IOM - SAATCHI & SAATCHI WIN AWARD

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The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM

difference it makes to women who are trapped in appalling conditions,” said Grant Meldrum, Managing Director of Saatchi & Saatchi South Africa, explaining why his company became involved in the project.

“This hard-hitting PSA captures the evil realities of human trafficking and shows how ruthless traffickers shatter the hopes and dreams of their victims,” says Karen Blackman, Information Specialist for IOM's Southern African Counter-Trafficking Assistance Programme (SACTAP). “Human trafficking is happening in Southern Africa today, but awareness levels remain worryingly low.”

The advert has so far been aired on South African channels SABC 1, SABC 2, SABC 3 and ETV in primetime slots, as well as DSTV, which broadcasts throughout Southern Africa. During the two weeks of its broadcast at the end of May 2007, the advert resulted in a significant increase in calls to IOM's helpline.

As part of the reward for winning these awards, MultiChoice will screen the PSA free of charge on a range of DSTV channels throughout 2008.

MultiChoice is a premium television entertainment provider, broadcasting 70 video, over 40 audio and 28 radio channels, and more than 6 data channels, 24 hours a day on its DSTV platform.

Says Jacki Rikotla, Corporate Affairs General Manager of Multichoice: “Every year we dare aspiring and professional filmmakers and advertising creatives to put their skills and energy into making an advert that counts for our society. And every year without hesitation they meet and surpass that challenge.”

To view the PSA, please go to: http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pid/748

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Dear reader,

As the New Year approaches, many people seek positive change and new opportunities, often looking overseas where the grass looks greener. Page three is a gentle reminder that working abroad should always be a beneficial experience for both employers and employees, and we once again list a few things that you should know when you make that decision.

It is now the period of the year when we intensify the fight against violence against women and children. On page four, IOM's Mariam Khokhar and the Human Sciences Research Council's Vasu Reddy jointly highlight the plight of one category of silenced and invisible groups for which 16 Days of Activism is meant.

2007 has been a year of positive synergies in the fight against human trafficking. In October, the Global Interfaith Dialogue Forum on human trafficking brought together interdenominational religious leaders from all over the world in Cape Town; in the same month the International Association of Women Judges met in Johannesburg to discuss counter-trafficking interventions. Earlier in May, senior state officials from SADC met at IOM's Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA) Workshop on human trafficking in Gaborone. These are just a few of many meetings that took place this year. One of the challenges of 2008 will be translating the policy recommendations and resolutions of these meetings into effective counter-trafficking activities. IOM, as always, offers technical assistance to state and non-state institutions to enhance the realization of such goals.

At the close of the year, IOM must thank the donors through whose generous contributions the Southern African Counter-Trafficking Assistance Programme (SACTAP) has forged ahead in 2007 - the US Department of State’s Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), the Departments of Foreign Affairs of Norway and South Africa, and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

And congrats to Saatchi & Saatchi on a job well done! Nde Ndifonka 

Editor

SADC Urged to Combat Human Trafficking

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been called to take strong action against human trafficking.

"It is time for the SADC to stem the tide of human trafficking," said Advocate Thoko Majokweni, Director of the National Prosecution Authority’s (NPA) Sex Offences and Community Affairs unit of South Africa on Thursday 18 October 2007.

Addressing the International Association of Women Judges Conference on Human Trafficking in Africa, which took place from 18 to 21 October 2007 at the Birchwood Hotel, Boksburg, South Africa, Advocate Majokweni said this crime is a serious offence against human dignity and is a problem which needs to be tackled effectively by all in the region.

"Although it is difficult to determine the extent of the problem in the Southern African region because most countries in the region have not criminalised trafficking persons, strong action must be taken against such practice," said Ms Majokweni.

It is time, she said, for law enforcement agencies in the region to be empowered to deal with human trafficking.

"Better measures must be put in place to deal with this phenomenon," said Advocate Majokweni, adding that there is also a need for the general public to be taught about human trafficking.

South Africa, Advocate Majokweni said, is used as a destination, transit point as well as a source of human trafficking.

MALAWI: National Network against Child Trafficking

The National Network against Child Trafficking (NNCT) in Malawi was established in November 2006. It sprang from the Southern Africa Network against Trafficking and Abuse of Children (SANTAC) and owes its sustainability to UNICEF funding. The network’s primary aim is to undertake public campaigns and advocacy against child trafficking and related abuses.

