



General Assembly Third Committee Topic Background Guide  
***Topic 3: Trafficking in Women and Children<sup>1</sup>***

October 7, 2012

Human trafficking is “the recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of coercion, abduction, deception or abuse of power or of vulnerability, for the purpose of exploitation,” including “sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery and slavery-like practices.”<sup>2</sup> Human trafficking is a major avenue of international criminal activity and an area of increasing international concern.

People are trafficked in different ways. Some are kidnapped and forced into work or prostitution. Others are sold by their parents to individuals who force them to work or sell them to others. Still others sell their labor or bodies to traffickers. Regardless, the result is some kind of enslavement. For example, people may be smuggled into a foreign country and forced to repay their passage through sexual exploitation, forced labor, military service, or organ removal. Or they may be imprisoned in a home or business in their own country, unable to escape.

The exact extent of human trafficking is unknown. Most government statistics simply reveal the number of trafficking cases addressed by the criminal justice system.<sup>3</sup> To overcome this problem, international organizations such as the UN International Labor Organization (ILO), have devised statistical models that project from known cases to arrive at estimates of all trafficking activities.

According to the ILO, between 2002 and 2011, 20.9 million people (about 2 million people per year), were “victims of forced labour globally, trapped in jobs into which they were coerced or deceived and which they [could not] leave.” Of these, 74 percent were adults, and 26 percent were children. More females than males were trafficked: 11.4 million (55 percent) of the victims from 2002-2011 were women and girls, while 9.5 million (45 percent) were men and boys.<sup>4</sup>

Most people who were trafficked were coerced to work, either by private businesses (68 percent) or by governments (10 percent). The remainder (22 percent or 4.5 million people from 2002-2011) were sexually exploited. The average victim of human trafficking was exploited for 18 months.<sup>5</sup>

Most (98 percent) of the people who are trafficked for sexual exploitation are women and girls. Men and boys are generally trafficked for labor. Individuals who are exploited for sex are generally (74 percent of the time) trafficked across international borders, while those who are forced into labor are usually exploited in their home country. Overall, from 2002-2011, about 6 million people (600,000-800,000 per year) were trafficked across

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<sup>1</sup> This background guide was written by Karen Ruth Adams, MMUN faculty advisor, and Kim Davis, 2008 ECOSOC rapporteur. Copyright 2012 by Karen Ruth Adams.

<sup>2</sup> International Labor Organization (ILO), “ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labour: Results and Methodology,” June 2012, p. 20, [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_182004.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_182004.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Kristiina Kangaspunta, “Mapping the Inhuman Trade: Preliminary findings of the human trafficking Database,” *Forum on Crime and Society* (2003), p. 3, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/meetings/consult/CM-Dec03-CRPI.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> For the ILO, forced labor and human trafficking are synonymous. ILO, “ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labour,” pp. 13, 19-20.

<sup>5</sup> ILO, “ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labour,” pp. 14, 17.

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international borders.<sup>6</sup> This is ten times more than the 80,000 Africans who were transported to the Americas each year at the peak of the slave trade.<sup>7</sup>

Every region is affected by human trafficking. According to the ILO, between 2002 and 2011,

The Asia-Pacific region account[ed] for by far the highest absolute number of forced labourers – 11.7 million or 56% of the global total. The second highest number [wa]s found in Africa at 3.7 million (18%), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean with 1.8 million victims (9%). The Developed Economies and European Union account[ed] for 1.5 million (7%) forced labourers, whilst countries of Central, Southeast and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and the Commonwealth of Independent States ha[d] 1.6 million (7%). There [we]re an estimated 600,000 (3%) victims in the Middle East.<sup>8</sup>

Countries affected by human trafficking fall into three categories: countries of origin, transit, and destination. In a 2004 report by UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, Kristiina Kangaspunta, 147 countries were mentioned at least once as a country of origin. Among these, the most often cited were the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Nigeria. The region mentioned most often as the origin was Asia, with the former Soviet bloc countries ranking second and Africa ranking third. Ninety-six transit countries were cited. Of those, Central and Eastern European countries were most often mentioned. Finally, 150 countries were mentioned as destinations, of which the most often cited were the United States, several European Union countries, and Japan. Developed countries were the most common destination. The Asian region was cited almost equally as a country of origin and destination (second to the industrialized world). Specifically, South East Asia was the most frequently noted area of both origin and transit and was just behind South West Asia as a destination.<sup>9</sup>

