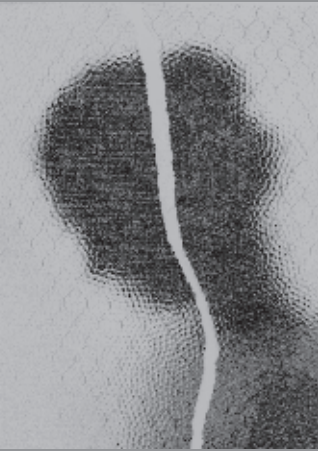


Trafficking in Persons: USAID's Response



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U.S. Agency for International Development
Office of Women in Development

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Introduction

Trafficking in persons is a pernicious and brutal abuse of human rights that affects nearly every country in the world. Its victims are most often poor and vulnerable women and children forced into degrading sexual or economic exploitation. U.S. Department of State figures suggest that 800,000 to 900,000 people are trafficked across borders annually.¹ An additional and significant number of individuals are trafficked within countries.

In December 2002, President Bush signed a Trafficking in Persons National Security Presidential Directive that commits the U.S. Government to raising awareness about human trafficking and to stepping up efforts to eradicate it. As President Bush said in addressing the United Nations General Assembly, “We must show new energy in fighting back an old evil. Nearly two centuries after the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, and more than a century after slavery was officially ended in its last strongholds, the trade in human beings for any purpose must not be allowed to thrive in our time.”²

In 2003, USAID field missions, regional bureaus and the Office of Women in Development provided over \$15 million for specific anti-trafficking activities in 36 countries, an increase of more than 50 percent over USAID anti-trafficking funding for 2002.

Trafficking in persons is complex and multifaceted, simultaneously a development and a criminal justice problem. Victims may be deceived by false promises of legitimate work, defrauded, tricked, threatened with force, coerced, abducted or even sold by their parents. Women are often more vulnerable to traffickers because of lack of education or access to work near their homes, or because of the prevalence of gender-based abuse and violence. Victims are exploited for sexual purposes, such as prostitution or pornography, or for labor without compensation in homes, farms, factories or other businesses. Those who are sexually exploited may become infected with HIV or other sexually transmitted infections.

The perpetrators who lure, transport, use or profit from trafficking in human beings may operate on their own or in groups, some of which are linked to organized transnational criminal networks. Markets for sex and cheap labor in destination countries and the growing sex tourism industry fuel the demand. Weak rule of law, porous borders and widespread official corruption provide the context that allows human traffickers to operate with impunity.

¹ U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report: June 2003,” p. 7.

² President George W. Bush, Address to the U.N. General Assembly, September 2003.

Increasing international awareness of the issue has helped to build political will on the part of many countries to address trafficking over the past few years. The annual Trafficking in Persons Report (the TIP Report) prepared by the U.S. Department of State, which describes country efforts worldwide to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons, has helped to spur positive action on the part of many governments.³ During 2003, countries making progress in combating trafficking have passed new legislation; conducted high-profile anti-trafficking public awareness campaigns; developed training programs for police, immigration and judicial officials; created national task forces and action plans; and promoted sensitive treatment for victims.

USAID is playing an active role within a coordinated U.S. Government and international effort to address trafficking in persons. As USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios has said, “Human trafficking is a development issue. We cannot separate the development process in a country from the trafficking issue.”⁴ USAID has programs in more than 40 countries that address prevention of trafficking, prosecution of perpetrators and protection of victims. For every country, appropriate interventions are identified as part of a coordinated U.S. Government effort, along with the Department of State and other relevant U.S. Government agencies also working to combat trafficking.

In 2003, USAID issued a Trafficking in Persons strategy⁵ to guide its programs to prevent trafficking of persons for sexual or economic exploitation; protect trafficking victims by reducing the vulnerability of women, children and men to traffickers; and promote the political will and legal and institutional capacity needed to eliminate trafficking. The USAID strategy underlies the planning and implementation of strategic interventions that, together with those of other governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), are designed to make real progress toward the elimination of this modern day form of slavery. The strategy makes it clear that “Organizations advocating prostitution as an employment choice or which advocate or support the legalization of prostitution are not appropriate partners for USAID anti-trafficking grants or contracts.”

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³ The Trafficking in Persons List submitted to Congress by the Secretary of State annually on June 1 identifies countries of origin, transit or destination for a significant number of victims of severe forms of trafficking. The list is divided into three tiers. The governments of countries placed in tier 1 meet the minimum standards for combating trafficking in persons. Those in tier 2 do not meet minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance. Tier 3 is reserved for governments that do not meet minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance. Beginning with the 2003 report, countries in tier 3 are subject to certain sanctions, principally termination of nonhumanitarian, non-trade-related assistance.

⁴ USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios, “Remarks at the State Department Conference on the Global Fight Against Sex Trafficking,” February 2003.

