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SPEECH

Panel 2: Combatting migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons

Distinguished guests,

Dear Director General, Mr. Vitorino,

thank you for your invitation to the IOM International Dialogue on Migration 2022. I consider the session on *Combatting migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons* a very much needed one. It is an honour for me to attend this session and I'm grateful to the other participants who are sharing here their experience from which we all can learn.

Since 2005 - when the counter-trafficking law was adopted- the Moldovan Government has been doing considerable efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in persons . Each year considerable progress is achieved against the recommendations provided by different international bodies, in order to protect victims and hold criminals accountable.

Please, allow me now to share with you the latest best practices that Moldova has deployed in this field in twenty-nineteen and twenty-twenty.

I will start with the specialisation of judges in combating human trafficking and related crimes. Aiming to have this implemented, the Prosecutor General addressed the Superior Council of Magistrates, which agreed to examine the issue. Subsequently, since twenty-twenty, Moldova has judges specialised in human trafficking and related crimes, such as forced labour, organisation of illegal migration, trafficking of organs. Later, upon the request of the judges themselves, this decision of the Council was amended, aiming at ensuring that a victim-centered approach is mainstreamed in the action of prosecutors, in view of the extreme protection needs faced by victims of trafficking.

The second positive achievement that I would like to share, is related to combating online sexual exploitation. Moldova developed a Guide on International and National Legal Norms/Instruments in the field of combating child abuse and sexual exploitation using information and communication technologies. The guide imposes a unitary approach of cases on online sexual exploitation and describes the best practices in the field. It is mandatory for prosecutors and criminal investigation officers to follow that guide during their activity. Moreover, the Guide has the merit of being developed in cooperation with the international NGO La Strada.

Another key achievement is the development and official approval of the Guide to Conducting Parallel Financial Investigations. The guide was approved by the Prosecutor General's order of 2019, and it is a long-awaited instrument, of mandatory nature to prosecutors and criminal investigation officers. The guide was developed with IOM support.

Despite the good results I have described so far, some key challenges for us still remain:

- The broad use of the Internet and Communication Technologies, which opens up to new venues for traffickers to exploit their victims, and poses a continuous challenge to legal frameworks, investigations and prosecutions;
- Increasing economic inequality between different social strata, between people from different regions of the same countries as well as between citizens of countries of destination and origin. Socio economic inequalities continue to fuel the offer and the demand for trafficking;

Specialized Prosecutors will stay committed to fight the crime of Trafficking in Persons in Moldova and will continue active cooperation with all national and international stakeholders to ensure, not only prosecution, but also victims centered approach and respect of the right of the victims. We consider that only strong partnerships and dialogues at all levels will contribute to eradicate this phenomenon on which should be one of the priorities for each country.

These being said, thank you for your attention!