Trafficking for forced labor is more common in Asia, Africa and developing countries, whereas trafficking for sexual exploitation is more common in developed countries. But both types of trafficking occur in both developed and developing countries.<sup>10</sup> For example, of the 103 traffickers convicted in the US in 2007, the majority (83 percent) were engaged in sexual exploitation, and the rest (17 percent) were involved in labor exploitation.<sup>11</sup>

Human trafficking violates many of the basic human rights asserted by the General Assembly in its 1945 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), including “the right to life, liberty and security of person,” the right not to “be held in slavery or servitude,” and the right to be free from “cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.”<sup>12</sup> As the GA sub-committee charged with improving human rights, what could and should the GA-3 do to encourage UN member states to bring an end to human trafficking, both in general and among the most vulnerable populations, namely children (who are most likely to be kidnapped and sold) and women and girls (who are most likely to be sexually exploited)?

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<sup>6</sup> ILO, “ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labour,” pp. 14, 16. See also Alison Siskin and Liana Sun Wyler, “Trafficking in Persons: U.S. Policy and Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service, 23 December 2010, summary, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL34317.pdf>. The latter includes the most recent (2005) US government estimates of trafficking into the US (approximately 17,500 persons per year) and within the US (100,000 American children per year).

<sup>7</sup> Nicholas Kristof, “The Face of Modern Slavery,” *New York Times*, 16 November 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/17/opinion/kristof-the-face-of-modern-slavery.html>

<sup>8</sup> ILO, “ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labour,” p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in Kangaspunta, “Mapping the Inhuman Trade,” 8-12, 16-18.

<sup>10</sup> Kangaspunta, “Mapping the Inhuman Trade,” pp. 8-12, 16-18.

<sup>11</sup> UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons,” February 2009, p. 134, [http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Global\\_Report\\_on\\_TIP.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Global_Report_on_TIP.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> UN General Assembly, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” 1945, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

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## *History and Current Events*

To reduce or eliminate human trafficking, it is necessary to understand its causes, which include the economic forces of supply and demand for labor, as well as social, cultural, and political norms about women, children, poor people, and people from different ethnic and religious groups.

### Human Trafficking as an Economic Activity

The majority (78 percent) of people who are trafficked are forced to work. As a result, trafficking is, among other things, an economic activity, and can be understood, in part, in terms of the market forces of demand and supply.

On the demand side of the equation, it is necessary to consider who benefits from trafficking. The answer is: many people. Direct beneficiaries include individuals who enslave others as household servants,<sup>13</sup> businesses who obtain workers from “recruitment agencies” run by traffickers,<sup>14</sup> and governments that incarcerate people in labor camps.<sup>15</sup> Indirect beneficiaries include investors who own stock in businesses that profit from such activities, as well as consumers who purchase goods and services that are made by trafficked workers and are lower in price than they would be if the workers were paid at market rates for their skill and time.<sup>16</sup>

Whether traffickers are able to supply the demand for forced labor depends on economic conditions, especially whether the people they would like to “recruit” to sell their labor, kidnap other persons, or sell their children have better options. Thus poverty is a leading demand-side factor. The importance of poverty is evident in the fact that trafficking tends to increase in economic downturns. For example, in the wake of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, trafficking in Asia increased dramatically. In Laos,

An alarming number of children from rural areas are migrating to work in nightclubs, hotels and restaurants in Vientiane, the Lao capital, as well as other towns along the Mekong River dividing Laos from Thailand. ...Thousands of Lao youths illegally migrate to Thailand every year, with traffickers and their agents luring young boys and girls living in villages along the river across it with promises of high-paying jobs. ...The children are then forced to work without pay as factory workers, as servants in private homes, and as waitresses in restaurants and nightclubs in order to “repay their debts or fees.” ...Some children have to do hard labor without rest and are frequently beaten by their “owners.” In some cases, traffickers pay parents as much as two years in advance for the right to take their daughters to work in factories in Thailand. Some girls are then raped and “lured into prostitution.”<sup>17</sup>

The supply of victims is also increased by the displacement that accompanies natural disasters such as hurricanes and man-made catastrophes such as war. For example, after the 2008 hurricane in Myanmar, UNICEF’s chief child protection officer in Rangoon said that “a broker came to a shelter and tried to recruit children.”

