World Day against Trafficking in Persons:
Use of ICTs to Combat Trafficking in Persons

Tuesday, July 16, 2019, 3 PM -- 4.30 PM

UNHQ Conference Room 8

Concept Note

Despite an increased focus of the international community on human trafficking, prevention, identification and prosecution mechanisms are still inadequate in many countries. In 2016, over 25,000 victims of human trafficking were registered in about 100 countries covered by the UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, which is prepared on a biennial basis in accordance with the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. This is a 13-year record high indicating an overall improvement in response systems but also a growing and persistent challenge. Women and girls remain disproportionately affected by this crime representing 72% of detected victims globally and 94% of detected victims of sexual exploitation, which remains the most detected form of trafficking.

The political declaration adopted at the high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly held at the United Nations Headquarters on September 27-28, 2017, noted with concern, inter alia, the criminal misuse of information and communications technologies (ICTs), in particular the Internet, to facilitate trafficking in persons. As noted in the UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, criminals use a variety of online resources, including various online open and classified advertisement and adult sites, social networks and other available technological means, such as the darknet, to obscure online communications.

Women and girls can be especially vulnerable to technology-facilitated trafficking. For example, globally, women and girls are less likely to have access to means of personal identification than men, due to economic and social barriers. Social media and the Internet are used by traffickers to deceive women and girls into sexual exploitation and sham marriages on the false promise of other forms of work.

At the same time, there is huge potential of ICTs to combat trafficking. Big data and machine learning are already assisting all stakeholders involved in the fight against human trafficking in bridging their knowledge gaps and in using data to detect and respond to new trafficking trends. ICTs can also facilitate assistance to victims or people prone to trafficking in persons. ICTs can raise awareness about the trafficking in persons risks, empower victims to report their exploitation,
seek shelter and assistance, and engage in rehabilitation programs. And the digital know-how in the private sector can boost global responses through innovative and impactful partnerships.

There is significant potential in ICTs to strengthen concerted efforts against human trafficking around the world. It is essential that national and international actors understand how ICTs can be used most effectively to combat human trafficking and to reach the most vulnerable.

On the occasion of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, established in accordance with UNGA resolution 68/192, the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, in partnership with Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU) will convene a thematic event, focusing on the role of ICTs in combatting human trafficking, in particular on positive contribution it can make to global efforts to eradicate human trafficking and to leave no one behind.

We invite you to the thematic event to commemorate the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, where different stakeholders will share experiences, ideas and strategies on this issue.

**Agenda**

Moderator: **Simone Monasebian**, UNODC, ICAT Coordinator

Speakers:

- **H.E. Valentin Rybakov**, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations on behalf of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking
- **Alex T. Ajayi**, Minister of the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations
- **Kalliope Mingeirou**, UN Women, EVAW Chief, ICAT Co-chair in 2019
  - Ensuring a rights-based approach to human trafficking and addressing the specific needs of women and girls
- **Valiant Richey**, Acting OSCE Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, ICAT Co-chair in 2019 (video address)
  - Presentation of ICAT’s new issue brief on the use of technology in human trafficking
- **Mr. Yushi Torigoe**, Chief, Strategic Planning and Membership, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
  - Examples of harnessing new technologies to combat human trafficking
- **Romina Canessa**, Equality Now, End Sex Trafficking Program Attorney
  - a short trailer of the film “Saving Zoë” will be demonstrated
- **Melanie Thomson**, Survivor of human trafficking
  - Experiences from a survivor’s point of view
  - The importance of a survivor-centred approach to human trafficking

Q&A

Note: If you don’t have a UN pass please email: jacqueline.traore@itu.int by Wednesday July 10 to register. Information on where to pick up your pass on the day of the event will be sent to you after registration.