



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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147th IPU Assembly

Luanda, Angola
23–27 October 2023



Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 4

FEM/36/4.Inf-1
10 October 2023

Contribution to the work of the 147th Assembly from a gender perspective

Monday, 23 October 2023, 11:30 – 13:00

I. Arrangements for the debate

Participants will be invited to discuss the draft resolution that is on the agenda of the 147th Assembly, entitled *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliamentarians in reducing harm* (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights). Participants will discuss the draft resolution from a gender perspective and issue recommendations on gender-related amendments to be submitted by the Forum of Women Parliamentarians to the Standing Committee.

After a short presentation on the draft resolution, the Forum will debate it in plenary. On the recommendation of its Bureau, the Forum will designate a rapporteur, who will present recommendations from the debate to the Forum later in the afternoon.

II. Focus of the debate

The debate will focus on the main gender aspects of the topic of the draft resolution.

Trafficking in persons is a major human rights violation and is prohibited under international law. According to the latest data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), trafficking mostly affects women (42%) and children (35%). The main purposes of trafficking are sexual exploitation (39%) and forced labour (39%).¹

Trafficking in women is specifically prohibited in Article 6 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The CEDAW Committee has stressed that trafficking in and exploitation of prostitution of women and girls are rooted in structural gender-based discrimination, constituting gender-based violence against women and girls.²

Identifying, addressing and eliminating the root causes are key elements of the obligations of States parties in preventing trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls. These root causes include the systemic gender-based discrimination that creates the economic and social injustices experienced disproportionately by women and girls, enhanced vulnerability in situations of conflict and humanitarian emergencies, including the consequent displacement, discrimination in migration and asylum regimes, and the demand that fosters exploitation and leads to trafficking.

¹ UNODC, Global report on trafficking in persons in 2022 (2023), available at https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTiP_2022_web.pdf

² CEDAW Committee, General recommendation No 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, CEDAW/C/GC/38, 20 November 2020, available at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/GC/38&Lang=en

Orphanage trafficking, which involves the transfer or recruitment of children into residential care for the purposes of exploitation and/or profit, is a distinctive form of trafficking in persons. It affects both the children concerned and their families and communities. As with any form of trafficking, it often has a gender dimension. Poverty and exclusion mostly affect women and girls, which makes them more prone to such trafficking. Demand for orphanage trafficking has an international element, in the form of orphanage tourism or “voluntourism”.

Parliamentarians can prevent and address orphanage trafficking, in particular by addressing its gender dimensions. For this, they need to develop their knowledge and understanding of the nature of trafficking at large, and orphanage trafficking in particular, including the different ways in which they target and affect women/girls and men/boys. Parliamentarians can also ensure that a comprehensive approach to trafficking prevention is in place in their country, and that prevention efforts consider the fact that women and girls are particularly likely to be targeted and fall victim.

The guiding questions for the debate will include the following:

- In what ways does orphanage trafficking target and affect women/girls and men/boys differently?
- What are the main drivers of orphanage trafficking? To what extent do the specific vulnerabilities and demand for this type of trafficking differ for women and girls?
- How can the vulnerabilities of girls and their families to orphanage trafficking be reduced?
- How can laws and policies better address orphanage trafficking, including by incorporating its transnational dimension?
- How can we ensure law-enforcement practices in the fight against orphanage trafficking are victim-centred and gender-responsive, and place the best interests of the child at the centre?
- How can parliaments and parliamentarians promote the role of women and girls in addressing trafficking, including orphanage trafficking?