Trafficking in Persons: USAID's Response

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United States Agency for International Development
Office of Women in Development

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Introduction

In 2002, trafficking in persons remains a global problem embedded in a web of poverty, conflict, population displacement, political transition, inadequate female education and economic opportunity and the low value placed on women and children. The criminal nature of human trafficking makes it difficult to know the real extent of the phenomenon. It is estimated that somewhere between 700,000[1] and 4 million women, children and men are trafficked each year into modern forms of slavery worldwide. Fifty thousand of these are trafficked into the United States. The purposes of trafficking include not only prostitution, debt bondage, and domestic labor, but also the trafficking of children as slave laborers, child soldiers, camel jockeys and sex slaves.

International awareness of and concern about human trafficking have increased due in large part to U.S. leadership in the global fight against trafficking in persons. More donor organizations, governments and non-governmental organizations, both international and local, have become involved in efforts to prevent trafficking, protect its victims and prosecute its perpetrators.

Human trafficking affects vulnerable individuals, particularly women and children, in every region. In Latin America and Asia, women and children are trafficked into prostitution and forced labor within their own countries as well as overseas and children are exploited by drug traffickers to participate in that trade.[2] In conflict-ridden areas of Africa, both boys and girls are kidnapped and forced to join the warring parties as child soldiers or war wives. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that at least 1 million children a year are trafficked into prostitution.[3] In East Europe and Eurasia, steeply declining economic opportunity and the prevalence of domestic violence at home have made many young women seeking employment abroad easy prey to duplicitous traffickers.

The United Nations Protocol on Trafficking in Persons, adopted in November 2000, has 105 signatories including the United States. The protocol defines trafficking as: "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, or deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other

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1 U.S. Department of State, *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000: Trafficking in Persons Report*, page 1, June 2002.

2 UNICEF, *Beyond Child Labor, Affirming Child Rights*, page 14, March 2001.

3 Ibid.

forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."

The U.S. Congress enacted the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act in 2000. U.S. anti-trafficking policy is directed at trafficking both globally and into the United States. It is based on a three-part integrated framework:

1) *prevention* of trafficking through education, public awareness and economic alternatives

2) *protection* for victims

3) *prosecution* of traffickers

International awareness of and concern about human trafficking have increased due in large part to U.S. leadership in the global fight against trafficking in persons. More donor organizations, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), both international and local, have become involved in efforts to prevent trafficking, protect its victims and prosecute its perpetrators.

A multitude of factors including the low status of women and children, the acceptability of gender-based violence within many societies, poverty, endemic unemployment, the flourishing global markets for sex and cheap labor and official corruption and porous international borders fuel this massive abuse of human rights. Traffickers often trick desperately poor parents into selling their children or sending them away for "work." Individuals with little economic opportunity may be lured into travelling abroad for what they are led to believe are good jobs in hotels, restaurants, bars or domestic service. Others are abducted. Victims everywhere are subjected to physical and emotional abuse.

The enslavement of individuals is part of a dynamic within which traffickers and clients see victims as expendable, and many victims come to see themselves as worthless. For those pressed into prostitution, the risk of infection from sexually transmitted diseases and HIV is alarmingly high. The demand for child prostitutes has grown in part because of the belief that they are less likely to carry the HIV infection. When discovered by the authorities, trafficked individuals may be treated as criminals, rather than victims of fraud and violence. In contrast, traffickers, commonly functioning through organized crime networks, operate with little fear of reprisal, as criminal sanctions are often weak or not enforced. The high profit and low risk increase the appeal of human trafficking to organized crime.

USAID's Response to Trafficking in Persons

USAID plays an important role within the U.S. Government's anti-trafficking effort. USAID's mandate and expertise lie primarily in prevention of trafficking and assistance to and protection of its victims. The Agency also addresses aspects of enforcement and prosecution through training, advocacy, administration of justice and anti-corruption programs. Policy dialogue with governments not only in source countries, but also in transit and destination countries is an important element of the overall strategy.

