

Conference statement

We represent different women's groups from 19 countries, across 6 continents. We have gathered in South Africa for an international conference that aims to strengthen the coordination and cooperation between organizations, in addressing the issue of trafficking of women and children and prostitution. The group is working to eliminate the demand for women and children for purposes of sexual exploitation.

Recognising the Palermo Protocol of December 2000, that calls for the prevention of trafficking in persons, with particular emphasis on women and children, protection and assistance of victims-survivors of such trafficking with full respect of their human rights, and promotion of cooperation among State parties in order to meet those objectives,

Affirming the efforts of the UN in promoting and protecting the rights of women through enactment of CEDAW¹ and UN R1325², we still recognise massive sexual violations against women and girls.

Recall to all state parties and affirm that the adoption and ratification of these declarations, conventions and resolutions are very necessary measures in addressing the issue of violations of women's human rights. It is very essential that these documents be implemented with both strong political will and resources, and not merely ratified.

Women, girls and children in particular, are being trafficked every day bringing them into conditions in which their basic human rights are violated. We know that traffickers primarily target women and children because of the demand factors that take advantage of the vulnerability of women and children, and because they are disproportionately affected by poverty and discrimination - factors that impede their access to employment, educational opportunities and other resources.

Trafficking for sexual exploitation is a global problem. It happens within regions, across and within national borders, from south to north, north to south and south to south. Therefore it requires a collective action. We need to work across borders, in joint actions if we want to succeed. We know that this is happening and know that it is a serious problem for the individual, but also for the society as a whole. It is important to monitor experiences and carry out research in order to understand which measures function to prevent trafficking, and the lack of data needs to be addressed.

Trafficking in persons encompass a number of illegal actions, including transnational crime for labour servitude and trafficking in organs. Very often, anti-trafficking initiatives address a single aspect of the problem and thus approach trafficking either as a criminal problem, or an immigration or labour problem. As long as trafficking and prostitution exist and are accepted, gender equality will never be achieved.

Therefore we demand:

- that the root causes of prostitution and trafficking must be addressed to achieve gender equality and sustainable democratic societies.
- a radical transformation of the patriarchal, political and social structures of power to achieve gender equality, women's human rights and justice using education, collective organization, legislative change, social development, social movements and women's organizations as means.

We are establishing collaborative networks and developing joint initiatives to eliminate the demand, especially in relation to the next Fifa Soccer World Cup which will be held in South Africa during 2010.

¹ Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

² Resolution 1325 on women, war and security calls for the participation of women and promotion of women's human rights

Other big sports arrangements have shown a visible increase of trafficking and prostitution. Prostitution is not a sport.

Participating women's organisations are deeply concerned about proposals to legalize the prostitution industry in South Africa and other countries, and the effects that such a response is likely to have on women and children as well as society at large. This approach infringes the human rights of women, impairing their dignity and integrity, and is contrary to the spirit of the South African Constitution and other pieces of legislation.

We will continue to build strong women's organizations and movements and strengthen our networks to fight against all forms of violence and discrimination against women through mass education, organization, empowerment, national, regional and international mobilization, as well as media campaigns.

Women's organisations represented at the international conference on trafficking and prostitution provide direct services to hundreds of thousands of women across the world.

Our actions will always ensure that women's voices are heard. We will continue to exert pressure and challenge governments, international institutions and multilateral organisations to promote and protect women's rights.

Participating organisations:

South Africa

Masimanyane Women's Support Centre

Gender Links

Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention (ADAPT)

POWA – People Opposing Women Abuse

Curriculum Development Project Trust (Art and Culture) (CDP)

Kenya

Gender and Development Centre (GADECE)

Moldova

Child Rights Information Center (CRIC)

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

Soroptimist International, Club of Chisinau, Moldova

Tanzania

KIWAKKUKI Kikundi cha Wanawake Kilimanjaro Kupambana na UKIMWI(Women Against AIDS in Kilimanjaro)

Kilimanjaro Women Information Exchange and Consultancy Organization (KWIECO)

Uganda

Isis- WICCE

Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA)

Companion of Works Association COWA

International and regional network organisations

Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CATW)

CATW – Asia Pacific

CATW – Latin America

CATW - Europe

International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT)

IAWRT- India and Nepal Chapter

IAWRT – African chapter

The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women (IAC)

Norway

Forum for women and Development – FOKUS

Legal Counselling for Women – JURK

Norwegian Nurses' Association (NNA)

Norwegian Women and Family Association

ROSA

Soroptimist International, Union of Norway

The Norwegian Council for Africa, Women's Committee

The International Association of Women in Radio and Television IAWRT, Norwegian Chapter

The Secretariat of the Shelter Movement

The Women's Front