

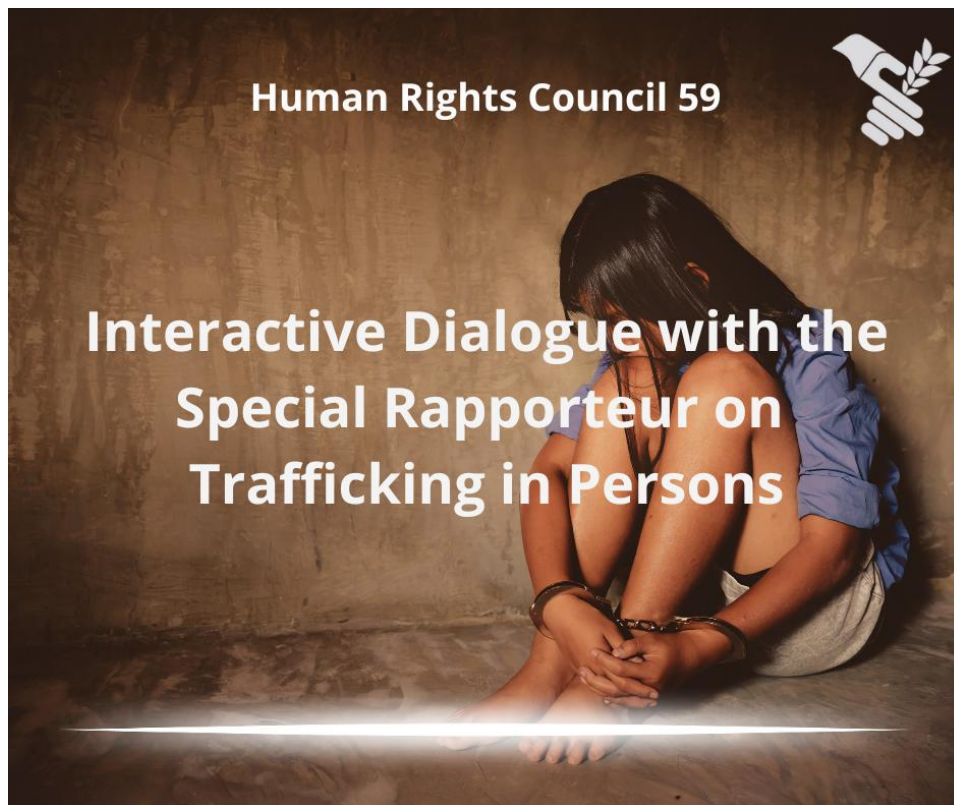


GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children

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PRESENTATION OF THE THEMATIC REPORT

Ms. Siobhán MULLALLY, Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children

The SR introduces her new thematic report titled '**Migrant domestic workers and trafficking in persons: prevention, rights protection and access to justice.**' Trafficking in persons in the domestic work sector remains prevalent, particularly affecting women. Despite deeply gendered and racialized assumptions about the nature of domestic work as not work, and a lack of political will to take effective action to ensure the application and enforcement of labour laws, contribute to impunity, creating a protection gap within which **rights violations persist and access to justice is denied**. Historical legacies of slavery and the slave trade, the intersections of gender, race and ethnicity, continue to shape the working conditions of domestic workers and the resulting risks of trafficking in persons.



The SR has received and continues to receive numerous concerns in relation to migrant domestic workers and allegations of trafficking in persons. Their cases all share common features. The **victims are primarily women from disadvantaged communities** and are offered promising jobs by unscrupulous recruiters in their countries of origin or residence. They are offered visas, flights and monthly salaries. Upon arrival, the conditions of employment differ significantly from those outlined in the labour contracts offered to the women, and at their employers' households they are subjected to physical violence and labour abuses. Often the women are unable to leave and terminate their contracts as they may be subject to penalties for breach of contract or punished and penalised for absconding. Some, many indeed, are also subjected to sexual harassment and sexual violence, including rape by their employers and members of their employers' families.

The specific nature of domestic work and weak regulatory responses by states produces **structural vulnerability to exploitation**. Isolation and dependence on employers foster a breeding ground for all kinds of exploitation. Such risks and vulnerabilities are increased for migrant domestic workers who are non-documented or in an irregular situation and who fear being at risk of deportation if they contact state authorities to seek assistance and protection. **Tied visa regimes** can also contribute to increased risks of trafficking, but despite persistent credible evidence of the impact of such restrictions, states continue to operate tied visas and sponsorship schemes, both *de jure* and *de facto*.

The **lack of access to safe, regular migration** contributes to high risks of trafficking, creating and producing vulnerabilities to exploitation. It is essential to ensure that labour migration pathways are rights-based and regular and effectively implemented. As of May 2024, among 82 countries that completed a migration governance indicators assessment, only 23% had a migration strategy addressing the different needs of migrant women. The adoption of **bilateral labour migration agreements** can strengthen and protect workers' rights when these are grounded in international human rights and labour law and are accompanied by sufficient resources to effectively monitor recruitment processes and ensure accountability when human rights and labour standards are abused.

Against a background of **reliance on migrant worker remittances** in many countries, there is a lack of political will to highlight patterns of exploitation in countries of destination. The SR urges all governments to revise their bilateral agreements to ensure that they are gender responsive and non-discriminatory and that they protect the human rights of migrant workers effectively. Discrimination, gender inequality and gendered stereotypes contribute to failures to identify victims of trafficking or to provide assistance. **Labour inspections** can play a critical role in preventing trafficking and in identifying victims, but the role of labour inspectors is undermined by the exclusion of domestic work from their competences and functions in many countries. States must ensure that labour inspectors have the authority to conduct proactive, independent and regular inspections of private recruitment agencies and private households.

Women **victims of trafficking returning home** also face the risks of stigmatisation, discrimination and poverty and are at risk of being trafficked again, especially when left without assistance upon return and without long-term inclusion measures. **Legal assistance** and information including on compensation are often not available or difficult to access in practise. The **absence of state compensation funds** and limited international cooperation leaves many



victims of trafficking without remedies. Victims and survivors of human trafficking must never be criminalised, but must be supported through child-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches, recognising the non-punishment principle.

There is an urgent need to implement and strengthen **gender-sensitive and trauma-informed investigations**, as well as international cooperation to ensure accountability for trafficking in persons in the context of migration and domestic work, including where trafficking occurs through the **use of AI and digital technologies**. Cooperation with migrant domestic workers associations and trade unions and an enabling environment for civil society is key to ensuring prompt identification of victims and provision of early, unconditional assistance. Migrant domestic workers must have access to decent work and safe, regular migration pathways.

In closing, the SR urges states that have not done so to **ratify and implement** the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and 2011 ILO Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189).

PRESENTATION OF COUNTRY VISIT REPORTS

The SR presents the report on her visit to **Guinea-Bissau** carried out in November 2024, the SR is grateful to the government for the excellent cooperation shown to her mandate before, during and after the visit. The SR commends the cooperative approach of all authorities and the willingness to engage in an open and constructive dialogue.

The SR is concerned at the **prevalence of child trafficking** and the lack of effective investigations and accountability for this serious crime and serious human rights violation. The limited capacity of state institutions, law enforcement and lack of independence of the judiciary, corruption in the administration of justice, combined with weak child protection systems and extreme poverty, contribute to particularly high risks facing children. The SR urges Guinea-Bissau to implement gender-responsive child rights and trauma-informed criminal justice procedures to strengthen access to justice, particularly in rural areas, ensuring the rights, safety and dignity of victims and effective measures to combat impunity for child trafficking, including by religious leaders.