The Agency's comparative advantage in addressing trafficking lies in its field presence and the experience of its Missions with related development activities. A significant part of USAID's development assistance helps create conditions that reduce the vulnerability of women and children to traffickers, including poverty reduction, girls' education, rule of law, equal rights and economic and political opportunities for women. These development activities by themselves are not sufficient to eliminate trafficking, but they provide an important platform of support and reinforcement for activities specifically targeted at the prevention of trafficking and protection for its victims.

The USAID anti-trafficking strategy emphasizes countries and regions where there is a significant level of severe forms of trafficking, particularly those that are included on the Annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) List issued by the Department of State. At the heart of USAID's anti-trafficking efforts are partnerships with international, regional and local organizations including NGOs, private voluntary organizations and faith-based organizations that are fighting trafficking and assisting the victims of prostitution, child labor and other forms of slavery. Coordination with other parts of the U.S. Government and bilateral and multilateral donors is critical.

USAID is supporting a wide range of activities to combat trafficking including:

- Collection of reliable information on the scope, patterns and routes of trafficking;
- Campaigns to promote public awareness of trafficking and its dangers;
- Interventions targeted at vulnerable groups especially women and children including expansion of economic opportunity, girls' education and information on legal rights;
- Protection and assistance including shelter, legal assistance, vocational training and social integration for victims trafficked into child labor, prostitution and other forms of slavery;

- Legislative and policy reform to curb national and transnational trafficking in persons;
- Sensitization and training for judges, prosecutors and police; and
- Policy dialogue and advocacy to strengthen the political will of governments to combat trafficking.

USAID's 2002 Anti-Trafficking Activities

In 2002, USAID field missions, regional bureaus and the Office of Women in Development (WID Office) are providing about $10 million for specifically targeted anti-trafficking activities in over 30 countries, an increase of more than 50 percent over USAID anti-trafficking funding for 2001. Missions and regional bureaus are providing approximately $3 million in Central and Southeast Europe and Eurasia, $2.5 million in Asia, $2.5 million in Africa and $1 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, with $1 million worldwide from the WID Office. In addition, USAID is managing a number of anti-trafficking programs funded by the Department of State.

The nature of trafficking varies greatly by region, and USAID anti-trafficking activities are designed with these differences in mind. The summaries that follow illustrate how USAID is drawing on the expertise of its missions in developing and transition countries to fight trafficking and foster development.

Africa

In a public-private partnership with Ben & Jerry's/ Unilever the USAID Mission in Mali is launching a media campaign in Mali and Cote d'Ivoire to promote child welfare and prevent trafficking. Community radio soap operas will address child welfare and trafficking, increasing awareness and changing public attitudes and behaviors about child trafficking.

In Africa, conflict and the demand for child labor play a large part in trafficking in persons. Women and children are trafficked into the sex trade, begging and soliciting, domestic servitude, internal conflicts as child soldiers or war wives and forced labor in the agricultural, construction and industrial sectors. In many African societies traffickers exploit the long-standing custom of sharing children among extended families and communities. Parents who believe they are sending their child off to a better life may unwittingly send that child into forced labor. Children trafficked for economic purposes may later be sexually exploited.

Many African governments acknowledge the trafficking problem and are making significant efforts to combat it, although most do not have comprehensive national action plans. Cameroon, Ethiopia and Mali have drafted anti-trafficking legislation and are beginning to deliver repatriation and social integration assistance to victims. Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Morocco, Gabon, Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Ghana provide modest amounts of victim assistance themselves,

but are cooperating with international organizations and NGOs to facilitate repatriation and assistance to victims.

Benin. The USAID Mission in Benin is working with the Ministry of Family Protection, UNICEF and NGOs to increase public awareness about the dangers of child trafficking. The Mission in collaboration with UNICEF is producing a documentary film on child trafficking. Town meetings on trafficking will be held nationwide, and the USAID Mission will work with local authorities to develop community charters for child protection.

Ethiopia. The USAID Mission in Ethiopia is assisting the government with an extensive survey of the magnitude of the trafficking problem that will provide a basis for future anti-trafficking interventions. USAID will support the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) public awareness campaign and partner with NGOs to identify key areas where the government can improve social protection for victims. Government employment centers will include information on the dangers of trafficking for women who come to the centers seeking employment abroad.

