To the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

**On General Recommendations on Trafficking in Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration**

As Ukrainian experts on gender equality, specialists in international law and human rights, we ask the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to consider our recommendations on methods that can be effective in combating trafficking in women and girls.

In accordance with Article 6 of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women*.

The Protocol as of 15 November 2000 on the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime ratified by Ukraine, requires States parties to "use or improve legislative or other measures ... aimed at counteracting the demand that gives rise to the exploitation of people, especially women and children, in all its forms, as it leads to trafficking in human beings."

The Council of Europe's Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, ratified by Ukraine, calls demand one of the root causes of trafficking in human beings and obliges to adopt legislative, administrative, educational, social, cultural or other measures for the elimination of demand, or to strengthen them. In Resolution No. 1983 (2014), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe calls upon all member states to consider criminalising the purchase of sexual services, based on the Swedish (Nordic) model, as the most effective tool for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings.

We support the above-mentioned provisions about counteracting demand as it leads to trafficking in human beings, and ask the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to include in Draft general recommendation on trafficking of women and girls in the context of global migration (hereinafter GR) the following:

1. GR should recommend strengthening the efforts of States in the fight against trafficking of women and girls by fighting the demand for sexual exploitation (criminalizing of clients);
2. GR should recommend strengthening the protection of victims of trafficking of women and girls by abolishing any punishment of prostituted persons.
3. GR should include the full Palermo definition of trafficking and article that addresses demand, cite Article 6 of the CEDAW completely, not partially, because trafficking and prostitution are interdependent: we cannot fight them separately.
4. GR should include concerns about the role of digital technologies in the growth of trafficking of women and girls, underlining concerns about the objectification and commodification of girls and women.
5. GR should include the vulnerabilities of women trafficked for labour to sexual violence, sexual exploitation and the exploitation of prostitution. GR should not include prostitution under labour or services or as “women’s work”.
6. GR should omit any terms like “forced sexual exploitation” or “forced prostitution”, “worst forms of child labour” (which includes prostitution) because these are not terms of international law and it violates Palermo Protocol, CRC and CEDAW.
7. GR should include recommendation to Governments to disaggregate trafficking statistics by sex, age and form of exploitation under SDG indicator 16.2.2.
8. GR should request States and organizations to go beyond the HIV/AIDS framework when addressing access to health care and to conduct research on the pervasive physical and psychological harms of trafficking on women and girls.

With the assurance of our highest consideration,

Yours sincerely,

**Julia Strebkova**, Docent (Associate Professor), PhD in Philosophy, Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Ukrainian Gender Education Center, Vice-director of the sciences and methodology

**Larysa Denysenko**, Attorney at Law, Writer

**Maria Dmytriyeva**, National gender expert, scholar, trainer and researcher

**Dr. Svitlana Babenko**, Docent (Associate Professor), PhD in Sociology, Department of Social Structures and Social Relations, Head of MA Program "Gender Studies" Faculty of Sociology  
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine

**Natalia Semchuk**, barrister, PhD, Senior Lecturer of Law Faculty (Department of Criminal Law and Process), National Aviation University

**Olena Zaitseva**, lawyer, former national Consultant on Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination to Ministry for Regional Development, Building and Housing of Ukraine