⁵ “Trafficking in Persons, The USAID Strategy for Response,” USAID, February 2003.

imately \$5.7 million in Central and Southeast Europe and Eurasia, \$3.2 million in Asia, \$2.5 million in Africa and \$1.0 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, with \$3 million worldwide from the WID Office. Including programs under way with funding from prior years, USAID is implementing anti-trafficking activities in more than 40 countries. In addition, USAID is managing a number of anti-trafficking programs funded by the Department of State. In Asia and the Near East, USAID missions are managing nearly \$4 million of State Department-financed anti-trafficking activities in addition to the \$3.2 million provided from USAID resources.

USAID's 2003 Anti-Trafficking Activities

Africa

African children are trafficked for farm, urban and domestic labor to locations within national borders, to other African countries, and also to Europe and the Middle East. Women are trafficked internationally as prostitutes or as domestic workers and are also frequently subject to psychological and physical abuse as well as sexual exploitation. Trafficking in persons is common in conflict settings, where men, women and children are abducted by militias and rebel forces and forced into labor, combat and sexual slavery, for example in the Sudan or northern Uganda.⁶

Many African countries recognize the need to reach local communities with culturally appropriate information about the dangers of trafficking. They are stepping up grassroots awareness campaigns, implementing anti-trafficking programs in schools and increasingly working with traditional leaders to fight trafficking. African governments have increased their support for facilities to assist victims but, overall, are constrained by a severe lack of resources.

The level of official response to the problem varies widely across the continent. In many conflict regions, officials lack political will to fight trafficking. Some countries, for example Côte d'Ivoire, have taken positive steps to develop comprehensive anti-trafficking plans and establish interministerial structures. Many African countries recognize the need to reach local communities with culturally appro-

appropriate information about the dangers of trafficking. They are stepping up grassroots awareness campaigns, implementing anti-trafficking programs in schools and increasingly working with traditional leaders to fight trafficking. African governments have increased their support for facilities to assist victims but, overall, are constrained by a severe lack of resources. Governments are cooperating with NGOs and donors on programs to reintegrate former child soldiers and other victims of trafficking. Effective cross-border arrangements to limit trafficking are just beginning, but more governments are working together in prosecution and protection efforts—for example, the governments of Mali and Côte d'Ivoire.

Benin. The USAID Mission in Benin is working with the Ministry of Family and Children, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and various NGOs, with an emphasis on prevention. USAID programs have begun to provide opportunities for education, training and employment for children and young women who are vulnerable to trafficking. Film and radio are used to spread information to at-risk groups about the dangers of child trafficking, including the working conditions on cocoa plantations. USAID is also working with local government to incorporate child protection into the formal mandate of all locally elected officials.

⁶ Research has found trafficking in persons in 85 percent of the conflict areas in the world. Save the Children, "State of the World's Mothers 2003: Protecting Women and Children in War and Conflict."

Democratic Republic of the Congo. USAID is supporting efforts by the International Rescue Committee, Search for Common Ground and local groups to improve and expand services for populations vulnerable to trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence. Activities provide victims with legal advice, psychological and social support, and medical assistance. Radio, theater, posters and videos are educating communities about the risks of trafficking and providing information on available support services. Public messages include positive examples of women who have been successfully reunited with their families. USAID is training local groups to effectively investigate, counsel and report on abduction and trafficking during armed conflict. USAID also supports sensitization of combatants and ex-combatants to the effects of sexual abduction and gender-based violence.

Ethiopia. The USAID Mission in Ethiopia is funding a program to provide victims with return and reintegration services, including shelter, medical care, counseling, travel arrangements, vocational training and micro-credit mechanisms. It supports a prevention program on Ethiopia Radio and is extending awareness activities to key areas around the country known as centers of trafficking. USAID is helping the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Women's Affairs Bureau in the Office of the Prime Minister and the government committee that sets trafficking policy to develop practical ways to implement a recent national anti-trafficking proclamation. Technical support will strengthen government prevention and victim protection programs, for example, to monitor employment agencies and document trafficking cases. USAID's anti-trafficking partners include local and international NGOs and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Mali. The USAID Mission in Mali and the West Africa Regional Program, in collaboration with Save the Children and other partners, are supporting a media campaign that uses community radio to promote child welfare and prevent trafficking. Programming frequency has increased to two 30-minute episodes each week in several local languages and in French. Radio soap operas address issues related to child welfare and help families and communities understand what steps they should take to reduce the vulnerability of children to traffickers.

Nigeria. The USAID Mission and the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria have developed a strategy and are working with UNICEF, IOM and a consortium of local NGOs to rehabilitate trafficking survivors. The program establishes and maintains temporary shelters and training centers in Edo State, a primary source state for women trafficked to Europe. The shelters, accommodating up to 300 women at a time, provide temporary housing, counseling and support to women and girls who cannot immediately be reunited with their families. Six months of training for each woman covers literacy and numeracy and marketable skills such as tailoring and computer use.

