A. INTRODUCTION

Trafficking in persons is a particularly virulent offence against human rights, which has mostly been treated as a sub-set of irregular migration. It is however increasingly drawing the attention of policy makers as a labour issue involving "supply-demand" dynamics, and requiring data collection and policies appropriate to this.[1] The phenomenon may be old, but it has taken on new forms, as globalization has fuelled growth in certain economic sectors with demands for cheap labour, particularly of women and children in the sex industry and other service sectors; and as immigration laws have increasingly restricted entry into the labour markets of developed countries, driving much labour migration underground.

The crime of trafficking in persons is generally under-reported, under-recorded and under-legislated. There has been a dramatic growth in reportage and discussion over the past decade, mostly by academics, IOM, NGOs, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, OSCE, EC, UNHCR and some governments, and some cross-country data collection initiatives by UNESCO, IOM, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Balkans Stability Pact Task Force in the Balkans - but there is still insufficient systematic analysis of its causes and impacts. Despite the fact that it has risen to the top of the international policy agenda, there is still a dearth of international and national legislation against trafficking in persons, for a variety of reasons, among them lack of data, neglect, lack of resources, and economic trade-offs between public enforcement and private sector laissez fairism. This has made it a high profit-low risk venture for the traffickers. It

to calculate the global profits to traffickers at around $7-10 billion a year (IOM, 2003). The US government estimates approximately $9.5 billion in annual revenues to trafficking agents and accomplices, and links this to money laundering, drug trafficking, document fraud and human smuggling (US Department of State, 2005).

While cross-border trafficking is a crime and a breach of immigration and labour laws in many countries, it is also and principally a human rights violation that affects mostly people in vulnerable, usually low income, socially deprived, circumstances, such as women, children and minority groups. People often fall prey to the lure of traffickers – the offer of employment, higher income, better life opportunities for themselves and their family – out of necessity and a lack of information and resources to take their own action. These are typically the circumstances of the poor, and while available data show that it is not necessarily the poorest who are trafficked, many of the victims assisted by NGOs and IOs invariably come from some of the most poverty-stricken countries (Moldova, Mali, Nepal, Bangladesh).

In South-Eastern Europe, where extensive research and victim support has been undertaken, the trafficked victims come from the poorer countries of the region, which earlier speakers at this meeting have also identified as generally being large migration reservoirs – Moldova, Romania, Albania and Bulgaria. The ECA transition countries experienced serious increases in poverty levels in the 1990s and despite some reductions in poverty levels in recent years, Moldova and Albania remain the poorest in the region, and are also primary source countries for trafficked persons. In China, there is evidence that poverty in rural areas is causing considerable internal trafficking (IOM, 2005a). In West and Central Africa, poverty is seen as the key factor in the huge trafficking of women and children. Endemic rural poverty often causes poor families to sell their children to traffickers, hoping for improved circumstances for the children (Dottridge, 2002). In South Asia, two of the most poverty-stricken countries, Nepal and Bangladesh, are the major source countries (along with Sri Lanka) (ibid)

There are a range of other reasons why trafficking proliferates in some countries and regions, among them the presence of military or peace-keeping forces, e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina or Kosovo in the late 1990s, or South Korea with its US military bases that have attracted entertainers from Southeast Asia(Lee, 2002; Seol et al, 2003). Demographic gaps such as the dearth of females in certain parts of India, or in China as a result of the one-child policy, are another demand factor (US Department of State,

women) and between rich and poor countries. Finally, the success of traffickers is not just a human, social and economic undercutting of development efforts by national and international agencies, it is an erosion of authority, which in turn affects the welfare and security of a country (ibid).

1. Who is most vulnerable?

Regarding the implications of trafficking for poverty: household surveys show that age, minority ethnicity and location are major factors in determining poverty. Most affected are usually rural residents, children in large families and ethnic minority groups. Minorities and young people especially tend to experience acute labor market exclusion in post-conflict countries and to suffer isolation and powerlessness, especially in rural areas and small towns (Clert et al, 2005), and it has been shown that these aspects of youth vulnerability have been gender-specific (Report on Gender in Transition (Paci, 2002). In the Balkan countries, in particular, there has been an increase of women and girls being trafficked in the SEE region over the past 10 years. This has been linked to increased levels of domestic violence and discriminatory hiring practices associated with the transition, where migration offers women alternative economic prospects.

