

The meeting on the ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL NEEDS AND TENDENCIES IN COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING –THE ROLE OF NGOs was held in 3 sessions. In their presentations, representatives from public agencies and organizations, non-governmental organizations and academic circles from Turkey and from abroad gave information on their activities and shared their experiences in the field of combating human trafficking. Within this framework, the following items were agreed upon unanimously:

-Taking into consideration that factors such as economic and social problems, political instability, geographic locations etc play a role in the root of the phenomenon of human trafficking, these factors must be kept in mind for a permanent solution;

-In combating human trafficking, basic concepts such as trafficking in persons, trafficking in women, migrant smuggling and so on should be understood and used as defined in the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;

-Since human trafficking is a global issue, it requires international cooperation; hence, national and international mechanism should be established in line with the rapidly changing tendencies and any existing mechanisms should be strengthened, and flow of information should be rendered more practical;

-A communication network should be established between NGOs and enforcement units on a national and international basis; strong cooperative structures should be established, and experiences and best practices should be exchanged on a national and international level;

-In order to apprehend and take penal action against perpetrators, cooperation should be promoted between law enforcements units and judicial bodies of relevant countries, and advanced policing measures should be taken;

-Scientific studies on the phenomenon of human trafficking should be carried out on a national and regional level;

-Noting that the meeting provides opportunities for direct connection between organizations working in the field, efforts should be continued to organize national and international meetings;

-Whereas the need for cooperation in the field of combating human trafficking is frequently emphasized, there is no clarity as to how this cooperation should be established;

- In countries facing the problem of human trafficking, weight should be given to awareness raising/informative and educational efforts and the public sensitivity on the issue should be increased;

- Taking into consideration that mostly the women and children fall victim to human trafficking, and that trafficking in women is one of the severest forms of violence against women, there is a need to increase the effectiveness of actions against gender-based discrimination;

- There is a need to create public resources for an effective combat against human trafficking;

-The organizational capacities of all agencies working in the field of combating human trafficking should be increased;

-Noting that combating in this field requires continuity and expertise, and hence relocation or reappointment of the law enforcement officials working in this field after they reach a certain level of knowledge and experience cripples the combat, this knowledge and experience should be taken into account when relocating these personnel, and studies should be undertaken to deepen the specialization of those who combat this crime;

-In the combating human trafficking, local solutions should be produced in consideration of the regional and local characteristics;

- Legal arrangements and practices with regard to work and residence permits and visa procedures should be reviewed, and measures should be taken to prevent false marriages;

-Human trafficking is a new form of slave trafficking, and hence should be punished most severely;

-Within the framework of the conventions to which they are parties, States should make the necessary arrangements in their legislations, and set up mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the practice, with a determination to ensure due implementation of legislation;

-NGOs should be included actively in all phases of the above-mentioned process; the number of NGOs working in this field should be increased, and existing NGOs should be strengthened;

-Public agencies, NGOs, universities, the private sector, local governments, professional organizations and the citizens should work in cooperation and coordination in combating human trafficking;

-the continuity of the State-NGO relations should be ensured within the framework of specific norms;

- Agencies and NGOs combating human trafficking should be strengthened financially;
- NGOs should participate in the process of determining Counter-Trafficking Policies;
- Common criteria should be developed with regard to identifying the victims, and parties, national and international, should carry out their activities and transactions in line with these criteria;
- Exposure in the media of victims of human trafficking, which re-victimizes them, should be prevented; the media should be informed in that regard and encouraged to take an active part in the efforts; when introducing this issue to the public, concrete examples of both the criminal and the humanistic aspects thereof should be covered;
- In consideration of the importance of cooperation between the victim and the judicial and law enforcement units, special sensitivity should be employed when contacting victims, and communication with them should be established via persons who speak the same language and share the same cultural values;
- It should be ensured that victims of human trafficking receive quality legal assistance, and any shortcomings in this regard should be rectified expeditiously;
- Programs should be developed to ensure that victims are reintegrated into society following their return to their home countries; and cooperation in this field should be increased;
- The sustainability of the shelters established to protect and rehabilitate victims should be ensured, and new shelters should be opened as needed,
- Special studies should be undertaken with regard to victims, who constitute one of the main pillars of the combat against human trafficking;
- There should be a police attaché at consulates located where this problem is experienced frequently;
- Whereas human trafficking mostly occurs in the form of sexual exploitation, measures should also be taken with regard to other forms of human trafficking;
- In the prevention of human trafficking, due emphasis should be given to the efforts of the Council of Europe and to the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings which has been opened for approval by countries.