Sudan. USAID and Save the Children/UK are working together to prevent and reduce the practice of conflict-related abduction and to assist women and children victims. The program facilitates identification of abduction cases and the return of abducted women and children between Sudanese and Sudan People's Liberation Army-controlled areas. Funding for an interagency database is enabling support groups to trace the progress of victim care and reintegration. Local partner organizations are assisting victims by providing interim shelters and developing long-term solutions such as family-based care, small group homes, and an

assistance package to help young adults resettle. The program tracks and reunifies families, where possible, and provides other options for women and children whose families cannot be traced or for whom reunification is not possible.

USAID is working with the International Rescue Committee, the Center for Victims of Torture and Search for Common Ground to meet the varied and complex needs of victims, especially women who were abducted to serve as wives for former Revolutionary United Front members and then abandoned, as is common in both Liberia and Guinea.

Mano River Union—Regional Program for Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.

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then abandoned, as is common in both Liberia and Guinea. USAID's partners are working with local groups to facilitate the safe return, social integration and rehabilitation of victims, many of whom are survivors of gender-based abuse, violence and torture. Victims obtain psychological counseling, social services and employment-related skills. USAID is also addressing prevention by raising awareness at the community level and with officials of relevant government agencies.

Asia

Trafficking of women and children occurs internally within individual countries, within South and Southeast Asia subregions, and further afield in East Asia and the Middle East. The magnitude of the problem in Asia almost defies belief, with hundreds of thousands trafficked annually, primarily for sexual exploitation and forced labor.

Many countries have legislation that criminalizes trafficking, but in most cases the existing legal framework does not offer adequate controls. Implementation of current laws is limited, and law enforcement officials lack adequate training. Prosecution is increasing, but, given the magnitude of the problem, much more needs to be done. Most Asian governments are stepping up public awareness and victim assistance programs on their own and in conjunction with NGOs and international organizations. These programs often are very modest due to resource constraints. Several neighbor states are beginning to collaborate on investigations and have signed cross-border agreements to regularize the return of victims. However, the need for coordination and information sharing among the countries of the region remains great.

In addition to USAID-funded programs, USAID is implementing programs funded by the Department of State in Indonesia, Laos, the Philippines and Vietnam. The Department of State has provided funds for activities managed by USAID in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal and Thailand.

Bangladesh. The USAID Mission in Bangladesh and its partners, Action Against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children, Academy for Educational Development and the IOM, are implementing a countrywide anti-trafficking program. A comprehensive prevention campaign brings government and civil society together to expand public information using a multimedia approach that includes street dramas, film festivals, public rallies, orientation of religious leaders and programs in schools. In addition to the prevention campaign, USAID and its partners, including the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs and IOM, sponsor public road marches that bring anti-trafficking messages to tens of thousands of people across the country. One USAID-supported NGO group, the

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA), has established 13 watchdog sites to monitor trafficking cases and provide legal assistance to victims. It repatriates victims from other countries, facilitates the release of those trafficked within Bangladesh and reintegrates them into community life. From January 2003 to November 2003, BNWLA repatriated 29 women, children and men from various countries, effected the release of 32 women and children from internal trafficking and provided information that led police to arrest 76 traffickers. In the same period, 16 traffickers received convictions.

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Cambodia. USAID is supporting efforts by the IOM and the Ministry of Women's and Veteran's Affairs to prevent trafficking. With a focus on key provinces and municipalities, including Phnom Penh, the USAID-sponsored activities use video, theater, posters and auto loudspeakers to inform citizens of their rights and provide information they can use to protect themselves from being trafficked. USAID also fosters community networking to combat trafficking and has supported a counter-trafficking database that helps develop counter-trafficking policy in the country. The Asia Foundation receives USAID support to fund a wide range of Cambodian civil society groups active at the community level, in a comprehensive program that incorporates prevention, protection, rehabilitation and reintegration for women and girls. Examples of individual projects include (1) expansion of an effective community watch approach to three provinces; (2) victim shelters, including a shelter in Phnom Penh that is home to about 80 Cambodian and Vietnamese survivors each year; (3) interventions that reach young girls and women as they arrive at taxi and bus stations in Phnom Penh and provide them with housing and employment options before traffickers approach them; and (4) a campaign to inform women how to migrate safely to other countries. USAID is also funding the International Justice Mission in a new program that will increase the capacity of Cambodian law enforcement authorities to rescue victims and to capture and convict traffickers, including investigative training for the Ministry of Interior's Anti-Human Trafficking Juvenile Protection Unit.