NNCT is coordinated by the NGO, Eye of the Child (EYC). The EYC has so far opened a resource centre at its offices where members could access a variety of literature, including human trafficking reports from organizations like the International Organization for Migration (IOM), draft bills, and documentation of good advocacy practices. EYC has also established a training centre to offer courses in various areas of child rights, including child protection and management and development of advocacy of practices.

The formation of NNCT is part of ongoing counter-trafficking activities that have placed Malawi on Tier 1 of the US Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, suggesting that the country is taking effective action to combat trafficking. The NNCT has envisioned a plan of action to combat child trafficking, which includes research and advocacy, rehabilitation and reintegration, training and capacity building, coordination, monitoring and partnership, prevention and social mobilization.

The advocate said women are sold by Nigerian syndicates to Germany, Italy and Belgium, via South Africa.

Also speaking at the conference was the Executive Director of International Association of Women Judges Joan Winship, who said human trafficking is a problem throughout the world.

She said judges and everybody else in the legal fraternity should be involved in looking at ways of dealing with the problem.

"We will continue to develop programmes aimed at dealing with human trafficking," she said, adding that the protection of women and children is a priority.

The conference, attended by delegates from various African countries, sought to find better solutions in dealing with human trafficking.

In March this year, United Nations Deputy Secretary General Asha-Rose Migiro told the International Conference on Trafficking in Women and Girls that despite the freedom enjoyed by millions of people around the world, the phenomenon of human trafficking is still a reality.

"The fact that there are forms of slavery in our world today should fill us all with shame. As an African woman, I would add that it also fills me with rage."

By Edwin Tshihidzo

Boksburg, RSA
What you must know before traveling to work abroad

"Working abroad should always be a beneficial experience for both the employee and employer."

Working abroad can be an exciting and rewarding experience. It may be an opportunity to improve your economic situation, gain valuable work experience, and travel to new and interesting places. However, accepting a job offer without making adequate preparations and taking precautions can put a migrant worker in a vulnerable position, and optimistic migrant workers may find themselves in the hands of unscrupulous employers or human traffickers.

Human traffickers can be very good at identifying and recruiting potential victims. They can make a false job offer appear very enticing and realistic. It is therefore essential that migrant workers avail themselves of proper information when seeking employment overseas, and arm themselves with a back-up plan should things go wrong.

In Issue 9 of the EYE on Human Trafficking, the article 'Middle East Job Opportunities for South Africans' describes several recent cases of young South Africans who found themselves in rather unfortunate circumstances after accepting employment opportunities overseas. They were promised jobs with substantial salaries and comfortable accommodation, but ended up working for far less, and living in undesirable conditions. As a result of this article, IOM's toll-free help line in South Africa (0800 555 999) received a barrage of calls from the general public asking how to avoid finding themselves in a similar situation. In response to these requests for more information, as well as the increase of reports of trafficking victims from the Southern African region, we have compiled a list of basic precautions that one should take before accepting any offer of employment abroad.

Before you leave home

Ensure the job offer is genuine
Check to see that the recruitment agency is registered with the local Chamber of Commerce and, if possible, contact the company offering the job on a landline to confirm that they are recruiting, and that the conditions of employment are those promised by the recruitment agency. Offers from third parties, disreputable recruitment agencies, or people who approach you on the street should be treated with caution. You may also contact the local embassy of the country of destination to confirm that the company is reputable, and is permitted by law to employ foreign nationals in the manner promised. Beware of job offers that sound too good to be true and/or which offer to cover all of your expenses, including airfare and accommodation, up-front.

Obtain the correct working permit for the country of destination
Ensure that you are traveling with the correct and legal documentation to work in the country of destination. Most countries will require you to apply for a working visa if you intend to work in the country. The application for the visa must be filled out and signed by you, the employee, and not by the agency. Be suspicious if the recruitment agency attempts to convince you that a visitor's or tourist visa is sufficient for you to work legally in the country in which you wish to find employment. This is very rarely the case. If you are unsure, you can contact the Embassy of the country to which you hope to travel and/or check the government website, which may provide travel information to prospective migrant workers.

