

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

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Statement of the Delegation of Armenia

As delivered by

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Madam Moderator,

First I would like to thank our three distinguished panelists who shaped not only our today discussions but entire discourse on combating human trafficking in the OSCE region for a decade.

With other participating states we are pleased to sum up a decade of efforts to eradicate this new phenomenon through systematic work entailing participation of wide range stakeholders.

Approximately in one decade Armenia created anti-trafficking legislation, capacities and action plans. This was rather incremental process which took into account shaping realities and feedback from all including our international partners. As a result today we know what, how and whom we are fighting with.

We also know very well the potential of international cooperation in addressing such a global scourge as trafficking. It is through international cooperation that we brought our legislation into line with international standards, we created effective capacities and elaborated national action plans based on the best international and regional practices.

The victim centered approach was firmly imbedded in subsequent national plans, and the National Referral Mechanism provides necessary framework to this end. This mechanism regulates the primary, intermediate and final identification of the victims, provides an effective way to refer victims of trafficking to state and non-governmental organizations, establishes a framework through which state actors fulfill their obligations to protect and promote the human rights of trafficked persons, as well as provides them with appropriate social and legal assistance and support. It ensures the targeted assistance to the victims of trafficking.

All identified victims of trafficking, regardless of whether they are citizens of Armenia or not, by their voluntary consent, are provided with all possible assistance, including legal advice and legal protection, document recovery, free medical care, vocational guidance and training activities, with possible employment, humanitarian aid, etc.

Confidential safe housing in shelters operated by NGOs is provided to all the victims of trafficking. Since 2010, maintenance costs of such shelters are partly financed from the state budget within the framework of program on social and psychological rehabilitation of the victims of trafficking.

Further efforts will be directed towards improving the protection of victims of trafficking in Armenia. In particular, it implies:

- Modification of the National Referral Mechanism for victims of trafficking aimed at improving their access to adequate assistance;
- Creation of compensation systems available to all victims of trafficking;
- Improvement of witness protection.

To achieve these objectives we will continue to rely on the cooperation with the OSCE executive structures particularly the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings as well as OSCE participating states with some of which we managed to create excellent interaction.

In our view, further efforts can be made to forge cooperation with the OSCE participating states particularly at the level of the law enforcement agencies. Given the global phenomenon of the problem, the anti-trafficking cooperation cannot be taken hostage of political problems and lack of consular representation should be overcome via international partnerships and the OSCE can have its own unique place here.

Thank you.