



**UN Global Plan of Action against
Trafficking in Persons**

2021 Appraisal



*Presidency
of Hope*

76th session of the
UN General Assembly

**HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY ON THE APPRAISAL OF THE UNITED
NATIONS**

Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons

22–23 November 2021



#endhumantrafficking



76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High-Level Meeting Of The General Assembly On The Appraisal Of The United Nations Global Plan Of Action To Combat Trafficking in Persons

22-23 November 2021

Concept Note and Programme

Background

In accordance with General Assembly resolution [74/176](#) of 18 December 2019, "Improving the Coordination of Efforts against Trafficking in Persons" and resolution [75/283](#) of 7 June 2021, "Modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons", a high-level meeting of the General Assembly will be convened on 22-23 November 2021 to appraise progress achieved in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (resolution [64/293](#)).

This appraisal occurs on a quadrennial basis, and provides the opportunity to acknowledge achievements, and reflect on existing gaps and challenges, both in implementation and scope, and consequently on the way forward in the fight against trafficking in persons.

Format

The two-day high-level meeting will consist of an opening plenary meeting, followed by plenary meetings, two interactive panel discussions, and a closing plenary meeting. The political declaration on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons will be adopted at the opening plenary.

Each of the two panels will be chaired by a representative of a Member State at the invitation of the President of the General Assembly. For each panel, the chair of the panel will provide an opening statement, followed by a presentation from each of the panellists. The floor will then be opened for an interactive discussion with interventions and questions limited to 2 minutes each for individual delegations and 3 minutes for regional group statements.





In order to promote interactive and substantive discussions, participation in each panel discussion will include Member States, observers, representatives of United Nations entities, and representatives of international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, the private sector and the media, time permitting.

Monday, 22 November 2021

General Assembly Hall

10.00 – 11.00 **Opening Plenary Meeting**

H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid, *President of the General Assembly*

H.E. Mr. António Guterres, *Secretary-General of the United Nations*

Ms. Ghada Waly, *Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)*

Ms. Siobhán Mullally, *Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children*

Eminent Person

Civil Society Representative

Adoption of the Political Declaration

11.00 – 13.00 **Plenary Meeting**

Statements by Member States and observers of the General Assembly

15:00 – 16:30 **Panel Discussion 1**

The Global Plan of Action and enduring trafficking issues and gaps including, inter alia, the trafficking of women and children, particularly girls, for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Structure of the Panel: The chair will give an opening statement and introduce the panellists; followed by a presentation by each panellist; the floor will then be opened for interventions; delegations can request the floor by pressing the microphone button on their desk; interventions will be limited to 2 minutes for individual delegations and 3 minutes for regional group statements and the panellists will then be given the floor to respond to comments or questions posed, both time permitting.



Guiding Questions (Please see annex for background on panel 1).

The following questions are intended to inform the discussions during Interactive Panel Discussion 1. Chairs, panellists and participants may wish to address particular questions during their interventions.

1. How can we enhance our response to the enduring socio-economic and structural issues that contribute to the vulnerability of individuals, globally, to specific risks of trafficking?
2. Taking into account the gender dimensions that place women and girls at significantly higher risk of trafficking in persons, in particular for sexual exploitation, how can we reduce demand and address the root causes of sexual exploitation to eradicate trafficking in women and girls in the long term? How can we incorporate a human rights-based approach in addressing this issue?
3. How can we better address the continued challenge of impunity for trafficking in persons? What measures can we take to close continued deficiencies in the investigation and prosecution of offenders? How can cooperation across jurisdictions be enhanced and better, related practices be replicated?
4. How can we ensure that the principle of non-punishment of victims of trafficking for acts they have been compelled to commit is given effect, and otherwise ensure a rights-based, child and gender-sensitive approach in protecting victims of trafficking?
5. Which measures of protection and assistance for trafficking victims can be further developed so that comprehensive, immediate but also long-term support is granted to survivors to help trauma recovery and rehabilitation?
6. How can we address the specific vulnerability of children to trafficking in persons? What preventative measures can be taken to provide greater protection for those most vulnerable?
7. What promising practices and lessons learnt can be identified, at national, regional and international level, or through the development of multi-lateral partnerships, in the promotion and implementation of comprehensive responses to prevent trafficking? How can these best practices be replicated?





