## The threat of human trafficking in Africa

Olawale I. Maiyegun Director Social Affairs Department African Union Commission People being tricked, lured, coerced or otherwise removed from their home or country, and then forced to work with no or low payment or on highly exploitive terms.

The practice is considered to be the trade or commerce of people, which has many features of slavery, and is illegal in most countries.

Victims used in a variety of situations - prostitution, forced labor and involuntary servitude, including the sale of babies and children for adoption or other purposes and trafficking in body parts. Africa highest percentage child labourers in the world (80 million or 41% African children work).

**Children between five and 14 years old.** 

- ILO: Between 200,000 and 300,000 children are trafficked each year for forced labour and sexual exploitation in West and Central Africa.
- UNICEF: 10,000 to 15,000 West African children work on cocoa plantations in Côte d'Ivoire, sold for up to \$340. UNICEF: 25,000 children working in markets and farms in Gabon.
- IOM: Ethiopian girls are trafficked to Middle East to work as domestic servants, but are subjected to physical and sexual abuse.
- Approximately 250 Somali teenagers and children, some as young as two years old, found abandoned by traffickers who took money from parents to 'place' them.

African countries are source, transit and destination countries for trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

Trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation not only growing but controlled by organised criminal gangs from Bulgaria, Russia, Thailand, China and Nigeria.

Child prostitution on the rise across Africa. ILO Rapid Assessment indicates serious child prostitution problem in Tanzania, while Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and The Gambia are becoming increasingly known as destinations for sex tourists.

Civil unrest, internal armed conflict and natural disasters destabilise and displace populations, increasing vulnerability to exploitation, abuse and trafficking.

Human Rights Watch estimates over 120,000 children used in armed conflicts in Africa.

Men, women and children continue to be abducted by all sides in African conflicts to serve as porters for looted goods, arms and ammunition, forced labourers, and sex slaves for military and militia officers. children to urban areas.

Factors such as exposure to world outside village important 'push' factors.

'Pull' factors include demand for cheap and malleable labour in informal economies and rapidly

growing demand for children for commercial sexual exploitation.

The negative consequences of trafficking on victims do not trickle back to rural areas. Victims often ashamed or afraid to return home. As a result, info regarding negative side of trafficking rarely reach home areas. Middle East for commercial sexual exploitation.

Trafficking networks, dominated by organized criminal groups, highly adaptive and have expanded operations throughout Africa.

Increased airport security and scrutiny of documents have forced traffickers to take their human cargo overland and maritime routes.

Victims often reluctant to return home after 'failing' to fulfil contracts and fear reprisals from both the traffickers and families. annually.Value of trafficked victims more ongoing than that of drugs or weapons. Trafficking victims, even if caught, can be re-trafficked and traffickers can make additional money off victims by re-selling them to another brothel owner or employer after debt is paid.

Also low risks make the trafficking business attractive. African traffickers face a low risk of arrest, prosecution, or other negative consequences.

Criminal groups engaged in illicit drug and firearms trafficking are taking advantage of their network and shifting to increasingly more profitable and "low risk" human trafficking Human trafficking thrives where the criminal justice

system is weak and many perpetrators to do

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## Mobilising against human trafficking

Traffickers are ruthless and murderous. Therefore, they must be pursued with vigour, frustrated and dismantled with the full force of the law

Human Trafficking is a transnational organized crime and it requires transnational organized response

Characteristics of the Criminal Groups involved in Human Trafficking must be properly studied and their modus operandi understood

Traditional MLA must be supplemented by Police-to Police or law enforcement cooperation

Increased joint investigation and use of special investigative techniques

Witness Protection Programme that will serve the purposes of investigation and prosecution

Robust Anti-Money Laundering (AML) regime that covers a wide range of predicate offences with

Efficient and effective confiscation system that comprise of both conviction-based and non-conviction based i.e. Confiscation in rem

## Thank you for your attention!