

# **PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN FOOD SYSTEMS**

Reid Johnson, Montana State University  
MUNFW 73 Session - Food and Agriculture Organization

Women play a substantial role in food systems around the world. Producing between 60-80% of food in developing countries and accounting for half of food production globally, they are a key aspect of food security (Davies, 2023). However, the challenges that women face in food systems have consequences for communities as a whole. By constraining women's access to essential tools such as land, credit, and agricultural inputs, states are further supporting an inefficient food system. Other key issues are women's lack of access to decision making, as well as research and technology. Without these aspects of food production at hand, women are left with very limited options in producing and preparing for their families and communities. As the global community faces challenges in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and food systems fall behind on their track toward the 2030 Agenda, states can promote women's role in food systems and use it as the driving force to bring food security to a new sustainable era.

## **ACCESS TO RESOURCES SUCH AS LAND, CREDIT, AGRICULTURAL INPUTS, EDUCATION TRAINING AND EXTENSION SERVICES**

There are a number of multicultural and social factors as to why women lack access to such important resources. For one, the work that they put into food production is often considered the 'natural extension of mothers' work'. Women are placed in the caretaker role in many societies, especially in developing states. However, their involvement in food systems is much more than a small supporting role. In many places,

women are the foundation of food systems. It is estimated in Cameroon that women produce 90% of subsistence food, while also working as laborers for hire and privately on family farms (Divine, 2021). In Sub-Saharan Africa, women and men have very different responsibilities, both of which food security depend entirely; “While men are often responsible for land clearing, burning and polishing, women specialise in weeding, transplanting, post-harvest work and, in some areas, land preparation and both take part in seeding and harvesting” (Giubbonari, n.d.). Women represent 43% of the global agricultural labor force, yet they undergo “significant discrimination when it comes to land and livestock ownership, equal pay, participation in decision-making entities and access to credit and financial services” (FAO, 2023). These limits to their resources and authority have deleterious consequences on food systems. Not only are women responsible for much of the burden preparing and processing foods, but they are also increasing as the main group of Head of Households in developing countries.

As of the 2022 Sustainable Development Goals report, only 15 out of 52 countries provided legal allocations advocating for women’s rights to own land. The COVID-19 pandemic has also caused states to fall behind in their efforts to combat gender discrimination, despite women’s leadership in response to the pandemic. Food insecurity has been on the rise as another result of the pandemic, and the international community is off track in meeting the 2030 Agenda. In moving toward a more sustainable world and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger, women must be “considered as actors and not helpers in the food system process” (Divine, 2021).

## **UN ACTION AND RECOGNITION**

The first United Nations conference addressing women and gender equality was held in Mexico City, Mexico, in 1975. The conference sparked a series of efforts to reduce gender inequalities and give women the opportunity for their voices to be heard. Resulting from the conference were the organizations that would later be combined to form what is now the UN Women organization. The UN Decade for Women (1976-1985) also found its birthplace at the

conference with three main objectives set in place; Full Gender Equality and the Elimination of Gender Discrimination, The Integration and Full Participation of Women in Development, and An Increased Contribution by Women to Towards Strengthening World Peace (United Nations). At the 4th world conference on women in 1995, the Beijing Platform For Action was implemented by 189 countries, and it is recognized as one of the most empowering movements for women and gender equality that the international community has adopted. It is reaffirmed in resolutions A/RES/77/181, 75/233, 74/235, 77/193, and many other United Nations documents on the topic of gender equality. The platform addresses twelve topics advocating for gender equality, including Violence against Women, Women and the Economy, Human Rights of Women, Women in Power and Decision-Making, and Women and the Environment. Since its implementation in 1995, there have been great strides in these areas of work for gender equality and the empowerment of women around the world. Results from the 25-year review show that maternal mortality rates have fallen, more women are being educated than ever before, and 65% of women have accounts at financial institutions.

The General Assembly adopted A/RES/66/216 on Women in Development in 2011. It recognizes the “mutually reinforcing links between gender equality and poverty eradication and the achievement of all of the Millenium Development Goals,” and it urges Member States to “incorporate a gender perspective, [...] into the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of national development strategies.”

