

## 5th Heads of NCBs Conference

Lyon, France, 3-6 March 2009

Address by Hon. Roberto Maroni, Minister of the Interior, Italy

Trafficking in human beings, even before being a heinous crime, is a violation of fundamental human rights.

A few days ago, Mr Antonio Costa, Executive Director of UNODC, in presenting the first Global Report on Trafficking in Persons<sup>1</sup>, said, 'it is embarrassing having to write a report on slavery in the twenty-first century.'

Unfortunately, the data show us that, even in our time, this phenomenon – which is growing all over the world - affects all countries, rich and poor. However, perhaps a more alarming figure is that, worldwide, nearly 20 per cent of all victims of trafficking are children, with rates up to 100 per cent in some areas of West Africa.

The empirical evidence indicates that the primary cause of trafficking is sexual exploitation (more than three cases out of four), and its victims are predominantly women and adolescents, while the second most common cause is labour exploitation (one in five). Moreover, the demand for illegal child labour is considerable, but unfortunately less visible, and therefore probably underestimated.

In economic terms, it appears that the new business of slavery is the third after drugs and arms trafficking worldwide and criminal networks make profits of several billion dollars a year out of it.

The control exercised by transnational organized crime on most flows (and routes) of illegal immigration towards the developed countries creates wide economies of scale for criminal networks, which are increasingly merging trafficking in human beings with all sorts of illegal smuggling.

We know that trafficking in human beings is made up of three activities which are; recruitment, transportation and exploitation of the victims, all of them extremely lucrative for the traffickers.

The architecture of criminal organizations involved in trafficking seems particularly well structured. Genuine transnational companies, they operate with flexible modules, often on an ethnic basis. We know for example, that there are forms of co-operation between Italian and foreign mafias in order to share out the various segments of the illegal market (prostitution, illegal work, begging, etc...)

Italy has recorded with great concern the worldwide expansion of this crime and is aware of the need to strengthen international co-operation to combat it. To this end, Italy, holding the current presidency of



Italy's Minister of the Interior, Roberto Maroni, addresses INTERPOL Heads of NCBs from around the world on the importance of fighting crimes related to trafficking in human beings.

the G8, has decided to discuss this issue at the G8 of the Ministers of the Interior and Justice, which will be held in Rome at the end of May.

To address the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings, many countries have strengthened their legal and operational framework, but the most significant progress has been made by strengthening international co-operation and co-ordination between the police and the judicial authorities.

As regards international co-operation in this area, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the two Protocols annexed, related to combating trafficking in human beings and illegal immigrants<sup>2</sup>, are of added value.

INTERPOL, thanks to its network and expertise, plays a valuable role in combating human trafficking and supporting the response of the states.

A fundamental means of preventing and combating trafficking, and yet a further objective of international co-operation, is given by the co-operation agreements on security.

Italy has signed agreements of this kind with 52 countries.

Italy, Nigeria and INTERPOL agree today on a very advanced formula of police co-operation in order to enhance the capacity to combat trafficking in human beings, smuggling of illegal immigrants and transnational organized crime.

The agreement will allow the posting of Nigerian police officers in Italy, so that they will have the opportunity to work side by side with the Italian border police at border posts, ports and international airports. In addition, the Central Directorate for Immigration and the Italian border police will organize training for the Nigerian police.

This is an advanced formula of co-operation, which, having being developed within INTERPOL may also make use of its instruments and expertise.

The agreement reflects a new concept of law enforcement, as it complements and enhances bilateral and multilateral international co-operation for security, adopting innovative concepts, such as joint law enforcement, capable of enhancing the operational capacities of the two countries and, at the same time, speeding up administrative procedures for repatriation of illegal immigrants.

I believe that this agreement, because of its contents and the philosophy that inspired it, has significant development opportunities in the future and could be a model of further implementation in other countries and in other areas of security co-operation.

---

1. The first Global Report on Trafficking in Persons was launched on Feb.12, 2009 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

2. The Convention is also referred to as the "Palermo Convention", as a tribute to the city where it was signed in December 2000. It came into force, at international level, in 2003. Both protocols were ratified by Italy in 2006.