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Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings – Presentation on the occasion of the AHC meeting, 16 Dec. 99

Trafficking in human beings is an issue that has been grossly neglected by society at large, but also by Governments. Criminal justice systems, in most cases, are ill prepared to face this new global challenge. Women and children are targeted by organized crime which makes them vulnerable to human rights abuse. A bilateral approach is not enough to face this type of transnational crime. An answer at the international level is required.

With your support, we will be able to assist in two ways. One is the work on the Convention and the three additional protocols, for which you have come here. The other tool we developed is the Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings. It was launched in March of this year. Since then, we, i.e. CICP and UNICRI, have developed projects in four regions. They will assist countries of origin, transit and destination to develop joint strategies and practical actions.

The projects offer various types of assistance responding to the specific needs of countries. This includes strengthening their institutional capacity, launching awareness raising and prevention campaigns, and training of law enforcement officers. Improving cooperation at the national and international levels is another major concern of the Global Programme. Victim-witness protection programs will offer improved safety to victims. Such programs will also contribute to successful investigation and prosecution by guaranteeing their testimony in court.

For measures to be effective they have to be based on thorough knowledge. Reliable data on trafficking in human beings are not readily available. Through close contacts with national authorities we will increase the overall knowledge on trafficking. Interviews with key officials of criminal justice, immigration and social agencies will enable us to better understand the structures and modalities used by organized criminal groups. In addition, a collection of best practices will be compiled in a databank for use by policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and the NGO community.

The Global Programme will lead to the formulation of an international strategy, to be based on the outcome of the national and regional projects. The results of the Global Programme should then be presented and discussed at a global forum.

Technical cooperation projects are on their way in four regions: South-East Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Western Africa. In the Philippines we started a pilot project. Activities range from establishing a national coordination mechanism, developing a database on organised crime involvement in trafficking, awareness-raising and training for law enforcement officers, to supporting victims and witnesses. The implementation of

existing national legislation and international agreements on criminal matters and problems encountered by law enforcement officers and criminal justice personnel are also going to be confronted. A Rapid Assessment Report has been prepared, ready for distribution, by UNICRI in collaboration with AIC.

In Eastern Europe, a project was started in collaboration with the European Commission. An assessment mission to the Czech Republic was carried out in November, others are to follow this and next month.

In October 1999, a mission to Brazil initiated discussions on a project for the Latin-American region. A follow-up expert mission will take place in the first quarter of 2000 to prepare an in-depth evaluation of the situation.

Another project is about to start in West Africa.

Contributions and pledges for 1999 are (more or less) in line with the budgetary estimates of the Global Programme. We would like to take this occasion to thank the Governments and institutions that have allowed us to start with our Programme. In order to continue with our projects as foreseen we will need approximately 2.3 million US \$ for the year 2000.

Criminal justice action is one of the answers to trafficking in human beings. In this respect, we will continue to cooperate closely with all our partners at the national level to find the appropriate answers. We will maintain our working links with those international organizations and the NGO community that addresses various other aspects of trafficking.

We will need an intensive dialogue between the donor and participating countries to make this Programme successful. We need your continued political commitment and your financial support.

Thank you.