Women have been a fundamental part of food systems for centuries, however they are only recently receiving recognition for their work. In April of 2021 the United Nations published an article addressing the consequences of COVID-19, calling for Urgent Action to Feed the World’s growing population healthily, equitably and sustainably. In anticipation of the 2021 Food Systems Summit, leaders in the international community spoke about their concerns within food systems and what areas of focus they preferred. Among the concerns for the environment and population changes affecting demand, food security and gender was addressed. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs wrote, “While women make up over 37 per cent of the world’s rural agricultural employment – a figure that rises to 48 per cent for low-income countries –

they face disadvantages in access to productive assets, inputs and services, including land, inheritance, livestock, education and extension and financial services” (2021). In his summary and statement of action following the 2021 Food Systems Summit, Secretary General António Guterres referred to women as the “backbone of food systems.”

The night before the Pre-Summit began in July 2021, the international community held a gathering to pay tribute to female farmers in the form of a producer’s market. Delegates shared ideas, spoke about their concerns, and discussed food systems in a sustainable future. The issue of access to resources and information for women farmers was again brought up by Elizabeth Nsimadala, President of Pan-African Farmers Organizations (PAFO). The tribute gave recognition to the “essential, yet often unnoticed, contribution that women producers make” (United Nations, 2021).

Resulting from the Summit is the Food Systems Coordination Hub, a team of international actors working toward the common goal of improving food systems around the globe through collaboration to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. Among the members includes the FAO, World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). The main functions of the Hub are to coordinate national pathways, improve leadership skills in states’ interest, increase support among the UN system, use effective methods in holding states accountable, and promote a food systems approach. The overlying goal in these operations is to improve the status of food systems by giving them the means of communication, resources, and technology to expand their existing culture without intruding. In strengthening leadership in states, the Hub is committed to working with people in communities by introducing the Stakeholder Engagement and Networking Advisory (SENA) group. This advisory will communicate with “self-appointed focal points of constituencies, including youth, indigenous peoples, producers, women, the scientific and technological community, and the Private Sector” (United Nations, 2022). This is an opportunity for women to gain access to resources and connections in order to improve the food systems they are a part of. Through working at the community level, the SENA will be able to promote the women in food systems, and simultaneously improve food security.

## **OTHER INTERNATIONAL ACTION**

Apart from the United Nations, states have also taken it upon themselves to advocate for Women's Empowerment in food systems. "Feed the Future" is a United States funded organization working with partner states to eradicate poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. One of their initiatives is the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (AWEIA). The goal of the AWEIA is to track women's empowerment in areas of agriculture including production, resources, income, leadership, and time use. States use the results of the AWEIA to examine how effective strategies used to empower women are, and how they affect men as well. The baseline report from 2014 examined the status of women in 13 developing countries from 5 regions; "Across countries, women are almost twice as disempowered as men in their ability to access and make decisions regarding credit, and over one and a half times as disempowered with respect to workload and group membership" (Malapit, 2014).

Since the implementation of the AWEIA and its different versions over the last decade, women have achieved much more agricultural access in a number of regions. For example, in Ethiopia the index found barriers to greater nutrition in women's lack of access to control over household resources, weaker social networks and greater time burden. The Ethiopian government responded to this by developing programs to include women in economic activities for their national nutrition program, giving them more access to social networks and control. In India, the Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN) shifted power from an abstract idea to tangible actions that are easily seen and respected by the community. In doing so, women were able to gain authority and access and now have a say in what crops they would like to produce and are being compensated for their sale (Myers, 2022). These are only a few examples of how the AWEIA has greatly impacted the promotion of women in food systems, and there is still much to be done.

## **POSSIBLE ACTION**

Although there have been considerable efforts in promoting women in food systems, much

still remains to be done. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations defines a sustainable food system as “one that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations is not compromised. This means that it is profitable throughout, ensuring economic sustainability, it has broad-based benefits for society, securing social sustainability, and that it has a positive or neutral impact on the natural resource environment, safeguarding the sustainability of the environment” (FAO 2023). By including women in food systems, states can simultaneously tackle Sustainable Development Goals 2, Zero Hunger, and 5, Gender Equality. Other SDGs such as No Poverty, Quality Education and Reduced Inequalities may also be improved as a by-product of such efforts. Due to the profound role that women play in food systems, “any set of strategies for sustainable food security must address their limited access to productive resources” (FAO, 2022).