In the SEE region, one World Bank expert observes that human trafficking can be categorized as a form of gender-based violence that has increased with the upheavals of transition; and that young children from poor families have also been increasingly at risk (Clert et al, 2005). In the subsistence economies of Sub Saharan Africa, children are enlisted into the family labour pool as critical production assets. Child trafficking is demand-driven where there is a huge market for cheap labour and sex and insufficient legal frameworks or trained authorities to prevent it (IOM, 2005a).

However, there remains insufficient empirical and theoretical information about the causes and impacts of poverty on trafficking, and vice versa; a serious omission in any country and international efforts to prevent and prosecute the traffickers.

C. WHO IS BEING TRAFFICKED, AND WHY?

Observations in the following section are drawn from IOM's global database of 5233 cases of victims assisted between 2001 and June 2005. The cases have mostly been referred to IOM by law enforcement agencies, NGOs, international organizations and embassies. Contrary to many of the general, quick surveys of trafficking, the database is the result of a painstaking effort to collect information in a standard way across the world from the sources themselves, that could throw light on the causes, methods, routes, outcomes and players in this increasingly complex phenomenon. As many researchers know, this method has its own problems, not the least being the veracity of the responses to the interview questions, and the potential for the data to reflect the biases of the assisting agency.

Age, gender and low education are generally held to be the biggest risk factors. In reflection of the poverty indicators, the largest source countries, according to the IOM database, are high on development aid agencies' list of priorities: Moldova, Romania, Mali, Ukraine, Belarus, Bulgaria, Uzbekistan, Colombia and Kyrgyzstan. The database covers 50 more source countries, and 78 countries of destination.

In the IOM database, more than 81% of surveyed victims are females, more than 74% are 25 years of age or younger, the majority between 18 and 25 (56.9%). More than 55% are single, divorced; separated or widowed, and some 8% married. The Belgrade Regional Clearing Point also found similar trends in its Southeastern Europe caseload. Some 26-27% claimed to have children. The family status of victims deserves some attention, because of the impact on children and aged relatives left behind (Clert et

al, 2005). The Regional Clearing Point found in the case of Southeast European trafficked women, that many victims from Moldova and Romania were likely to be mothers at the time of recruitment (either married or separated), and the children often left in the care of other family members with few means, or in childcare institutions (ibid).

There is no clear evidence that a low level of education is necessarily a high risk factor. More than 60% of cases surveyed have had considerable education, even some university (3.9%). The first of the Belgrade Clearing Point reports in 2003 also confirmed this trend for victims in the South East European region, but found that it is a risk factor for Albanian and Kosovar victims (with some 85% possessing only some elementary schooling) (ibid). The Clearing Point also found that the average education levels of Romanian victims declined in the reporting period, suggesting that the information campaigns being conducted in the schools at that time were having an effect. At the same time, the education levels of Moldovan victims rose, which seemed to suggest that higher education may only be a mitigating factor where there are employment opportunities after the schooling (RCP, 2003).

Similarly, contrary to expectations, not all victims were unemployed prior to migration. Of the victims surveyed by IOM, more than 42% had had some work experience prior to their migration, mostly as self-employed or employed in some family business. But more than 50% claimed to have earned less than $100 a month; and an earlier IOM report on Kosovo showed that 70% of assisted victims in Kosovo who had worked in their countries of origin had earned less than $30 a month (IOM, 2002b). Thus the economic circumstances appear to be dire enough to call for survival strategies such as those offered by migration.

