

**Appointment Ceremony  
of Ms Nadia Murad Basee Taha  
as UNODC Goodwill Ambassador  
for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking**

United Nations, New York  
September 16, 2016

**Statement  
by Ambassador Andrei Dapkiunas  
Permanent Representative of Belarus  
to the United Nations  
on behalf of the Group of Friends  
United Against Human Trafficking**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear Nadia,

I am honoured to speak today and greet you on behalf of the 24 Member States of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking.

Surely, the Members of the Group are not the only countries that take close to their heart the plight of victims of modern-day slavery and try to do their best – both at home and globally – to fight this evil.

Yet our informal group of friends is the only group of Member States in the United Nations that openly advocates the virtue and importance of a cooperative approach in fighting human trafficking.

Our group actively seeks the unity, coherence and concert of action of all national governments, international organisations and civil society.

Dear Nadia,

The tradition of good-will ambassadorship in international relations is a long-tested means of drawing public attention to issues of great social importance.

But yours is a very different kind of ambassadorship.

Unlike celebrities who put to noble public use their fame and personal understanding of a topical cause, you bring with you for this mission the hardest of credentials – the record of personal suffering, your courage and your dignity.

Unlike most of the statesmen and high decision makers you are to meet, you have seen the ugly face of our enemy. You looked the inhumanity of slavery in the very eye.

This is why we do not think that, with what you have survived, you will be easily taken with lofty words of cautious diplomatic writing and non-obliging doublespeak.

We do not think you would be thrilled about the partners in this struggle – be they Member States or international organisations – often engaging in clever theorising about where in our fight the emphasis should be placed – on human trafficking or modern slavery, forced labour or sexual exploitation, slavery in conflict or in time of peace.

Theorising while we remain regrettably detached from appreciating a simple truth: our enemy may be multi-faceted but one. It is simply called human bondage. And we need unity of action to defeat it.

We can cleverly plan our anti-trafficking ‘advocacy for decades ahead. Yet we will not be able to eliminate the evil of slavery unless we coolly take every possible practical step to prevent, protect and prosecute while uniting our actions in an honest partnership.

Today we invite you to engage with us in a no-nonsense ‘advocacy of the need for unity of international action and sincere commitment of all concerned partners – both in governments and beyond – in our struggle to defeat slavery, once and for all.

We believe that your honest and courageous voice is going to be an indispensable asset in this collective effort.

On a more personal note, I cannot but marvel at your and Amal’s first names meaning the very same thing - ‘Hope’. As a firm believer in the higher meaning of life’s apparent coincidences, I would like you to know that you both give us hope.