The SR further notes a **limited capacity for the protection of workers' rights** and the high concentration of workers in the informal sector increases risks of trafficking for forced labour, particularly in high-risk sectors such as domestic work, agriculture, fisheries and mining. **Normalisation of exploitative practises** in affected sectors also hampers identification of trafficking victims and intersects with discrimination based on gender, migration status and socio-economic status.

The continuing political instability hinders the strengthening of institutions and the administration of justice. Serious concerns in relation to **corruption in law enforcement and in the judiciary** and lack of independence of the judiciary must be addressed. Comprehensive assistance and protection measures for victims must be implemented in cooperation with civil society.

Turning to the report on her visit to **Liberia** conducted in December 2024, the SR thanks the government for their excellent cooperation and for facilitating the visit, during which she visited rural and border areas and observed the government's efforts to combat trafficking in persons.



Liberia has made commendable strides in establishing a **national anti-trafficking task force and in legislative reform**. The SR also welcomes the launch of Liberia's first national action plan on business and human rights, alongside other dedicated plans on trafficking, child labour and inclusion of persons with disabilities. Despite these advances, significant challenges remain.

Assistance for victims of domestic servitude, forced labour and sexual exploitation is limited, especially in remote areas. Government-run safe homes, hotlines and emergency shelters were not fully operational at the time of the visit and services are lacking due to limited staffing, resources and capacity, all of which increase the risk of trafficking and re-trafficking of victims. The capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, Border Agents and Labour Commissions to identify and refer cases must be strengthened.

Specialised training and resource allocation are also needed for police, judiciary and social workers, in particular child protection workers, especially those in hard-to-reach areas and along borders. Moreover, sanctions must be effective and proportionate, and effective action must be taken prioritising prevention of and accountability for trafficking in high-risk sectors such as agriculture, mining, fisheries and domestic work.

The SR is particularly concerned at the **prevalence of child trafficking for sexual exploitation**, particularly girls, in concession areas, in border areas and urban centres. Child trafficking particularly affects girls in situations of extreme poverty and out of school. The SR further expresses alarm at the apparent tolerance of child trafficking for sexual exploitation. In this respect, the SR urges the government to prioritise action to combat child trafficking and prioritise allocation of resources for anti-trafficking action to address internal and cross-border trafficking, ensuring that children and migrant victims are effectively protected.

FUTURE COUNTRY VISITS

Finally, the SR is grateful to the governments of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad and Mongolia** for the acceptance of the SR's country visit requests.

REPLIES AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

In relation to the statements of support received from **Viet Nam and Greece**, the SR highlights that communications have been issued to both states, urging them to continue to follow up with her Office on those communications to ensure effective prevention of all forms of trafficking and protection of victims and accountability. Thankful for the statements of support received from the **Lao PDR and Djibouti**, the SR encourages both countries to respond positively to the requests from her Office for country visits.

On **action to be taken**, the SR stresses the importance of **ensuring safe, regular migration**; ending tied visas, which put workers in very vulnerable situations; ensuring effective implementation of labour laws; including domestic work within labour protections; extending the competence of labour inspectorates to private domestic households; effectively training labour inspectorates to identify victims of trafficking in the context of domestic work and make referrals for assistance; and ensuring that labour inspectorates are properly resourced and independent in their functions. The SR would urge the **effective regulation of recruitment agencies**, putting in place ethical and fair recruitment processes, and combating corruption by all those involved



in migration, including state officials that can increase risks of trafficking in prisons. States also need to ensure **unconditional assistance to victims of trafficking**, stressing that such assistance is long-term, not short-term; and to effectively combat racial and gender discrimination that underpins increased risks of trafficking in prisons.

The SR thanks **Belarus** for its comments on the upcoming Global Plan of Action review and for its work in promoting the latter alongside the work of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT). The SR will continue to highlight the prioritisation of safe, regular migration and the rights of migrant domestic workers in that context. She further thanks the **African group** for highlighting the importance of equal protection of migrant domestic workers and of domestic work as work, as well as for underlining that many African women and women of African descent are victims of trafficking in the context of domestic work. This must be recognised and effectively addressed in all action to combat trafficking. The SR further extends its thanks to the Arab group and the **GCC** for their respective statements, in particular the point raised by the **Arab group** on a tendency to neglect the racial discriminatory element of trafficking in prisons.

To sum up, the SR believes the report is balanced, the analysis is balanced, and the recommendations are balanced too. Her mandate does take into account legislative developments, which are noted in the report, but implementation in practice remains weak, and that is a recurring problem. It is not just about protections on paper, it is also about **protections in practice**, and these gaps in protection are highlighted in the report.

Turning to the **United Kingdom**, the SR welcomes the review of the overseas domestic worker visa regime that is ongoing. She would urge the UK to implement previous recommendations, including responding to concerns raised in communications on the overseas domestic worker visa, and would further urge implementation of the Ewing's review earlier on the visa process and increased risks of trafficking.

On how to strengthen **reintegration of migrant domestic workers** who are victims of trafficking, the SR would urge all states to ensure long-term assistance, unconditional assistance, implementation of the non-punishment principle, provision of immediate safe accommodation, but also looking at pathways to residence and citizenship, and effective access to compensation.

With regard to **coordinated actions** to be taken, the SR recommends looking at the implementation of the recommendations and objectives of the Global Compact on Migration in particular, and of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention. On the latter, the SR is glad to support **Ghana's** ongoing work on ratification and implementation of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention and effective regulation of the informal economy, including of domestic work. For **Jamaica**, the OHCHR and the Secretariat of the SR remain available to provide technical assistance, particularly on data collection and monitoring of trends. The SR would further urge Jamaica to engage with the International Labour Organisation and UNODC for support.

Turning to **Libya**, the SR appreciates the statement of support, while noting many communications addressed by the SR to the country, particularly concerning treatment of victims of trafficking, asylum seekers and refugees. The SR would also highlight and support the findings of the fact-finding mission on Libya, which concluded that crimes of enslavement arising



from trafficking in prisons in Libya may amount to crimes against humanity. Therefore, the SR urges Libya to accept her country visit request.

On **good practises on cross-border recruitment**, the SR mentions examples from the Philippines and from the International Labour Organisation, which itself has many recommendations and standards to be implemented. Turning to **good practises on bilateral migration agreements**, the SR points to the work of the International Labour Organisation and its guidelines, and to the leadership work of the Philippines in the context of the Global Compact on Migration, thereby emphasising the importance of pre-departure orientation, training that is gender responsive, looking at strengthening the role of consular and embassy services, and follow-up in countries of destination to ensure enforcement and practises.

The SR is concerned that there tends to be an **overemphasis on criminal justice responses** and not sufficient attention to safe migration, including safe labour migration, and to other forms of trafficking in prisons, including domestic servitude. The SR would urge regional processes in all states engaging to focus on human rights of victims and effective **human rights-based approaches to migration**. The SR further notes that **large movements of people** does not necessarily increase risks of trafficking in prisons, where we have safe, regular migration pathways and the rights of refugees, and asylum seekers are effectively protected. That is the best way to ensure effective prevention of trafficking.

