



Statement of Rev. Monsignor John Putzer, Chargé d’Affaires a.i.
Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International
Organizations in Geneva
at the 53rd Regular Session of the Human Rights Council

**Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on trafficking
in persons**
Geneva, 28 June 2023

Mr. President,

The Holy See takes note of the Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and shares her concerns over the increased risks of human trafficking faced by people on the move.

As Pope Francis has stated, ““Human trafficking disfigures dignity. Exploitation and subjugation limit freedom and turn people into objects to use and discard. And the system of trafficking profits from the injustice and wickedness that oblige millions of people to live in conditions of vulnerability.”¹ Indeed, trafficking is a tragic reality that is exacerbated today by the increasing number of both humanitarian and refugee crises, particularly those stemming from conflict, climate change and poverty.

Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and the forcibly displaced often fall prey to various forms of trafficking in persons, especially women and children in particular, including through domestic or sexual violence, as well as labor exploitation.

Mr. President,

While the rapid development of new technologies offers great opportunities, it also provides traffickers and criminals with digital platforms and cost-effective, anonymous tools to recruit, exploit victims, along with organizing their transportation. Social media, in particular, is increasingly used to identify and recruit victims, especially children.

For this reason, more effective international measures are urgently needed to combat human trafficking – with a focus on prevention – while simultaneously developing adequate policies to protect, assist and reintegrate victims. In this regard, awareness-raising activities on the safe use of the internet and social media could also help mitigate the risk of children and teenagers falling victims to online trafficking.

While solemnly condemning every form of human trafficking, exploitation and modern slavery, the Holy See also reaffirms the inviolable, God given dignity of every human being and renews its commitment to combatting such atrocious crimes in all their forms.

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ Pope Francis, Videomessage released on the ninth World Day of Prayer and Reflection Against Human Trafficking, 8 February 2023.