Mali. In a public-private partnership with Ben & Jerry's/Unilever, the USAID Mission in Mali is launching a media campaign in Mali and Cote d'Ivoire to promote child welfare and prevent trafficking. Community radio soap operas will address child welfare and trafficking, increasing awareness and changing public attitudes and behaviors about child trafficking. The USAID Mission in Mali and the WID Office will support community awareness workshops to bring the experience and voices of young people who have been trafficked to the community. This work builds on the results of a study on parental and community perceptions of child trafficking in the Sikasso region and community education activities previously supported by the Mission and the WID Office. Leadership training will help local school management committees become an effective force for anti-trafficking in the region.

Nigeria. Edo State is the source of a large number of Nigerian women and children trafficked to Europe. The USAID Mission in Nigeria is funding the IOM and a consortium of local NGOs to establish shelters and training centers for trafficking victims and to launch community and HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. Shelters will provide temporary housing and job-skills training including basic literacy and numeracy as well as marketable skills in cosmetology, home economics, tailoring or office work for approximately 300 women per training cycle. The program includes psychological and financial counseling, and may provide small loans for graduates starting their own businesses.

Sierra Leone. USAID's Sierra Leone Transition Strategy supports NGOs providing social integration assistance, including medical, psychological and legal services, to female victims trafficked from Liberia and Guinea to Sierra Leone, many of whom were brought as "war wives" for former Revolutionary United Front members and later abandoned. NGOs will work with community and government leaders to explore ways to facilitate the victims' return to their countries.

Sudan. USAID and Save the Children/UK have joined forces to combat abduction in Sudan and to find effective ways to help women and children victims. An interagency database will better track trafficking cases and map commonly used overland routes. Assistance to victims will include identification of organizations that can provide effective alternatives to institutional care, such as family-based care, small group homes and self-build homes.

West Africa—Child Labor in Agro-Industry. USAID contributed to a series of surveys conducted by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) to better define the problem of hazardous child labor in the cocoa industry and the relationship of child labor to trafficking. The results, released in July 2002, indicated that of approximately 284,000 children working in hazardous conditions on cocoa farms in West Africa, about 2,500 may have been trafficked. A public-private partnership among USAID, the U.S. Department of Labor, West African Governments, the global chocolate industry, and the International Labor Organization is designing and implementing seven pilot projects and a regional initiative to address exploitative child labor in five West African nations: Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon. The pilot projects and regional program will include interventions to prevent child trafficking in cocoa and cashew production and, as a first step toward rehabilitation, will improve the conditions of children already working in the tree crops industry.

Asia

Women and children from South and Southeast Asia are trafficked domestically, regionally and internationally for a variety of purposes: as prostitutes, domestic laborers, industrial workers, and beggars and, in the case of small boys, camel jockeys in the Middle East. Many victims are from poor families, ethnic minorities, "scheduled castes," tribal groups and other particularly vulnerable sectors of society.

The USAID Nepal Mission's anti-trafficking activities address both prevention and protection of victims, in close coordination with local and international NGOs and the Nepalese government's national plan of action against trafficking. . . . USAID joined national and international NGOs to establish an information and documentation center within the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare. This Center has created a compendium of anti-trafficking materials and is setting up a system to help track trafficking patterns and routes.

Anti-trafficking efforts within Asia vary, with some countries making concerted efforts to address the problem, while others still lack the political will to deal effectively with trafficking. Bangladesh, Nepal, the Philippines and Indonesia have drafted national action plans to combat trafficking in persons. The international donor community and local NGOs have responded to trafficking in Asia with public awareness campaigns and victim assistance programs.

Bangladesh. In 2002 anti-trafficking advocates in Bangladesh, with active participation from the USAID Mission, made considerable progress in agreeing on a common understanding of the nature of trafficking of Bangladeshi adults. The USAID mission in Bangladesh continues to pursue a comprehensive anti-trafficking strategy developed in 2000. USAID's multi-faceted program includes mapping exercises to track trafficking in at-risk areas; creation of a victim database; establishment of a resource center to disseminate data; legal, social integration and repatriation help to victims; and, culturally sensitive community public awareness campaigns. From its inception in 2000 to June 2002, key results of the program include:

