

Montclair State University

Global Center on Human Trafficking

United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking of Person Multi Stakeholder Hearing

Testimony of the Global Center on Human Trafficking headquartered at Montclair State University

July 13, 2021

Good afternoon. My name is Ali Boak and I am the Director of the Global Center on Human Trafficking headquartered at Montclair State University. I have been working in the anti-trafficking field for over 25 years and I am grateful for the opportunity to provide feedback on the practical experience of responding to trafficking of persons.

The Global Center on Human Trafficking is a multi-disciplinary effort focused on developing innovative solutions to the global problem of human trafficking. **The Global Center on Human Trafficking** envisions a world in which all people live free from human trafficking and our mission at the **Global Center for Human Trafficking** is to develop novel and innovative solutions to the complex problems of human trafficking by mobilizing collective action and cooperation at the local, national, and global levels.

I'd like to begin my remarks by highlighting the need for all actors, whether they be from government, law enforcement, civil society, academia or the private sector to work according to a human rights approach. This approach requires us to consider, at each and every stage, the impact that a law, policy, practice or measure may have on persons who have been trafficked and persons who are vulnerable to being trafficked. To effectively respond to the crime of human trafficking while protecting the rights of trafficking survivors, **the field must move to engage and support survivors as leaders and partners.** We must challenge ourselves to move even further than a victim-centered approach and we must learn from, listen to, and build our responses based on the lived experience of survivors of all forms of human trafficking. **The third appraisal of the Global Plan of Action can increase our knowledge of human trafficking and revolutionize the way we all respond to human trafficking by elevating and supporting the leadership role of survivors in developing anti-trafficking interventions.**

If we are to improve our response from prevention, to protection, through prosecution we must focus on our partnership with survivors in all areas, especially in the area of research. It is through a better understanding of the phenomenon of human trafficking that we will be able to innovate new, more effective responses. A global research agenda should be developed that is driven by survivors and engages survivors in all aspects of the research. Further qualitative and quantitative study by and of survivors is necessary at the macro- and micro-level understanding of the phenomenon. We need to reduce our reliance on small, unrepresentative samples and end the practice of developing interventions based on extrapolations from small convenience samples. Research must be increased in areas of the world with the highest prevalence of human trafficking. International research collaborations must be funded and supported. The

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only way to truly increase our knowledge is to support and engage survivors as researchers, interviewers, data collectors, and data analysts. The Global Center on Human Trafficking urges the third appraisal of the Global Action Plan to highlight the large gap in research conceived and carried out by survivors and to call for funding, international collaboration, and support for survivor driven and executed research projects. Thank you very much for your time and for considering my comments today.

Respectfully,

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