In closing, the SR points out that **regional processes** such as the Bali process may be effective or useful, and she would like the opportunity to engage more effectively with such regional processes through her mandate.

VIEWS EXPRESSED BY GUINEA-BISSAU AND LIBERIA AS CONCERNED COUNTRIES

The delegation of **Guinea-Bissau** is not present in the room.

The delegation of **Liberia** welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, following her official visit from the 9th to the 18th of December 2020. Liberia expresses its appreciation for the constructive engagement, comprehensive analysis and recommendations provided, which will inform ongoing and future actions to combat trafficking in persons in all its forms. Commitments to human rights and international obligations is unwavering for the Government of Liberia, which reaffirms its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, including the rights of victims of trafficking, and to the fulfilment of its obligations under international and regional human rights instruments.

The Government acknowledges the importance of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and continues to prioritise the ratification and implementation of pending treaties relevant to child protection and migrant rights. Liberia notes with appreciation the recognition of its efforts, including the adoption and implementation of the 2021 Revised Act to Ban Trafficking in Persons, which strengthens the legal framework and aligns national legislation with international standards, the completion of the Second National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and the launch of the First National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, including the establishment of the National Anti-Trafficking Task Force and the continued engagement with civil society, development partners, and affected



communities. The country also stresses progress in birth registration and child protective initiatives, including the decentralisation and digitalisation of the birth registration system.

Nevertheless, the Government also acknowledges the challenges that lay ahead. Gaps in the implementation of anti-trafficking measures in rural and hard-to-reach areas, the need of strengthened capacity and resources for law enforcement, labour inspection, and victim support services, the importance of ensuring judicial independence and expanding access to justice for victims of trafficking, the necessity of integrating disability-inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches in all anti-trafficking interventions.

The Government of Liberia is committed to continually strengthening its national response to trafficking in persons by engaging all stakeholders in the ongoing evaluation and enhancement of existing strategies and action plans, ensuring that future efforts remain grounded in human rights principles and informed by lessons learned from previous initiatives. Expanding victim support services, including safe accommodation, psychosocial assistance, and reintegration programmes with particular attention to children and women and persons with disabilities, strengthening the independence and capacity of accountability institutions, advancing the transnational justice and peace-building efforts also. Liberia values long-standing partnership with the United Nations, international organisations, and development partners in the collective fight against trafficking in persons.

The government recognises the evolving global context in which many multilateral institutions are operating today. In this regard, Liberia is actively exploring avenues to strengthen and diversify its partnerships while seeking sustainable approaches to resource mobilisation, including enhanced domestic efforts and collaborations with both traditional and new partners to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of its anti-trafficking initiatives. Liberia reiterates its unwavering determination to combat trafficking in persons, protect the rights of all victims, and fulfil its international obligations. The government remains open to constructive dialogue and cooperation with the SR, the UNHRC, and all stakeholders in pursuit of a comprehensive victim-centred and right-based approach to ending trafficking in persons in Liberia.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Views Expressed by State Delegations

Australia agrees that migrant domestic workers, particularly women, are at a heightened risk of contemporary forms of modern slavery, including human trafficking. Australia is working with ASEAN member states to establish safe, regular migration pathways and frameworks for migrant workers. The Triangle in ASEAN programme focusses on high-risk sectors for migrants, such as domestic work. Australia has supported ASEAN to draft guidelines on the implementation of the non-punishment principle for protection of victims of trafficking in persons. These guidelines, launched on 2 June 2025 in Jakarta, will assist ASEAN member states to implement domestic legislation and policies to ensure victims of trafficking are protected, not penalised. Australia appointed its first Federal Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Mr. Chris Evans, in November 2024. He supports businesses to address risks of modern slavery in their operations and supply chains and raises awareness of these issues.



Bahrain on behalf of the Arab group is aware of the importance of strengthening international efforts to combat trafficking in persons. This scourge is extremely serious and has humanitarian repercussions that are incalculable. These repercussions can be in the medium to long term and disproportionately affect the most vulnerable categories, women, girls, children and persons with disabilities, which is why countries need to strengthen their legal frameworks. The conclusions outlined in the SR's report are extremely significant ones. The Arab group stresses that there is a strong link between domestic work on the one hand and the exploitation on the other, which is why countries must regulate domestic work. International cooperation must happen if we are going to combat trafficking in persons, which is why all stakeholders internationally must cooperate and launch greater Venezuelan campaigns to also develop more effective remedies, especially for the accountability of all perpetrators of this scourge. New forms of trafficking in persons are emerging, which is why we need to scale up our own efforts to combat this scourge.

Belarus on behalf of the Group of Friends United Against Human Trafficking commends the SR's efforts to bring to light the grave and complex realities of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Her latest report is a powerful reminder of the urgent need to strengthen responses to this trafficking. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Palermo Protocol, which remains the cornerstone of the international legal framework to combat trafficking in persons. Despite all the progress achieved, trafficking remains widespread. The international community must renew its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Palermo Protocol. The latest UNODC Global Report highlights concerning trends, rise of detected trafficking cases with women and girls remaining the majority, and growing number of child victims. To reverse this trend, it is important to reaffirm the collective commitment to the implementation of the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons through comprehensive and coordinated actions at international and national levels. In this context, the Group of Friends underlines the vital role of ICAT, and in view of the fact that women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected by trafficking, it urges the SR to keep this issue at the top of the ICAT agenda.

Belgium welcomes the SR's comprehensive report on the heightened risk of trafficking in persons faced by migrant domestic workers. The report underlines that sexual and gender-based violence pervades trafficking, with women facing triple the risk of physical or extreme violence by traffickers. Belgium, alongside the UN team of experts, recently hosted a meeting on the case of Ukraine, exposing persistent gaps, still hindering an effective rule-of-law response to this trafficking-sexual-violence nexus. Belgium fully endorses the SR's call for strong consular engagement. Its current Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons makes gender-sensitive victim identification training mandatory for all diplomats and consular staff and instructs missions to raise trafficking concerns practically with host authorities. Belgium also underscores the importance of tackling violence and harassment in the workplace more broadly. Therefore, Belgium ratified ILO Conventions No. 190 on violence and harassment and No. 189 on domestic workers. Belgium encourages all states that have not done so to ratify these landmark conventions.

Botswana is committed to combating human trafficking through robust legislative and policy frameworks, including the Anti-Human Trafficking Act and National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons. Botswana believes that due attention should be given to address the vulnerabilities of



migrants and domestic workers who face exploitation by strengthening cross-border collaboration, adopting victim-centred approaches and ethical recruitment practises. In line with the African Union's call for multisectoral approaches, Botswana has established an inter-ministerial committee to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts by respective national stakeholders. In the Southern African Development Community, Botswana continues to work with member states to harmonise and enhance anti-trafficking efforts to provide safe migration pathways and promote fair labour practises. While Botswana has made progress in terms of policy and legislation, enforcement remains inconsistent, particularly in remote areas. Therefore, the country remains steadfast in ensuring continuous training of law enforcement and social services officials to capacitate them for effective intervention and protect victims, especially women and children.

Cameroon agrees on the fact that visa schemes linked to the employer as well as the lack of safe pathways and exclusion of migrant workers from the protection of the law, means that they face multiple forms of discrimination intersecting on generational and migratory status. Cameroon has changed its laws to strengthen its legal framework against trafficking while strengthening protection mechanisms for migrant workers. A new law has been adopted to regulate conditions for domestic work and guarantee access to justice. For victims, Cameroon welcomes the call of the SR to adopt a human rights-based approach and encouraging international cooperation, especially South-South cooperation to build migratory systems that are protective, equitable and regulated. To conclude, Cameroon welcomes the recommendations in the report and restates its commitment to combat the forces of trafficking in full respect for the dignity and the rights of migrant persons.

