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Information void dooms anti-trafficking efforts

Experts warn that current anti-trafficking efforts will fail if trafficked persons are not involved in their development and evaluation.

Efforts to fight human trafficking are founded on hearsay rather than objective research, making failure a certainty - a report launched by a network of 100 anti-trafficking organisations worldwide, meeting at the UN international conference on human trafficking, says.

The report finds that national, regional and international programmes and policies overwhelmingly fail to assess their effectiveness. Critically, trafficked persons are not consulted on their experiences of anti-trafficking programmes – meaning that there is still no means of assessing what does work and what does not. Research shows that, where trafficked persons are included in anti-trafficking programmes chances of success greatly increase.

The report asks, without adequate information are those claiming to fight trafficking just wasting time 'feeling good about feeling bad'?

Ms Evelyn Probst, Coordinator of the Austrian anti-trafficking organisation, LEFO-IBF, states:

“Whilst governments celebrate ten years since the introduction of international law on trafficking, this research shows that the majority of efforts are carried out on a wing and a prayer, which is fundamentally failing trafficked persons”, adding:

“It is apparent that without consultation with trafficked persons, many are trying and failing to respond to trafficking. This catastrophic oversight will lead to certain failure.”

Ms Helga Konrad, Former Austrian Women’s Minister and expert on trafficking in persons who contributed to this report noted:

“Evaluation is the single most critical addition necessary to strengthen anti-trafficking work”

She added that in anti-trafficking projects:

“evaluation has been little more than an afterthought, this is not enough. What is needed, is independent, external, objective evaluation, informed by trafficking expertise.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The report 'Feeling Good about Feeling Bad: a Global Review of Evaluation in Anti-Trafficking Initiatives', will be launched at Palais Epstein, Vienna on 21st October 2010 10-11am with speeches from **Ms Helga Konrad** (Independent Consultant on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and former Austrian Women's Minister), **Ms Bandana Pattanaik**, (International Coordinator of the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women – lead report author) and **Ms Evelyn Probst**, (Coordinator, LEFÖ-IBF).

2. This briefing is organised by the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women and LEFÖ-IBF:

The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) is an Alliance of more than 100 anti-trafficking organisations worldwide established in 1994. GAATW's international secretariat is situated in Bangkok, Thailand.
www.gaatw.org

LEFÖ-IBF (Intervention Centre for Trafficked Women), Austria, has supported women, trafficked into labour and/or living conditions characterized by exploitation, abuse and violence since 1998. LEFÖ-IBF operates nationally on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior and the Women's Directorate within the Federal Chancellery of Austria.
www.lefoe.at

3. For further information or interviews please contact Ms Caroline Hames – 0650 8700002 (English) / Ms Caroline Sander – 0699 11280380 (German).