In empowering women and furthering their role within food systems, the cause of the issue must first be addressed. The GENDER Impact Platform identifies the origin of gender and social inequalities as “structural barriers that manifest as rigid, discriminatory gender norms, policies and institutions” (Gadeberg & Lecoutere, 2023). This concept is difficult to quantify, but there are specific actions states can take. By creating communities with the goal to support women’s empowerment and autonomy, they will gain access to resources they lack such as markets and increased production. Other specific actions that states can take include providing women with inclusive technologies, education and training, and include women’s voices in policymaking and decision making.

Points of focus are a key aspect to promoting women in food systems. The FAO recommends a number of food security requirements in a sustainable world. These points of focus include equal access to land and agricultural services, advertisement of technology to make for more time to focus on more efficient tasks, provide better opportunities for income and conduct reassessments to ensure that issues women face are being addressed.

UN Women published an article in February of 2022 highlighting ways to build gender equality and sustainability. The first is supporting female smallholders, meaning those who own

farms up to 25 acres. By increasing their producing abilities and giving them more access to land, it supports a more sustainable way of production. Another strategy is supporting women's leadership in communities and funding women's organizations.

## **FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

With all of this in mind, states now move forward to the 2030 Agenda. In a more sustainable era, women are alongside men at the front lines of food systems. To protect and promote their role, states will recognize the current inequality that stands in the way of efficiency. Measuring the problem areas, implementing new practices and assessing their validity are all strategies by which states can accomplish this. Investments in organizations such as UN Women, the Food Systems Coordination Hub, and Feed the Future will also bring the international community closer to achieving its goals for food systems. As states develop, the protection of women's rights and roles becomes more achievable. What is needed now from the international community is innovation and collaboration to set forth the agenda to combat this issue.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What key issues are limiting women from being active members of food systems in specific states?
2. Which technologies can be introduced to communities that will enhance efficiency and further promote women's access to resources?
3. Where is there room for more women's access to resources such as land, education, profits and authority?
4. What is the current state of your country in the international food community? How can your status as a contributor be elevated?
5. Does your country intend to advocate for the protection and promotion of women's roles in food systems?
6. How can the United Nations incentivize states to adopt an appreciation for the work that women do in food systems and provide them with more authority in decision-making?



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AIDOS Via dei Giubbonari 34. (n.d.). *Women and Sustainable Food Security*. Women: The key to food security.  
<https://www.fao.org/3/x0171e/x0171e02.htm#:~:text=THE%20GENDER%20DIVISION%20OF%20LABOR&text=While%20men%20are%20often%20responsible,part%20in%20seeding%20and%20harvesting>
- Davies, V. (2023). *Women produce up to 80% of food in developing countries*. FAO.  
<https://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/1634537/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20FAO%2C%20women,is%20only%20recently%20being%20recognized.>
- Divine, F., Carletto, T., & Terence, N. (2021, July 25). *Understanding gender and food systems: The role of women in Food Systems*. Food Systems Summit Dialogues.  
<https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/3026/>
- FAO. (2023). *Fao.org*. Women in agriculture | Reduce Rural Poverty | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.  
<https://www.fao.org/reduce-rural-poverty/our-work/women-in-agriculture/en/>
- Gadeberg, M. and Lecoutere, E. 2023. *The status of women in agriculture and food systems: persistent gaps and promising solutions*. Nairobi, Kenya: CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform.
- Guterres, A. (2021, September 23). *Secretary-general's chair summary and statement of action on the UN Food Systems Summit*. United Nations.  
<https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/news/making-food-systems-work-people-pla-net-and-prosperity>
- United Nations. (2022, May). *The Food Systems Coordination Hub* - المتحدة الأمم. UN Food Systems Coordination Hub Frequently Asked Questions.  
[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2022/07/hub\\_faqs\\_en.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2022/07/hub_faqs_en.pdf)
- United Nations. (2021). *UN Food Systems Summit pays tribute to female farmers on eve of pre-summit gathering*. United Nations.  
<https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/news/un-food-systems-summit-pays-tribute-female-farmers-eve-pre-summit-gathering>
- United Nations. (n.d.). *World Conference of the international women's year*. United Nations.  
<https://www.un.org/en/conferences/women/mexico-city1975#:~:text=The%20first%20UN%20conference%20on,in%20much%20of%20the%20world.>
- United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs. (2021). *UN calls for urgent action to feed the world's growing population healthily, equitably and sustainably*. United Nations.  
<https://www.un.org/en/desa/un-calls-urgent-action-feed-world%E2%80%99s-growing-population-healthily-equitably-and-sustainably>