Colombia has adopted concrete measures to tackle this phenomenon and comprehensively through the National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons 2020-2024 includes a special chapter on borders. The Labour Ministry has developed plans to provide the labour decent integration, especially differentiated routes for women who are especially vulnerable in sectors such as domestic work and sexual work. Colombia underscores the use of the single registration of foreign workers in Colombia and the training of over 500 labour inspectors for the identification of potential cases of trafficking for purposes of forced labour. In line with ILO Convention No. 189, Colombia made progress in the formalising of domestic work and with the recognition of the labour rights of migrants, independently of their relative migration status. Colombia agrees with the SR that the timely identification of victims continues to be a critical challenge and it insists on the need to strengthen the prevention, protection and effective access to justice mechanisms. Colombia reiterates its commitment to combat people trafficking with a human rights-based and gender approach and strengthen international cooperation in this field.

Costa Rica restates its determination to eradicate trafficking in persons, including that existing in domestic work, where there is an intersectionality of vulnerability, gender, migration, status and ethnic origin in this context. Costa Rica ratified ILO Convention No. 189 and has driven forward a regulatory framework on public policies geared towards the protection of domestic workers, highlighting the remunerated work, the national policies on migration, integration and equality, and coalitions to combat trafficking. At the same time, Costa Rica recognises that there are ongoing challenges, like in every other state, for which the country must continue to strengthen the identification and the referral of victims in large access to specialised services,



train prosecutors and judges and police officers and improve the institutional coordination. It is also crucial to make progress in data collection, analyse the resolution of cases and guarantee effective accountability mechanisms. On borders, there are realities which call for international cooperation and we need to pool efforts to guarantee decent work, justice and protection for all persons without any discrimination.

The **Democratic Republic of Congo** converges with the SR on the fact that trafficking in persons is a major problem in the context of migration and domestic work, which is often linked to exploitation, abuse of domestic workers who are migrants particularly are vulnerable to trafficking because of the situations when they are recruited, transported and hosted, housed in conditions where they can be exploited. The DRC agrees with the SR on the adoption of bilateral agreements on labour migration between states as a tool to ensure that these cases are regulated. Furthermore, the DRC had already started to combat trafficking in persons through decree 19-027 of 22 April 2019 on the emergency and the prevention of trafficking in persons. To conclude, the DRC underscores the need to have a comprehensive approach involved in the cooperation of states to protect the rights of migrant workers and domestic workers and put an end to their exploitation.

Djibouti welcomes a report on the limits of legislative and strategic frameworks which contribute to the risk of migrant domestic workers exposed to human trafficking. Djibouti recognises the prime responsibility of states in preventing and protecting trafficking victims, as well as the need for States to uphold their obligations under their international commitments, in particular non-refoulement. Djibouti provides guarantees of protection to all victims of trafficking, including migrant domestic workers, specifically through the 2016 Law providing for victim protection and establishing a mechanism for access to justice and remedy. Victims are not prosecuted for irregular entry or stay, or for carrying out clandestine work, nor for their participation in criminal activities as a result of coercive, deceptive or abusive measures by traffickers.

The **Dominican Republic** recognises the importance of continuing to strengthen protection frameworks to combat trafficking in persons, especially for people who are involved in domestic work, which is highly vulnerable. With regard to the references the SR made to the Dominican Republic, the delegation restates the country's firm and sustained commitment to the comprehensive protection of domestic workers and without any kind of discrimination, as a signatory of ILO Convention No. 189. Its Labour Code, through Law Act 1692, has been strengthened through emblematic decisions handed down by the Constitutional Tribunal Court, in particular Decision 0168.13, which teases the rights of domestic workers regardless of their nationality, the right to decent work, social security and maternity leave, on equal basis with the rest of the workers. Furthermore, Decision 0275.17 restates the obligation of the state to adopt a progressive interpretation, which is non-discriminatory, of fundamental rights, giving priority to historically marginalised sectors. The Dominican Republic continues to be committed to the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of trafficking in persons.

Ecuador reiterates its firm commitment to the prevention and eradication of trafficking in persons in particular in the context of human mobility. Trafficking in persons amounts to a serious crime under its domestic laws. The country has a strong framework of provisions focused on the comprehensive protection of victims especially women, boys and girls and adolescents. ICAT

and its implementing text establish mechanisms for the investigation, prosecution and providing assistance to victims and their families and members. Ecuador recognises the many vulnerabilities faced by its citizens abroad both as they are in transit and in their country of destination which means that Ecuador's consulates can further prioritise. National protocols and tools for protection and assistance are regularly reviewed to ensure that they meet the current challenges of migration. Finally, as President of the Quito process in 2025, Ecuador will be leading a regional coordinated response for secure, orderly and regular migration based on solidarity, shared responsibility and international cooperation.

Gabon has always been a country of transit and destination. More than concerned about this question, especially as far as women and girls are concerned, Gabon, in addition to the Paloma Protocol, has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and all conventions prohibiting child labour. A National Commission to Prevent and to Combat Trafficking in Persons was also created and Gabon has also signed bilateral agreements with some countries of origin. Aware of the scale of the phenomenon, Gabon adopted Decree 599-PR on 17 June 1981. This decree imposes strict legal obligations as far as social contributions are concerned. If employers fail to declare domestic workers to social security, they face heavy financial criminal penalties. Despite these tangible efforts, Gabon nevertheless needs to request the support of the international community, especially in terms of technical assistance.

Georgia echoes the SR's call to eliminate statelessness and address gender-based vulnerabilities especially among displaced populations. Combating trafficking in persons remains a key priority for the government of Georgia. The latter has adopted a robust legal framework based on four pillars of prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership. The inter-agency coordinating council leads the implementation of unified anti-trafficking policies through national action plans. Georgia also emphasises the critical role of our consular services in prevention and victim assistance. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs ensures that anti-trafficking information is regularly updated across all diplomatic platforms while consular missions provide vital support to victims and coordinate closely with the national and foreign authorities. Unfortunately, illegal occupation of Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions by Russia remain a main obstacle for the government to effectively fulfil its counter-trafficking measures. There are no mechanisms to identify, investigate and prosecute alleged trafficking in persons cases in both occupied regions.

Ghana echoes the SR's concerns over gendered and racialized vulnerabilities and commends the focus on accountability and labour rights. Ghana also condemns all forms of trafficking in persons and forced labour. Under its Human Trafficking Act and National Plan of Action of 2022 to 2026, Ghana prioritises prevention and victim support. The country has also strengthened pre-departure training programmes for migrant workers with IOM, enhanced bilateral cooperation with destination countries to safeguard Ghanaian workers abroad, and expanded labour inspection and victim assistance programmes. Ghana recognises the critical importance of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention No. 189 in protecting migrant workers, particularly women, in vulnerable sectors. While reviewing the Convention for Future Ratification, Ghana urges all states to eliminate conditioned visas that enable exploitation and prioritise safe migration pathways.



