

International Conference Human Trafficking within and from Africa.
**Co-organised by Caritas Internationalis and the Pontifical Council for the
Pastoral care of Migrants and Itinerant People.**

5th-7th September, 2016.

**Daughters of Divine Love Retreat and Conference centre (DRACC),
Abuja- Nigeria.**

Hosted by Caritas Nigeria.

**ONE HUMAN FAMILY
ONE VOICE
NO HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**5-7
September
2016
ABUJA
Nigeria**

**International Conference
on Human Trafficking
Within and From Africa**

Co-organised by Caritas Internationalis and the Pontifical
Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.
Hosted by Caritas Nigeria

**Conferência Internacional
sobre Tráfico de Seres Humanos
dentro e a partir da África.**

**05 a 07 de setembro de 2016,
Abuja, Nigéria.**

Promovida pela Caritas Internationalis
e o Conselho Pontifício para a Pastoral
dos Migrantes e Itinerantes.

Apoiada por Caritas Nigéria.

**Conférence Internationale
sur la traite des personnes
dans et de l'Afrique.**

**Du 5 au 7 septembre 2016,
à Abuja, au Nigeria.**

Organisée conjointement par Caritas
Internationalis et le Conseil Pontifical
pour la Pastorale des Migrants
et des Personnes en Déplacement.

Accueillie par Caritas Nigeria.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT CARITAS NIGERIA IN ABUJA: info@ccfng.org OR +2348113942132


PONTIFICUM CONSILIUM
DE SPIRITUALI MIGRANTUM
ATQUE ITINERANTUM CURA


Caritas
Internationalis


Caritas
NIGERIA & JDPC

150 delegates working in various ways to prevent human trafficking and support those who have fallen victim to human trafficking, met with a view to:

1. Raising awareness about trafficking among people within and from Africa, with a special focus on the trafficking of children, trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation, trafficking in crisis situations and trafficking in the maritime industry.
2. Connect various stakeholders and strengthen cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination, in order to explore collaborative strategies that can be used to prevent human trafficking in Africa.
3. Promote common Church actions together with other faith-based organisations that stand by victims to combat trafficking and slavery.
4. Contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) through actions aimed at combating trafficking and slavery.



Conference delegates received a warm welcome from Bishop Lucius Ugorji, President of Caritas Nigeria, who invited all present to assist in devising a roadmap to eradicate human trafficking. This invitation was echoed in the address by Mr. Michel Roy, Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis, when he stated “we have come here together, deciding to make a difference in people’s lives.”

The importance of efforts to make a difference in people’s lives, was brought home through the first-hand experiences recounted to us by two victims, Blessing and Sophie, who bravely spoke about their experiences of being trafficked for the sex trade. Although it was difficult to hear the pain and sadness in their voices, it was perhaps more difficult to hear the girls tell how the betrayal of trust by their family members and neighbours remains hurtful and damaging.

A common trend amongst victims of trafficking is the natural desire for life-improvement, both for themselves and their families, which made the exploitation, deceptions and breaches of trust all the more difficult for the victims to bear- "migration gone wrong"- as recounted by both Blessing and Sophie. Another common trend however, is the victims' determination to survive.

Theirs is a story of hope and restored faith in humanity as Blessing and Sophie spoke about the ongoing support and assistance they have experienced from the Religious and from associated aid agencies, who endeavour to help rehabilitate and support survivors.

The Bishops present called for honest and open dialogue on human trafficking, at all levels in society, nationally and internationally. They reminded us of the Pope's call for a "...resurgence of conscience" and called upon us to network, forge alliances and strengthen cooperation in order to mobilise a collective strength so as to bring an end to human trafficking and exploitation.

Challenges in combating human trafficking and exploitation from the perspective of international law and human rights, law enforcement and African Union institutions.