United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *What is Beijing Platform for Action*. United Nations. file:///Users/reidjohnson/Downloads/Beijing\_final.pdf

UN Women. (2022, February 28). *Five ways to build gender equality and Sustainability*. UN Women – Headquarters.

[https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2022/02/five-ways-to-build-gender-equality-and-sustainability?gclid=CjwKCAjwhdWkBhBZEiwA1ibLmPlezo1659cFFkZNwfibt6v8J1dZoiGQCmABGm5f5XGHEyN9JrNKCBoc8BQQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2022/02/five-ways-to-build-gender-equality-and-sustainability?gclid=CjwKCAjwhdWkBhBZEiwA1ibLmPlezo1659cFFkZNwfibt6v8J1dZoiGQCmABGm5f5XGHEyN9JrNKCBoc8BQQAvD_BwE)

USAID. (2013, April 30). *The women's empowerment in agriculture index*. Feed the Future.

<https://www.feedthefuture.gov/the-womens-empowerment-in-agriculture-index/>

Malapit, Hazel J.; Sproule, Kathryn; Kovarik, Chiara; Meinzen-Dick, Ruth Suseela; Quisumbing, Agnes R.; Ramzan, Farzana; Hogue, Emily and Alkire, Sabina. 2014. *Measuring progress toward empowerment: Women's empowerment in agriculture index: Baseline report*.

Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

<http://ebrary.ifpri.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15738coll2/id/128190>

Myers, E. (2022, March 3). *Lessons from a decade of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)*. Ifpri.org.

<https://www.ifpri.org/blog/lessons-decade-womens-empowerment-agriculture-index-weai>

# ENSURING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Maritza Velasco, San José State University  
MUNFW 73rd Session - Human Rights Council

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.”<sup>1</sup> However, a modern form of slavery, human trafficking, has been prominent. Human trafficking is “the process through which individuals are placed or maintained in an exploitative situation for economic gain.”<sup>2</sup>

Under the UDHR, discrimination based on race and sex is prohibited and demands certain key rights for non-citizens of Member States<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, article 14 of the UDHR outlines the freedom of movement within each state and the right to leave and return to one’s own country.<sup>4</sup> The UDHR also grants everyone the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, just and favorable conditions of work, and the right of children to special protection.<sup>5</sup> All these rights are violated in the process of being trafficked; first when they are trafficked being stripped of their freedom. Violations continue even after they are rescued, as they are not treated properly nor provided with adequate or effective services.

## PROBLEMS

According to the International Labour Organization, human trafficking is prohibited as it coerces individuals into forced labor, which is defined as: “work or service which is exacted from

---

<sup>1</sup>United Nations. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights*. (article 4).  
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

<sup>2</sup>OHCHR. (2014). Human Rights and Human Trafficking: Fact Sheet No. 36 (p. 1). Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/FS36\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/FS36_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> United Nations. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights*. (article 2).  
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

<sup>4</sup>United Nations. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights*. (article 14).  
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights*. (articles 23, 25).  
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered [themselves] voluntarily.”<sup>6</sup> Further practices declared illegal under human rights law are servitude, child sexual exploitation, forced marriage, child marriage, enforced prostitution, and the exploitation of prostitution.<sup>7</sup>