Ghana on behalf of the African group is deeply concerned by the persistence of trafficking, abuse, and exploitation in the domestic work sector, where outdated, racialized, and gendered assumptions continue to mask labour violations as mere household matters. Migrant domestic workers, many of whom are African women, are often trapped in situations of exploitation due to restricted migration regimes, the use of tied braces, and the absence of meaningful labour protection. The African group echoes the SR's call for ratifying and implementing key international instruments and to reform migration systems that increase vulnerability to trafficking. Effective prevention must begin with fair recruitment, safe and regular migration pathways, and the prohibition of practises such as withholding of identity documents. The African group urges states to expand access to justice and remedy, including legal aid compensation and the reversal of burden of proof where appropriate. Migrant domestic workers must have access to labour protection equal to other workers without discrimination based on migration status. Finally, the group underscores the importance of regional and international cooperation, including through the regulation of recruitment agencies and the conclusion of bilateral labour agreements.

Greece remains deeply concerned about the widespread trafficking in persons in the domestic work sector, particularly affecting women and girls from marginalised communities and migrant backgrounds. The perception of domestic work as non-work contributes to its invisibility and the impunity of perpetrators fostering environments where rights violations persist. Migrant domestic workers face heightened risks, with women migrant domestic workers in particular enduring sexual harassment, sexual and gender-based violence and being at risk of trafficking for both sexual exploitation and forced labour. Therefore, as outlined in the report, measures should be taken concerning legislation, programmes and policies, labour protection, trafficking prevention, accountability and access to justice. In this vein, Greece has continuously stepped up its efforts to prevent trafficking in human beings through the introduction of pivotal legal and institutional frameworks such as the Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and the National Referral Mechanism for the Identification and Referral of Victims of Trafficking in collaboration with the Labour Inspectorate. Greece reaffirms its commitment to combating trafficking in persons through a human rights-based, gender-responsive and intersectional approach.

Guatemala agrees with the SR's report on the importance of ensuring that ministries cooperate with civil society and international organisations, working together to combat people trafficking through bilateral agreements, regional agreements and international agreements, which will enable us to improve protection for domestic workers. With regard to combating trafficking in persons, Guatemala highlights the work developed by the Department Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and People Trafficking in Guatemala, which has implemented a number of strategies and programmes institutionally and inter-institutionally, which represent progress made by the country to prevent, combat and punish trafficking in persons. Because of this support, Guatemala has developed institutions to investigate and punish this crime within the National Police Force, the Prosecutor's Office and Judiciary, with a number of different courts specialising therein. In closing, Guatemala stresses the need to ensure that domestic workers who are migrants and victims of trafficking and who are involved in enslavement and forced work must play a crucial role in developing prevention.



The **Holy See** takes note of the SR's report focused on the urgent need to address the underlying limits of current legal and policy frameworks that facilitate conditions for the trafficking of migrant domestic workers. Migrant domestic workers are a valuable yet frequently overlooked asset to society and a vital part of the economy both in their host country and in their country of origin. The word economy itself comes from the Greek *oikonomia*, meaning household management, and this is a clear reminder that economic life has its roots in the stewardship of domestic work. As these workers are often entrusted with caring for children, the elderly and homes, they should be granted fair wages, just labour conditions and the protection of their fundamental rights. Any injustice inflicted upon them undermines not only their human dignity but also that of their perpetrators. The Holy See draws the Council's attention to the typically hidden nature of domestic work, which leaves migrant workers more vulnerable to abuse, debt, bandage and trafficking with limited access to justice and effective remedies. Respect for their dignity cannot depend on the recognising of their work. The report confirms that trafficking in persons is a complex and constantly evolving phenomenon that requires coordinated global responses and shared efforts at all levels. The tackling of this issue is beyond the capabilities of individual states. Therefore, the Holy See renews its call for cooperation and solidarity, particularly among governments and organisations engaged in the fight to eliminate all forms of trafficking. They must combine their efforts to combat this scourge which is an affront to humanity.

Italy is firmly committed to combating trafficking in persons and the serious human rights violations associated with it, fully in line with the principles of the Palermo Protocol. Such a complex phenomenon poses a serious threat to international peace and security and demands adequate protection for the victims, especially the most vulnerable. Italy expresses deep concern over the increasing links between transnational organised crime, terrorism and trafficking networks. Large movements of people can facilitate trafficking while unsafe and irregular migration routes expose individuals to abuse. Particularly at risk are women and girls who may face forced marriage, sexual slavery and exploitation, forced labour and domestic servitude. Through the adoption of the National Action Plan against Trafficking and Serious Exploitation of Human Beings for the period 2022-2025, Italy has consistently pursued a comprehensive approach from prevention through protection of victims to prosecution and conviction of traffickers. Italy remains committed to strengthening international cooperation and safeguarding the victims of human trafficking at both national and international levels, especially women and children, including unaccompanied minors.

Jamaica welcomes the SR's report and its thematic focus on migrant domestic workers and trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Jamaica maintains a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of exploitation, including trafficking in persons supported by legislation, policies and institutions such as the Trafficking in Persons Prevention, Suppression and Punishment Act, the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons, the appointment of a National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, and Jamaica's National Referral Mechanism for Child Trafficking. The Government of Jamaica continues to prioritise policies in line with international standards such as the Convention on the Protection of Migrant Workers and Their Families and the ILO Domestic Workers Convention No. 189. Jamaica would like to enquire what possibilities exist for technical assistance for states like Jamaica to strengthen data collection

and coordination to improve policy responses to migration trends, particularly those involving the trafficking of women and children.

Jordan agrees with references made in the thematic report that action must be taken swiftly to address the violations against female migrant domestic workers. Action must be taken to realise access to justice for victims. Jordan is committed to protecting the rights of workers, addressing trafficking in persons through developing relevant national legislations and implementation mechanisms in this respect. Legislations on regulating the rights of domestic workers, cooks and gardeners have been adopted and an e-portal for the protection of the rights of workers has also been launched in ten multiple languages, as well as allowing diplomatic missions to submit complaints on behalf of the workers. The law amending the Law Against Trafficking in Persons No. 10 of 2021 was also adopted aggravating circumstances for the perpetrators. Jordan reaffirms its zero tolerance policy towards trafficking in persons in all its novel and traditional forms in a manner that protects human dignity.

Kuwait on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have taken note of the report and reiterate how important her topic is. But UN reports must faithfully portray the situation on the ground. For example, they must take note of what states are doing nationally and institutional and legal initiatives in countries. The conclusions contained in the reports must be balanced and non-selective, because that strengthens the relationship between the UN and states. The GCC reiterates its determination to combat trafficking in persons. The GCC states have adopted extremely concrete measures, whilst at the same time developing their individual institutional and legal frameworks on domestic work. They have entered into bilateral agreements for the regulation of domestic work, and this is to preserve human rights and dignity of workers.