Ms. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, Executive Director, Women's Aid Collective (WACOL) and former UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children (1st August 2008—31st July, 2014), Mr Kevin Hyland, OBE, the UK's first independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner and Mr. Philip Bob Jusu, of the Migration Programme of the African Union, each spoke to the challenge of how the role of Christian churches might be strengthened in relation to impacting on policies, laws and practices in the African continent.

Amongst the challenges is the question of how to use the right of free movement constructively. Added to that are the variations in degrees of commitment amongst the international community to approaches, punishment, redress, rehabilitation and recovery. In her presentation, Ms. Ezeilo saw the greatest challenge to combating human trafficking, lies in capacity, coordination and care.

Additionally, she drew attention to the need to clarify international parameters in defining what is and what is not human trafficking, as well as the need to define and understand the distinctions between human trafficking and exploitation.

In speaking about community engagement being critical to reaching as many victims as possible, Mr. Hyland, OBE, called on everyone to work together to seek out and support those at source, transit and destination, stating " we need to play these perpetrators at their own games. The suffering inflicted on the vulnerable cannot be underestimated. "

Mr. Hyland spoke of one particular Nigerian state (Edo) which although only comprising 2% of the overall Nigerian population, somehow or other comprises 70% of the Nigerian human trafficking. Subsequent to Mr. Hyland's address, this particular state was referenced on a

number of occasions during the conference, with particular regard for the remoteness of location and the prevalence of voodoo, witchcraft and shamanism which instil fear amongst villagers and serves to silence girls who are trafficked, who fear of consequences to the families if the girls try to escape from their traffickers and break out of the chains of sexual exploitation.

Cultural morés, in addition to the African continent’s vastness in size (comprising 30.2 million square kilometres; 54 countries; 2,000 languages; 1 billion inhabitants) illustrate the complexities in trying to address the socio-economic and cultural realities of the continent, according to Mr. Philip Bob Jusu.

Mr. Jusu indicated that most of the victims of human trafficking who appear in Scandinavia and Europe, originate from the Horn of Africa. He spoke of the alliances between the African Union, the Horn of Africa Initiative (HOAI) , the IOM, the UNHCR, Interpol, the EU, the League of Arab States and the IOL, in the belief that “combating this scourge of our time, is a shared responsibility.”

Mr. Jusu echoed the prevailing view of the conference that to end demand is critical to ending human trafficking. Critical of the EU- as being ‘reactive’ instead of ‘proactive’, Mr Jusu emphasised the critical importance of criminalising the end-user; the need for robust witness and victim protection programmes; standardised international protection policies which ultimately serve effective prosecutions.

Trying to address **Trafficking in situations of crisis** was considered as being particularly problematic, not least because of the huge challenge to identify actual human trafficking victims from the midst of the milieu that exists amongst the various organisations clamouring to help out during a time of crisis. Ms. Genevieve Colas, Secours Catholique-Caritas France and Ms. Sylvie Eid- Caritas MONA, shared the benefits of years of experience working with victims of human trafficking and showed a brief clip of a video *Invisibles* , which highlighted the vulnerabilities of young, vulnerable youth in France, the abduction of minors and the perils of domestic servitude.





Post- earthquake Haiti was an example of trafficking in situations of crisis, as are post-tsunami areas, post-wildfire areas and war-torn regions. Not only is there a danger and vulnerability to human trafficking, there are additional exposures to trafficking for labour exploitation, organ harvesting, begging, ritual purposes, abductions, sham marriages. It was agreed that especially

vulnerable to all the above are unaccompanied minors.

On a positive note, we heard of the strength of the major outreach of the Church, a long-standing presence with a familiarity of the local community. We heard about how the Church can act as moderator and advocate in times of crisis. The Church can calm fears, reduce tensions and anxieties through the provision of information. We also heard about the Church as a lobbying identity in destination countries.