Human trafficking affects individuals of all genders, ages, races, and identities, despite many believing that women and girls are the only victims of trafficking, specifically sexual exploitation.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, over the past decade, there have been more male victims detected. These victims have been targeted with intentions of criminality and mixed forms of exploitation.<sup>9</sup> Additional data shows that 20 percent of victims of trafficking worldwide are children.<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, 60 percent of globally trafficked persons are women, and almost all are trafficked with the intention of being sexually exploited, according to the UN Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.<sup>11</sup> Women and girls are the most targeted victims because trafficking is rooted in sex-based discrimination, gender-based structural inequality, and the feminization of poverty, violating article two of the UDHR.<sup>12</sup> Women belonging to marginalized groups living in rural and remote areas, having a low socioeconomic status, indigenous groups, and migrant women are most vulnerable to trafficking.<sup>13</sup>

When individuals are trafficked, they are stripped of their freedom. Not only are they often forced to work in hazardous conditions, but they are also exploited sexually. However, upon being

---

<sup>6</sup> ILO. (1930). *CO-29 Forced Labour Convention* (article 2) International Labour Organization. [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C029](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C029).

<sup>7</sup> UNFPA-UNICEF. (2016). *Global Programme to End Child Marriage* United Nations Population Fund United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund. <https://www.unfpa.org/unfpa-unicef-global-programme-end-child-marriage>; UN Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, p 6; [www.un.org/en/pdfs/UN%20Victim%20Assistance%20Protocol\\_English\\_Final.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/pdfs/UN%20Victim%20Assistance%20Protocol_English_Final.pdf).

United Nations. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights*. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>;

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> United Nations. (2022). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022* (p. XI). [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTiP\\_2022\\_web.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTiP_2022_web.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. (November 20, 2020). *General recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration*. (p. 2) <https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=CEDAW/C/GC/38&Lang=E>; United Nations. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights*. (article 2). <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

<sup>13</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. (November 20, 2020). *General recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration*. (p. 5) <https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=CEDAW/C/GC/38&Lang=E>

rescued, many victims are not able to make a full recovery due to their lack of support from the State.

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and WeProtect Global Alliance indicated that almost 20 percent of the countries examined did not have effective services for victims and survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, in countries where such measures were in place, they were not sufficient.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, despite many attempts by the United Nations to help support survivors of trafficking, it remains a problem in a large part of the world.

In 2002, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) outlined 11 guidelines in its Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking. Guideline number five indicated that law enforcement response was critical. Victims of human trafficking often don't report their experiences to law enforcement officers "because they lack confidence in the police and the judicial system and/or because of the absence of any effective protection mechanisms."<sup>15</sup> It is critical that survivors of trafficking, and their experiences, are taken seriously. This allows them to feel inclined to share their stories, receive support, and ultimately, combat trafficking itself.

## EXISTING SOLUTIONS

While the UDHR is a very important and significant document, it is not legally binding to any State. Therefore, the best way to ensure these rights to citizens is through treaties. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime aims "a) To prevent and combat trafficking in persons, paying particular attention to women and children; b) To protect and assist the victims of such trafficking, with full respect for their human rights; and c) To promote cooperation among States Parties in order to meet those objectives."<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> OHCHR. *Recommended principles and guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*. (p.7) (January 01, 2002). <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/reference-publications/recommended-principles-and-guidelines-human-rights-and-human>

<sup>16</sup> United Nations. (2000). *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (article 2).

The United Nations bodies have worked to diminish the impact and practice of human trafficking. The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime's (UNODC) 2022 Global Report on Trafficking Persons found that the number of detected victims fell for the first time in 20 years. However, Ghada Waly, the UNODC's Executive Director, stated that the Coronavirus pandemic played a factor in law enforcement's ability to come into contact with victims. Waly states that law enforcement and public services were under increasing strain and pandemic restrictions may have also driven some forms of tracking to more hidden locations, potentially increasing the dangers to victims and making it less likely they could come to the attention of the authorities. Moreover, the UN's "institutions are too often failing to detect and protect trafficking victims, and to give them justice."<sup>17</sup> It is clear from this report that trafficking in persons is still a prominent issue that requires awareness and action.

