

What Gets Measured, Gets Done: Measuring the Efficacy of Human Trafficking Policies and Programmes

Event Summary and Highlights

Overview

What Gets Measured, Gets Done: Measuring the Efficacy of Human Trafficking Policies and Programmes, a virtual discussion conducted on 6 April, 2022 and broadcasted via [UN WebTV](#), brought together anti-trafficking experts from major stakeholder groups to discuss the need for common definition of success and indicators, current state of measurement efforts and what is needed to forge the way forward.

The event was co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations, International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime Research (UNODC Research), Refinitiv, NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons, ECPAT-USA, American Medical Women's Association, Women's Graduate Association-USA, Sisters of Charity and World Citizens Network Foundation.

Discussion Summary

Ambassador Joan Cedano, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations

Ambassador Cedano remarked that an international law framework and key guidelines exist, as evidenced by the 178 member states of the United Nations that are parties to the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), also known as the Palermo Protocol and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011).

She discussed the importance of governments' investments in diminishing human trafficking and "that the investment and human rights imperative that underpins counter-trafficking work, demands that these interventions demonstrate accountability, results and beneficial impact." It is the data, including diminishing victimization and illicit profiteering, that allows policymakers to understand what programs work and do not work. Last November, UN member states "reinvigorated" commitments through the adoption of the political declaration on the implementation of UN Global Plan of Action to combat trafficking in persons, which the Dominican Republic along with the Philippines facilitated. She urged

The time is now! Slavery has been with us for millenniums. If we are serious about ending human trafficking --we need to quickly pivot and understand what is working and what isn't working to eradicate HT.

The world agrees that victimization is an issue. Today's policies and programmes rely on potential victims, also known as at risk populations, preventing the victimization from happening. Yet, if the perpetrators and their enablers are making billions in illicit profits, what is their incentive to stop? Simple economics – there are two sides of every market exchange: if there is no demand, there is no supply.

By stopping the illicit profiteering through policies and programs that bankrupt the business of human trafficking and reduce demand for slavery, we propose that we can get closer to reaching the goal of eradicating human trafficking.

But we are never going to know how close we are coming to eradicating human trafficking until we all start measuring and displaying results by a universal definition of success— victimization (prevalence) and illicit profiteering.

that this event not be the end of the dialogue but that it continues, so that we can eradicate human trafficking by 2030 and achieve so many components to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Dr. Gergana Danailova-Trainor, Senior Economist, United States Government Accountability Office¹

Dr. Danailova-Trainor discussed the intersection of human trafficking and evidence, which includes performance information, program evaluations, and statistical information. She acknowledged the contributions made thus far in assessing the scope and patterns of human trafficking and illicit profits by the UNODC, ILO, IOM and the US.

Dr. Danailova-Trainor stated that if our goal is the progressive eradication of human trafficking, then “success” can be defined as the degree, to which our collective programs and policies in a particular area, industry or type of exploitation reduce trafficking prevalence and illicit trafficking-related profits. She indicated that different methods for prevalence estimation and for program evaluation may be appropriate for different types of interventions and contexts, and in some instances there may be room for causal analysis. In addition, she explained that human trafficking intersects with other criminal activities such as money laundering, illicit finance, identity theft, and transnational organized crime, including cybercrime. Therefore, she noted that our policy goal to dismantle illicit financial and human trafficking networks requires careful mapping and estimation of internal and cross border flows of victims of trafficking, cyber flows, and financial flows. She added that to achieve the ultimate goal of eradication of human trafficking, we should look at baselines and estimates of all these flows and the links among them. She called for a repository of knowledge, standardization of methods, and a mechanism through which promising estimation methodologies, evaluation practices and success stories can be exchanged.

Harry Cook, Programme Coordinator, Trafficking in Persons Research, International Organization for Migration

Mr. Cook indicated that prevalence measurement is needed to understand the scale of the problem and explained that a measurement framework is difficult but not impossible. His focus was on next steps with pragmatic recommendations for a scientific approach for understanding prevalence including socialize the measurement tools and approaches with stakeholders, piloting the approaches in member states and keeping track of the standards and approaches. He discussed the challenging question regarding how we can use statistics to evaluate efficacy of programs by “establishing a baseline, endline, big enough projects and the need to address efficacy in a standardized manner.” He explained that prevalence gives a sense of the scale of the problem but it does not provide the details needed to inform response. This is where the link needs to be made to measuring illicit profiteering from victims and being able to identify the sectors or industries of most concern. Administrative data routinely collected by NGOs, providing protection services, courts, police ministries, or government departments, and other organizations could be our best and perhaps only source. IOM is working with ILO and UNODC to develop a global measurement framework for estimating the prevalence of trafficking, including standardized tools, methodologies, and guidance to support Member States and other stakeholders to conduct prevalence estimates with a standardized approach, and hopefully to generate data that are comparable. IOM is also working with UNODC to develop the first classification standards and guidance for the production and safe management and analysis of administrative data on trafficking in persons.

¹ The opinions and views expressed in this article are the author’s alone and are not intended to reflect GAO’s institutional views.

Mr. Cook also used Ukraine as an example of a humanitarian crisis that exacerbates trafficking. Migration is a risk multiplier as trafficking was prevalent before the crisis as a source country and sexual violence is now happening with impunity and little chance of reporting.

Susan Snyder, Senior Coordinator for International Programs, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, United States Department of State

Ms. Snyder noted that the United States Trafficking in Persons report is based on law as embodied in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and its reauthorizations. It is based on both qualitative and quantitative indicators and the report has more than doubled the number of countries assessed in its annual editions since 2001 and has refined its assessment methodology.

