

**Message by the UNODC Executive Director
High-Level Meeting on Migration and Human Rights
Panel on: Roundtable 2 of the High-Level Dialogue: protecting the
human rights of migrants**

Geneva, 4 September 2013

Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to speak at this important meeting on migration and human rights.

Unfortunately, I cannot be with you today in person. But I am very glad that the UN Office on Drugs and Crime is contributing to the discussion.

UNODC works in areas, that see some of the most acute abuses of human rights: namely, the smuggling of migrants, and the modern form of slavery known as trafficking in persons.

Our efforts help to prevent and combat the abuse and exploitation that thousands of human beings face every day, across the globe.

The UNTOC is the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organized crime and has two supplementary protocols which target human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

As the guardian of the Convention and its protocols, UNODC works with Member States to help them bring legislation in line with the agreed framework.

We also support States in strengthening and coordinating the criminal justice response to human trafficking, which also has a migration context, and migrant smuggling as such.

But the victims of these serious crimes should not be the subject of related criminal sanctions.

Rather, we must bring to justice the real criminals who exploit them. This is made clear in the Protocols, which emphasize full protection of the rights of trafficking victims and migrants.

We have achieved progress since the Protocols came into force one decade ago. The level of ratification is very high: 157 States have ratified the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, and 137 the Migrant Smuggling Protocol.

Nevertheless, the available data consistently indicate that significant challenges remain with implementation.

The protocols require comprehensive action on 4 fronts, what has been termed the “4 Ps”– prevention, prosecution, partnership and protection.

It is not possible to respond to these crimes without a coordinated, rights-based approach to migration, and concrete action on protecting trafficked persons and smuggled migrants.

Firstly, what is needed is the firm political commitment of governments and the resources to put this into practice. This includes full implementation of the UNTOC and the protocols.

Secondly, as the GA prepares for the second High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development this year, we must work in partnership to deliver a comprehensive response to these transborder challenges. This means confronting the issue as a crime, while also addressing the social and economic factors that make it easier for migrant smugglers and traffickers to prey on the vulnerable.

Thirdly, we need enhanced coordination between the different UN entities whose mandates address migration and human rights, in particular, through the collegial framework of the Global Migration Group.

Most importantly, we need cooperation with and between States, as well as with civil society.

I am confident that this meeting will help us build such partnerships for progress, prevent human trafficking and migrant smuggling, prosecute the criminals and protect people.

I wish you a fruitful discussion. Thank you.