Sign a contract before you leave home
The contract should be in a language you can read, and stipulate your wages and deductions, your duties, working hours and breaks, benefits, leave, and procedures for resignation or termination. Be careful of accepting offers where you are required to pay back money to the employer if you do not fulfill the full term of the contract. The contract should clearly stipulate any amount paid for up-front by the prospective employer (for example, the cost of your airfare) and the conditions under which you will be required to repay this sum. Have an independent attorney examine the contract before you sign. Both you and the employer must sign the contract, and you should each be in possession of a copy of the contract.

Have contacts for people/organizations that can provide assistance
Before leaving home, make sure you have the contact details for your country's Embassy or High Commission in the country in which you wish to find employment. It is also advisable to notify your embassy that you are in the country and give them your address and contact details. Have a list of emergency contact details in the country you are going to: e.g. migrant worker organizations, churches and shelters, the police, friends and family in the destination country. IOM offers counter-trafficking programmes in many parts of the world that may be able to provide assistance to you in case of an emergency. It is also advisable to agree on a contact schedule with family and/or friends at home before leaving for a new destination. Should something go awry, and you fail to contact them at the agreed time, they will be able to contact the relevant authorities for help.

Know your rights as an employee of the country you are going to
Migrant workers are entitled to the same rights as all workers, and should be treated with respect and dignity. Before you work abroad, know your rights, and how to protect them. Be sure to investigate the minimum wages and other conditions of employment in the country to which you're travelling.

Once you arrive in your country of destination

Do not give your passport away to anyone
Do not give your passport over to the employer or anyone else except immigration officials. It is illegal in many parts of the world for an employer to ask to hold onto your passport for any reason, and you should never agree to do so, regardless of whether this is stipulated in the contract.

Make contact
Once you have arrived in your country of destination, contact your local embassy and inform them that you are in the country. Also contact friends and family at home and let them know that you are safe and give them your contact details. If you find yourself in trouble, make contact with one of the organizations on your list, or contact the police or your local embassy.

Working abroad should always be a beneficial experience for both the employee and employer. While social services providers, government departments and law enforcement officials can be helpful in assisting persons who are victimised in the process, the ability to prevent such incidences lies largely on the individual.

For further information, refer to the handbook The Migrating Woman's Handbook, published by the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, available on their website at www.gaatw.net. It is a very informative manual developed to help women and others working abroad make a safe journey.
As we embark on another annual campaign of 16 Days of Action of no violence against women and children, it is worth asking why trafficking should warrant attention.

Considerable time and resources are allocated to border control measures in order to uncover secret movements and to prosecute traffickers. However, the source of the exploitation also lies in behaviours and processes that displace people. Resources and campaigns could be directed towards this source. Not all women migrants, even illegal ones, work in the sex trade. Sadly this is often the image of women and children that dominate anti-trafficking measures. We do not suggest that all trafficked women and children lack agency, or that they are silenced and voiceless. Indeed many speak for themselves when possible.

But what are the responsibilities of the State to these problems? We live in a world where laws govern and determine mobility for “citizens” and “permanent residents”. Other laws govern so-called “illegals” and “aliens” where discrimination can be rife. South Africa is also increasingly shown to be a destination for trafficked women and children.

Appropriate social responses in our opinion requires state support for the poor and marginalized, and legislation to offer protection. Our view is that anti-trafficking campaigns should not only be directed at controlling the migration of women and children but should criminalize those who move people clandestinely. Surely, trafficked women desire not to be labelled ‘illegal’, all that they wish for is to simply earn a living. Campaign work should also pay attention to ensure safe migration practices for women and children, including exit, transit and resettlement.

Florence’s story reminds us of the need to highlight the plight of often silenced and invisible groups. Let these 16 Days of Activism help intensify our collective struggle against human trafficking.
The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol) was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by UN General Assembly on 15 November 2000. This is the key international instrument that defines and criminalizes human trafficking, and obliges states that have ratified or acceded to it to pass domestic legislation criminalizing human trafficking. To date, 117 countries have signed the Protocol and 116 have ratified or acceded to it, including 11 from Southern Africa. This extract from the website of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) discusses some common features of the Palermo Protocol. For more information, visit the UNODC website: http://www.unodc.org

Part I - Purpose, scope and criminal sanctions (Articles 1-3)

Articles 1 and 2 set out the basic purpose and scope of the Protocol. Essentially, the Protocol is intended to “prevent and combat” trafficking in persons and facilitate international cooperation against such trafficking. It provides for criminal offences, control and cooperation measures against traffickers. It also provides some measures to protect and assist the victims. Some issues remain open with respect to the application of the Protocol to purely domestic activities (e.g. movement of victims within a country), which support international trafficking.