In addition, the U.S. policy response to combating TIP has incorporated trafficking-related efforts in policies related to international trade, foreign assistance and public procurement, as well as combating illicit financial flows and money laundering. Specifically, Ms. Snyder cited the Program to End Modern Slavery and its focus on evidence-based policymaking in measuring the results of the programs selected for grants. PEMS has issued a grant to the University of Georgia and amongst its achievements is the statistical definition of trafficking, indicators and sample survey questions. Working in a number of African nations, the University of Georgia plans on conducting research, developing baseline prevalence estimates and informing policymakers on needed programs to overcome human trafficking. Promising practices are expected to be identified in five years.

Beate Andrees, Special Representative to the United Nations and Director, International Labour Organization Office for the United Nations

Ms. Andrees announced that ILO will be updating their prevalence and illicit profiteering estimates later this year. She stressed the imperative for ending human trafficking now, and that forced labour and human trafficking are both criminal and severe forms of exploitation and human rights violations. “However you define it—it has no place in our century.” Utilization of data has allowed assessing trends and shaping policy. Sharing a best practice, Ms. Andrees identified Uzbekistan as a government that was able to eliminate human trafficking in its agriculture industry by working with partners, including the ILO and to assess baseline and endline as a result of the policies enacted. Their research has found that “no size fits all policies”, that there are economic costs in both productivity and quality when using forced labour and that the highest risk is at the low end of supply chain and informal labor. She pointed out that the legal definitions must translate into statistical definitions in order to measure effectively and consistently. In 2018, there was an universally adopted standard for forced labor and that there needs to be a standard for human trafficking, so national statistical offices can consistently measure results. Ms. Andrees also iterated that in fighting human trafficking, while we tend to focus on victims, we need to understand the abuse of power by governments and the private sector.

Ruth Freedom Pojman, International Consultant and prior Deputy Coordinator and Senior Advisor at the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSR/CTHB)

Ms. Pojman has worked with most of the organizations involved in today’s programs. Her insights stressed collaboration, leveraging existing methodologies and tools, developing new tools that are

harmonized, standardization of methodology. Specifically, she stressed the importance of sharing best practices and overcoming obstacles and spoke of Alliance 8.7's Knowledge Hub as an example of a tool that enables knowledge transfer and collaboration. Alliance 8.7 is a multistakeholders' coalition including member states, private sector, academia, NGOs and public organizations, working together to end forced labour and trafficking, consistent with the Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7.

Summary of recommendations:²

Overcome Barriers in Measuring the Efficacy of Human Trafficking Policies and Programmes:

- Ensure availability of the baseline information on trafficking prevalence and illicit financial flows associated with human trafficking. It will be important to leverage the estimates and evaluation methodologies that currently exist to accelerate implementation, for example, the potential utilization of ILO's estimates of victimization and illicit profiteering done in 2016.
- Work towards developing logical frameworks with individual project objectives, that taken collectively can reduce trafficking prevalence and illicit financial flows associated with trafficking;
- Develop evaluation methods for specific programs and contexts, including causal analysis when possible. For example, for victim assistance programs, track survivors over time and analyze administrative data; for awareness campaigns, use rigorous evaluation approaches; for following the money, conduct concurrent financial and trafficking investigations; for understanding the criminal networks, conduct network analysis of traffickers and illicit profits.
- Develop programs and policies that target beneficiaries where interventions are most needed, or where interventions would likely have the greatest impact. This requires narrowing the focus and stakeholder collaboration through the use of estimates in a particular territory, subject to a particular type of exploitation. It will be important to estimate both the total number of victims and illicit profiteering when it comes to collecting primary data for statistical measurements in order to identify the sectors or industries of most concern;
- Develop or strengthen processes for the identification of internal and cross border flows of victims, cyber flows, and financial flows.

Generate Political Will, Awareness, Action and Solidarity:

- Integrate measurement standards, data standardization on human trafficking within the larger discussion on combatting trafficking in persons among United Nations Member States, as well as broader multilateral frameworks aimed at addressing economic and social development, human rights, the rule of law. It can be seen as an accelerator of the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals targets 8.7, 5.2, 16.2 and 16.4;
- Demonstrate Member States, multilateral organizations and private sector adoption of ethical and transparent practices in their procurement and supply chains, regular disclosure and providing further access to relevant information on these practices with a "seal of approval", that is available to consumers and investors in their decision-making processes;
- Strengthen collaboration amongst multi-sectors engaged in policymaking, implementation and monitoring of results and engage in multisectoral discussions to develop action plans. It is also crucial to work with workers, employer organizations to address forced labor, trafficking in the private sector;

² Recommendations have been made in concert with Bankrupting the [Business of Human Trafficking: Summary & Recommendations](#), October, 2021 (compiled from 24 international experts).

- Display collective measurements of illicit profiteering and prevalence in both the United States and United Nations Trafficking in Persons Reports. Utilize efforts to diminish illicit profiteering and prevalence in the algorithms used in both reports for ranking performance.

Create an Enabling Environment for Data Standardization and Sharing

- Translate legal definitions into statistical definition to support global effort in standardizing and comparing data. The International Conference of Labour Statisticians is an effective mechanism that makes recommendations on selected topics of labour statistics in the form of resolutions and guidelines;
- Leverage Alliance 8.7 and its Knowledge Platform as the repository of knowledge or mechanism through which the international community can exchange and synthesize promising estimation methodologies, evaluation practices and success stories;
- Make better use of the administrative data that has already been routinely collected by NGOs around the world when providing protection services;
- Implement policies and programs to raise awareness regarding the effect of cultural norms that promote demand and victimization of women and girls in sexual exploitation;
- Advance tailor-made policies that address various national context but also in different economic sectors.

