

Welcome to this Helsinki Commission hearing on “A Decade of the Trafficking in Persons Report” The Link between Revenue Transparency and Human Rights.” In my role as Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I have worked extensively with Co-Chairman Alcee Hastings and Congressman Chris Smith, among other colleagues to end modern-day slavery. The Helsinki Commission’s lengthy history of contributions to U.S. anti-trafficking legislation and compliance, coupled with its close engagement with actors throughout the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) region on trafficking issues, have served to ensure the fulfillment of the human rights commitments within the Helsinki Final Act of 1975.

Since its inception in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, the State Department’s annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report has been responsible for remarkable improvements in coordination, accountability, and political awareness in our cooperative international effort against human trafficking. The TIP report’s comprehensive evaluations of trends in government anti-trafficking efforts continue to highlight problem areas within OSCE region and provoke officials into taking effective action. The tier ranking system featured in the report focuses on the degree to which countries have aspired to a minimum standard in their efforts to combat trafficking. It is only resource of its kind, forged through countless hours of research by U.S. Foreign Service officers at diplomatic missions across the globe. As such, the TIP report has emerged as a centerpiece in diplomatic efforts to advance human rights.

In today’s hearing we have an ideal opportunity to explore the evolution of the TIP report how we can improve this vital resource. As many of you know, this is the first year that the United States has been ranked in the tier placement system of the report, as set forth in the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008. This reauthorization also requires that countries ranked on the Tier 2 Watch List for two consecutive years face statutory downgrade to Tier 3, if concerted improvement is not observed. The 2010 TIP report has rendered 37 countries placed at risk of this downgrade.

The 2010 TIP Report has illuminated the fact that child trafficking persists globally. Recently, Senator Boxer, Senator Brownback, and I introduced in the Senate the Child Protection Compact Act, a bill that would empower the U.S. State Department to provide assistance to countries with high incidences of child trafficking. This legislation would facilitate the eradication of child trafficking through cooperative agreements and contracts for policy development. We have bipartisan support with 8 co-sponsors, which we hope will expedite its consideration in the Senate. I thank my friend, Representative Chris Smith who authored the House version of this legislation.

I’m pleased that we have an excellent panel today who will give us their perspective on the evolution of the TIP report, as well as help us take stock in the last decade of combating human trafficking. The witnesses bios have been distributed so let me introduce our first speaker,

Ambassador Luis CdeBaca, Director of the State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. He is joined by Dr. Maria Grazia Giammarnaro, OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, who will report to us on OSCE counter-trafficking initiatives and the state of play throughout the OSCE region. On our second panel we will hear how NGOs have utilized the TIP report in their work, beginning with Ms. Jolene Smith, CEO of Free the Slaves and concluding with remarks from Ms. Holly Burkhalter, Vice President of Government Relations for International Justice Mission.

The brutal deprivation of freedoms forced by traffickers onto their victims has taken immeasurable toll on countless men, women, and children alike throughout the OSCE region. We cannot rest in our efforts until all States have implemented the collaborative and comprehensive anti-trafficking policies necessary to end modern-day slavery.