Because the UN's priority is to protect victims of trafficking, in A/HRC/47/34 the Human Rights Council reported that it would be implementing the non-punishment principle. The report states that the goal is to ensure that victims of trafficking are not punished for unlawful acts that they might have committed during the trafficking process because fearing punishment will discourage victims from seeking services, protection, and justice.<sup>18</sup>

"Trafficked persons shall not be detained, charged or prosecuted for the illegality of their entry into or residence in countries of transit and destination, or for their involvement in unlawful activities to the extent that such involvement is a direct consequence of their situation as trafficked persons."<sup>19</sup>

This report also emphasizes that the non-punishment principle applies to all cases where the trafficking definition applies. The non-punishment principle aims to protect any and all victims, with the hopes that survivors will come forward about their experiences and receive all the help they may need.

---

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons5>.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations. (2022). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022* (p. 7).

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTIP\\_2022\\_web.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTIP_2022_web.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Human Rights Council. (May 17, 2021). *Implementation of the non-punishment principle: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Siobhán Mullally*. United Nations.

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3928739?ln=en>

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

Because children are targets of human traffickers, often targeted for purposes related to sexual exploitation and labor, additional human rights laws that impose responsibilities on States regarding child victims have been created. States are obliged to “provide for the physical safety of victims of trafficking in persons while they are within its territory.”<sup>20</sup> It is emphasized that these laws cannot be defied by States based on their own laws, such as immigration laws or public order, as the rights of the child are of utmost importance.

The HRC outlines that children must be granted care above all else. In the report from the 26th of January 2023, titled *Reparation for Child Victims and Survivors of Sale and Sexual Exploitation*, the HRC delineates that reparations for child victims of sale and sexual exploitation can be made in the form of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition, which can be symbolic, material, individual, or collective in character.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, reparations must be proportional to the gravity of the violations and the harm suffered by the child victims and survivors. The HRC report states that reparations include “financial compensation to individuals; support for rehabilitation; free or subsidized access to education; access to psychological, legal and social services,” among others.<sup>22</sup>

The need for these services comes from the different effects that survivors experience. Different circumstances leave victims with numerous traumas, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and anxieties, thus creating the need for psychological care. Furthermore, many victims are malnourished which can lead to various health conditions. Additionally, because 20 percent of trafficking victims are children, many do not receive crucial and fundamental education.

To properly and effectively provide reparations, A/HRC/52/31 calls upon States to finance urgent medical care and psychological, educational, financial, legal, and housing support. The report emphasizes assistance and reparation to all child victims and survivors, without discrimination. Providing these services and high levels of care, attention, and support will allow

---

<sup>20</sup> United Nations. (2000). *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (article 6). <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-per-sons>

<sup>21</sup> Human Rights Council. (January 26, 2023). *Reparation for child victims and survivors of sale and sexual exploitation*. United Nations. <https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/HRC/52/31&Lang=E>

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

victims of human trafficking to live normal lives after their experiences with trafficking.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, by financing these services, States will encourage victims to completely take advantage of said services as many trafficking victims are released into difficult situations.

## **NECESSITY FOR MORE SOLUTIONS**

In 2005, the UN Commission on Human Rights adopted decision 2004/110, which appointed a Special Rapporteur who would act on violations of trafficked individuals, especially women, and children, visit States to make recommendations based on the respective country's position on trafficking, and submit annual reports to the Human Rights Council and General Assembly. The Rapporteur "is the only exclusively focused international human rights mechanism for combating human trafficking."<sup>24</sup>

Although the United Nations has made countless decisions to help support survivors of trafficking, it remains a problem in a large part of the world. The problem of underreporting is large, as it incorrectly results in statistical evidence reflecting that trafficking rates are down. Hence the OHCHR's recommendation to all Member States to create special anti-trafficking units consisting of individuals of all genders. Furthermore, they emphasize "sensitizing police, prosecutors, border, immigration, and judicial authorities, and social and public health workers to the problem of trafficking," among others.<sup>25</sup> Having the ability to feel safe, comfortable, and confident with law enforcement officials is the first step to ensuring that trafficked persons are taken care of.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women's (CEDAW) 38th recommendation on trafficking against women and girls stated that "a life free from being trafficked must be recognized as a human right, and appropriate conditions must be created

---

<sup>23</sup> Human Rights Council. (January 26, 2023). *Reparation for child victims and survivors of sale and sexual exploitation*. United Nations. (p. 19) <https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/HRC/52/31&Lang=E>