“Trafficking in persons” is intended to include a range of cases where human beings are exploited by organized crime groups, where there is an element of duress involved and a transnational aspect, such as the movement of people across borders or their exploitation within a country by a transnational organized crime group.

Trafficking is the “...recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons...” by improper means, such as force, abduction, fraud or coercion, for an improper purpose, like forced or coerced labour, servitude, slavery or sexual exploitation. Countries that ratify the Protocol are obliged to enact domestic laws making these activities criminal offences, if such laws are not already in place (Art.3).

This has been a difficult exercise in drafting and negotiation because of the wide variety of activities that many of the countries are seeking to control. Some states have taken the position that, since the major abuses of trafficking involve women and children who are most in need of protection, the Protocol should focus domestic efforts accordingly. Others felt that abuses against all “persons” should be included. As presently worded, the Protocol applies to all “persons”, but generally refers to “…persons, especially women and children...”

Finding language to capture a wide range of coercive means used by organized crime has also proven difficult. With the exception of children, who cannot consent, the intention is to distinguish between consensual acts or treatment and those in which abduction, force, fraud, deception or coercion are used or threatened. As with the Convention, the nature and degree of international and organized crime involvement required before the Protocol applies has also been the subject of extensive discussions. Generally, cases in which there is little or no international involvement can be dealt with by domestic officials without recourse to the Protocol or Convention. On the other hand, requiring too direct a link might make it impossible to use the Protocol provisions in cases where purely domestic offences were committed by foreign offenders or as part of a larger transnational organized crime scheme.

Part II - Protection of trafficked persons (Articles 4-6)

In addition to taking action against traffickers, the Protocol requires states that ratify it to take some steps to protect and assist trafficked persons. Trafficked persons would be entitled to confidentiality and have some protection against offenders, in general and when they provide evidence or assistance to law enforcement or appear as witnesses in prosecutions or similar proceedings. Some social benefits, such as housing, medical care and legal or other counselling are also provided for.

The legal status of trafficked persons and whether they would eventually be returned to their countries of origin has been the subject of extensive negotiations. Similar discussions have taken place with respect to the return of smuggled migrants in the Protocol dealing with them. Generally, developed countries to which persons are often trafficked have taken the position that there should not be a right to remain in their countries as this would provide an incentive both for trafficking and illegal migration. Countries whose nationals were more likely to be trafficked wanted as much protection and legal status for trafficked persons as possible. The negotiations are still ongoing, but the text presently requires states “to consider” laws which would allow trafficked persons to remain, temporarily or permanently, “in appropriate cases”.

(Art.5). States would also agree to accept and facilitate the repatriation of their own nationals (Art.6).

Part III - Prevention, cooperation and other measures (Articles 7-11)

Law enforcement agencies of countries that ratify the Protocol would be required to cooperate with such things as the identification of offenders and trafficked persons, sharing information about the methods of offenders and the training of investigators, enforcement and victim support personnel (Art.7). Countries would also be required to implement security and border controls to detect and prevent trafficking. These include strengthening their own border controls, imposing requirements on commercial carriers to check passports and visas (Art.8), setting standards for the technical quality of passports and other travel documents (Art.9) and cooperation in establishing the validity of their own documents when used abroad (Art.6, para (3)).

Cooperation between states who ratify is generally mandatory. Cooperation with states who are not parties to the Protocol is not required but is encouraged (Art.11).

Social methods of prevention, such as research, advertising and social or economic support are also provided for, both by governments and in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (Art.10).
UNESCO reviews human trafficking in Lesotho, South Africa

The UNESCO project against human trafficking in Africa has just published two additional policy papers on trafficking in Lesotho and South Africa. According to the reports, mainly women and children are victims of trafficking in both countries. Poverty, HIV, AIDS and a lack of proper education force many to set up survival strategies that can make them even more vulnerable, pushing them into the arms of traffickers. These circumstances coincide with a vast demand for domestic and sexual services or economic differentials that make even relatively poor neighboring cities, regions or countries seem a likely source of livelihood.