16.30 – 18.00 **Panel Discussion 2**

The Global Plan of Action and emerging issues, such as trafficking in persons in the context of COVID-19, and the misuse of information and communications technologies to facilitate trafficking, including trafficking of children for the purpose of sexual exploitation on the Internet.

Structure of the Panel: The chair will give an opening statement and introduce panellists; followed by a presentation by each panellist; the floor will then be opened for interventions; delegations can request the floor by pressing the microphone button on their desk; interventions will be limited to 2 minutes for individual delegations and 3 minutes for regional group statements and the panellists will then be given the floor to respond to comments or questions posed, both time permitting.

Guiding Questions (Please see annex for background on panel 2)

The following questions are intended to inform the discussions during Interactive Panel Discussion 2. Chairs, panellists and participants may wish to address particular questions during their interventions.

1. What practices and lessons can be identified amongst the responses to COVID-19 that have considered those most vulnerable to, and affected by, exploitation? How might we take measures to mitigate the effect of the pandemic on trafficking in persons and prepare for a more inclusive crisis response in the future, including better engaging civil society, victims and survivors?
2. How can we specifically address the heightened impact and risk of trafficking faced by refugees and migrants, as a result of future health crises?
3. How can we enhance our ability to specifically address the greater risk of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation faced by children as a result of the misuse of technology? What are the continued gaps in regulation, resources and capabilities that need to be addressed?



4. How can we provide a stronger national, regional and international response (including international and cross-border co-operation) to the misuse of information and communications technology in facilitating trafficking in persons? How can we identify and protect victims of trafficking who have been exploited through the use of such technologies? How can we increase partnerships with the private sector in that regard, including technology companies and financial institutions?

5. What are the challenges to investigations and prosecution of those engaging in trafficking in persons through the misuse of information and communications technology? How can we enhance the capacity of law enforcement and criminal justice systems to identify, investigate and prosecute such cases? How can we ensure that the use of new technologies by law enforcement officials is in full compliance with human rights, and in particular the right to privacy?

6. What measures utilizing technology-based solutions might be helpful to address the global scope trafficking? What are the current challenges to the wider use of such solutions, including potential privacy concerns, and how might we address them?

Tuesday, 23 November 2021

General Assembly Hall

10.00 – 13.00 **Plenary Meetings**

and
15.00 – 17.30 *Statements by Member States and observers of the General Assembly*

17.30 – 18:00 **Closing Plenary Meeting**

- *Summaries by the Chairs of the two Panel Discussions*
- *Final remarks by the President of the General Assembly*





Background Paper: Interactive Panel Discussion 1

"The Global Plan of Action and enduring trafficking issues and gaps including, inter alia, the trafficking of women and children, particularly girls, for the purpose of sexual exploitation."

Background

In the nearly two decades since the adoption of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol), there has been significant progress made towards recognizing the crime of trafficking in persons and understanding the complexities behind the nature and scope of the challenge in addressing it, and implementing the international framework. The Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons represented a key step in progressing co-ordinated global co-operation to addressing trafficking in persons. However, despite this progress and substantial effort to monitor, evaluate and enhance responses to have a greater impact on the crime, specific forms and characteristics of trafficking endure, with related gaps persisting in counter-trafficking responses.

The root causes of trafficking in persons endure. Vulnerability remains a core factor enabling human trafficking. Traffickers may target victims who are marginalized, in economic need or in other difficult circumstances, such as undocumented migrants or those in desperate need of income. Research continues to show that the inter-section of economic need and structural disadvantages such as those faced by migrant workers, women and children, heighten vulnerability to trafficking, as members of disadvantaged groups are often faced with a reduced range of opportunities and may be more likely to be subjected to exploitative practices.