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<sup>13</sup> Nisha Varia and Jo Becker, “World Report 2012: A Landmark Victory for Domestic Workers,” Human Rights Watch, 2012, <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/world-report-2012-landmark-victory-domestic-workers>

<sup>14</sup> John Morrison and Neill Wilkins, “Business must do more to protect the world's most vulnerable workers,” *Guardian* [UK], 5 October 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainable-business/business-protect-vulnerable-workers-human-rights?newsfeed=true>. See also Human Rights Watch, “Letter to Mr. Mike Duke, President of Walmart Stores Inc.,” 16 April 2012, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/04/16/letter-mr-mike-duke-president-walmart-stores-inc>

<sup>15</sup> Human Rights Watch, “North Korea: Economic System Built on Forced Labor: New Testimonies Say Even Children Must Work or Face Detention Camps,” 13 June 2012, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/06/13/north-korea-economic-system-built-forced-labor>

<sup>16</sup> “How do you contribute to modern day slavery of human trafficking?,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 9 September 2012, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-Issues/2012/0909/How-do-you-contribute-to-modern-day-slavery-of-human-trafficking>

<sup>17</sup> “Crisis-hit Laos wrestles with child-trafficking problem,” *Asian Political News*, 31 January 2000.

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According to Katy Barnett, a child protection adviser with Save the Children, “It’s something which agencies have been expecting. It’s an absolute standard thing in the fallout from an emergency like this. ...Traffickers can easily get hold of unaccompanied or separated children and tell them they’ll lead a better life or be safe.”<sup>18</sup>

Together, supply and demand have made human trafficking the third largest source of profits for organized crime (after trafficking in drugs and weapons),<sup>19</sup> generating as much as \$32 billion annually.<sup>20</sup> According to the UN,

Generally the flow of trafficking is from less developed countries to industrialized nations or towards neighbouring countries with marginally higher standards of living. Even using conservative estimates, the problem is enormous, with trafficked persons usually ending up in large cities, vacation and tourist areas, or near military bases, where the demand is highest.<sup>21</sup>

### The Social, Cultural, and Political Roots of Human Trafficking

Economic logic helps to explain why people are trafficked. But why are women and children disproportionately targeted? The answer lies, in part, in their economic vulnerability. Women and children are less likely than men to be educated, to be employed in stable jobs, and to own property.<sup>22</sup>

Women and children are also more likely to be seen as expendable, “throw-away” people<sup>23</sup> and as sexual objects who can be bought and sold by others. According to UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet,

This human rights violation is driven by the demand for sexual services and the profit they generate; the commodification of human beings as sexual objects, and the poverty, gender inequalities and subordinate position of women and girls that provide fertile ground for human trafficking.

We have all heard stories of parents selling their daughters. What we haven’t heard so much are the stories of illegal recruiters and traffickers that cash in on gender-based vulnerabilities. Studies from South Asia point to traffickers scouring villages looking for widowed, divorced women, women or girls who had been sexually abused or censured by communities who were seeking refuge from alienation and wanting economic security, or economically excluded women wanting to migrate for better work. “Fly now, pay later schemes”, were deployed, trapping women and girls in debt bondage from the outset.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> “Traffickers target child cyclone survivors,” News.com.au [Australian news site], 14 May 2008, <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,23695317-2,00.html>

<sup>19</sup> “UN Division for the Advancement of Women, “World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women and International Migration,” (New York: United Nations, 2004), p. 57, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/WorldSurvey2004-Women&Migration.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> UNODC, “Have a Heart: Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking,” <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/human-trafficking-fund.html>, accessed 6 October 2012.

<sup>21</sup> “UN Division for the Advancement of Women, “World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women and International Migration,” p. 57.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations. “Millennium Development Goals Report 2012,” pp. 10-11, 18-23, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202012.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Heather J. Clawson, et al., “Human Trafficking Into and Within the United States: A Review of the Literature,” *Study of HHS Programs Serving Human Trafficking Victims*, US Department of Health and Human Services, August 2009, <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/07/humantrafficking/litrev/>

<sup>24</sup> Michelle Bachelet, “Fighting Human Trafficking: Partnership and Innovation to End Violence against Women and Children,” UN Women, 3 April 2012, <http://www.unwomen.org/2012/04/remarks-of-michellebachelet-fighting-human-trafficking-partnership-and-innovation-to-end-violence-against-women/>

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Women and children also lack the physical strength and other resources to deter or resist assault, as well as political representation to obtain legal protections and justice when their rights have been violated.<sup>25</sup> Both developing and developed countries lack legal protections. Even when there are laws on the books, politicians and police forces often lack the will to enforce them.<sup>26</sup>

