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"Violence against women: Good practices in  
combating and eliminating violence against women"

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**TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND GOOD  
PRACTICES FOR ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS**

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# Trafficking in Women For Sexual Exploitation and Good Practices for Addressing the Problem by all Stakeholders

## I. INTRODUCTION

Trafficking in human beings, especially in minors and young women, for the purpose of sexual exploitation has become an issue of major concern globally because of its rapid growth in recent years. The phenomenon has become more transnational in scope. An important feature of the increase in human trafficking has been the growing involvement of criminal organizations who exploit of the urge to migrate felt by those who live in the world's poorer nations (Luda, 2003). Western Europe is a major destination of trafficked women.

Human trafficking is defined by the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (The Palermo Convention and Protocol) as follows: Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. Trafficking for the purpose of sexual or economic exploitation is considered a contemporary form of slavery, and a serious violation of women's human rights.

to slavery

traffickers or employers can lead to fines, threats, physical violence, and even death. Victims live in fear of their employers or of being discovered by the police and repatriated.

Nigeria has been identified as a centre for the illicit trade in human beings, acting as a provider (origin), receiver (destination) and transit point. Evidence shows that a large proportion of women trafficked to Europe, especially Italy, are from Nigeria (UNODC/UNICRI, 2003). Nigerians, primarily women, are also trafficked to work on plantations in other African countries, including Gabon, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Benin. Other significant destinations for trafficked Nigerians include the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Spain, France, and other countries in the Middle East (US Department of State, 2001). Data also show that children from Togo, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana are trafficked to Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Cameroon and Gabon. Children are trafficked both in and out of Nigeria (UNICEF, 2003a). Nigeria also serves as a transit hub for trafficking in West Africa and to a lesser extent, a destination point for young children from nearby West African countries. There is also evidence of trafficking in women and children within Nigeria. (US Department of State, 2001).

Although trafficking in women has been on the increase for some time, responses to it are relatively recent. Little attention was paid to the problem of trafficking in human beings in Nigeria, especially by government agencies. Some NGOs and other organizations have been involved in combating human trafficking in Nigeria for some time. The NGOs and other organizations offered a variety of services to victims of trafficking. Studies of the nature and dimensions of trafficking showed that until recently, there were no specific laws in Nigeria which prohibit trafficking in humans (UNICRI/UNODC, 2003; UNODC, 2004). Reliance was on two principal criminal codes. In 2003, The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, 2003, was signed into law by the President. Government, NGOs and the international community are now involved in programmes to combat trafficking in women for sexual exploitation (UNODC, 2004).

Although the effectiveness of most of these policies and programmes are yet to be fully evaluated, since most of them are recent or not yet fully developed, some of them qualify to be described as good practices. The paper discusses initiatives to combat trafficking in women which qualify as good practices examples in combating trafficking in women for sexual exploitation. They include policies, programmes and legislation aimed at combating and eliminating trafficking in women for sexual exploitation, focusing on Nigerian examples. Section two of this paper discusses the concept of good practices. Section three discusses some good practice initiatives for combating trafficking in women in Nigeria. Section four discusses why they should be regarded as good practices, while section five concludes the paper.

## II. CONCEPT OF GOOD PRACTICES

When is an initiative a good practice? ILO/IPEC in its publication identifying good practices for combating child labour emphasized that it is important to identify and document good practices in order to share information between various audiences, including target groups, and to show how an objective can be approached more effectively (ILO/IPEC, 2003). According to ILO/IPEC, a good practice is any procedure that works well in terms of its action to achieve a given objective, in this case, action against trafficking in women. A good practice can be any type of practice, whether large or small. It should however be in full or partially, a tried and proven good practice. It need not be a project or programme, it could be a policy-level activity, or a specific process (ILO/IPEC, 2003). Good practices enable us to learn from the successful experiences and lessons of others and then to apply them more broadly. Such practices can stimulate new ideas or suggest adaptations. They can also provide guidance on how to effectively prevent violence against women (trafficking).

ILO/IPEC identified 7 criteria for identifying a good practice (ILO/IPEC, 2003). They will be phrased with reference to trafficking in women, they are:

- Innovative or creative: What is special about the practice in terms of action against trafficking in women that makes it of potential interest to others who wish to combat trafficking in women?
- Effectiveness/impact: What evidence is there that the practice has actually made a difference in terms of combating trafficking in women. Can this impact be documented either through a formal programme evaluation or some other means?
- Replicability: Can this practice help to combat trafficking in women in other situations or settings? It does not have to be copied exactly to be useful to others, it could be adapted, or some elements of it may be useful to other holders.
- Sustainability: Is the practice, and/or its benefits likely to continue in some way, and to continue being effective over the medium to long term? For example, can the project/programme continue after its initial funding expires? Or can it change attitudes towards trafficking in women?
- Relevance: How will the practice contribute, directly or indirectly, to action against trafficking in women?
- Responsiveness and ethical force: Is the practice respectful of the interests of and desires of women and others? Is it consistent with principles and standards of professional conduct? Were women given a voice to ensure that their interests and perspectives were taken into account?
- Efficiency and implementation: Were resources (human, financial, and material) used in a way that maximizes impact?