- A comprehensive mass media campaign to address trafficking, branded with a common logo and implemented in coordination with the Government of Bangladesh and other major partners fighting trafficking in Bangladesh;
- A comprehensive database of victims established that tracks information on all trafficking cases with a total of 393 entries;
- A 13-month community-level trafficking awareness survey conducted in Bangladesh and the receiving countries, India and Kuwait;
- Ten focal ("watchdog") sites established nationwide to regularly collect legal information on trafficking, with:
  - 204 trafficked victims given legal support and 111 cases investigated and filed;
  - 167 traffickers arrested; and,
  - 422 incidents related to trafficking detailed.
- Sixty external trafficking victims repatriated and 59 internal trafficking victims released;
- Counseling support for social integration provided to more than 120 persons.

India. The USAID India Mission's anti-trafficking initiative, implemented through the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and now in its third year, provides grant support and capacity building to NGOs for anti-trafficking interventions. Research and data enhancement, awareness campaigns and educational and vocational opportunities for children of prostitutes who are at risk of falling victim to prostitution are included. Comprehensive programs will offer physical, psychological, social and economic services to trafficking victims, and alternative livelihood options, including non-formal adult education for prostitutes wanting to change their lives. Among the activities of partner organizations are evaluation of the existing legal framework and institutional mechanisms to combat trafficking; sensitization training for the judiciary, law enforcement and administrators to increase their awareness of trafficking; and efforts to strengthen the capacity of civil society networks and coalitions to provide services for potential and returned victims.

Nepal. The USAID Nepal Mission's anti-trafficking activities address both prevention and protection of victims, in close coordination with local and international NGOs and the Nepalese government's national plan of action against trafficking. Through the Asia Foundation, USAID-funded programs strengthen prevention, rehabilitation and social integration services and increase the capacity of the government and NGOs to address trafficking. USAID joined national and international NGOs to establish an information and documentation center within the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare. This Center has created a compendium of anti-trafficking materials and is setting up a system to help track trafficking patterns and routes. USAID has supported the development of a strategy for information, education and communications, and the production of materials appropriate for semi- or newly literate persons, including comic books. Recent research documents case studies of "intercepted" and "rescued" girls and the coping strategies of trafficked and migrant women who have returned to Nepal.

South Asia Regional. USAID continues to support a major regional anti-trafficking effort, managed by UNIFEM, focusing on prevention, education, rescue and repatriation in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Within this regional effort organizations throughout South Asia receive training in trauma counseling; data on the social and legal dimensions of trafficking within and between South Asian countries are collected; training manuals for counselors are developed; a regional resource center for trafficking related literature has been established; and, regional coalitions and networks strengthened. An advantage of this regional approach is that it provides a channel for advocacy and negotiation with governments at the highest level, including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

The regional program also supports in-country anti-trafficking activities. In Nepal, current efforts include community based awareness-raising campaigns, regional consultations and a workshop for parliamentarians. In Bangladesh, a detailed validated database of NGOs working on trafficking has been created and a regional consultation organized. In India, awareness campaigns for a variety of stakeholders, action research, media campaigns and supporting rescue and rehabilitation practices are being supported. In Sri Lanka, capacity-building assistance is being provided to the National Child Protection Authority and in Pakistan a number of research activities will be conducted.

Anti-trafficking activities funded by the Department of State and managed by USAID. In addition to programs funded from its own resources, USAID also manages 24 projects in Asia funded by the Department of State in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia. Examples of USAID managed programs include: **Cambodia**—support to front-line human rights NGOs that provide shelter, food, basic health care, counseling, vocational training and other assistance to victims of trafficking and abuse; **Indonesia**—a major two-year anti-trafficking in persons program with the Ministry for Women's Empowerment, trade unions and local NGOs; **Philippines**—information campaigns and assistance to victims, including halfway houses in the ports of Manila and Davao

and **Thailand**—prevention campaigns directed toward minority ethnic groups and migrants, which increasingly account for new trafficking victims in Thailand and victim assistance, such as an interview room to help children participate in prosecutions without facing their abusers.