The social and political factors that make women and children especially vulnerable to trafficking are often compounded by cultural factors, such as ethnicity and religion.<sup>27</sup> In many countries, people from other parts of the world are seen as less than human and, therefore, as unworthy of rights. The legacy of forced labor can sour international relations for decades. More than 60 years later, forced prostitution of South Korean women by Japanese soldiers during World War II remains a major point of contention between the countries.<sup>28</sup>

### Methods for Reducing Human Trafficking

Given the number of factors that contribute to human trafficking, no single policy will eliminate it. Instead, it is necessary to address economic factors, such as the demand for cheap products and the supply of people who, due to their economic circumstances, can be lured and coerced into trafficking. In addition, it is necessary to address social and cultural factors such as sexism, ageism, and racism, which result in unequal economic opportunities and unequal treatment before the law.

According to many people, educating women and children is the key to eliminating human trafficking because it will provide them with confidence, awareness of their human rights, and the literacy and skills needed for more secure employment.<sup>29</sup> Education of consumers, investors, and businesses is also important.<sup>30</sup> But without attention to the economic and political factors that create poverty and make it possible for individuals, businesses, and governments to force people into prostitution and other forms of coerced labor, education alone will be insufficient.<sup>31</sup>

### *Previous Committee Work on Trafficking in Women and Children*

The International Agreement for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic, ratified by 12 nations in 1902, was the first international document on trafficking in women. Its aim was to protect “women of full age who have suffered abuse or compulsion, [and] ... women and girls under age, effective protection against the criminal traffic known as the ‘White Slave Traffic’... the procuring of women or girls for immoral purposes abroad.”<sup>32</sup> In 1949,

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<sup>25</sup> United Nations, “Millennium Development Goals Report 2012,” pp. 24-25. See also UN Women, “In Focus: Strengthening Women’s Access to Justice,” <http://www.unwomen.org/news-events/in-focus/strengthening-womens-access-to-justice/>.

<sup>26</sup> Nicholas Kristof, “In Obama’s Speech, Their Voices,” *New York Times*, 26 September 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/27/opinion/kristof-in-obamas-speech-their-voices.html>

<sup>27</sup> UN Division for the Advancement of Women, “World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women and International Migration,” pp. 56-61.

<sup>28</sup> Amnesty International, “Japan: Still no justice for the survivors of Japan’s military sexual slavery system,” 15 August 2012, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA22/014/2012/en>

<sup>29</sup> “Half the Sky: Education is the Ladder Out of Poverty for Women and Girls,” Independent Lens, PBS, <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/half-the-sky/education/>, accessed 6 October 2012.

<sup>30</sup> “Human Trafficking Awareness Day,” Not for Sale, 2009, <http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/news/2009/01/11/human-trafficking-awareness-day/>

<sup>31</sup> Bachelet, “Fighting Human Trafficking.”

<sup>32</sup> “International Agreement for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic,” 1904, [http://www.oas.org/juridico/MLA/en/traites/en\\_traites-inter-wst.pdf](http://www.oas.org/juridico/MLA/en/traites/en_traites-inter-wst.pdf).

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UN member states adopted the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. But neither of these documents defined human trafficking.<sup>33</sup>

The first international treaty to define human trafficking was the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which is a supplement to United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. According to the Protocol, human trafficking is “the action of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person for the purposes of exploitation.”<sup>34</sup>

As of October 2012, 124 states have ratified and become parties to the Protocol, which entered into force in December 2003.<sup>35</sup> States that have ratified the Protocol agree:

- (a) To prevent and combat trafficking in persons, paying particular attention to women and children;
- (b) To protect and assist the victims of such trafficking, with full respect for their human rights; and
- (c) To promote cooperation among States Parties in order to meet those objectives.<sup>36</sup>

One of the most important aspects of the Protocol is that state parties agree both to treat trafficking as a crime and to define the crime broadly to create a strong deterrent effect. Persons who consent to exploitation because they have been persuaded “by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits” are considered to have been trafficked, regardless of their consent. Moreover, children under the age of 18 are considered to have been trafficked regardless of the means of persuasion, as long as their “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt” is “for the purpose of exploitation.”<sup>37</sup>