The report on Lesotho states that laws that are currently in place are inadequate. According to the report, it is also not helpful to enact laws without giving the law enforcement agents the capacity to implement them. The Child and Gender Protection Unit, which should play a key role in the fight against trafficking, is under-funded, under-staffed and lacks sufficiently trained personnel to deal with this specialised area of law enforcement. The report recommends that the silence surrounding the problem should be broken and it should be publicly acknowledged at the highest level of Government. It states that human trafficking is a heinous crime which ought to be rooted out by legislative enactments, prosecution of traffickers, and also by an adequate strategy to fight against poverty.

The South African report underscores a lack of effective legislative and policy frameworks as a key factor hindering the development of a comprehensive approach to diverse but related demands of prevention, protection and prosecution. The advent of proposed domestic legislation on human trafficking will make a significant change. Various campaigns against child trafficking have been launched since 1996. However, according to the report, many challenges remain. The AIDS epidemic, the persistence of harmful cultural practices, the growth of the reach of organized crime and the influence of organized crime and the persistent loss of women, children and men to sexual and forced labour exploitation require concerted and constant attention in the fight against human trafficking.

Both reports are available online.

Human Trafficking in South Africa: Root Causes and Recommendations:  
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001528/152823E.pdf

Human Trafficking in Lesotho: Root Causes and Recommendations: 
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001528/152824E.pdf
There are situations where you have to force girls by using rape, abuse or torture. When she begins to fear for her life, she stops resisting and starts working..."

This quote, from a human trafficker and brothel-owner, were the beginning words of Ms May-Elin Stener, Chargé d’Affaires of the Norwegian Embassy, when she reiterated the commitment of the Government of Norway to combat human trafficking in Southern Africa.

Examples of awareness-raising on billboards in Hillbrow, met with South African officials from National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and the police who are involved in the support of victims and prosecution of perpetrators behind the crime. I met without exception dedicated personnel with wish and ability to make a difference, and I have after the visits been even more convinced that the work SACTAP is doing have a significant impact.”

Mariam Khokar, Programme Manager for IOM’s Southern African Counter-Trafficking Assistance Programme (SACTAP), reported that hundreds of victims of cross-border trafficking have been assisted and rehabilitated in Southern Africa, especially in South Africa. These persons come from Thailand (115), Democratic Republic of Congo (35), India (12), China (11), South Africa (8), Zimbabwe (8), Mozambique (7), Nigeria (3), Angola (1), Bulgaria (1), Cameroon (1), Kenya (1), Philippines (1), Romania (1), Rwanda (1), Somalia (1) and Swaziland (1).

Ms. Stener added: “We are now pleased to announce that with our continued financial and strategic support, IOM will be able to put its expertise and considerable experience to the service of internally trafficked persons, not only in South Africa, but also in the entire region.”

SACTAP was commenced in 2004 initially to respond to the trafficking of women and children in Southern Africa for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Ms Stener notes that since the inception of SACTAP, a lot of progress has been made in raising public awareness, in useful research, and above all, in assisting victims of this heinous practice.

At least 1500 law enforcement officials across the region identify cases of human trafficking, to assist victims, and to lay charges against traffickers. IOM has established a toll-free hotline, and continues to run national and regional information campaigns against human trafficking.

“At the same time there are no easy solutions”, Ms Stener noted. “Because the reasons for human trafficking are so complex, the measures taken have to be numerous and wide-ranging. A profound prerequisite to stop human trafficking is that there is political will to give it priority.

That means to ratify the Palermo Protocol against human trafficking, put domestic legislation into force, ensure the capacity among the police and prosecution authority to detect and prosecute the persons behind the crimes and help the victims to get a new and better life.”

Between 2004-2008, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs will, through the Norwegian Embassy in Pretoria, donate 35 millions Norwegian kroner (6,6 million USD) to IOM’s fight against human trafficking in Southern Africa.

Norway will also support the efforts of other counter-trafficking stakeholders such as United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and NGOs such as the Southern Africa Network against Trafficking and Abuse of Children (SANTAC).

This comes as part of Norway’s ongoing 2006-2009 Plan of Action to combat human trafficking, illustrating the Government of Norway’s strong commitment to the global fight.

“Our goal is no less than a total eradication.” said Ms Stener. “We are especially anxious to protect children less than 18 years against all forms of abuse. Trafficking in children violates the inherent right of every child to grow up in a protective environment and the right to be free from all forms of violence.”

Speaking at the briefing, IOM’s Regional Representative for Southern Africa, Hans-Petter Boe noted the commitment of IOM to continue to combat human trafficking with the help of donors like the Government of Norway.