India. The USAID Mission in India is working with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and a number of Indian NGOs active in anti-trafficking throughout the country. Activities include information centers and shelters, psychological counseling, and educational and vocational opportunities, including for children of prostitutes in order to prevent them from falling victim to traffickers. Training helps communities advocate against trafficking and reach at-risk groups with prevention efforts. USAID also supports information-sharing networks among NGOs and local law enforcement, and training for judiciary and law enforcement officials on the causes, nature and magnitude of trafficking. Awareness campaigns are under way at state and national levels using a variety of media.

Indonesia. The USAID Mission in Indonesia is collaborating with the Ministry for Women's Empowerment in the drafting and passage of appropriate legislation and in building an inter-governmental coalition to arrest and prosecute traffickers. USAID is helping nongovernmental groups provide services to protect victims and prevent the vulnerable from being trafficked. In collaboration with the American Center for International Labor Solidarity and the International Catholic Migration Commission, USAID is undertaking anti-trafficking programs through small grants in six provinces, including an awareness campaign on the threat trafficking poses to individuals seeking jobs outside their communities. USAID also works to strengthen the capabilities of the Indonesian government's enforcement arms to counter trafficking and improve the capacity of communities to protect their vulnerable groups; support two Indonesian consulates in Malaysia to better serve victims; and, in collaboration with the provincial Child Protection Agency, build local government capacity to prevent, investigate and prosecute acts of trafficking and to assist and protect victims of trafficking.

Laos. In collaboration with The Asia Foundation and its local sub-grantee partners, Lao Women's Union and Village Focus International, USAID is involved in a public education campaign on trafficking and violence against women. Research has helped tailor campaign messages to the needs of various at-risk communities. Other activities include information on safe migration, drafting of anti-trafficking laws, income generation activities and counseling services. USAID also supports a consortium, including World Education and World Learning, which is working to increase awareness and provide skills training for legitimate work opportunities in Mekong border communities.

Nepal. USAID supports an ongoing program to raise awareness in seven trafficking-prone districts to combat trafficking, to improve the capacity of service providers to deal sensitively with survivors and to advocate for more stringent sentences to deter traffickers. This program reaches out to vulnerable women and girls, teachers and students, manpower agencies, members of local government and transport workers to prevent trafficking. The Government of Nepal receives USAID assistance to activate district, municipality and village anti-trafficking task forces. It addresses rehabilitation and reintegration of survivors by providing training in psychological and social services for staff of transit homes. A new activity focuses on improving the financial security of the most vulnerable, including victims, through job skills and placement. USAID has also supported a component on trafficking as part of its literacy training program for out-of-school girls. USAID's South Asia Regional Initiative has supported rescue and rehabilitation activities as well as an analysis of the legal framework in Nepal.

The Philippines. USAID collaborates with The Asia Foundation in supporting a local NGO that maintains halfway houses in two major ports where women and children migrating for work are at high risk of being trafficked, and in developing strategic linkages with public and private entities essential to counter trafficking, including the police, coast guard, ports authority and shipping companies. Another USAID partner is undertaking prevention efforts through community education programs to disseminate information, raise public awareness and encourage participation in anti-trafficking initiatives as well as helping build local NGO anti-trafficking networks.

Sri Lanka. USAID is supporting the efforts of UNIFEM, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the National Child Protection Authority to combat trafficking and protect victims. A nationwide assessment of the problem will help the government and nongovernmental groups better target information and services to the most vulnerable. USAID's South Asia Regional Initiative supports implementation of awareness-raising programs and analysis of current legal protections for victims of trafficking.

Thailand. In Thailand, USAID is working with The Asia Foundation to advance community programs to deter trafficking, including collaboration with intersecting actors ranging from law enforcement agencies to social and health workers. Sub-grants help build the capacity of Thai NGOs to warn those at risk of trafficking and to provide legal support and shelter to victims. USAID supports World Vision's efforts to reduce the number of women, youths and children trafficked for sex or other forms of exploitative labor from Burma to Thailand and from the Thai border areas to the Thai interior. This work includes awareness-raising efforts among community-based organizations about the trafficking risks of migration, as well as assistance in setting up suitable community-based interventions.

Vietnam. USAID collaborates with IOM to facilitate the reintegration of trafficked women in two provinces. A reception center and transit facility provide assistance to returning Vietnamese women and children. Services provided depend upon an individual's needs, which may include counseling, skills training, small loans, literacy classes and basic medical care. USAID is supporting a study to determine which interventions have been most effective.

South Asia Regional. The USAID South Asia Regional Initiative is promoting regional-level activity through projects implemented by UNIFEM and the Academy for Educational Development. UNIFEM promotes multi-pronged preventive strategies and interventions to reduce the incidence of trafficking of women and children in the region and has supported the adoption of the anti-trafficking convention by the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation. Cross-border regional cooperation strategies are an important element of program activities. The UNIFEM program provides support to all countries in the region for analysis of the legal frameworks relevant to trafficking for the design of new laws and conventions for combating trafficking of persons, and for strengthening the capacity to implement relevant laws. USAID's regional program also promotes the exchange of ideas and provides practical information on prevention programs and advocacy techniques related to social equity for women and children.

