**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**

**HALF-DAY GENERAL DISCUSSION ON TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL MIGRATION – 22 FEBRUARY 2019**

Chairperson

South Africa takes this opportunity to congratulate the Committee on holding its 72nd Session and the hosting of this very important general discussion on “Trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration” to prepare for the elaboration of a General Recommendation on this topic. The discussion itself comes at an opportune time as 2019 marks 40 years since the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and 30 years since the adoption of the Convention on the Right of the Child were adopted. The Convention presented and continues to present a major milestone in the advancement of women and addressing the intersecting forms of discrimination that many women and girls face.

Chairperson

South Africa is encouraged by the work of the Committee in developing the General Recommendation on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration. Trafficking and migration are complex issues that impact all member states. Article 6 of the CEDAW encourages member states to “take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women”.

In this regard, South Africa is pleased to share that the country in addition to having a Constitution that upholds the principles of equality and human dignity; is a signatory to the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially women and children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. As a result and to give effect to the provisions of these instruments, South Africa passed the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act, No.7 of 2013 which subsequently came into force on 09 August 2015 with the exception of Sections 15, 16 and 31 (b)(ii). 09 August is very symbolic for women in South Africa as it is National Women’s Day where the country recognises the contributions made by women from all walks of life who have contributed towards eliminating discrimination against women.

Chairperson

The Prevention and Combating in Persons Act fulfils four main objectives; namely to: provide for an offence of trafficking in persons and other offences associated with trafficking in persons; prevent and combat the trafficking in persons within and across the borders of the Republic; provide for measures to protect and assist victims of trafficking in persons; and provide for the establishment of the Inter-Sectoral Committee on Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons which is now operational. In having these objectives in the legislation, South Africa aims to ensure comprehensive protection for women and children. Furthermore, in relation to global migration, South Africa has a comprehensive set of legislative and policy frameworks such as the White Paper on International Migration, the Immigration Act, and Refugees Act.

Chairperson

My delegation firmly believes that today’s discussion is most relevant for member states such as my country as this will provide better understanding and interpretation of Article 6 of CEDAW and hence allow member states to strengthen their domestic measures to tackle trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration. This will further enhance international cooperation among states and other entities dealing with this issue to ensure comprehensive protection for those women and girls vulnerable and survivors of trafficking in persons.

Chairperson

South Africa places great emphasis on regional and international cooperation to combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. In this respect, South Africa is working with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in conducting awareness training campaigns with traditional leaders in communities to educate them on issues related to trafficking in persons and smuggling in migrants to empower them about safe migration options available for the benefit of their communities. In addition, South Africa actively participates in regional counter-trafficking in persons initiatives such as the establishment of the SADC Prosecutors Reference Group that is tasked with updating case database and therefore strengthen the prosecutorial capacity of member states within the region.

Finally, Chairperson, South Africa reiterates its continued support to the work of the Committee in carrying out its mandate and ensuring the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. We firmly believe that the initiative to develop this General Recommendation will strengthen prevention and protection measures related to trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration.