Trafficking in human beings is a risk to all persons moving in mixed migratory flows. Women and girls in migration flows are extremely vulnerable to trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation. In particular, governments cannot effectively combat trafficking in human beings without fully recognizing the acute vulnerabilities and specific needs of women and girls, especially within migration flows. The identification of victims of trafficking is often hampered by a number of factors, including lack of adequate training or functioning referral mechanisms. At the same time, other factors, such as implicit or explicit bias, prejudice and gender stereotypes may negatively impact law enforcement assistance to female victims of trafficking. Trafficking in human beings is often gender specific, as are its consequences, harms and recovery processes. Assistance to survivors therefore needs to be gender specific and tailored.

Article 6 of the CEDAW states that “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.” Any recommendations should be in line with Article 6 of CEDAW, as it is accepted international law. The United Nations Secretary-General stated, “every woman and every girl has the right to a life free of violence. Yet this rupture of human rights occurs in a variety of ways in every community. It particularly affects those who are most marginalized and most vulnerable.”

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that 72 percent of detected trafficking victims are women and girls[[1]](#footnote-1). Of these, 94 percent are trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation, including the exploitation of prostitution[[2]](#footnote-2). Moreover, reports from around the world indicate that women and girls trafficked for forced labour are also highly vulnerable to sexual violence and commercial sexual exploitation.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Goal 5 seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030. Target 5.2 focuses on violence against women and girls, highlighting trafficking and sexual exploitation as clear examples of gender-based violence. It is essential that Member States fully incorporate the language and goals of SDG target 5.2 and recall the provisions of international laws and conventions, in particular the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol).

I am fully committed to 5.2 Global Partnership objectives, which seek to ensure the implementation of SDG Target 5.2, which calls on governments to “eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.” Governments must invest in the implementation of SDG Target 5.2 as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls.

The most effective solution to prevent human trafficking, especially of women and girls, is through inclusion of impactful strategies to counteract demand. This approach is in line with Palermo Protocol Article 9, subsection 5, which states: “States Parties shall adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures, such as educational, social or cultural measures, including through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children that leads to trafficking.”

1. UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016 https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2016\_Global\_Report\_on\_Trafficking\_in\_Persons.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018 https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2018/GLOTiP\_2018\_BOOK\_web\_small.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)