22/02/19

Half-Day General discussion on Trafficking in Women and Girls

in the Context of Global Migration

Statement by the Republic of Cyprus

Cyprus would like to thank the Committee for holding this general discussion with the view to prepare the elaboration of a General Recommendation on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration.

The Republic of Cyprus is committed to preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.

In this regard Cyprus has enacted a solid legal framework to combatting this phenomenon. The legislation is based on the Palermo Protocol, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking, as well as the EU directive 2011/36 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims and finally; through its commitment towards the CEDAW Convention.

Regrettably, despite our best efforts, Cyprus continues to be a destination country for victims of sexual & labor exploitation and forced marriage.

Therefore, my government has revisited the enacted legislation, reevaluating the root causes of trafficking, by recognizing that one of the root causes of trafficking is the demand of services from victims of human trafficking.

Since 2014, the Republic has criminalized the use of services from victims of trafficking. Specifically Article 17 of the Trafficking Law 60(I) 2014 “*penalizes persons who use services provided by victims of trafficking if they should reasonably have been able to assume that the service was provided by a victim of trafficking*.”

The Parliament of Cyprus, in close consultation with the Government and civil society organizations within the context of the implementation of SDGs and the Government’s international obligations, notably, the CEDAW convention, is proceeding to the amendment of the specific article.

With this amendment, the definition of demand shall include the end-users of the services of victims (the clients), the trafficker who is smuggling, exploiting, recruiting, or pushing women into prostitution. It shall also include the employer of victims, the owner of any establishments where victims of trafficking are offering services and any other person involved in the chain of trafficking.

The amendment of the said article shall further strengthen the protection of victims of trafficking; while suggesting the criminalization of the use of services of victims, by removing the “reasonable assumption” when it comes to sexual exploitation.

Cyprus is confident that the previous mentioned amendments of the Trafficking Law will enhance the respective legislation with the view to making it more effective and victim’s oriented.

Allow me to conclude by thanking once more the Committee for the elaboration of this General Recommendation; which will provide further guidance to our efforts.