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INTER-AMERICAN DECLARATION AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

“DECLARATION OF BRASILIA”

(Adopted at the third plenary session, held on December 5, 2014)

CONSIDERING the commitments adopted by the member states of the Organization of American States to promote and protect human rights and ensure their full exercise;

RECOGNIZING that the crime of trafficking in persons and the human exploitation that is its ultimate purpose are a serious world problem and merits their description as a contemporary form of slavery;

HIGHLIGHTING the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, in order to strengthen the protection afforded by those instruments and to develop the standards set forth therein;

HIGHLIGHTING that the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons of 2010 stresses the relevance of mechanisms and initiatives contained in subregional, regional, and interregional plans, such as the Work Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons in the Western Hemisphere of the Organization of American States; and the importance of encouraging broad, coordinated, and consistent responses on the national, regional, and international levels to combat trafficking in persons;

RECOGNIZING the need to develop and perfect national and subregional migration policies to prevent violation of the human rights of migrants and the vulnerability to human trafficking associated with the increase in migration flows;

RECOGNIZING ALSO the need to reduce vulnerability factors, such as the economic, social, and cultural conditions of our peoples, poverty and unemployment, social inequality, lack of services and access to education, gender-based inequity and violence, discrimination, and corruption;

STRESSING that the United Nations General Assembly decided, from 2014 onward, to mark World Day against Trafficking in Persons on July 30 each year, in order to create greater awareness about the plight of victims of this crime as well as to promote and protect their rights;

OBSERVING that the crime of trafficking in persons, particularly when committed by transnational criminal organizations, demands an intense cooperation effort among origin, transit, and destination countries in order effectively to prevent and combat it with comprehensive measures;

RECOGNIZING the fundamental principle that women should be able to live free from violence, which includes, *inter alia*, the elimination of discrimination, promotion of education, and the right to be valued without stereotypes and sociocultural practices based on concepts of inferiority, subordination, and violence; and

RECOGNIZING ALSO the political will of the member states to take all necessary steps to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons in all its forms in the Hemisphere by providing assistance and protection to its victims, prosecuting and punishing its perpetrators, and establishing the necessary internal institutional mechanisms and international cooperation frameworks to achieve those objectives,

WE DECLARE THE IMPORTANCE OF:

1. Condemning trafficking in persons in all its forms in the Hemisphere as a criminal offense that violates human rights and, in particular, impinges on the liberty, physical integrity, health, and dignity of its victims and their families, and harms the most vulnerable sectors of our societies.

2. Stressing the need to prevent trafficking in persons by designing, improving, and implementing public policies that address social, economic, cultural, security, and migration-related variables that adversely affect women, minors and, indeed, all vulnerable sectors of society.

3. Allocating adequate resources for the design, formulation, execution, and assessment of public policies on the crime of trafficking in persons in all its forms and for establishing or strengthening programs on prevention, comprehensive assistance, protection and, where appropriate, social reintegration of victims of this crime.

4. Promoting, for the purpose of combating this crime, the strengthening of national systems of criminal justice, criminal prosecution of perpetrators, and comprehensive assistance for victims, including victim and witness protections and guarantees, under an unwavering approach of respect for and protection of their human rights.

5. Affirming the need to improve or, as appropriate, update domestic laws, particularly as regards the definition of this offense and the prosecution and punishment of offenses associated with trafficking persons.

6. Move forward with the implementation of internal mechanisms for coordination and exchange of information and financing among national entities, and coordination with civil society organizations, other social actors engaged in the issue (including academia), and the private sector, so that society and the State can offer a broad, timely, adequate, and integrated response to trafficking in persons.

7. Encouraging sustained implementation by member states of information and awareness campaigns about immigration rules, false offers of employment, the use of information and communication technologies as recruitment tools, and about the risks that the latter pose to the sectors most vulnerable to trafficking in persons; as well as implementation of reporting mechanisms and toll-free prevention and assistance hotlines in a language that trafficking-in-persons victims can understand.

8. Encouraging, furthermore, in our societies a culture of values and practices for preventing and reporting this crime, in addition to educational programs to reduce social vulnerabilities, promoting equity, knowledge, and respect for the basic human rights and dignity of persons.

9. Promoting protection and assistance for victims, with particular emphasis on their psychosocial and productive reintegration, non-revictimization, and active participation in that process, within a framework of respect for their dignity.

10. Promoting comprehensive training, *inter alia*, for officials and staff in the immigration, justice, health, foreign affairs, consular, security, labor inspection, and social services sectors on the different characteristics of trafficking in persons in all its forms, in order to enhance their skills in preventing, detecting, and prosecuting trafficking in persons, and in providing care for victims.

11. Recognizing the need to strengthen international, regional, and subregional cooperation, including cooperation mechanisms among member states, in the area of judicial investigations and extradition, as well as for fully implementing the provisions contained in the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and other applicable bilateral and inter-American instruments.

12. Promoting the creation of a network of authorities in member states in order to strengthen the exchange of best practices and promote the requisite coordination, cooperation, mutual legal assistance, institution-building, and funding to confront trafficking in persons, harnessing all available tools, including electronic ones.

13. Highlighting, moreover, that in the Declaration of Lima, adopted at the XIV South American Conference on Migration, paragraph 1 of the subtopic "Specific Migration Situations" accepted the request to establish mechanisms for effective cooperation in combating trafficking in persons, particularly in cases where the place of origin, transit, or destination is in the South American region.

14. Ratifying the need for the broadest possible observance in region of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing it; and inviting member states that have not yet done so to consider ratifying the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Protocol of San Salvador) and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of *Belém do Pará*).

15. Reaffirming the importance of member states regularly monitoring and evaluating the Second Work Plan against Trafficking in Persons in the Western Hemisphere 2015-2018 and of sharing their progress and successful experiences in that regard.