In terms of protecting and assisting victims of trafficking, state parties to the Protocol agree to protect victims’ privacy; offer protection to victims who provide assistance to the police or courts; and consider humanitarian factors in considering whether to allow victims to remain in the destination country or be repatriated. Optional protections include social benefits, such as housing, medical care, and legal or other counseling. The preventive elements of the Protocol include agreements to “alleviate the factors that make persons, especially women and children, vulnerable to trafficking, such as poverty, underdevelopment and lack of equal opportunity,” as well as commitments to publicize the fact that trafficking is a human rights crime, improve border security, and cooperate with other countries to share information.<sup>38</sup>

After the Protocol came into effect, the UNODC began the Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings (GPAT) to help countries combat trafficking by improving their criminal justice systems. In March 2007, the UNODC launched the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN GIFT), which

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<sup>33</sup> Kangaspunta, “Mapping the Inhuman Trade,” p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children,” 2000, Article 3, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/protocoltraffic.htm>

<sup>35</sup> UNODC, “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children: Status as at 26/09/2008; Chapter XVII, Penal Matters,” 26 September 2008, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/countrylist-traffickingprotocol.html>

<sup>36</sup> “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children,” Article 2.

<sup>37</sup> “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons,” Articles 3 and 5.

<sup>38</sup> “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons,” Articles 6-10.

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focuses on preventing trafficking through information and international cooperation. The slogan of UN GIFT is that human trafficking is “a crime that shames us all.”<sup>39</sup>

The UN Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air also supplements the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The definition of “smuggling of migrants is the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.” It is important to note the difference between the definitions of smuggling of migrants and the trafficking of persons. The smuggling of migrants occurs when the relationship between the person being smuggled and the smuggler ends once they reach the country of destination. In trafficking, on the other hand, persons are delivered to organizations or individuals who have paid for their delivery and the trafficked person must, after the delivery, repay their debt to the organizer through prostitution or forced labor.<sup>40</sup>

The US is an example of a state that has implemented many of the measures called for in the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons. Since 2000, the US has passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, established the State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, and begun to publish the annual State Department Trafficking in Persons Report. This report lists countries according to their involvement in trafficking, with countries listed as “Tier 3” or “Tier 2 Watch List” likely to be sanctioned by the US government.<sup>41</sup>

The European Union and individual European states have also adopted policies to address human trafficking. The EU’s STOP Program and Aegis Program, for example, set common regional standards for apprehending and sanctioning traffickers. Although these efforts are important, they have been criticized as focusing too much on law enforcement and judicial cooperation, instead of also considering the needs and rights of victims, as well as strategies for prevention.<sup>42</sup> European states have been at the center of discussion about whether trafficking would be reduced by legalizing prostitution. Researchers have found that even where prostitution is legal, prostitution establishments do little to protect their workers. For example, in the Netherlands, where prostitution is legal, 60 percent of prostitutes suffer physical assault, 70 percent experience verbal threats, and 40 percent experience sexual violence. In Sweden, by contrast, prostitution “is officially acknowledged as a form of exploitation” and is prohibited. But in Sweden, only clients are punished (with up to four years of imprisonment); prostitutes are considered to be victims of violence. With these laws, the Swedish government has significantly reduced demand for prostitution and has made the Swedish sex market unattractive for international traffickers.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> UNODC United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN GIFT), “About UN.GIFT,” <http://www.ungift.org/ungift/en/about/index.html>

<sup>40</sup> “Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants By Land, Sea, and Air, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime,” 2000, <http://untreaty.un.org/English/notpubl/18-12-b.E.doc>,

<sup>41</sup> US Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, “Trafficking in Persons Report 2012,” <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/index.htm>

<sup>42</sup> Jo Goodey, “Sex Trafficking in Women from Central and East European Countries: Promoting a 'Victim-Centred' and 'Woman-Centred' Approach to Criminal Justice Intervention,” *Feminist Review* (2004), p. 26-45.

<sup>43</sup> Svitlana Batsyukova, “Prostitution and Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation,” *Gender Issues* (2007).

