



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
B U L G A R I A
T O T H E U N I T E D N A T I O N S**

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**High Level Interactive Launch of UNODC's Global Report on Trafficking in Persons
New York, 21 December 2016**

Bulgaria's intervention

Ms. Asya Tsvetanova, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the UN

Madam Chair,

Bulgaria welcomes today's official launch of UNODC's Global Report on Trafficking in Persons and commends UNODC for their dedicated efforts to collecting international statistics on detected victims of trafficking in persons and helping States combat this global scourge.

I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, the Permanent Representative of France to the UN H.E. Mr. Francois Delattre and the Executive-Director of UNODC Mr. Yury Fedotov for their very informative and insightful presentations.

Bulgaria warmly welcomes also the participation of the young Yazidi woman Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha who has been recently appointed UNODC Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking and commends her for her courage and determination to stand up and advocate for the protection of victims of trafficking and bringing to justice the perpetrators.

Trafficking in persons is a gross violation of human rights and destroys human dignity. It is also one of the most serious and lucrative forms of transnational organized crime with huge human, social and economic implications. Women and girls, persons with disabilities and other marginalized individuals are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking. The problem is further exacerbated by the current large movements of refugees and migrants who often become easy targets of exploitation. Thus, it is imperative to accelerate the global response to human trafficking.

Due to its cross-border nature and the magnitude of the challenges it presents, no country can fight it alone. A global approach is required that includes all stakeholders in order to achieve sustainability of results. Better cooperation should be established among countries of origin, transit and destination on information sharing and victim identification, as well as ensuring victims' support and reintegration.

The role of international organizations is crucial. Bulgaria highly values its cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as with the International Organization for Migration, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe - aimed at ensuring effective management of migration processes and the respect of human rights of all persons.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol against Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children - the so called Palermo Protocol, represent a solid foundation of international law in this area.

Bulgaria welcomes the first ever Security Council Resolution on Trafficking of Persons in Conflict Situations - Resolution 2331 (2016) adopted unanimously yesterday by the Council during the Open Debate organized by Spain. Bulgaria is a proud cosponsor of this resolution.

Bulgaria's national legislation on trafficking in persons is fully harmonized with international legal standards. In the last couple of years the Bulgarian Government has increased efforts to prevent trafficking. The National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Persons has developed the National Anti-Trafficking Strategy for 2017 - 2021. The Commission implements Annual National Action Plans and publishes Annual Reports of the Government's anti-trafficking activities. The Commission has improved inter-ministerial coordination and has empowered also local-level commissions on anti-trafficking.

Bulgaria has developed and effectively implements a National Programme on Prevention and Combatting Trafficking in Persons and Protection of its Victims. National Referral Mechanisms for Victims of Trafficking and for Special Care in Cases of Unaccompanied Children and Children Victims of Trafficking Returning from Abroad have been developed and recently updated (July 2016) taking into consideration the new challenges. A National Council for Assistance and Compensation to Victims of Crime, including human trafficking, has been established.

In partnership with local authorities, the academia and civil society various prevention information campaigns have been launched to raise public awareness and create intolerance to this heinous phenomenon, especially within the risk groups of the population, including Roma communities.

The Bulgarian Government invests in building capacities to identify potential and actual victims of trafficking among migrants and asylum seekers, and provide adequate protection, in particular to children on the move, including unaccompanied minors.

Bulgarian authorities pay close attention to potential linkages between traffickers and smugglers and remain determined to disrupt the involved criminal groups, eliminate their financing opportunities and bring to justice the perpetrators.

Bulgaria highlights the importance of including the fight against human trafficking in all efforts - at global and national levels - for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants,

taking into consideration also the particular vulnerabilities of women and children, and persons with disabilities.

Thank you, Madam Chair!