IOM Strengthens Capacities to Fight Trafficking in Persons in the Caribbean

For the past decade the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been working closely with Caribbean countries to prevent trafficking in persons, identify and assist victims of trafficking, pursue criminal justice actions against perpetrators and facilitate national, regional and global partnerships between stakeholders.

In October 2015 IOM was granted funding from the U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP) to implement a project to build capacity in four Caribbean countries. The project, entitled “Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of Criminal Justice Actors in the Caribbean to Counter Trafficking in Persons Using a Victim Centred Approach” is being implemented in Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. This project seeks to directly address the needs identified in the four participating countries to increase the capacity of law enforcement officials on victim-centered investigations and prosecutions of TIP cases. This project also seeks to strengthen the capacities of all actors in the criminal justice system to utilize victim-centered methods to identify victims, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate TIP cases.
To date the project has conducted needs assessments in the four project countries and has met with a total of 52 Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA’s) as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO’s). These assessments have provided IOM with insights into the countries’ counter trafficking efforts including their achievements, challenges and recommendations to strengthen their responses. In addition, in March 2016, IOM for the first time brought together Task Force Chairs and key stakeholders who lead counter TIP efforts from the four project countries and The Bahamas. This was in an effort to strengthen coordination to counter trafficking in persons in the Caribbean. The meeting provided a platform for stakeholders to discuss best practices and explore areas of possible collaboration and cooperation.

Over the upcoming months IOM has a number of project activities planned. This includes establishing a working group comprised of police officers, immigration officers, prosecutors and social workers who will be charged with developing a TIP manual for law enforcement officers. IOM will also be facilitating multi-agency trainings on TIP in Antigua and Barbuda, and Belize.

During the period in which IOM has been working with Caribbean countries to counter trafficking, it has delivered support through training stakeholders, providing assistance to victims and Governments, and raising public awareness through information campaigns. Over the years, Caribbean countries have displayed their commitment to countering trafficking in person leading to an increase in the number of cases investigated and successful prosecutions. In the past 10 years the number of trafficked persons identified by IOM’s Caribbean partners now exceeds 350.

This year, in observation of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on July 30th IOM has partnered with the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago to produce this newsletter. IOM hopes you find it an insightful read which showcases the counter trafficking efforts undertaken in each country.

For more information, please contact:
IOM Kingston
Email: iomkingston@iom.int
www.iom.int

Needs Assessment Interview with ATIPs Council in Belize © IOM 2016

Task Force Chairs Meeting Opening Ceremony Group Photo © IOM 2016
Countering Human Trafficking in Antigua and Barbuda

Antigua and Barbuda stands firmly with the rest of the world in observance of “World Day against Trafficking in Persons” which is acknowledged on July 30 annually.

The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, postulated thus:

“Every country must join together to overcome this transnational threat by supporting and protecting victims while pursuing and prosecuting the criminals. On the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, let us resolve to act as one in the name of justice and dignity for all”.

Trafficking in persons is modern-day slavery and as such, a crime against humanity. Against this backdrop, Antigua and Barbuda wholeheartedly associates itself with the Secretary General’s pronouncement and renews its commitment to the eradication of this horrific crime.

As evidence of our commitment to this cause since the observance of “World Day against Trafficking in Persons 2015”, we have significantly increased our efforts in a number of areas to ensure greater efficacy of our duties:

**Strengthening of Legislation**

The Minister of Legal Affairs, Public Safety and Labour, under whom the Trafficking in Persons Prevention Committee falls, moved swiftly to ensure the amendment of the anti-trafficking law to allow for human trafficking offenses to be tried not only as summary convictions in the magistrate court, but now on indictment in the high court, which would have jurisdiction to impose the maximum sentences of imprisonment. This “loophole” was identified and successfully plugged by the legislature in October 2015. The amendment provides a stronger platform for the responsible bodies to vigorously prosecute trafficking offenses and convict and punish traffickers, including officials complicit in trafficking.
Antigua and Barbuda (cont.)

Awareness Campaign Efforts

During this period also, a concerted effort was made to heighten awareness by the Education Task Force. A number of successful events were executed over a period of two weeks under theme: “STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING, PREVENTION IS THE ONLY CURE”. These include:

- Thanksgiving Service – TIPPC Chair addressed congregation
- Media Blitz – Media houses were swamped with personnel from the Committee and Task Forces educating the public
- Awareness presentations – Primary & secondary schools, community groups, NGOs, service organizations were sensitized
- Distribution of flyers, brochures, pamphlets – In town and at test cricket
- Launching of a Facebook Page – Utilize social media to engage a wider audience
- Awareness Street Fair – collaborating with various stake-holders(Gender Affairs, Aids Secretariat, Women Advocacy Group) to engage the public.
- Awareness March – Through the streets of the city, distributing pamphlets along the route

Training/Partnership

Antigua and Barbuda benefitted from a two-day meeting held in Belize in March 2016. This meeting was organized and sponsored by IOM Jamaica for Task Force Chairs and focused on discussing ways by which the countries could collaborate in “Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of Criminal Justice Actors in the Caribbean to Counter Trafficking in Persons Using a Victim Centred Approach”.

