

**Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*):**

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on presiding over the Council for this month. I thank you for holding this important open debate. I also thank Mr. Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Mr. Kevin Hyland, United Kingdom Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner; and the observer of the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre in Somalia for their valuable briefings this morning.

Trafficking in persons is a reality and an international phenomenon that challenges the international will and human values. It is a grave violation of human rights. It is a complex threat that targets vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, in addition to persons with disabilities and the elderly. Trafficking in persons is a serious problem often caused by conflicts, which create waves of displaced persons. Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees are forced to leave their homes and homelands to seek a decent living. The phenomenon is compounded by the fact that terrorist groups benefit from it, as they exploit, recruit and brainwash youth to get them to conduct terrorist operations. The proceeds of trafficking in persons are used in those operations.

The adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the United Nations Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons constitutes the legal basis for the international community to combat human trafficking. However, the international community has been unable to end the crises and conflicts. Moreover, the policies adopted have failed to end the violations of the fundamental rights of individuals and peoples and failed to combat impunity, which has led to continued trafficking in persons. Crises and conflicts create an enabling environment for trafficking in persons and for the perpetuation of that phenomenon, which violates the rights of individuals and populations.

Qatar is committed to international law and seeks to enhance cooperation in that field. Hence, we have supported the United Nations Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons since its adoption. We have taken legal steps, and we have promulgated a national law on trafficking in persons that criminalizes it in all its forms. We have taken strict legal action to prevent and criminalize money-laundering as one of the tools used in human trafficking.

Qatar is one of the major contributors to the United Nations Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking. We seek to enhance international cooperation in the field of combating crime, especially as manifested in human trafficking. We hosted the thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The adoption of the Doha Declaration on integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider United Nations agenda so as to address the social and economic challenges and promote the rule of law at the national and international levels was a step towards dealing with this crime.

We are one of the major supporters of UNODC, as it is the main United Nations points of reference in efforts to combat crime. We believe in the rule of law at the national and international levels. We believe in the role that the rule of law plays in combating mass atrocities and violations of human rights in countries suffering from conflict. We have therefore worked with partners in international groups to combat impunity. We understand the high human price that civilians pay in Syria as they are forced to migrate and fall victims to traffickers. Hence, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/248, on the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic. That is an important step towards combating human trafficking as an international crime.

We believe in the need to preserve human dignity, and we honour our international legal obligations. Hence, together with our partners, we participate in the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons. Moreover, my country has approved the request by the General Assembly that I should serve as a co-facilitator with Greece for the evaluation of the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which will be held in October 2017.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that the international community's efforts to combat this phenomenon requires concerted action, the most important part of which is to resolve conflicts and crises and to combat impunity. We will continue to support all the efforts of the Security Council aimed at ending human trafficking.