

Statement by
Mr. Gilles HERVIO, Ambassador/Head of EU Delegation in Zambia
Second National Symposium on Child Trafficking
23 February 2011

Honourable Vice President and Minister of Justice,
Honourable Minister of Home Affairs,
Colleagues Ambassadors,
Government officials present,
Representatives of the media,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I feel very honored having the opportunity to contribute to this second National Symposium on Child Trafficking which is specifically aiming at 'Working together on strengthening the collaboration on Human Trafficking'. This wording captures very well the idea that the European Union considers key to successful interventions in the area of human trafficking in general, and child trafficking in particular, which is: to work together and to coordinate our efforts.

We all know that human trafficking has many faces and that its underlying causes are complex. We obviously need to look at pull factors: without demand, the business of trafficking would not exist. However, push factors also play an important role. Poverty is certainly one of the most important push-factors. It is also essential, in our view, to strengthen Government institutions involved in work on human trafficking, in order to avoid a situation where weak institutions constitute an additional push factor.

Zambia is affected by child trafficking in different ways: it is first a potential country of origin, but it is also a transit country and even a destination place of child trafficking. In some aspects, the situation can be compared with the one which prevails in the European Union, which usually is a destination area for human trafficking, but at the same time – as far as the less wealthy European Member States are concerned – a place of origin.

The EU strategies on combating human trafficking are built on the understanding that the multifaceted nature of trafficking and the complexity of the underlying causes require an equally diversified response and a long term commitment. The EU actions on human trafficking are hence based on a close collaboration with national Governments and with the relevant international and regional organizations.

Here in Zambia, the EU has since 2009 joined forces with the Government and three UN agencies to support a €1.6 million project to fight Human Trafficking. The project builds on the comparative advantages of the different partners and aims at addressing the diverse aspects of child trafficking in a comprehensive manner. In particular, it seeks to:

- improve public awareness,
- create a protective environment for children in collaboration with state and non-state actors,
- strengthen law enforcement and judiciary agencies and
- build capacity to meet better the needs for support of the victims.

Apart from this project, the EU also collaborates directly with the Ministry of Home Affairs in supporting the newly created Anti-Human Trafficking Secretariat. I hope that, through our development cooperation in general, the Government of the Republic of Zambia will be able to progress towards poverty reduction and hence remove one of the most important push factors for human trafficking.

I would also like to mention that the EU involvement at the national level is complemented by political actions at the regional level – in collaboration with the African Union. The recently signed AU-EU 'Joined action plan 2011-13' explicitly mentions the eradication of human trafficking as one of its objectives. I was pleased to see that the website of the Africa– EU Partnership already mentions our ongoing project here in Zambia as a 'Success Story'.

Given the political and humanitarian importance of the issue, and taking stock of the already existing activities in Zambia, I can only reiterate the EU's strong commitment to support actions against all forms of human trafficking. I very much hope that our joined efforts will continue to make good progress and eventually achieve the end result we aim at, which is to reduce child trafficking to the lowest possible level with a hope to eradicate it in a foreseeable future.

Thank you.