Additionally, the meeting engendered the opportunity to finalize the draft Project Plan of Action document, it provided a forum to exchange best practices and challenges among the participating countries in relation to counter trafficking efforts, and it facilitated discussions on developing a draft memorandum of understanding between countries in relation to either data-sharing, victim protection, or coordination of victim return. Certainly, it was an effort worthy of its cause.

This partnership is greatly assisting Antigua and Barbuda’s in its continued efforts of identifying and protecting trafficking victims; formalizing procedures for law enforcement, child welfare officials, and other front-line responders to identify victims and referring them to appropriate services; developing and adopting a national anti-trafficking plan; providing anti-trafficking training to diplomatic personnel; and continuing efforts to raise awareness among child protection specialists about child sex trafficking.

As we collaborate with our partners to observe “World Day against Trafficking in Persons 2016” it is critical for all as we forge ahead, to be strategic in upholding the 4Ps; Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership. Therefore, this is our message to the rest of the world: Be Vigilant! No One is Immune to Human Trafficking!
The Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Subcommittee of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council (A-TIPS) of Belize is hard at work implementing activities under its 2016 Action Plan. Some of our most recent initiatives include:

**Information dissemination at major public events:** The Council sets up information booths at major public events throughout the country, highlighting the issue of human trafficking on a large-scale. Thus far, the Council has attended five (5) major events for the year.

**Utility Worker’s Training:** In a proactive attempt to identify victims of trafficking, the Council is providing training to utility workers (who visit homes/businesses on a daily basis) on how to detect and report suspected cases of human trafficking.

**Community based education in rural areas and in schools:** The IEC subcommittee conducts presentations for schools in various districts, and to stakeholders in at-risk and vulnerable communities. Over 2,000 people have been reached to date.

**Billboards:** The Council recently put up six billboards in English and Spanish at prime locations, specifically at the Western border, Northern border, Phillip Goldson International Airport and three other major crossroads in the country.
The Counter Trafficking Response in Trinidad and Tobago

The Trinidad and Tobago Trafficking in Persons (TIPs) Act Chapter 12:10 is the governing legislation for addressing human trafficking in the country. The Act established the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) which is a specialized unit of the Ministry of National Security and has been operational since 2013. According to section 12 (d) of the Trinidad and Tobago TIPS Act, the CTU is responsible for “the day-to-day operations of the counter-trafficking response of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.” Along with this general fundamental responsibility, some other major functions of the CTU include:

- Preparing and implementing public awareness programmes
- Operating a hotline for the reporting of possible cases of trafficking in persons

The preparation and implementation of public awareness programmes is a major aspect of any strategy for combating human trafficking. This is primarily because of the relative prevailing novelty of the crime. In the particular case of Trinidad and Tobago, with the CTU becoming operational only in 2013, a crucial way by which we tackle the problem of human trafficking is through educating the public about what it is, how to recognise possible victims and traffickers, and who to make a report to if one knows or suspects human trafficking activity.

Another reason for promoting public awareness is to disabuse persons of the notion that human trafficking is a problem that occurs ‘elsewhere’ and not in our communities or neighbourhoods. Tied to this also is the fact that human trafficking can occur in a variety of ways. Therefore countries may acknowledge that human trafficking occurs, but they may nonetheless, hold the view that this applies only to certain types of trafficking to the exclusion of others. What persons should be made aware of is that traffickers can exploit people in varying ways. News reports from around the world, have reported of persons being forced to work in high-end bakeries or as chefs in hotels. Children who were also trafficked were forced to sing in choirs or work in laundromats. Just as these instances of human trafficking occur elsewhere, it is also possible that it can occur here in our region. Persons therefore, should remain open to the prospect that human trafficking can occur in seemingly incredulous ways.

Another notable reason for public awareness is the growth and ubiquitous use of social media. The popularity of this form of communication, particularly among young people, is not lost on human traffickers. As such, educating the public about the uses, and machinations that traffickers use to lure their victims via social media, is an imperative.

Human trafficking is a crime hiding in plain sight. This rather inconspicuous characteristic of the crime demands that persons be made more aware about it so as to prevent and pre-empt its spread.

The need for public awareness about human trafficking is also important given that it can be linked to other crimes. These may include, money laundering illegal drugs and arms trafficking, corruption and even murder. Given such linkages, public awareness is needed. Human trafficking’s linkages to other types of crimes necessitates that the public be made more aware of it for their own increased levels of safety and security. It is a crime where the negative impacts are not confined solely to its victims.