Central and Southeastern Europe and Eurasia

Young women and girls from transition economies in Central and Southeastern Europe and Eurasia are generally more educated than their developing country counterparts. However, dwindling economic opportunity and escalating poverty, combined with the belief in better opportunities in the West, contribute to these women's susceptibility to clever traffickers. The victims, primarily young females ages 14 to 29, are lured abroad by organized crime syndicates with promises of employment as waitresses, dancers, models, au pairs or maids. They are given passports and travel documents that are often forged or obtained from corrupt government officials. Once out of their own country, they are stripped of their documents, and bought and sold, often repeatedly, as prostitutes or domestic servants. Forced to repay travel and expenses, victims are trapped in a cycle of "debt bondage" that continues as they are resold from one buyer to another. Threats of violence, of prosecution for illegal entry into the destination country, or rejection if they do manage to return home deter victims from attempting to escape.

Traffickers are often disguised as employment or travel agencies. Recent anecdotal evidence shows that acquaintances, many returned trafficking victims themselves, also lure women and girls abroad. Returned victims may be coerced into working as recruiters or face re-trafficking. With limited social and legal protections and few economic options, they may see no alternative. Traffickers continue to expand their operations into rural areas with high levels of poverty and low awareness of the issue.

Governments in the region have strengthened anti-trafficking measures in conjunction with international donors and international and national NGOs. Governments of Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine, Romania and Slovenia have organized anti-trafficking national working groups and developed national action plans to combat trafficking in persons. NGOs are focussing on public awareness and information campaigns and social integration assistance for victims.

Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina, USAID supports IOM efforts to return and integrate trafficked women, many from neighboring countries including Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. Safe houses in Tirana and Sarajevo, an effective social integration support network catering to the diverse needs of trafficking victims, and an international referral mechanism have been established. Social integration services include medical, psychological and legal services, vocational training and job placement assistance. In Albania, in districts prone to trafficking, USAID supports shelters that provide services

for abused and trafficked women, document trafficking cases and help governmental and non-governmental organizations advocate for increased anti-trafficking measures.

Kosovo. The USAID Mission in Kosovo in partnership with Save the Children, is funding a new effort to prevent trafficking and protect victims. In 2003 a coalition of local institutions, organizations and individuals will be established to lead trafficking prevention and protection efforts, and it will be linked with regional organizations and networks. The program will strengthen the capacity of local NGOs to provide protection, representation and assistance to trafficked victims; to function as advocates with public institutions; to support outreach and awareness-raising campaigns for vulnerable groups and to increase public awareness of trafficking into and out of Kosovo.

USAID is supporting development of a law enforcement manual for police and prosecutors throughout Southeastern Europe as a reference on current anti-trafficking laws and best practices. . . . Countries benefiting from the manual include Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Ukraine.

Romania. The USAID Mission in Romania addresses trafficking in persons through two umbrella grants. Through the Child Net Program, the USAID Mission is funding life skills training to prevent vulnerable children from falling victim to trafficking. The Romanian-American Sustainable Partnerships Program supports a partnership between an American NGO and a Romanian NGO to facilitate the social integration of victims of trafficking, implement a community-based campaign to increase awareness among youth at risk of being trafficked and strengthen the capacity of other NGOs involved in anti-trafficking activities.

Russia. The USAID Mission in Russia is continuing to address trafficking through information and education campaigns, economic empowerment of vulnerable women and girls, provision of services for victims through crisis centers and training for professionals assisting victims and their families. The capacity of Russian NGOs to address trafficking is being increased through high quality vocational training and entrepreneurship development, public outreach about trafficking in rural areas and small towns, and provision of services to at-risk women.

Ukraine. The USAID Mission in Ukraine launched its anti-trafficking activities on protection and assistance for victims and prevention of trafficking through local NGOs and regional and national authorities in l998. The work has continued with USAID funding in 2001 and 2002.

Local NGOs operate trafficking prevention centers in seven regional cities, offering job skills and crisis prevention services to potential victims and women returning to Ukraine from abroad. Vocational assistance for underemployed young women includes computer training, job counseling, free legal consultations and distribution of information on sexual harassment and

workplace discrimination. Crisis prevention efforts include hotlines, legal consultation, medical and psychological referrals and assistance to victims and their families. In the four years since the project's inception:

- 43,485 people have sought assistance on domestic violence and trafficking from telephone information hotlines;
- 39,273 participated in the walk-in Job Skills Training Program; 3,069 found new jobs as a result of those job services;
- 23,166 women received training in basic employment and life skills; 8,365 women who participated in courses report that they are no longer seeking employment abroad;
- 17,149 used the Crisis Prevention Program walk-in services and received training in the prevention of domestic violence and trafficking.