The **Lao PDR** has attached importance to preventing and combating trafficking in persons, especially women and children, by adopting a number of laws, regulations and measures in order to fulfil its obligations under international treaties related to human trafficking in persons to which the Lao PDR is party. The country also attaches the importance to the protection of migrant workers from trafficking in persons and all forms of exploitation. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has issued ministerial regulations and guidelines related to contract enforcement, minimum wage compliance, occupation of safety and health, and protection against exploitation and discrimination and safe and fair migration. The National Commission on Anti-Human Trafficking in Persons under the Ministry of Public Security is now implementing the National Plan of Action on Anti-Trafficking in Persons Phase 3, 2021-2025. In order to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of trafficking in the form of labour exploitation, the Lao PDR has created mechanisms for the protection and management of the Lao workforce abroad and signed bilateral agreements with countries in the region. The Lao PDR reaffirms its commitment to work closely with all development partners, UN agencies and stakeholders in our common endeavour to combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

Libya explains that human trafficking is criminalised in the country and the sanctions are imposed on perpetrators, particularly those trafficking in women and children. There are many migrants heading to Europe and Libya undertakes action in this context to fight trafficking. Libya attempts to ensure that victims do not fall in the hands of traffickers. Libya also endeavours to dismantle illegal networks that carry out human trafficking. It is necessary to strengthen



international cooperation to fight human trafficking and to eradicate the root causes of clandestine migration. Laws need to be strengthened in order to fight trafficking in humans.

Mauritania commends the report's focus on prevention and access to justice. As a country recipient of migrant workers, Mauritania is deeply committed to promoting and protecting their human rights by implementing a human rights-based approach to ensure their dignity and well-being. Ensuring fair recruitment is paramount for us. Mauritania has strengthened regulations for recruitment agencies. It prioritises bilateral labour agreements to destination countries and uphold the principle of non-punishment for trafficking victims, ensuring they receive protection, not penalties. The National Agency for Combating Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling operates a hotline special fund for human trafficking victims and collaborates with security forces and civil society to monitor the situation and raise the awareness. Future priorities include assuming a leading role in protecting migrant domestic workers' human rights, providing funds for income-generating activities for victims to ensure their integration, and implementing the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking.

Norway on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries is alarmed by the heightened risk of exploitation and abuse migrant domestic workers face. The majority of domestic workers are women, yet limited attention is paid to the gender dimensions of migration and the specific risks faced by migrant women workers. Such workers may endure sexual harassment and sexual and gender-based violence. They can also be at risk of sexual exploitation or forced labour. The Nordic-Baltic countries are concerned by the fact that many survivors of trafficking do not seek assistance from law enforcement or report experiences of trafficking out of fear of arrest, detention, and deportation. Women victims of trafficking returning home risk stigmatisation, discrimination, and poverty together with an increased risk of being re-trafficked. The Nordic-Baltic countries urge states to act with urgency to remedy the gendered abuses of migrant domestic workers and take effective action to ensure accountability and access to justice.

Paraguay appreciates the SR's report and her focus on the relationship between gender and migration situation as aggravating factors, including trafficking, especially with the ongoing existence of regulatory and structural loopholes which mean that some people are more at risk. Effective prevention and suppression of people in trafficking means that we need to adopt an international and broad approach. Countries of origin, transit, destination and Paraguay have strengthened their institutional and policy framework against period of trafficking in person, which is categorised as a crime in all its forms. The mechanisms to provide protection and assistance are triggered by an inter-institutional framework which is focussing particularly on boys and girls and through the implementation of a national plan on prevention, combat and provide support to victims.

The **Philippines** thanks the SR for highlighting the institutional gaps that increase migrant domestic workers' vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation. Domestic workers do their job in the private, intimate space of the home where abuses are easily rendered invisible and sometimes faithfully normalised. As a labour-sending country and a 'Global Compact for Migration champion', the Philippines has a comprehensive, gender-responsive strategy on combating trafficking and upholding migrant workers' rights. The Philippines has well-established mechanisms to ensure that its citizens are protected all throughout the immigration process,



from pre-departure training to the provision of consular legal and welfare assistance, as well as repatriation and reintegration of nationals into the domestic workforce and society. The Philippines stresses the importance of international agreements, including at the bilateral level, as normative and operational tools for ensuring migrant domestic workers' rights. The country's experience showed that quiet and good-faith collaboration between sending and receiving countries yields concrete, meaningful results. In 2020, for instance, the Philippines successfully prosecuted a human trafficking case in close cooperation with the Kingdom of Bahrain that led to the conviction of the perpetrators. This was the first of its kind, a positive example of access to justice cooperation pursued even without a mutual legal assistance treaty. In closing, the Philippines calls on all partners to positively consider the SR's recommendations including to ratify ILO Convention No. 189 and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families as well as to support the Global Compact for Migration.

Poland explains that since the beginning of Russia's invasion against Ukraine, Polish authorities have faced unprecedented challenges in preventing and countering human trafficking, a crime likely to be provoked by migration movements caused by armed conflicts. To ensure the safety of Ukrainian refugees, Poland has implemented a number of solutions to protect those exposed to human trafficking, in particular women and children. Those measures include tougher penalties for trafficking in human beings. This crime can lead even to a sentence of 25 years of imprisonment. Screening of organisations, foreign entities and individuals who offer aid to Ukrainian refugees. Text message alerts for persons crossing the Polish-Ukrainian border that provide contact data to police hotline and intervention centre for victims of human trafficking. Thanking the SR for the important points she raised in her report, Poland hopes it will contribute to the development of more robust legal frameworks and translate into effective protections for migrant domestic workers.

Romania is taking active steps to identify and assist individuals at risk of trafficking, particularly among those entering the country as refugees or labour force. A key tool in this effort is the updated National Identification and Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in Persons that emphasises a victim-centred approach and involves coordinated screening efforts by authorities as well as relevant stakeholders to identify migrant victims of trafficking, including those working in domestic settings, and refer them to appropriate protection and assistance services. Women, given their heightened risk of exploitation, receive focused attention. Romania has also taken legislative action to address the risks faced by domestic workers. The 2022 law regulating domestic work granted formal recognition to this sector, extending essential labour rights and benefits such as pensions, health insurance and paid leave to all domestic workers without discrimination based on nationality or legal status. Oversight is further supported by immigration and labour policies that aim to prevent abuse during recruitment and employment process.

Senegal welcomes the focus of the SR's report on migrant domestic workers as they are particularly exposed to abuse due to the informal nature of domestic work and the lack of legal protections and a frequently precarious status. Senegal has established a robust arsenal to fight human trafficking and to protect workers, including domestic workers. One law in particular criminalises all forms of trafficking, a plan of action and a strategy to fight human trafficking which includes prevention, penalisation and repression against human trafficking. Senegal also has a



system for data collection on trafficking in persons as well as a special compensation fund for victims of trafficking. To conclude, Senegal calls for international cooperation that is strengthened and based on best practises, cooperation and judicial cooperation as well.

Thailand is committed to combating trafficking in all its forms, particularly among women, children and migrant workers. Through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, Thailand has strengthened our national referral mechanism, improved victim screening and placed trauma-informed, victim-centred care at the heart of our response. In 2024, the country opened the Thailand Victim Identification and Referral Centre and launched a national anti-trafficking database to enhance coordination and accountability. Specific to migrant domestic workers, Thailand's ministerial regulation was introduced, aiming to ensure fair working conditions, decent wages and access to remedies in case of violations. Thailand stands for a right-based, non-discriminatory approach to migrant labour governance. Looking ahead, Thailand encourages the SR to further examine challenges and good practises regarding regulating and monitoring cross-border recruitment as well as cooperation to prevent trafficking and ensure protection of migrant workers.