East Asia Regional. USAID is collaborating on a three-year regional project for the prevention of trafficking in persons and the promotion of women's rights in Thailand, Vietnam and Laos with The Asia Foundation. In 2004, the project continues to build advocacy and leadership capacity at all levels and to foster grassroots support to combat trafficking in persons and violence against women. USAID and its partners also continue to help integrate country-specific anti-trafficking programs by encouraging regional memoranda of understanding and implementation of legal structures in the region.

Central and Southeastern Europe and Eurasia

The Europe and Eurasia region is second only to Southeast Asia according to the U.S. Department of State's estimates of persons trafficked annually. It now has the highest percentage of trafficking victims per capita since the opening of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the opening of the region's borders subsequent to the collapse of the USSR. Transition in the region has included high unemployment and poverty, dislocation in values and rampant corruption, disenfranchisement and, in some countries, violent conflict. Adult victims of trafficking in persons in this region differ from those in developing countries in that they usually have secondary or sometimes even higher education, but they no longer have the job security that the Communist/Soviet system offered. Trafficking is more likely to be linked to organized crime in this region, which is home to some of the most pernicious organized crime groups in the world.

Women and children are primarily trafficked for sexual exploitation and men for forced and legally unprotected cheap labor. Most countries in the region are countries of origin or transit, but a few are countries of destination such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and, increasingly, Russia. For trafficking victims flowing to Western Europe, the major source countries in the Europe and Eurasia region are Albania, Moldova, Romania, Russia and Ukraine. Within Eurasia, in Asia and the Middle East there may be large numbers of trafficked persons from Armenia, Georgia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The southeastern European region in particular has become a leader in global anti-trafficking efforts. Response to trafficking in persons in Eurasia has generally been slower and weaker, with destination countries to the east and the south less aware, cooperative and transparent than the destination countries in the west. Most governments now have criminalized trafficking in persons in their national legislation, established national plans of action, and increased NGO-government and cross-border cooperation for the prosecution of traffickers and protection of victims.

Although impressive efforts have been undertaken, governments have uneven records in taking responsibility for combating trafficking in persons, in implementing new legislation and in allocating adequate financial and human resources to sustain and effectively combat trafficking without donor assistance. Governments in Europe and Eurasia, whether in source, transit or destination countries, increasingly acknowledge that they must take primary responsibility for anti-trafficking efforts domestically, regionally and internationally.

Albania. USAID is supporting the efforts of Terre des Hommes, a Switzerland-based NGO, to address trafficking of children from Albania to Greece and Italy. The program incorporates a transnational component that brings NGOs from source and destination countries together in a coalition against child trafficking. Activities include prevention, protection, assisted voluntary return and reintegration. USAID has provided funds to implement a program that will bring government officials and NGOs together to plan and implement anti-trafficking activities around the country. International and local NGOs based in Albania will obtain grants to undertake prevention activities as well as care for, support and reintegrate victims, including placing children with families or in foster care. USAID has also supported training of judges on the treatment of trafficking cases.

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Belarus. USAID has begun an activity to address prevention through the provision of economic options to vulnerable women. With USAID support, Winrock International will adapt training used successfully in Ukraine to the situation in Belarus.

Bulgaria. USAID is facilitating improved government capacity to implement the new Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Act through IOM. A network for interagency cooperation at central, regional and local levels will train and support national and local commissions mandated in the new act. This program builds on successful experience in promoting cooperation among Bulgarian organizations, including a pilot partnership for anti-trafficking operations in the town of Russe. The pilot is a model for collaboration among attorneys, law enforcement officials, counselors, health practitioners and educators that can be replicated elsewhere in the country.

Croatia. The USAID Mission in Croatia is supporting the trafficking prevention work of the IOM through information channeled through the education system. The Ministry of Education is developing a module for high school students, teachers and parents on trafficking and the threat it poses to young people with the aim of reaching 200,000 students, especially young girls, in 485 high schools. USAID is supporting ongoing efforts by a number of partners to implement an awareness campaign. The USAID Mission has funded a local technology firm to provide a specialized Internet platform for communications between government and NGOs working on trafficking issues and to develop an Internet application for registering and monitoring victims.

Georgia. USAID has funded an assessment of the trafficking problem and the Government of Georgia's capacity to address it. The findings will be used to design a multi-year anti-trafficking initiative. As an interim step before the new program is in place, the USAID Mission in Georgia is supporting information campaigns in key cities.