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### *Conclusion*

Despite recent international agreements, human trafficking continues to affect the lives and threaten the rights of millions of people, especially the world's most vulnerable people: women, children, and the poor. According to the UNODC, "The challenge for all countries, rich and poor, is to target the criminals who exploit desperate people and to protect and assist victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants, many of whom endure unimaginable hardships in their bid for a better life."<sup>44</sup>

What could and should the GA-3 do to address this problem? As you research your country's position on this issue, consider the following questions:

- What role does your country play in human trafficking? Is it a country of origin, transit, and/or destination? When trafficked people are found in your country, what countries are they from, and what kind of exploitation are they experiencing? What kinds of abuses, if any, has your country been criticized for, and how has it responded?
- What economic, social, cultural, and political factors contribute to trafficking in your country and region?
- What are the effects of human trafficking in your country and on relations between your country and others? Overall, does trafficking benefit or harm your country?
- Has your country ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children? Has it ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and/or the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women? Is it in compliance with these treaties? Why or why not?
- What laws and resources does your country have to combat trafficking and to protect and assist victims? To what extent are they enforced? What more could your country do, both domestically and internationally? How might it benefit from international cooperation?
- What could the GA-3 and UN agencies such as the ILO, UNODC, and UN Women do to reduce and eliminate human trafficking and restore the rights and lives of affected women and children? Which of the causes, locations, victims, and forms of trafficking should be prioritized?

### ***Recommended Reading***

"How do you contribute to modern day slavery of human trafficking?" *Christian Science Monitor*. 9 September 2012. Available at <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-Issues/2012/0909/How-do-you-contribute-to-modern-day-slavery-of-human-trafficking>

This site explains how consumers benefit from forced labor.

Human Rights Watch. "Trafficking of Women and Girls." Available at <http://www.hrw.org/topic/womens-rights/trafficking-women-and-girls>

The website of this non-governmental organization provides detailed reports on trafficking in women and girls. See also the topic pages on child labor and forced labor. Use the search function to find HRW articles on trafficking in, from, and to your country.

Kristof, Nicholas D. and Sheryl WuDunn. *Half the Sky*. New York: Random House, 2010. Excerpt available at <http://www.randomhouse.com/book/95840/half-the-sky-by-nicholas-d-kristof-and-sheryl-wudunn#excerpt>

This book discusses a range of issues related to the rights of women and girls, including prostitution and forced labor. It offers vivid case studies of the challenges and accomplishments of women, girls, and their advocates worldwide. For video clips from a recent PBS documentary related to the book, go to <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/half-the-sky/>. For one of Kristof's *New York Times* columns on human trafficking and links to his blog, see <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/17/opinion/kristof-the-face->

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<sup>44</sup> UNODC, "UNODC on human trafficking and migrant smuggling," <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/index.html>, accessed 6 October 2012.



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[of-modern-slavery.html](#). For WuDunn's 2010 TED speech on "Our Century's Greatest Injustice," go to [http://www.ted.com/talks/sheryl\\_wudunn\\_our\\_century\\_s\\_greatest\\_injustice.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/sheryl_wudunn_our_century_s_greatest_injustice.html)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. "International Law: The Core International Human Rights Instruments and their Monitoring Bodies." Available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/index.htm#core>

The OHCHR website provides access to all of the major human rights treaties, including those related to women and children. It also lists states that have ratified the treaties.

"Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children." 2000. Available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/protocoltraffic.htm>. List of signatories available at <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/countrylist-traffickingprotocol.html>

These sites provide access to the text of the Protocol, as well as a list of the states that have signed and/or ratified it. For the text and signatories of a related treaty, see the source in footnote 40.

UNICEF. "Child protection from violence, exploitation, and abuse: Child trafficking." Available at [http://www.unicef.org/protection/index\\_exploitation.html](http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_exploitation.html)

This website from the UN agency that focuses on child welfare explains some of the reasons children are trafficked, including for adoption and sexual exploitation.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). "UNODC on human trafficking and migrant smuggling" and "Legislative Guides for the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol Thereto." Available at <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/index.html> and <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/legislative-guide.html>.

The UNODC site is helpful for understanding the problem of human trafficking. It provides detailed examples of measures states can take to prevent trafficking and protect its victims. See also the report in footnote 11, which discusses and makes recommendations about the trafficking situation in each country. Open the report as a pdf file and search for your country's name.

UN Women. Available at <http://www.unwomen.org/>

This recently-created UN organization is dedicated to improving the lives and opportunities of women and girls. The site provides an overview of the situation in most countries, as well as policy advice. The speech cited in footnote 24 is especially helpful. See also the sections of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) report cited in footnotes 22 and 25.

United States Department of State. Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. "Trafficking in Persons Report 2012." Available at <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/index.htm>

This document discusses and makes recommendations about the problems with human trafficking in each country of the world. Countries in Tier 3 are subject to US economic sanctions. See also the fact sheets at <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/fs/2012/index.htm>, which include personal case stories and discussion of the psychological and other effects of trafficking.