Although one cannot wait to get the perfect good practice to combat trafficking in women, it is sometimes useful to grade practices at different levels – from well-developed and tested at one end of the spectrum, to first trials at the other end, even though the latter may be imaginative and creative approaches (ILO/IPEC, 2003). Thus the ILO/IPEC publication (2003) also recommended that good practices be ranked at three levels as follows:

- Innovative practices: practices at this level may not be substantiated by data or formal evaluation, but they may have been tried and a case made, using the seven criteria listed earlier, about their effectiveness.
- Successfully demonstrated practices: Practices at this level have been demonstrated to be successful in one setting, location or situation. It has characteristics of being potentially transferable to other settings.
- Replicated good practices: Practices at this level have demonstrably worked in many locations or situations, for example, across countries, sectors, projects, or different settings addressed by the same project (such as different communities or groups).

Thus the initiatives to address trafficking in women out of Nigeria will be assessed by the seven criteria outlined earlier and grouped into the three levels listed by the ILO. For lack of space and time, initiatives in this paper will be discussed under the following (in recognition of the different stakeholders):

- Initiatives by government.
- Initiatives by NGOs, and
- Initiatives by international organizations.

### III. GOOD PRACTICE INITIATIVES IN COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The UN General Assembly in its resolution 55/67 of December 4, 2000, urged governments to devise, enforce and strengthen effective measures to combat and eliminate all

forms of trafficking in women and girls through a comprehensive anti-trafficking strategy consisting of: legislative measures, reintegration of victims, and prosecution of offenders (UN, 2002). In the last few years, Nigeria has accepted this challenge and adopted, with the support of all stakeholders, a comprehensive set of initiatives to combat trafficking in women for sexual exploitation. Stakeholders include the Nigerian government, NGOs, victims and their families, transit and destination countries, and other international organizations.

Studies to define and explore the nature and dimensions of the problem of trafficking in Nigeria, identified explanatory factors to include: low valuation of and low level of education of girls; lack of employment opportunities for the youth; poverty and large family sizes, and greater willingness of girls to sacrifice themselves in order to assist their families. With respect to child trafficking, predisposing factors include: high demand for cheap and submissive child labourers; poverty and lack of employment opportunities; inadequate educational opportunities (including poor quality educational facilities in rural areas); desire to travel by the young; the practice of child fosterage (that is, sending children to live with wealthier relations and friends); large family sizes and death of a parent; and ignorance by parents of the implications of releasing their children to traffickers. Others were the liberalization of trade and movement across borders within the ECOWAS region which made policing the borders difficult; lack of commitment by government and policy makers; inadequacies of criminal and law enforcement agencies to combat trafficking, etc (UNICRI/UNODC, 2003; UNODC, 2004).

Data from these studies showed that travel papers were mostly false. Victims trafficked to Europe travelled either by air, land and sea, through the Sahara Desert and across the Mediterranean Sea into Europe. Victims earnings from sexual exploitation were retained by their madams/sponsors until their debt was paid. Madams/sponsors were usually the central figure in the trafficking business. In the case of children, victims were trafficked across land borders or freighted by sea to Gabon, a popular destination. Girls are used for domestic work

and young women being trafficked into Italy for the purpose of prostitution (n)T

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- Taking such measures and or in collaboration with other agencies or bodies that may ensure the elimination and prevention of the root causes of the problem of traffic in any person;
- Strengthening and enhancing the effective legal means for international cooperation in criminal matters for suppressing the international activities of traffic in persons;
- Taking charge, supervising, controlling and coordinating the rehabilitation of trafficked persons and participating in proceedings relating to traffic in persons

countries. They have been able to combine their capabilities to address the problem of trafficking. Their activities have focussed on preventive awareness campaigns and rehabilitation activities for victims.

### Initiatives by International Organizations

*Preventive activities:* These have taken various forms:

- *Agreements with origin countries:* As mentioned earlier, in September 2000, Nigeria and Italy signed a bilateral agreement designed to combat clandestine immigration which included commitments relating to welfare and respect of human rights in the repatriation of illegal migrants. Collaboration between origin and destination countries is very important if success is to be achieved in combating trafficking in women for sexual exploitation.
- *Diagnosis of the dimensions of the problem through research:* In order to address the problem effectively, it is important to have an accurate diagnosis of the situation as a basis for designing appropriate policies and programmes. In the last two or three years, a number of international agencies have conducted research on the nature of trafficking in women and children in Nigeria. These agencies have included UNICRI, UNODC, and UNICEF. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided the funds to conduct a study of trafficking in women for sexual exploitation from Nigeria to Italy in 2003.

*Rehabilitation/Resettlement activities:* These have taken the form of:

- *Establishment of rehabilitation centres.* The IOM in particular has been active in this direction in Nigeria. They have established a shelter for repatriated victims in Benin City and a much larger one in Lagos. Victims who were interviewed for the two studies of trafficking in women in Nigeria identified the importance of rehabilitation centres to assist victims to reintegrate into society (UNICRI/UNODC, 2003; UNODC, 2004).
- *Support of rehabilitation programmes:* The Italian government supports the NGO Coalition in Edo State to provide skills training and micro credit to repatriated victims. A second phase of the project is in the pipeline.