There was a palpable interest in the information presented by Fr. Bruno Ciceri, on **Trafficking in the maritime industry**. Fr. Ciceri, of the *Apostleship of the Sea of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People*, together with Sr. Apinya, from Caritas Thailand, enlightened us with their knowledge and information about trafficking in the maritime context. Especially moving was the fact that so many fishermen were tricked into working on the boats, believing in the promise of wages, food and the possibility to earn money to send home to support needy families.

Apart from the fact that there is scant publicity about maritime trafficking, there are enormous complexities in trying to identify whether or not fishermen are actually trafficked, as many are too frightened or intimidated into silence. On the other hand many are adrift on boats anchored on fish-banks for a few years on end, without ever having an opportunity to return home, even for a brief visit. Many families believe their loved ones have actually died at sea, as years may have passed since they last saw one another.



Fr. Ciceri spoke about small children being particularly easy to intimidate, abduct and traffic, in particular with reference to fishing on the lakes in Ghana and similarly with children in Thailand. Child trafficking for sexual exploitation, begging, labour on cocoa plantations and elsewhere are proof of the multi-faceted faces of human trafficking, with internal trafficking every bit as serious an issue as cross-border trafficking.

Throughout the conference, we were reminded of the harsh realities of developed world's economic dependency on human trafficking. Sourcing labour is a multi-million dollar economy, based upon production systems/business systems and consumption, all of which facilitate human trafficking.

Additionally, we were reminded of the cultural morés which facilitate sham marriages and child brides...invidious aspects of human trafficking.

Monsignor Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo conveyed greetings and blessings from Pope Francis, assuring us of his solidarity with us in our work to provide a new impetus to end this crime against humanity. He called on all Religious to take note of both climate change and mass emigration, which he identified as major contributing forces to slavery in modern times.

Repeating the statement that "we need to move from inter-Religious dialogue to action, action, action," Monsignor Sorondo emphasised the fact that all freedom emanates from Christ and that the globalisation of indifference greatly assists in the promotion of human trafficking and exploitation of persons. On a more positive note, he stated that thanks to globalisation of modern technologies, there are now improved opportunities for efficiencies in communication and understandings.

Citing the Beatitudes, Monsignor Sorondo reminded all present that "All nationalities have a new moral imperative to eradicate modern slavery in all its forms," and that the wounds of humanity are the wounds of Christ in the contemporary world.

Poverty was seen as a major 'push factor' in addition to the normalisation of sex, which together fuels demand. Working groups shared that the disintegration of the primary social unit that is the family, more often than not contributes to the breakdown of law and order in society. Arising from such a breakdown, is the absence or lack of information, which in turn contributes to fear and renders people vulnerable to exploitation, abduction and trafficking. This was an agreed truth, emanating from most of the working groups, who convened to consider the following main thematic issues;

- a. Trafficking of children
- b. Human trafficking in crisis situations
- c. Trafficking in the maritime industry
- d. Trafficking for labour exploitation, including domestic servitude
- e. Trafficking for sexual exploitation.

(Feedback from the working groups will be posted once collated).



Consideration of the **Sustainable Development Goals**, which provide a framework for largely local actions, lead to the conclusions that we should organise ourselves better, so as to coordinate use of our resources. Many supported the suggestion of creating an Alliance of Committed Agencies to address the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. (See www.sdg-alliance8-7.org to see the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) perspective on combating forced labour and human trafficking in Africa).

Sr. Gabriella Bottani, Talitha Kum, addressed the conference and spoke about the importance of collaboration and cooperation in order to collectively deploy our strengths and resources to optimum use.

Time was also given to St. Bakhita and the importance of honouring the 8th of February as a network.



A highlight of the conference was the presence and address of H.E Cardinal Tagle, President of Caritas Internationalis, who touched a nerve amongst all present with his heartfelt and sensitive reflection on **Human Ecology and the root causes of trafficking of human beings**.

Stating he was encouraged by the large attendance under “One Voice,” he was saddened that an international conference could be called because of the crime of human trafficking. Cardinal Tagle expressed his preference to attend a conference which would celebrate the eradication of human trafficking.... But that is unlikely to happen sometime soon, alas.