“We encourage the South African public to call IOM’s toll-free helpline to report suspected cases of human trafficking, or to seek help. Professional and specialised help is available to men, women and children who are trafficked within the borders of South Africa or across borders.”

IOM research indicates that trade in human beings for the purposes of sexual exploitation is flourishing in South Africa, with women being trafficked to South Africa from South East Asia, Eastern Europe, as well as other African countries like Mozambique and Malawi. South African men, women and children are being trafficked abroad to places like Macau and Ireland for sexual exploitation and forced labour. Another great concern is the trafficking of South African children within South African cities for forced labour and commercial sexual exploitation.

Chargé d’Affaires May-Elin Stener: "Our goal is no less than total eradication."
MOLDOVA Statistical Profile of Trafficking Victims Reveals New Trends

An increasing percentage of trafficking victims in Moldova being married women is thought to be linked to a corresponding rise in family members and friends becoming part of the trafficking process, according to IOM.

In an annual statistical profile of trafficked victims assisted by IOM in Moldova, partly used to reveal new trends, the Organization found that more victims were describing ‘recruiters’ for trafficking networks as people they were close to, including family members.

Married women with children in particular were falling prey to such ‘recruiters’. Although the number of newly registered cases of victims of trafficking has not significantly increased - up from 265 in 2005 to 295 in 2006 the percentage of married women with children has risen dramatically in recent years from 17 per cent in 2004 to 55 per cent in 2006.

“Traffic as it is: A Statistical Profile 2005-2006 Update”, funded by the Danish Foreign Ministry, also found that the high level of domestic violence in Moldova including rape and incest, was an important factor in trafficking levels. Independent surveys in Moldova have found that 40 per cent of women aged between 16-35 have suffered from domestic violence with rates being higher among groups particularly vulnerable to being trafficked.

Based on interviews carried out with trafficked victims assisted by IOM, the profile update also revealed more and more victims, including married women, are accepting high risk jobs such as a dancer, prostitute or hostess in order to escape abuse or poverty.

Although Turkey and Russia have now replaced the Balkans as the primary destinations for trafficked victims from Moldova, the overriding majority of victims are still trafficked for sexual exploitation (82 per cent). However, the number of cases of labour exploitation is gradually increasing, particularly in Turkey and Russia, to about 11 per cent.

The profiling has, nevertheless, revealed that in some aspects, human trafficking in Moldova has not changed. Poorly educated women from rural areas are still the most vulnerable to human trafficking.

“We know through our daily work with victims that almost all of them were victims of socio-economic misery and abuse before their trafficking ordeal. By adopting a more proactive prevention strategy aimed at high-risk groups, we feel we can tackle human trafficking in Moldova more effectively,” says IOM’s Chief of Mission in Moldova, Martin Wyss. “This means providing assistance such as counselling to those who might otherwise fall through the social net, vocational training and placement on other programmes that can help unemployed potential victims find a job or temporary shelter if they are escaping domestic violence.”

In 2006, as many as 512 people were offered preventive intervention assistance by IOM as opposed to 35 in 2005.


Religious leaders: Human trafficking is slavery

According to religious leaders from across the world, human traffickers have reincarnated slavery, only in a new form, 200 years after the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.

They joined voices to condemn human trafficking at the Global Interfaith Dialogue Forum, organised by the UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN-GIFT). The Forum was themed “What religious communities can do to combat human trafficking”, and it took place from 3-5 October at the Cape Town International Convention Centre in South Africa.

Speaking at the conference, Jeffrey Avina of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said traffickers are very organized, and continue to scout countries which have high numbers of vulnerable persons.

Anglican Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane said that two centuries after Britain outlawed the slave trade, it still continues to date, with 800 000 people being trafficked annually, 80 percent of them being women and children.

Thoko Majokweni of South Africa’s National Prosecution Authority (NPA) urged civic groups and religious communities to send out concerted messages that help is available for people who are being trafficked. Quoting the example of South Africa, Majokweni conceded that no one has yet been prosecuted for human trafficking as no legislation exists. However, she said some provisions of the Children’s Act and the Sexual Offences Act are being invoked to prosecute traffickers.

"VERBATIM The fact that there are forms of slavery in our world today should fill us all with shame. As an African woman, I would add that it also fills me with rage."

Asha-Rose Migiro, United Nations Deputy Secretary General, addressing the International Conference on Trafficking in Women and Girls, New York, March 2007.