Macedonia. USAID is working with local civil society groups on a broad prevention and protection program. In partnership with the Institute for Sustainable Community, local NGOs are competing for grants to strengthen their anti-trafficking programs. For example, the Association for Support of Families and Children is mobilizing multidisciplinary teams from eight towns, including professionals such as attorneys, social workers, psychologists and health workers, to provide services to victims, potential victims and their families. The Women's Lobby and Action against Violence and Trafficking in Women (Open Gate) is working with 10 NGO partners to create a network of organizations throughout the country for prevention and training on trafficking circumstances, risks and security concerns. Finally, USAID and its partners are providing media awards that recognize reporting on trafficking issues.

Romania. The USAID Mission in Romania works with NGOs to help prevent vulnerable children from becoming trafficking victims. With USAID support, World Learning and local and international NGOs offer life skills training and social and occupational services to children who leave state welfare institutions. The USAID Mission is also addressing trafficking through its Romanian American Sustainable Partnerships program that funds joint Romanian-U.S. NGO projects. A grant to the Lift Foundation (a U.S.-based organization) and Reaching Out (a Romanian NGO) is supporting a shelter that provides counseling, medical assistance and employment-related training. A grant to the Social Alternatives Association (a Romanian NGO) and the MiraMed Institute (a U.S.-based NGO) is supporting public awareness efforts, including TV and radio spots, poster contests and an in-school program conducted by local NGO and police representatives.

Russia. The USAID Mission in Russia is helping at-risk women build confidence and increase their economic opportunities, and through a network of women's NGOs is supporting training in technical areas and small business development for vulnerable women and returned victims. USAID has also supported trafficking prevention efforts in the Russian Far East and Siberia. USAID support helps build the capacity of local NGOs to provide job skills training and other services to at-risk women.

Serbia-Montenegro and Kosovo. USAID is funding an IOM anti-trafficking program in Serbia that is helping the government structure an anti-trafficking plan. It has successfully engaged the government in a dialogue that resulted in a policy change toward more favorable treatment of victims. Ongoing work addresses the need for improvements in social integration of Serbian victims as well as improvements in assistance to foreign victims, including funding a shelter for foreign victims for whom repatriation is not suitable. Also in Serbia, USAID is helping address the problems facing women and children from the Roma ethnic group. The government, local groups and donors are using research that documents the specific risks and vulnerabilities of Roma women and children to tailor anti-trafficking initiatives. In Montenegro, USAID funds IOM efforts to expand assistance to victims in conjunction with other international organizations, local NGOs and the government's Victims Protection Program. A shelter will provide secure accommodation, counseling and medical assistance for victims who need help before returning to their home communities.

In Kosovo, USAID is supporting the provision of immediate shelter and aid to victims and long-term reintegration support. This program reaches vulnerable women and children with information on ways to protect themselves from traffickers. Other USAID emphases in Kosovo include raising public and official awareness and building the capacity of local authorities and NGOs to undertake prevention and protection activities.

Ukraine. The USAID Mission in Ukraine has continued its partnership with Winrock International to implement the Trafficking Prevention Project, which is focused on women between the ages of 12 and 40. The program supports seven Trafficking Prevention Centers managed by Ukrainian NGOs that offer walk-in services and scheduled training in job search strategies, business development and technical subjects. The centers provide women in crisis with legal consultations, counseling on human rights, and referrals to psychologists and medical facilities. In addition, USAID will continue to award grants to Ukrainian NGOs to increase public awareness about trafficking and violence against women.

Central Asia. The USAID Mission for Central Asia is supporting a regional approach to combating trafficking in persons along with funding for complementary country-specific efforts. In Kazakhstan, this involves improving the policy and legislative framework to counter trafficking. In the Kyrgyz Republic, USAID is supporting grants to local NGOs for public awareness and victim assistance. In the Republic of Tajikistan, the focus is on an information campaign to prevent trafficking and labor exploitation using indigenous materials designed to reach specific communities with a high emigration rate and high-risk commercial areas and transport hubs. In Uzbekistan, USAID supports a prevention campaign and training for government officials.

Europe and Eurasia Regional. USAID funded and co-sponsored, with the U.S. Embassy in Budapest, the Regional Conference on Public Health and Trafficking in Human Beings in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, held in Budapest in March 2003. The conference assembled policy makers, health practitioners working with victims, NGOs involved in shelter programs and interested donors to discuss the public health aspects of trafficking in persons. The resulting “Budapest Declaration on Public Health and Trafficking in Human Beings” lays out an action agenda, including recognition of and provision for the special health care needs of trafficked children and adolescents, and a call for minimum standards for health care of all trafficking victims.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labor is a serious problem in the region. Most victims are young women and girls. Internal trafficking, especially for exploitation of children as prostitutes or as domestics, is an important aspect of the problem in many countries. The region also has a high number of economic migrants who move from rural to urban areas or who illegally cross borders and become vulnerable to traffickers.

Awareness of trafficking and of exploitation of children is growing among governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, fueled in part by increasing regional and international attention to the subject. The nations of the region have signed a number of conventions that address trafficking and related crimes. They are increasingly recognizing the need to cooperate among themselves, especially to address the cross-border aspects of the problem.