Household poverty levels appear to be an important risk factor. An earlier IOM report on 826 victims in South East European countries showed that more than half of the victims claimed to come from

There is a lingering question in Europe about whether the legalization of prostitution plays a role in counter trafficking efforts, particularly given the scant evidence that legalization can help reduce the magnitude of trafficking. Indeed, there appear to be more trafficked women detected in West European countries, where aspects of prostitution are legal. Some experts find that legalization may only protect nationals and further marginalize the position of trafficked women. ILO points out that even where the

The recommendations have a new focus on the labour market and the need for such activities as training of labour inspectors, as well as the health sector, and the need for health practitioners to better identify and assist victims. The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted a new Convention against trafficking in persons in May 2005, which challenges the law enforcement focus of the Protocol definition and interpretations, and is more victim-oriented. There is also an effort to expand more on the labor exploitation elements of the Protocol definition of trafficking in persons.

The principal UN agencies concerned wnit8( )Ti(i)-3..cer-3..cer.12.86.2(N)6.2(.7(connc)10.ta)11.erUNnc in9

Capacity building efforts with government agencies under EU programs, or funded by the US and other governments, are showing results in the number of new laws and training programs in place in a number of vulnerable regions. UNICEF is supporting Morocco and Spain in their agreements to jointly address the trafficking of children between the two countries (often transiting through Morocco). IOM Information campaigns have been implemented in countries of origin and destination throughout Europe, particularly South Eastern Europe; and shelters and assistance programs at both ends of the migration spectrum are being operated by many NGOs in cooperation with governments, IOM and others. School campaigns, hotlines and capacity building of NGOs and others have been variously implemented and supported by IOM, OSCE, UNICEF and NGOs in Europe and Asia.

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In East Asia, there is a huge dearth of concrete data on trafficking, a notable exception being a recent research project commissioned by the Ministry of Gender Equality of South Korea, which surveyed female migrants in the sex industry in Korea, South Korean male potential users of their sexual services and female migrants who had returned to their homes in the Philippines (Seol, et al, 2003). However, a large number of studies have been undertaken in South-East Asia particularly in the Mekong Region, due in part to the active engagement of UN and other donor agencies in that region (Derks, 2000; Caouette, 2002). IOM observes that there is much less research on trafficking in the North East Asian region, with the exception of an ILO-IPEC program in southern China and some studies on Japan and South Korea by NGOs such as Human Rights Watch (2000) and IOM (1997).

Aside from the country reports by the US Department of State, research by ILO and UNICEF in China, reports by NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and the Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CATW), UNODC, IOM, the Korean government and other researchers (e.g. the Asia-Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN), a common source of information on trafficking in persons in East Asia are the media (including the Japan Times, Bangkok Post, Korean Times, Agence France Presse, and Deutsche Presse Agentur) (IOM, 2005a).

The case-related databases of IOM and the RCP provide useful information directly from the victims on the reasons, methods and purposes of the trafficking, as well as the age, gender, familial, educational and work profile of the victims and who, broadly speaking, their traffickers were. The cases, however, are mostly those referred by the authorities or NGOs, and are unlikely to be reliable indicators of the overall numbers involved. For example, the RCP's database registered some 5778 cases between 2000 and 2004 (5 years) across the SEE countries Albania, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Kosovo, BiH,

Research and public reporting have proven to be effective in encouraging change in governance practices in this area. For example, following IOM's report on trafficking in the SADC region in 2003, the wide-ranging Southern African Counter Trafficking Assistance Program was set up (with information campaigns, hotlines, documentaries, capacity building of government, training of law enforcement officials). More action is needed by governments, and the international community in enforcing it, to prosecute traffickers. Large trafficking magnets such as South Africa still do not have specific anti-trafficking laws, in South Africa's case despite evidence that organized crime syndicates are responsible for trafficking in that region.

G. FUTURE STEPS

1. Development Responses

There is huge scope and need for trafficking in persons to be addressed in analytical work by agencies supporting development and poverty reduction, such as the World Bank. Other agencies working with migrants and governments on the ground, such as IOM, UNICEF, Terre des Hommes, ILO and OSCE should continue collecting baseline data from victims, law enforcement agencies, NGOs andl

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