

Mr. Tuy (Cambodia):

Mr. President, allow me to express my congratulations to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March.

Modern-day slavery and human trafficking affect virtually every country and constitute one of the major threats to global peace and security as well as to our shared economic prosperity. Human trafficking affects women, children and men, subjecting people to cruel forced labour and sexual exploitation.

The Royal Government of Cambodia strongly condemns all instances of slavery and human trafficking. In line with the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, my delegation supports a three-pronged approach focusing on prevention, protection and prosecution.

With respect to prevention, my delegation is of the view that effective prevention efforts must focus on curbing conflict while fully addressing its root causes. As exemplified by the way in which non-State armed groups operate, connections between armed conflict and human trafficking are multifaceted. Non-State armed groups openly advocate for the enslavement of women and children in the attainment of their misguided objectives. They actively promote slavery and human trafficking both as a means to finance their operations and as a method of warfare.

The primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the United Nations and the Security Council. In this context, the Council must play an active role in addressing conflict situations by promoting dialogue and peacefully negotiated solutions based on the United Nations Charter. It must follow up on the implementation of its resolutions, providing for clear and realistic peacekeeping mandates.

Moreover, the Security Council should closely collaborate with the General Assembly and United Nations agencies, including through increased consultations between the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Conflict prevention is the best policy to protect against human trafficking, and, where conflict is inevitable, the Security Council should actively engage in the de-escalation of hostilities, with a view to safeguarding vulnerable populations.

The protection of vulnerable persons, particularly displaced populations and refugees, is of central importance to the success of global efforts in combating human trafficking, forced labour and modern slavery by non-State actors. In this light, the full implementation of the Palermo Protocols and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants plays a crucial role in comprehensively addressing human trafficking.

Moreover, in implementing protective measures, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can mobilize efforts to strengthen protection of the rights of the most vulnerable populations. In this regard, Cambodia would like to emphasize the importance of the full implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.2, which focuses on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, including trafficking; SDG 8.7, which focuses on the eradication of forced labour, slavery and human trafficking; and SDG 16.2, which aims to end trafficking and all forms of violence against children.

The victims of human trafficking, particularly women and children, have a fundamental right to be protected in accordance with international law. In this context, it is necessary to ensure the provision of medical and psychological services to victims of sex trafficking and forced labour trafficking, while ensuring economic support to trafficking victims through training and job-placement programmes. It is also important to avoid stigmatization of these victims as they reintegrate into society.

In this context, my delegation supports the establishment of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and encourages States that are in a position to do so to contribute to the Fund.

This brings me to the issue of prosecution, which centrally reinforces preventive and protective efforts in the fight against human trafficking. The Security Council, in its resolution 2331 (2016), has recognized that human trafficking contributes to the spread of international organized crime, which exacerbates conflict and fosters insecurity and instability throughout the world. Moreover, Security Council resolution 2195 (2014) affirms that terrorists benefit from transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons.

As the prosecution of the perpetrators of such crimes is central to the eradication of human trafficking, my delegation notes the efforts made to establish an international mechanism focused on gathering evidence of atrocities committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and other terrorist organizations. Cambodia welcomes all such initiatives that are carried out with due respect for the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, including the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, self-determination and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

In the light of the importance of international law-enforcement cooperation in the prosecution of human trafficking crimes, Cambodia will continue its longstanding partnership with regional partners, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and INTERPOL, among others.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate that in the fight against modern slavery and human trafficking, the global community must ensure the effective implementation of international obligations. Having ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols thereto, my delegation believes that these efforts must be carried out in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion, with due regard for victims' rights and full respect for the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.