

“A Decade of the Trafficking in Persons Report”

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As prepared

Good morning. Thank you, Senator Cardin, Representative Hastings, Representative Smith, and all members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe for your leadership and commitment to ending modern slavery.

In June, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton released the 10th annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*, which not only highlights the landmark international standards of the Palermo Protocol and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, but also maps out the progress we've made in the last decade and the challenges that we still face.

Indeed, over the last 10 years we have had many successes. Today, I would like to discuss some of the trends that are highlighted in this year's report.

Not long ago, trafficking in persons was a little-understood crime that was perpetrated in the shadows. If people thought of it at all, they thought of women and children from the former Soviet Union being tricked by false advertisements for work, only to find themselves trapped in brothels and strip clubs.

Ten years later our laws and responses have improved to combat the many ways in which men, women, and children are enslaved in the 21st century. We now have a more comprehensive understanding of what trafficking is, and we continue to use the “three P” paradigm of prevention, protection, and prosecution to tackle this human rights abuse.

The State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons is working hard to ensure that the policy and legal achievements of the last decade are turned into actual results. One way that we ensure this is through the annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*, which provides

a fact-based diagnostic tool to assess countries' efforts to combat modern slavery. It also serves as the U.S. government's principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking. The report has inspired legislation around the world. In fact, in the last ten years, 116 countries have passed laws on trafficking. By partnering together, trafficking is prevented, victims are protected, and traffickers are prosecuted.

This year, the report assessed 177 countries, including two special cases—Haiti and Somalia. Also this year, two countries were ranked for the first time, Kiribati and the United States. We have a responsibility to hold ourselves accountable to the same minimum standards that we apply to other countries as outlined under the TVPA because victims in the United States also deserve the benefit of the diagnostic tool. And yet, these standards are just the minimum. Every country in the world *must* do more and *can* do more.

One success that I would like to highlight from this year is Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was upgraded to Tier 1 in the report. Bosnia was on Tier 3 for many years as a war-torn nation with little political and legal infrastructure. And many thought that the situation on the ground would not, maybe even could not, change. I think that for many people, the global fight against human trafficking first came to their attention because of the widespread sex slavery and abuses in the Balkans during the wars of the 1990s. And yet Bosnia succeeded in making great strides to implement the 3P paradigm and aggressively tackle this crime.

The easiest way to get off of Tier 3 or Tier 2 Watch List is to really act. The Bosnian government acted. There has been clear progress, especially over the last year. They have imposed stronger penalties for convicted traffickers. They've partnered with nongovernmental organizations on victim protection. They've employed proactive procedures to positively identify and aid victims. And in the course of the last decade, Bosnia and Herzegovina has significantly improved its efforts to combat trafficking, proving it to be fully compliant with the minimum standards set forth in the TVPA.

And Bosnia and Herzegovina is not alone. In the past year, around 50,000 victims were identified by governments around the world. There were over 4,000 prosecutions. Labor cases

tripled, from 104 to 335. But think—335 of a problem that affects at least 12.3 million people held in involuntary servitude worldwide. Let me be clear. The Obama Administration is wholly committed to combating every kind of trafficking, whether it is sex trafficking, forced prostitution, forced labor, child sex trafficking, involuntary domestic servitude, forced child labor, or debt bondage. Although we have made progress toward solutions, we must continue to improve our efforts to provide the help that the victims of this crime so desperately need.

What does modern slavery look like now? For one, a trend that we see in this year's report is the feminization of labor trafficking, which was once thought of as the male counterpoint to sex trafficking of women. But like their brothers, husbands, and sons, women are trapped in fields, factories, mines, and homes, often suffering the dual demons of forced labor and sexual exploitation.

Today, more than 56 percent of trafficking is of women and girls, and we see more women than ever before as victims of labor trafficking, specifically involuntary domestic servitude. These maids suffer in silence behind closed doors, and in some ways they are the most vulnerable because they do not come into contact with anyone other than their captors. In unregulated and unenforced workplaces such as private homes, domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, especially children in many parts of the world who perform domestic work. That is why the international community under the leadership of the International Labour Organization and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is working hard to improve the global standards for domestic workers.

As Secretary Clinton said in June, there are some countries that are making progress against modern slavery, and some that are not taking significant steps to eradicate this problem. Regardless, the United States stands ready in the spirit of partnership to work with all countries against this global phenomenon so that every person, no matter their nation of origin or their standing in society, may pursue their fundamental right of freedom.

Today we have an opportunity to strengthen a movement and to make significant improvements to the global standards against this crime. Worldwide, as the report outlines, there are more traffickers being prosecuted and convicted, more victims being protected, and more efforts to prevent this crime from occurring in the first place.

As we celebrate 10 years of progress and learning, we draw on the courage, strength, and tenacity of trafficking survivors to guide our own country in upholding the charge of Secretary Clinton to act boldly and strategically as we form new partnerships among government, law enforcement, and civil society to fight human trafficking.

Thank you for your support and your efforts on this important issue. I look forward to your questions.