*Prosecution related activities:* A number of international agencies UNICRI and UNODC have organized training programmes within as well as outside Nigeria. These programmes were designed to train law enforcement agencies (Police, Immigration, and Justice) to enhance their capacities to combat trafficking in human beings. The training programmes have aimed at improving their knowledge of the nature and dimensions of trafficking in order to enhance their abilities to apprehend as well as to prosecute traffickers. Some have been accompanied with provision of funds and equipment to assist them in their activities. The Italian Government especially, has helped to provide financial and material support to law enforcement agencies. The United States Government



under the Penal or Criminal Codes as was the case in Nigeria before the 2003 Act was passed. Passing a comprehensive Act makes it easier to prosecute offenders. In Nigeria, the Act also established an agency to implement the law. Other innovative initiatives are the setting up of a coalition of NGOs to combat trafficking, signing of memorandum of agreement with destination countries (Italy) and transit countries (ECOWAS). International collaboration between all affected countries (origin, transit and host) countries is indispensable for effective combat of trafficking. Another innovation is conducting studies to identify the nature of the problem as a basis for the design of anti-trafficking programmes.

**Responsiveness/Relevance:** All stakeholders were involved in the two studies to identify the dimensions of the problem. These included government agencies, law enforcement agencies (Police, Immigration and Judiciary), victims, NGOs, members of the community (experts), and international agencies (international NGOs and Embassies). The needs, constraints and interests of all stakeholders were therefore identified by the studies.

**Replicability:** The initiatives are replicable and can be transferred to or adapted for other environments. Several of them are already being implemented in other countries/regions where trafficking is a major issue, for example in Eastern and Western Europe. These include preventive and support programmes, especially. Majority of destination countries are yet to legislate against trafficking, apart from signing international protocols, and modifying their Criminal or Penal Codes to accommodate human trafficking (Council of Europe, 2003).

**Sustainability:** Although these initiatives are relatively new, they are potentially sustainable. Many of them were put in place since 2003. With the legislation and establishment of an anti-trafficking agency, the combat against trafficking is now more coordinated. Activities now revolve around the agency (NAPTIP), instead of being piecemeal as was the case in the past. All other agencies – Police and Immigration – now collaborate with NAPTIP as the lead agency. More traffickers are now being apprehended and prosecuted, unlike in the past where it was not sure which agency should prosecute them and where (which court) they were to be prosecuted. Furthermore, awareness campaigns have been intensified, and more people are now aware of the modalities of trafficking.

**Responsiveness:** All the initiatives are responses to the problems identified by the studies which identified the needs of victims, why they are vulnerable, the constraints faced by law enforcement agencies and so on.

**Efficiency:** The objective of the initiatives is to combat trafficking and if possible eliminate it. Although accurate statistics on the volume of trafficking are difficult to obtain because of its clandestine nature, indications are that more potential victims and their parents are now aware of the modalities and are less likely to be deceived. However, other programmes to eradicate poverty and create employment opportunities are necessary, to reduce vulnerability of poor families to traffickers. Despite constraints of resources, the initiatives have led to increased awareness of the evils of trafficking and enhancement of the capacities of law enforcement agencies to combat trafficking through training programmes

#### Levels of Good Practice

The initiatives described can also be categorised into levels of good practices as outlined in section two earlier: innovative, successfully demonstrated, and replicated good practices.

Table 1: Levels of good practices

Innovative	<p>Innovative initiatives which can be adopted in or modified for other environments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Legislation on trafficking.</li> <li>▪ Establishment of an anti-trafficking agency.</li> <li>▪ Research on trafficking in women and children.</li> <li>▪ Formation of coalition by NGOs to combat trafficking.</li> <li>▪ Signing of bilateral agreements with destination countries (Italy), and multilateral agreements with destination/transit countries (ECOWAS).</li> <li>▪ Skills training and micro credit to repatriated victims to reintegrate them into the society.</li> </ul>
Successfully demonstrated	<p>Initiatives which have been successfully demonstrated are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Awareness campaigns to educate and sensitize the community.</li> <li>▪ Training of law enforcement officers.</li> </ul>
Replicated	<p>Initiatives which have already been replicated elsewhere include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of shelter for victims.</li> </ul>

Since most of these initiatives are still recent (most of them commenced after 2003), their impacts and effectiveness are yet to be evaluated. Overall, it is safe to say that they are making impacts. It is likely that the volume of women trafficked out of the country is on the decline. In general, the following have been achieved.

People are now more aware of the problem of trafficking, they are also on the alert as more people now report suspicious movements to the authorities..

More offenders are now being apprehended and prosecuted.

The capabilities of law enforcement agencies to combat trafficking have been enhanced.

Government agencies are now more involved, unlike in the past when it was left only to NGOs.

International agencies and governments have supported the country's efforts to combat trafficking in women and children.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Over the past few years, Nigeria has made significant progress in reducing the number of women and girls out of Nigeria for sexual exploitation.