The USAID Mission in Ukraine continues to work with Ukrainian youths, building on earlier success with youth leadership training camps. With the International Charity Foundation for Development of Intellectual and Nature Resources of Ukraine, USAID has created the School of Equal Opportunities, a training program which operates in Kiev and fifteen other regions of Ukraine. Twelve- to sixteen-year-old participants from youth NGOs, orphanages, and schools develop leadership skills, learn about women's and children's rights and prepare to serve as community spokespersons against trafficking.

Central Asian Republics. The USAID Mission to the Central Asian Republics is collaborating with IOM in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan on public information campaigns to increase understanding of the dangers of trafficking. In Kyrgyzstan, IOM's nationwide campaign targets rural populations, children and vulnerable groups, including the unemployed, simultaneously raising the awareness of law enforcement officials. In Kazakhstan, IOM provides media training to create an informal network of journalists specializing in trafficking issues and to produce public service announcements highlighting the dangers of trafficking.

Central and Southeastern Europe and Eurasia Regional Activities. USAID is supporting development of a law enforcement manual for police and prosecutors throughout Southeastern Europe as a reference on current anti-trafficking laws and best practices in law enforcement related to trafficking. The USAID Mission in Romania manages this program, which is implemented by the United Nations Development Program in coordination with governments in the region, the Southeast Europe Cooperative Initiative regional anti-crime center and NGOs. Countries benefiting from the manual include Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Ukraine.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Social and economic conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean have forced families to create survival strategies that, in some cases, exploit their own children. Trafficking is compounded by the growing demand for sex tourism, lax prosecution of traffickers and economic and gender prejudices. In Brazil, children and adolescents 7 to 20 years old are transported across state borders to work in brothels or as domestic servants in middle-to-upper-class households. In the Caribbean, a recent IOM study of Haitian children trafficked to the Dominican Republic found that more than 4,000 children ages 5 to 15 years are trafficked each year over the border from Haiti to the Dominican Republic to work in agriculture, begging groups, street services or resorts.

Awareness of trafficking in persons is growing among governments in Latin American and the Caribbean. Governments in Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, Colombia and Haiti have launched prevention campaigns. Brazil and Mexico provide victim assistance through NGOs and have adopted national action plans to combat trafficking in persons that coordinate law enforcement with legislative and civil society efforts.

With USAID funding the Organization of American States (OAS) will publish a regional study carried out by the International Human Rights Law Institute of De Paul University College of Law on trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation in the Americas in 2002. Countries included in the study are Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Belize, Brazil and the Dominican Republic.

The USAID Mission in Brazil is working with the Reference Center for Children and Adolescents and the Sao Paulo Pact Against Abuse of Children and Adolescents to improve the legislative framework curbing transnational and internal trafficking in persons and to strengthen support networks for victims of violence and trafficking. . . . The Government, the USAID Mission and the WID Office are funding outreach to workers in the transport and tourism sectors to assist in the fight against sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

Brazil. Most human trafficking in Brazil occurs within the country according to recent research by the OAS and DePaul University. The USAID Mission in Brazil is working with the Reference Center for Children and Adolescents (CECRIA) and the Sao Paulo Pact Against Abuse of Children and Adolescents (CETRAF) to improve the legislative framework curbing transnational and internal trafficking in persons and to strengthen support networks for victims of violence and trafficking. CECRIA is providing technical assistance to the Brazilian Ministry of Justice to design a national policy to curb trafficking of children and adolescents for sexual exploitation. CETRAF is working with NGOs and government centers in border cities to train public and private sector