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cially to address the cross-border aspects of the problem. Many nations have taken action to strengthen their legislation. Some have created special police units to fight the exploitation of children. However, concrete implementation mechanisms are generally lacking, and those that exist are underfunded, sometimes severely so. Prosecution remains lax. Most governments lack the capacity to mount programs that meet the need to reach at-risk groups or assist victims.

Brazil. The USAID Mission in Brazil is expanding access to and improving the quality of assistance for trafficking victims, most of whom are children and adolescents trafficked for sexual exploitation. Activities in Brazil are undertaken collaboratively with the Government of Brazil, the International Labour Organization, Partners of the Americas and Brazilian NGOs. In 2003, the Government of Brazil formed a network of public and private sector victim assistance providers in seven municipalities that have a high incidence of trafficking. With USAID support, the government held workshops that engaged 1,200 professionals from diverse governmental and social service organizations in the seven municipalities to develop anti-trafficking work plans. USAID will support an expansion of this training to cover a broader range of topics related to NGO services, including psychological counseling and social assistance, and will extend it to victim assistance providers in the northeastern states of Maranhão, Paraíba and Rio Grande do Norte. The USAID Mission will also support a strengthened program of training for government officials who provide direct assistance to victims.

Dominican Republic. The USAID Mission in the Dominican Republic is supporting implementation of new anti-trafficking legislation passed by the Congress in July 2003. USAID is funding a training program for judicial officials, other involved government officials and staff of victim protection agencies that covers the requirements of the new legislation. USAID will also work with NGOs, public and private sector agencies, attorneys and justice sector institutions to help develop policies, plans and programs to implement the legislation.

Guatemala-Mexico Border Area. USAID is supporting the work of the Casa de la Mujer, a shelter run by a faith-based group that provides rehabilitation support, including counseling, medical care and vocational education, to trafficking victims in the border area of Tecun Uman and the surrounding Guatemalan department of San Marcos. Most of these victims are women under the age of 18 trafficked into prostitution.

Haiti. The USAID Mission in Haiti has begun to work with the Pan American Development Foundation and Catholic Relief Services to implement several interrelated anti-trafficking activities. Research is under way to clarify domestic and cross-border trafficking patterns and identify high incidence areas and populations most at risk. This will help USAID target resources toward the most vulnerable groups and geographic areas. To change people's attitudes toward forced child domestic labor and help prevent its recurrence, a network of community radio stations will disseminate information about trafficking patterns, living and working conditions of illegal child domestics, and principles of respect for the basic rights of children. USAID is supporting training for officers within the newly formed Juvenile Protection Squad of the Haitian National Police in methods for investigating and prosecuting traffickers. Border patrol agents, migration officials and employees of the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs and Ombudsman's office will be eligible for training as well. USAID funds will also support Haitian NGOs that provide social services to former child domestics.

Jamaica. USAID is assisting the Bureau for Women's Affairs, Government of Jamaica, to develop an educational program that will encompass literacy and job skills for women who are vulnerable to becoming victims of traffickers. It will be piloted in selected high-risk communities.

Nicaragua. The USAID Mission in Nicaragua has funded a study to detail the extent and nature of trafficking in that country. USAID will use the study, conducted by Johns Hopkins University, to design a public awareness campaign to reach potential victims, their parents and families, civil society and government institutions. The study can also be used by the Government of Nicaragua as a basis for a national strategy to combat trafficking.