<sup>24</sup>OHCHR. *Special rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children*. (July 21, 2023). <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-trafficking-in-persons#:~:text=The%20Special%20Rapporteur%20on%20trafficking.forums%2C%20and%20with%20civil%20society.>

<sup>25</sup>OHCHR. *Recommended principles and guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*. (p.8) (January 01, 2002). <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/reference-publications/recommended-principles-and-guidelines-human-rights-and-human>



for that right to be fully enjoyed by women and girls.”<sup>26</sup> As a result, trafficking survivors are entitled to the best services available. CEDAW zeroes in on States’ focus on support services that are “inclusive, accessible, include access to information on their rights, the medical, psychological, social and legal services available to them and how to acquire access to them, as well as to safe and appropriate accommodations.”<sup>27</sup> High-level services and support systems are still scarce, which is why victims of human trafficking continue to struggle with making a full recovery after being rescued.

## CONCLUSION

As recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all humans have the right to a free, healthy, and happy life. However, the basic human rights of the victims of trafficking are frequently violated in a number of ways. Survivors of human trafficking have the right to special assistance and protection measures provided by States.

However, long-term, needs-based, comprehensive, victim-centered assistance and protection measures have been lacking. Among the reasons for this is poor victim identification, an insufficient definition of trafficking in national law, and implementation thereof. All States must take measures to ensure that all victims of human trafficking receive adequate services in order for them to fully recover from any and all harm that trafficking may have caused.

---

<sup>26</sup>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. (November 20, 2020). *General recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration*. (p. 2)

<https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=CEDAW/C/GC/38&Lang=E>

<sup>27</sup>.ibid. (p. 9)

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. Are residents of your State vulnerable to being trafficked? If so, what rules, regulations, or laws can be implemented to reduce the number of victims?
2. Is your State a common destination for trafficking victims? What services are available to rescue these individuals from these circumstances?
3. What kinds of services does your State currently provide? Are these adequate services? How can you ensure that they are as accessible as possible?
4. What steps can your State take to ensure that victims of human trafficking are encouraged to seek help?

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. (November 20, 2020). *General recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration*.  
<https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=CEDAW/C/GC/38&Lang=E>
- Human Rights Council. (January 26, 2023). *Reparation for child victims and survivors of sale and sexual exploitation*. United Nations.  
<https://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=A/HRC/52/31&Lang=E>
- Human Rights Council. (May 17, 2021). *Implementation of the non-punishment principle: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Siobhán Mullally*. United Nations. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3928739?ln=en>
- International Labour Organization. (n.d.). *C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (no. 29)*. Convention C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).  
[https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB%3A12100%3A0%3A%3ANO%3A%3AP12100\\_ILO\\_CODE%3AC029](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB%3A12100%3A0%3A%3ANO%3A%3AP12100_ILO_CODE%3AC029)
- OHCHR. *Recommended principles and guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*. (January 01, 2002).  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/reference-publications/recommended-principles-and-guidelines-human-rights-and-human>
- OHCHR. *Special rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children*. (July 21, 2023).  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-trafficking-in-persons#:~:text=The%20Special%20Rapporteur%20on%20trafficking,forums%2C%20and%20with%20civil%20society>
- UNFPA-UNICEF. (2016). *Global Programme to End Child Marriage* United Nations Population Fund United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund  
<https://www.unfpa.org/unfpa-unicef-global-programme-end-child-marriage>
- United Nations (2019). *United Nations Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. United Nations  
[www.un.org/en/pdfs/UN%20Victim%20Assistance%20Protocol\\_English\\_Final.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/pdfs/UN%20Victim%20Assistance%20Protocol_English_Final.pdf)
- United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. (n.d.). Human Rights and Human Trafficking Fact Sheet No. 36.  
[https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/%20Documents/Publications/FS36\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/%20Documents/Publications/FS36_en.pdf)
- United Nations. (2022). *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022* (p. XI) United Nations.  
[https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTiP\\_2022\\_web.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTiP_2022_web.pdf)
- United Nations. (n.d.). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. United Nations.  
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>