The operation of a toll-free hotline was launched by the CTU in March of 2015. Its launch has become a major way via which investigations are initiated. With its launch, all CTU staff and assigned officers received a week-long training on hotline response from a local NGO. At the training they learned about concepts such as active listening, having caller empathy, and repeating or paraphrasing what the caller has said. These are to ensure that the listener receives the information correctly.

Information about the CTU hotline is included in all the CTU’s promotional materials and electronic Public Service Announcements (PSAs). The CTU office telephone, email contact information and the CTU hotline have also been added to the Polaris Project’s Global Modern Slavery Directory [http://globalmodernslavery.org/](http://globalmodernslavery.org/).

Persons can call the hotline anonymously to make reports of known or suspected human trafficking activity. The CTU toll-free hotline number is 800-428-4(CTU).
Human Trafficking is an emerging crime in Jamaica. The Governmental response to the scourge of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) in Jamaica is the establishment of the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NATFATIP).

The NATFATIP, established in June 2005 is a multi agency approach by the Government of Jamaica to strengthen Jamaica’s legislative, institutional and operational capacity to combat Trafficking in Persons. Three committees propel the work of the NATFATIP namely Protection, Prosecution and Prevention.

Over the years, there have been significant efforts by Jamaica in combating Human Trafficking. These efforts include:

- The enactment of the legislation in 2007 Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppressions and Punishment) Act and recent amendments in 2013.
- Four convictions under said legislation since its enactment
- Specialized unit at the Jamaica Constabulary Force for investigation of cases
- Specialized unit at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to prosecute cases
- The operationalisation of a TIP shelter in 2013.
- Development of Victim Management Guidelines and Victim protection protocol to guide officials in treating with victims
- Development of a Trafficking in Person Database
- Development of Standard Operating Procedures to guide Health care workers, the Police and Immigration officials.
- Development and introduction of TIP curriculum in secondary schools
- Commissioning of Landscape Study Trafficking in Persons (2015)
- Governor General Proclamation, declaring Trafficking in Persons Week, July 24-30, 2016

Jamaica continues on its path to ensure the elimination of this offence. This is evident in, among other things, training for key personnel to include the Judiciary, Prosecutors, Law enforcement Officers, Labour Officers, Immigration and Customs Officers and Mental Health workers. Significant partnerships have been forged with multi-lateral organizations, including the United Nations Development and the International Organization for Migration. An intensive media campaign has been launched which includes the production on Public Service Announcements on Trafficking in Persons, documentary features, mounting of billboard at strategic locations.

Notably, Jamaica has been upgraded on the Tier Ranking to Tier 2, which means that the Government has been making significant strides in combating Trafficking in Persons.
IOM Kingston recently conducted a national Trafficking in Persons poster competition for youth aged 6 through to 25 in an effort to raise awareness about Human Trafficking and to commemorate World Day against Trafficking Persons 2016. Entrants were asked to express their understanding of trafficking in persons and how it affects the individual and/or society, through art. The competition was held in partnership with the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NATFATIP), the British High Commission in Kingston, and two private sector companies: Genesis Office Concept Ltd and Burger King Jamaica.
Counter-trafficking
Regional and global statistics at-a-glance

7,000 trafficked and exploited persons assisted in 2015

- **45%** women
- **13%** children
- **85%** cross-border trafficking cases
- **74%** trafficked for forced labour and services
- **17%** trafficked for sexual exploitation

**By region**

- **Northern America**: 2%
- **Central America and Caribbean**: 9.5%
- **Europe**: 24.5%
- **Western Asia**: 36.3%
- **South and Central Asia**: 25.5%
- **East and South-East Asia**: 23.2%
- **Africa**: 1%
- **Oceania**: 0.3%

**By age**

- **Children**: 12.9%
- **Adults**: 87.1%

**By sex**

- **Male**: 55.3%
- **Female**: 44.7%

**International vs Internal**

- **International**: 85.5%
- **Internal**: 14.5%

**By type of exploitation**

- **Forced labour or services**: 73.9%
- **Domestic work**: 18.2%
- **Other types of forced labour**: 79.2%
- **Sexual exploitation**: 16.7%
- **Combined sexual exploitation and forced labour**: 4.9%
- **Forced marriage**: 0.4%
- **Organ removal**: 0.1%
- **Other**: 2.0%
- **Unknown/Not yet exploited**: 2.0%

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iom.int/world-trafficking-day

Data reflects counter-trafficking trends in recent years and where IOM has the most extensive programming. It is not necessarily representative of global human trafficking trends.

Map is for illustrative purpose. Boundaries and names shown and designations used do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM. 21/77/16