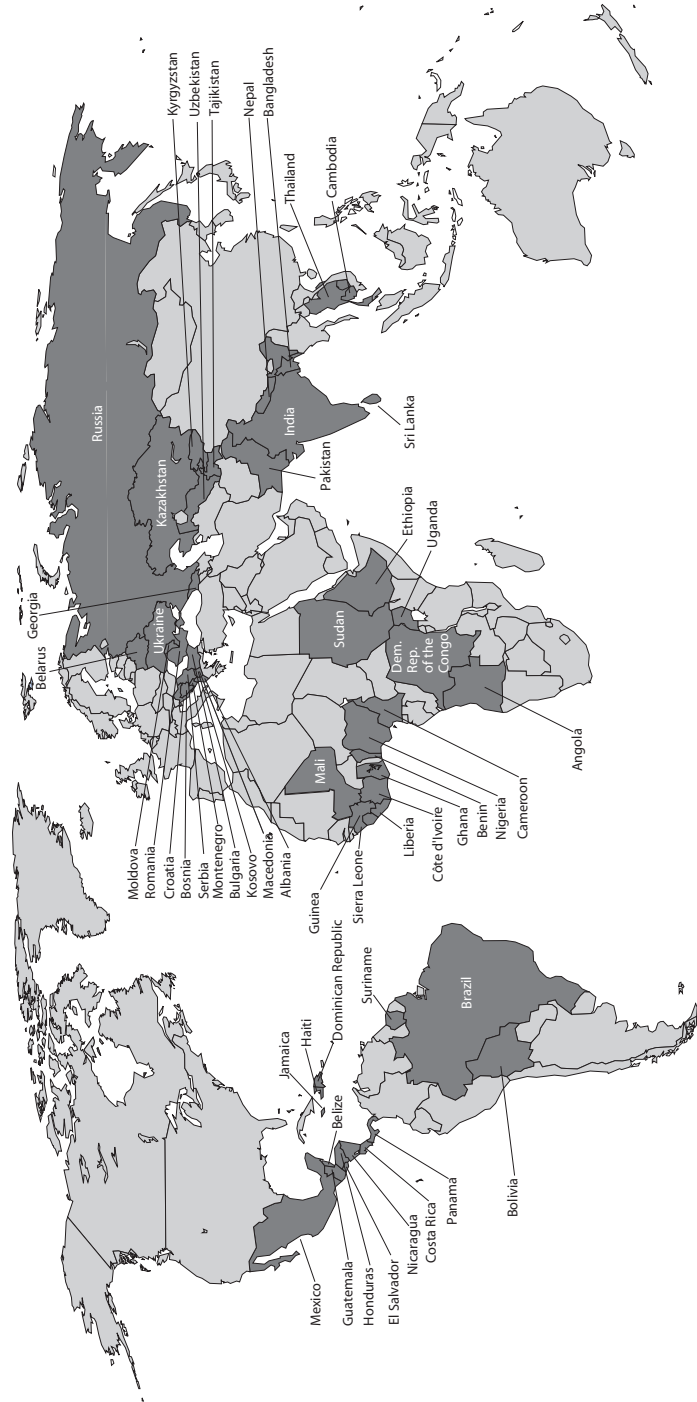
Latin America and the Caribbean Regional. USAID is funding part of a project being implemented by the Organization of American States/Inter-American Commission of Women (OAS/CIM) and the IOM to address international trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation in the Western Hemisphere. USAID supports project activities in Belize, Bolivia and Mexico. Funding will train government officials with responsibilities related to migration or trafficking and civil society groups working with women and children so that they can better identify and assist victims and implement anti-trafficking laws. Information about the social, legal, economic and cultural aspects of the trafficking problem in each country will also be shared with government and civil society stakeholders in order to further collaboration in anti-trafficking efforts. This activity is a follow-on to a USAID-funded regional study on trafficking in the Americas, carried out by the OAS/CIM and the International Human Rights Law Institute of De Paul University College of Law. Study results, shared with government officials throughout the region, helped raise awareness about the problem of trafficking for sexual exploitation and influenced an agreement by OAS delegates to issue a formal resolution on the crime of trafficking.

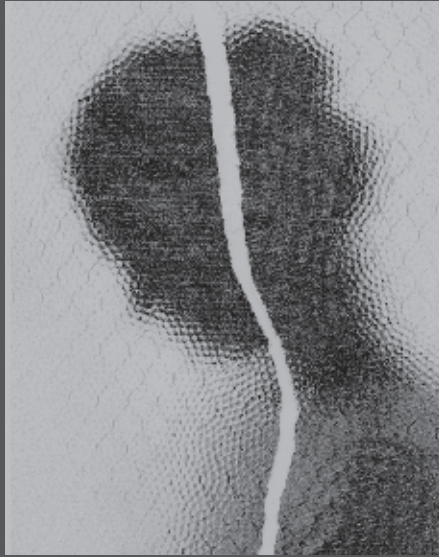
Conclusion

Since the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act in late 2000, the United States has made significant strides in the battle against trafficking in persons. The global scope and multifaceted nature of this crime require a truly collaborative effort by numerous actors from different countries and disciplines. As a recognized leader in the effort to eliminate this abuse of human rights, the United States has actively sought to focus public attention on the problem and to forge collaborative partnerships with governmental, nongovernmental and public international organizations across the world. Worldwide attention and action to fight this scourge have grown tremendously in the past several years.

Despite the progress made, trafficking in persons remains a significant global problem and unless our efforts continue and intensify it will remain so. Fighting trafficking is a continuing priority for USAID. The progress made provides hope that we can reach even greater achievements in the next years. Based upon our development experience and our direct anti-trafficking work in 40 countries, USAID is stepping up its efforts with more partners and new approaches and is expanding and deepening existing programs. The phenomenon of sex tourism is of concern to the U.S. Government, and USAID is joining the effort to stop this horrendous abuse of women and children. The problem of trafficking in conflict and post-conflict zones also will receive increased attention from USAID. Finally, in all situations, USAID is working to help trafficking victims find a new life after the abuse, fear, and physical and emotional damage visited upon them.

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