representatives to prevent and combat trafficking and improve assistance to youth and child trafficking victims. The Brazilian Government, the USAID Mission and the WID Office are funding outreach to workers in the transport and tourism sectors to assist in the fight against sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In Haiti, children, known as *restaveks,* are turned over by poor families with the agreement, in principle, that the receiving families will provide schooling, food, shelter and clothing in exchange for domestic labor. In practice, however, the children may receive few benefits, performing long days of labor without compensation and often suffering abuse. The USAID Mission in Haiti is addressing child slavery by supporting a mechanism to monitor implementation of domestic laws and international obligations on children's rights, slavery and trafficking, and by supporting an intensive public awareness campaign and research on issues related to trafficking. Outreach to human rights organizations, religious groups, teachers, labor unions, children's groups and business associations will promote increased cooperation and the creation of a sustainable anti-trafficking coalition. The WID Office is providing funds for a complementary effort with the IOM to track Haitian children trafficked to the Dominican Republic where Dominican NGOs will provide basic social services to the children.

Nicaragua. Social and economic conditions in Nicaragua are conducive to trafficking and the media recently has covered a number of sexual exploitation cases, yet most Nicaraguans are unaware that trafficking exists. The USAID Mission in Nicaragua will support a public awareness campaign to educate potential victims, their parents and families, educators, civil society, health workers and national and municipal government institutions about the dangers of trafficking. Protection and assistance for trafficking victims will include hotlines and medical, legal and psychosocial services. Target areas are the capital, Managua, and border regions. The USAID Mission in Nicaragua will also fund an assessment of trafficking and child prostitution, collecting baseline data to lay the groundwork for effective national, regional and international anti-trafficking strategies.

Central America Regional Program. More than 800 victims of trafficking for prostitution live in the economically depressed Guatemala-Mexico border area of San Marcos. About half are under age 18 and the majority are illiterate, from impoverished families, with a history of sexual abuse. Some have been lured to the area by promises of jobs as maids or waitresses, others have been deported from Mexico or sold by their families. USAID will augment the facilities and purchase furniture and equipment to sustain the long-term work of Casa de la Mujer, a shelter that provides food, counseling and medical attention to prostitutes. With USAID help, the four nuns who run Casa de Mujer will expand the skills training program to about 160 women annually. The Sisters will continue to travel through San Marcos offering information to at-risk women and girls.

Conclusions

Trafficking in persons is not only an abuse of the human rights of its victims, but also an affront to all our humanity.

Trafficking in persons in the 21st century is an abhorrent abuse of human rights. It is also an extremely complex issue, the elimination of which depends upon a multi-faceted approach and collaboration among multiple actors and actions within and across national borders.

The supply side of trafficking depends upon the existence of millions of individuals who are made vulnerable and susceptible to the tricks and force of traffickers by development problems including poverty, lack of education, gender and age based discrimination and cultural norms. The other side of the trafficking equation is the global demand for cheap labor and sex. The process that links the supply and the demand is facilitated by porous borders, corrupt officials, lack of political will to eliminate it, low public awareness of the problem and international criminal networks operating with impunity. Globalization and technology can play a positive role in combating trafficking, but they can also be a negative force. Sex tourism and "mail order brides" are advertised through the internet. Wireless technology aids the communication of traffickers.

Trafficking is a process, not an event, calling for different interventions at different phases in the process. The trafficking victim will never be the same person he or she was before being trafficked. The abuse leaves indelible impacts that may include HIV infection, physical injury, rejection by families, stigmatization by the community and lack of self-worth, making social integration of these individuals a challenge. Trafficked children are the most vulnerable and require special interventions that take their age and family situation into account.

Development efforts that lessen the vulnerability of women and children who are at high risk of trafficking are important. But, they are not the complete picture. As long as traffickers can operate in an environment of official complicity or at least neglect, they will continue to thrive even if forced to become cleverer in their ruses and abductions. Adequate legislation and the political will to enforce the law through prosecution of traffickers are necessary to end the environment of impunity within which these criminals so easily function. At the same time, the demand for trafficked labor and prostitution must be exposed through public awareness of the problem in destination countries.

This report describes a wide range of interventions to combat trafficking in persons throughout the world supported by USAID. Alone these activities will not end this pernicious abuse of human rights, but within country-based collaborative frameworks that have the committed participation of civil society, government, faith-based organizations and law enforcement, they can have powerful results.

USAID Office of Women in Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20523-3801 USA
Website: www.usaid.gov/wid

United States Agency for International Development