another crucial difference. As a legally binding tool, the Protocol is primarily for its State Parties to implement, whereas **the Global Plan, as a political instrument, is for its various stakeholders** – states, international organizations, civil society, and private sector – **to realize.**

So, an institutionalized review mechanism for the Global Plan seems to be off the list of options.

To be sure, the Global Plan's appraisal will feature a discussion at a high-level meeting, but it is clearly not enough. We in Belarus have the feeling that the review should produce something **tangible.**

But what this “tangible” might be?

There has been a view going around of late that the Global Plan's appraisal should result in **an Annex to the Plan**, which would list a number of currently **urgent aspects of human trafficking.** The latest human trafficking discourse generally features, among others, such issues as human trafficking in conflict, human trafficking along new migration routes, human trafficking for forced labor, human trafficking in supply chains, human trafficking for the purpose of organ removal and organ trafficking.

As for Belarus, we fully back the idea of reflecting these, I would say, **“emerging” dimensions of human trafficking in an Annex** to the Global Plan, provided we will have one.

Belarus was very keen to advance these new dimensions **in a practical way.** For instance, last May, we sponsored at the Commission on Crime Prevention a draft resolution on *Preventing Trafficking in Human Organs and Trafficking in Persons for the Purpose of Organ Removal.* We proposed to reflect in the draft the fact that organ trafficking and human trafficking occur within territories controlled by terrorist groups and among refugees fleeing conflict. There was an interesting debate on our proposal, as a result of which we had to concede some substance, but, all in all, we succeeded to some degree in reflecting these points.

I think, the way to decide on whether or not we will have an Annex and what it should contain is through **a relevant General Assembly resolution**, which will establish modalities for the next year's appraisal of the Global Plan. I think and hope that you, dear colleagues, who work here in New York, can tell me more about it than I can tell you.

On my part, I would like to share with you one specific suggestion. Since 2011, Belarus has been sponsoring at the Commission on Crime Prevention on a two-year basis **resolution** titled "*Implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons*". In 2013 and 2015 this resolution was also adopted as ECOSOC resolution.

So, you can see that **there is a resolution that very specifically deals with the Global Plan**. I think, this resolution provides a very good opportunity to make a contribution to the review of the Global Plan.

What I specifically have in mind is **two suggestions**. First, as the sponsor of the resolution Belarus may include in the draft provisions that request UNODC, as a coordinator of ICAT, to gather its members' views on substantive content of the review, and report them to New York.

Second, the resolution may concretely indicate that it welcomes having an Annex to the Global Plan, and that it welcomes the idea of reflecting in it a number of specific issues, like human trafficking in conflict, human trafficking along new migration routes, etc. Moreover, the resolution should encourage inputs from other important stakeholders like civil society.

I would very much appreciate if you could say something on what I have just suggested.

With this, I think, I would like to stop so that all of you could have an opportunity to participate in our discussion.

Thank you for your kind attention.