Mindful of the fact that human trafficking is evolving daily, Cardinal Tagle called it a destructive force which destroys humanities capacity to build community and contribute to the common good.

He demanded that as Faith-based organisations, we must ask ourselves the following questions “where is the humanity of those who exploit other human beings? What type of relationships lead to the commodification of human beings, exploit them for profit and deny their value as human beings?”

Cardinal Tagle urged us to consider a category of Human Ecology, as spoken by three recent Popes, John-Paul II, Benedict and Francis. The church attributes the dimension of morality, to Human Ecology, whereby human relationships cannot be considered without moral and ethical considerations and the absence of morality reduces humans to an inhuman ecology.

The Cardinal spoke of an understanding of the human person from the perspective of the theology of the body. Such a theology establishes a direct relationship between the environment and other living human beings, which is a gift from the Father. Thus, with such a perspective, we gain an understanding of ourselves within a context of the moral law and healthy human relationships.

All present shared his view that in the largely “throw away” culture of contemporary times, there is a lack of authentic human ecology. Instead, we are living through a distorted human ecology and it is this which is at the heart of human trafficking. The objectification and commodification of the person reflects an understanding of how contemporary humankind view one another.



In relation to forced labour, Cardinal Tagle sees this as portraying the body as a mere instrument, stretched to its very limits of endurance and capacity, with profit being infinitely more important than the tired, weary human body.

Cardinal Tagle went on to speak about the concept of progress and automation, to the extent of redundancy of human labour. The possibility of the redundancy of human interaction was made real for us when

he spoke of a recent request he had from an engaged couple, who asked if he would not mind their using a dog as the ring-bearer at their wedding, replacing what has usually been a child as a ring-bearer, with a dog. The couple were apparently closer to an animal than a human being...

Cardinal Tagle concluded his address by suggesting three codes by which we should live:

1. With compassion and understanding, let us help vulnerable people to detect signs of betrayal, so that they do not fall victim.
2. Educate about the value and dignity of the human person, the human body and the importance of the common good. It is essential this is done through the educational systems, parishes and social media, right out to the peripheries of society.
3. Let us be the conscience of society, by actively contributing to socio-economic and cultural structures. We should expose corruption; help provide access to education; build strong social protection systems. There is scope for God's action. There is room for human compassion.

Finally, the Cardinal stated "It is sad that the human vulnerability has created a space not for mercy, compassion, caring but instead, for exploitation. We must raise our voices to the call of the Beatitudes. We must ask ourselves the hard questions such as who prepared the food for us today. Who cleans up after we leave the dining room after each meal? Let us become more sensitive to seemingly "invisible people" who make our lives easier. The work is not easy, it is a mission which we are called to do out of commitment to the dignity of the human person."





Conclusion.

The Conference was the first step towards our common action as faith-based organisations in combating trafficking and exploitation in Africa. It is intended to promote and build our further activities on the experience and knowledge shared at the conference.

Meanwhile, you are invited to visit two webpages of the Conference (the webpage of the Caritas

Nigeria <https://caritasnigeria.org/africa1st/> and the webpage of Caritas Internationalis <http://www.caritas.org/2016/08/one-human-family-one-voice-no-human-trafficking/>) where you could download the following:

1. The Final statement of the participants (Caritas Internationalis webpage)
2. Presentations of the speakers (Caritas Nigeria website under Resources)
3. Photos (Caritas Internationalis webpage)
4. The issue papers in three languages (English, French and Portuguese) – Caritas Internationalis webpage.
5. An interview between RENATE Communications person and Vatican Radio is available at

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/09/08/nigeria_conference_women_religious_fight_trafficking/1256652

As soon as the reports of the working groups and minutes of the sessions are released, they will be made available on the RENATE website. Meantime, below is a visual of a 'Prayer Tree, 'where conference delegates placed their personal prayers, on the final day of the conference.



Anne Kelleher, RENATE Communications.