

**Mr. Khoshroo** (Islamic Republic of Iran):

I would like to express my appreciation to Spain for organizing this debate. Its convening, which coincides with the official launch of the United Nations Office

on Drugs and Crime *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, should be viewed as an important message by the United Nations and its States Member that trafficking in persons will not be tolerated under any circumstances and should be decisively dealt with. Today's debate can enrich the General Assembly's high-level meeting planned for October 2017 to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. We also underline the leading role of the General Assembly in considering this subject.

Given the transborder nature of the crime of trafficking, coordination and cooperation at the international level are necessary for combating it. The international community has to further strengthen and impose effective measures to prevent, combat and eliminate all forms of trafficking in persons. To that end, demand for trafficking victims should be addressed and suppressed, and protection for victims should be ensured, particularly for women and children, who are mostly subject to forced labour, exploitation, violence and sexual abuse.

In combating trafficking in persons, one cannot overlook the root causes of the phenomenon — poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment, lack of socioeconomic opportunities and lack of security, especially in conflict situations, as well as instability caused by different internal and external factors, including foreign occupation, foreign intervention and regime-change policies. All those elements continue to make people victims of human trafficking. With regard to today's debate, an increasing number of armed conflicts and the resulting mass movements of people have caused an alarming situation.

The indecisiveness of the world community in fighting terrorists such as Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front in Iraq and Syria or Boko Haram in Africa, due to narrowly defined geopolitical gains, has proved to be destructive in the global fight against trafficking in persons. The abhorrent reports of sexual enslavement of innocent women and girls and other atrocities committed by those criminals are the tragedies of our age and of the twenty-first century. Those Governments and individuals that are supporting those criminals financially, logistically or ideologically should be held accountable and brought to justice.

In that regard, takfiri ideologies that justify such abhorrent acts are to be blamed first, as they provide the necessary mental grounds. The sad trafficking of women and girls in the Middle East and Africa by terrorist groups could only have happened within such

horrendous mindsets. Such criminality begins in the minds of men, and it is in the minds of men that we can fight them.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, at the crossroads of drug trafficking, has first-hand experiences on the deadly nexus that could be forged between human trafficking networks and other criminal activities, including money-laundering, prostitution, slavery and drug trafficking. It is therefore essential that the international community constantly bear in mind the existence of links between different forms of criminal activities and trafficking in persons. We prefer to address them in an integrated manner.