The **United Arab Emirates** has adopted a comprehensive and increased and preventive approach against trafficking in persons predicated on strengthening legislations. The Federal Act on Combating Trafficking in Persons was adopted in 2023 as well as providing protection, legal and psychological support. The UAE has also launched multiple language communication lines and hotlines in order to enable domestic workers to report complaints. Protection is provided to domestic workers in all phases of the labour cycle. In conclusion, despite the challenges faced or imposed by these cross-border crimes, the UAE remains unwaveringly committed to promoting human rights based on dignity and respect, and calls for strengthened international cooperation and coming up with a comprehensive response to address trafficking in persons, particularly amongst women and children.

The **United Kingdom** stresses that migrant domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to labour exploitation and abuse in destination countries. The gendered risks of exploitation for migrant domestic workers must be recognized, while ensuring that these taken into account in prevention, assistance and protection efforts. In the UK, protections are in place for overseas domestic workers to help minimise the risk of exploitation. However, the UK remains concerned about the links between visa arrangements for private domestic staff and instances of modern slavery. The UK is reviewing how the overseas domestic worker route operates and can share more information in due course. Internationally, the UK's Work in Freedom programme has played a crucial role in preventing the trafficking of women and girls along migration routes in South Asia and the Gulf. The programme has supported over 770,000 individuals in local communities. It has worked with governments to shape more than 27 laws and policies aimed at protecting vulnerable migrant workers.

Viet Nam reaffirms its strong commitment to combating trafficking in person. As a state party to all international human rights treaties and ILO Conventions, Viet Nam has adopted a comprehensive legal and policy framework to prioritise safe, orderly and rights-based migration. Viet Nam strictly prohibited forced labour and all forms of trafficking in recruitment processes and penalties imposed on violators. In recent years, multiple labour export companies were



sanctioned and had licences revoked as part of national efforts to combat trafficking. Viet Nam provides wide-ranging support for victims of trafficking, including psychology services, legal aid, vocational training and reintegration. Without requirement of participation in legal proceedings, victims are not criminalised for acts committed under coercion. Viet Nam also enhances cooperation with countries of destination through embassies and labour offices to protect migrant workers and ensure safe repatriation especially during crises such as arms conflict and climate disaster. Viet Nam has become constructive, opened to dialogue and remains committed to working and on partners to prevent trafficking and protect the rights and dignity of all affected persons.

Views Expressed by Intergovernmental Organizations and UN Agencies

The **European Union** recalls that no person should ever be treated as a commodity, but unfortunately there is still much to do to stop this happening. Trafficking in human beings comes in many shapes and forms and often affects those in the most vulnerable situations. Therefore, the EU particularly welcomes the focus of this year's report on the legal situation of migrant domestic workers. The EU is deeply concerned about your findings, in particular that many women migrant domestic workers endure sexual harassment, sexual and gender-based violence, and are prone to the risk of being trafficked for sexual exploitation, forced labour, or domestic servitude. All states, whether countries of origin, destination, or transit, have a responsibility to take measures to prevent and eradicate trafficking in human beings, including by countering impunity for all perpetrators involved, and to improve the situation of victims. This approach lies at the core of the EU's strategy on combating trafficking in human beings, and the EU calls on others to join in such efforts.

The **Sovereign Order of Malta** shares the SR's concerns. Exploitation in domestic work is a serious issue, too often underestimated, particularly when it comes to migrant women and girls. The consistent application of international legal instruments must prevail. It is essential to promote the principles of non-discrimination and non-punishment as well as to strengthen equal protection under the law. Following its long tradition of serving the most vulnerable, the Order of Malta reaffirms its commitment to combat human trafficking. For example, the Romanian Association has implemented a programme for the prevention of trafficking and assistance to victims for the period 2022-2025. This programme includes, among other components, awareness sessions for women and children, psychological support and medical services. Furthermore, the Order of Malta is developing a training programme on human trafficking in collaboration with UNITAR. This training is intended for international servants, diplomats and frontline actors.

UN Women welcomes the SR's focus on domestic work, sector rooted in historical inequalities and too often excluded from formal labour protections. Domestic work remains deeply gendered and overwhelmingly carried out by migrant women, women from racialized minorities and indigenous communities. The legacies of slavery, colonialism continue to shape who performs this work and under what conditions, entrenching legal, economic and social exclusion. This places migrant women domestic workers at heightened risk of rights violations, including trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Many face gender-based violence, sexual harassment, coercive control, experiences that often lead to severe psychological distress



including depression. Sadly, sometimes this has resulted in suicide. Risks are highest for those in irregular situations and for leave-in domestic workers who are often isolated from support networks. The threat of deportation often deters survivors of violence from seeking protection, leaving them without access to justice, shelters, health care or legal aid. UN Women urges full inclusion of migrant women domestic workers in labour migration frameworks with equal rights and protections. UN Women joins the SR in urging states to address structural inequalities by regulating recruitment agencies, dismantling discriminatory visa regimes and ensuring complaint and redress mechanisms are accessible, safe and survivor-centred.

UNICEF welcomes the SR's and its critical focus on trafficking in persons in the domestic work sector. Children are affected in two deeply concerning ways. As children of domestic workers who are trafficked into conditions of forced labour and domestic servitude and as victims of trafficking and exploitation in domestic work themselves. Displaced children and children pushed into irregular migration face heightened risks. Prevention efforts require addressing the root causes that push children and families into vulnerable situations including poverty, lack of access to education and social protection and weak child protection systems. UNICEF calls on states to ratify and implement relevant international standards including ILO Conventions No. 182 and No. 189 and the Palermo Protocol. UNICEF urges states to strengthen child protection systems and promote cross-border cooperation across countries of origin, transit and destination. Ensuring universal access to health care, education and social protection is essential for migrant domestic workers and their children and registering children of migrants at birth is critical to safeguarding their rights. UNICEF further calls on states to further strengthen access to child friendly justice for child victims of trafficking as well as to create and expand safe and regular pathways for migration including family reunification pathways and regularisation based on humanitarian and other protection grounds. UNICEF stands ready to support.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

The **World Evangelical Alliance** affirms the urgent need to reframe how labour exploitation and domestic work is understood and addressed. What the Alliance sees across multiple regions is not merely bad labour practises, it is modern slavery. Migrant women are confined in private homes, stripped of legal identity through forged documents, and denied wages, rest, and communication. These are not isolated cases. They are systemic, embedded in how domestic work is structured and sustained. In one study, 87% of domestic workers in Uganda experienced conditions meeting the Palermo Protocol threshold for human trafficking. This is the norm. Yet very few of these cases are ever identified as trafficking, and these victims receive neither aid nor justice. Within this space are hundreds of thousands of trafficking victims, numbered alongside the millions globally who are never identified. Governments must be held accountable to increase identification of human trafficking and slave-like practises masquerading as work. In addition, the Alliance urges states to ratify and implement ILO Convention No. 189; criminalise the confiscation of communication tools; and regulate recruitment chains in both origin and destination countries. Recognition without enforcement sustains impunity. Justice must not be optional.



The **Iraqi Development Organisation** welcomes the SR's report on the risks of trafficking faced by migrant domestic workers, particularly women and children. However, we remain concerned about the *kafala* system's role in facilitating such abuse in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Despite reforms, the *kafala* system still binds migrant workers to their employers, enabling forced labour and exploitation deemed modern-day slavery. Domestic workers are particularly vulnerable. Excluded from labour protection, they endure gruelling hours in unregulated, abusive homes, where employers confiscate their passports and control their ability to leave or change jobs. Even those who escape face such risks due to their lack of legal status and support. Single mothers are especially trapped as their children are denied birth certificates and exit visas. As the Palermo Protocol affirms, restrictive systems like the *kafala* facilitate trafficking and must be dismantled.