Trafficking of women and children, particularly girls, for the purpose of sexual exploitation persists as a significant concern. Unequal social and economic structures, norms and practices perpetuate gender inequality and make women and girls disproportionately vulnerable to trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. According to the latest United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Global Report on Trafficking in Persons (Global Report, January 2021), for every ten victims detected globally, about five were adult women and two were girls. Sexual exploitation remains the most commonly detected form of trafficking – overall, more than 50 per cent of detected victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation.





Trafficking of children also continues to be an enduring issue. According to the Global Report, about one third of the overall detected victims of trafficking in persons were children. Child trafficking disproportionately affects low-income countries, where it is predominantly linked to child labour, whereas in higher income countries, children are trafficked mainly for sexual exploitation, forced criminality or begging.

Unfortunately, impunity still largely prevails. Available data demonstrates that prosecution and conviction rates globally remain to be overall low, turning trafficking in persons in to a low risk and highly profitable crime.

Ultimately, while considerable progress has been made to tackle trafficking in persons since the Global Plan of Action has been adopted, enduring issues continue to challenge the efficiency of our current global response, and further continued and concerted attention through this third appraisal.



Background Paper: Interactive Panel Discussion 2

"The Global Plan of Action and emerging issues, such as trafficking in persons in the context of COVID-19, and the misuse of information and communication technologies to facilitate trafficking, including trafficking of children for the purpose of sexual exploitation on the Internet."

Background

The crime of trafficking in persons has continued to evolve significantly as traffickers adapt to emerging patterns, including the global expansion in the use of technology, and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The international response, including through the Global Plan of Action, must meet the emerging challenges in the changing landscape of responding to trafficking in persons.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the exacerbated risks of trafficking faced by those most vulnerable. People who have been disproportionately impacted by the disruption to economic activities, reduced livelihood opportunities and social networks, along with restrictions on mobility, have been made more vulnerable due to economic need and isolation. Refugees and migrants have faced a greater risk.

The decreased visibility of victims during the pandemic has made crime detection and investigations more challenging, and frontline service providers have been impeded in their ability to prevent trafficking and protect victims. Repatriation of victims who had been trafficked across borders has also been hampered.

In turn, trafficking victims also represent a highly vulnerable group in times of such crises. They have been at heightened risk of exposure to COVID-19 as victims in exploitative conditions have faced challenges in remaining protected through social distancing or lacked access to personal protective equipment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the considerable challenges presented by the increasing misuse of information and communications technologies to facilitate trafficking. The internet offers a platform for traffickers to recruit as well as exploit victims, with greater speed and cost-effectiveness.





Social media, for example, is often used by traffickers to identify, groom and recruit victims, including children, while online platforms allow traffickers to widely advertise services provided by victims.

Research has shown that the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified these challenges. The UNODC Paper on “The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on trafficking in persons and responses to the challenges” (July 2021) reported that, during the pandemic, recruitment of victims has moved online and the sexual exploitation of adults and children is increasingly being carried out in private homes, facilitated by technology such as live-streaming. Furthermore, reports have shown that the risk of trafficking faced by children during the pandemic has also been heightened due to school closures and increased time spent online.

Additionally, technology has enabled perpetrators to act with anonymity, operating internationally across jurisdictions and evading detection with greater ease. Perpetrators are communicating through encrypted applications or using the Dark Web, and the emergence of cryptocurrencies has allowed perpetrators to move criminal proceeds anonymously.

These changes demand an adaptive response to ensure appropriate regulation, resources and capabilities are in place.

Ultimately, emerging issues are complicating the fight against trafficking, and require regular review and a coordinated, comprehensive global response that continues to reflect on, and tackle, the crime from different angles.