Action Canada for Population and Development gives the floor to Mimi, an activist for the defence of the rights of trans and migrant sex workers. The NGO welcomes the SR's report and her analysis of the gendered and racialized violations of the rights of migrant workers, domestic workers, and her appeal that safe and regular migration pathways be established. The rights of migrant workers - be they domestic workers or sex workers - are today in danger. The racist policies towards migrants mean that they are forced to go underground and are more vulnerable to trafficking. They are exposed to violence and to exploitation. Furthermore, they cannot have access to justice, nor can they have access to social protection and social rights because of their work is not recognised and prohibition only worsens their situation. In order to guarantee their rights, domestic workers and/or sex workers ask states to recognise and respect their work; open up borders and guarantee safe migration pathways; and combat racism, patriarchal attitudes, as well as unequal and oppressive economic models. Sex work is, and domestic work is, a job, and the victims deserve respect and solidarity.

Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice (IIMA) is concerned with the increasing numbers of victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. 19-hour daily work shift, physical, sexual, and gender-based violence at work, none or below minimum wage payment, employees confiscating workers personal documents, inadequate food, and lack of access to health care are just some of the inhumane conditions migrant domestic workers face. The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024 points out that in 2022, at least 162 different nationalities were trafficked to 128 different countries of destination. IIMA addresses some recommendations to states. One, strengthen bilateral, multilateral, and regional agreements to ensure the security of migrant domestic workers by implementing fair recruitment regulations, guaranteeing labour and social protection and accessible reporting mechanisms to hold traffickers and other entities accountable for their role in human trafficking. Two, raise awareness among migrant domestic workers of their rights and of labour standards and ensure that information is accessible in relevant platforms and languages. Three, provide returning victims with long-term access to safe accommodation, medical and psychosocial assistance, and legal aid.

The **Gulf Centre for Human Rights** (GCHR) focusses on abuses in the Middle East, including the Gulf states, and they are sadly well represented in this report. From Saudi Arabia and Oman, which are mentioned as case studies of widespread abuse, up to and including homicide, Kuwait and Lebanon are also included as having taken significant steps backward. The legal structure and trenching the power imbalance and widespread abuses have been widely documented in all GCC countries, as well as many neighbouring ones. The breadth of the recommendations on the



need to change laws, ensure implementation and accountability, indicate how much the structures need to change to remove the power and impunity that employers have over those working in their homes. It is true that there have been some changes by some countries in the region to increase labour standards and protection of domestic migrant workers. However, these have only come after significant international pressure, often linked to major international events. In each case, careful reviews of the new laws have shown the changes to be less than advertised, either due to inadequate enforcement or other laws maintaining the power imbalance. Nevertheless, pressure from the international community for change is welcome.

Global Network of Sex Work Projects gives the floor through a sex worker, Rosado Rabo, who is grateful to the SR for her report and her assessment of access to justice for domestic workers, migrant domestic workers, as representatives of the sex workers of the world. The Network highlights the link or the parallel between domestic workers and migrant sex workers. Sex workers face obstacles to justice, both as victims and accused persons. Criminalisation of sex work in most countries of the world means that sex workers have problems in courts and people are not sentenced, they do not have access to compensation and support for victims. They ask member states to include sex domestic workers and domestic workers when they guarantee legal aid with interpretation that police officers and judges and judicial operators need to be trained in human rights. States must stop comparing sex work with trafficking. Sex workers are victims of more violence, discrimination. They are at greater vulnerability. Domestic work and sex work is work. Sex workers are entitled to the same labour rights and access to justice.

Edmund Rice International (ERI) notes with concern that domestic work is deeply racialized and frequently undertaken by women from racialized minorities, Indigenous women, migrants, refugees and stateless women. Recent reports in the USA have noted significant problems for women in overseas domestic service. At least 274 Kenyans, nearly all of them women, have died in Saudi Arabia in the past five years. 55 died just last year, twice as many as the previous year. ERI's doctors only raised more questions. A Ugandan woman showed extensive brazen signs of electrocution, yet her death was labelled natural. Reporters were told of a surprising number of women who fell from roofs or balconies. East African women are recruited by the thousands and trained by well-established companies, then sent to Saudi Arabia through a process regulated by the Ugandan, Kenyan and Saudi governments. In addition, there are reliable reports of the women being further abused by officials in the diplomatic service when they sought help in the national embassy. ERI supports these recommendations of the SR: strengthen legislation to regulate recruitment intermediaries in accordance with ILO general principles and operational guidelines; establish mandatory accreditation for all recruitment agencies and require registration of all sub-agents; and conduct regular audits to ensure compliance with ethical recruitment standards and the international recruitment integrity system.

PRATYEK and the children of India draws the Council's attention to the issue of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. According to the UN, human trafficking and child trafficking in particular has risen sharply due to conflicts, climate-induced disasters and other global emergencies. According to the NCRB report, in 2022, on an average, more than 172 girls went missing, another 170 were kidnapped and almost three girls were trafficked every single day. Rooted in poverty, gender inequality, lack of education and weak enforcement of the law, trafficking continues to thrive across the country. The children of India urge their government to



strengthen prevention through education, social protection schemes and awareness programmes, especially in rural areas; support survivors with dignity as they need long-term care, education, mental health support and vocational training to rebuild their lives; increase youth participation in decision-making so that youth voices in anti-trafficking campaigns, committees and policy-making platforms can be heard.

The **Centre for African Legal Studies** (CEJA) voices its deepest concern over the alarming situation of children, particularly young girls who are victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation in Nigeria. This growing lucrative crime is difficult to quantify precisely because it is rooted in underground practises and evades official monitoring. It amounts to recruiting, transporting and hosting young girls to force them to form sects for money. In Nigeria, many girls from poor rural areas are moved to urban centres or abroad, where they are subjected to various forms of sexual exploitation. These practises are frequently organised by networks of pimps, as is the case for the madams. Nigeria thus is at the heart of the system, both as a country of origin, transit and destination for this sexual trafficking. The psychological repercussions of victims are deep and irreversible. In the face of this reality, the CEJA calls for coordinated responses. We must strengthen prevention. We must guarantee faithful follow-up and providing care for victims, which means we need to have strong political will pursuant to international instruments, the CRC, and the Palermo Protocol as well.

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul expresses strong support for the SR's report on trafficking in persons. With a specific focus on migrant domestic workers, The Daughters of Charity highlight the widespread issue of human trafficking in the domestic work sector, predominantly affecting women and girls. This is largely attributed to the failure of governments to adequately regulate the domestic work industry and ensure fair and just labour conditions. Human trafficking continues to mirror the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade, driven by greed and exploitation within organised criminal networks. Migrant domestic workers in particular face heightened vulnerability due to inconsistent migration policies and insufficient protection of their rights by states. The Daughters of Charity draw the Council's attention to the African continent, which is home to 1.4 billion people, nearly a million of whom are under 30. Despite this demographic potential and Africa's vast natural resources, extreme poverty remains a major factor, driving migration and trafficking especially among women and girls. The Daughters of Charity urge African governments to harness their human and natural resources for common good to promote stronger migration law.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

36 State Delegations

4 Inter-Governmental Organizations and UN Agencies

10 Non-Governmental Organizations