



ICAT The Inter-Agency Coordination Group
against Trafficking in Persons

2019

CHAIRS'
ANNUAL
REPORT

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FOREWORD



I am pleased to note that 2019 has been one of the most productive years for ICAT to date. As outlined in this Chairs' Report, the Group has stepped up its efforts as a mechanism reflecting the collective voice and experience of its member and partner entities and producing important guidance that drives the anti-human trafficking agenda forward.

The new ICAT initiative to support the United Nations Procurement Task Team on Supply Chains to minimize the risk that United Nations vendors and suppliers might procure or use goods and services involving trafficking in persons demonstrates the value ICAT attaches to practical, multi-sectoral responses, including at the United Nations level.

The ICAT brief on the challenges presented by new technologies and public events on different themes, including on the human trafficking practices of armed groups in war zones, helped shed light on new and emerging aspects of this crime.

UN Women and the OSCE steered the Group very successfully this year. The value of co-chairing is clear, and I hope it will set a precedent for similar chairing arrangements in the future.

UNODC has served as Coordinator of ICAT since its start in 2007. Despite limited financial resources, we continue to support the progress of ICAT, furthering the will and collective capacity of the United Nations and partner multilateral organizations, and helping consolidate the Group's reputation as a global platform for progressive policy development.

I am particularly pleased to welcome the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Ms Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, as the newest ICAT partner. As we now number 25 entities, and with further requests in process, the current level of cooperation and engagement is extremely promising.

However, despite our collective efforts, trafficking in persons is a continuing threat to human security, and much more remains to be done. We need to continue to identify priority areas, and zero in on them to maximize impact. Furthermore, we need to strengthen our outreach so more inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations join the Group, bringing in their regional and thematic expertise. ICAT policy papers must continue to inform field work, and be translated into multiple languages to facilitate their utilization.

ICAT remains committed to promoting greater policy coherence within and beyond the United Nations, as well as gender-responsive, human rights-based and victim-centred responses to trafficking. In doing so, the Group, I believe, will continue to serve as an innovative model of cooperation and multilateralism across the United Nations system and beyond.

I am grateful to the United Kingdom for continuing to fund the ICAT Secretariat, which allows UNODC to support the co-chairs as well as the increasing ICAT membership as a whole.

Ilias Chatzis

CHIEF, HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING SECTION
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

WHO WE ARE

The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, or ICAT, is the lead policy forum mandated by the General Assembly to improve coordination among United Nations agencies and other relevant regional and international organizations to facilitate a holistic and comprehensive approach to preventing and combating trafficking in persons. The membership of ICAT currently includes 23 member entities and two partners across the United Nations and regional organizations with a strong anti-trafficking mandate.

As an inter-agency platform, The main objectives of ICAT include:

- Facilitating internal policy coherence and a “one UN” approach across the United Nations system and relevant regional organizations in addressing trafficking in person by setting clear priorities, uniform standards, and by sharing expertise and best practices;
- Aiding States, civil society and practitioners in translating priorities into actions by offering the right tools and encouraging and mobilizing multi-stakeholder, coherent efforts.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is the Permanent Coordinator and Secretariat of ICAT. ICAT has a chairpersonship which periodically rotates among its members.

MEMBERS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) ▪ International Labour Organization (ILO) ▪ International Organization for Migration (IOM) ▪ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) ▪ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) ▪ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) ▪ United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) ▪ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) ▪ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) ▪ Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) ▪ Department of Peace Operations (DPO) ▪ Department of Political Affairs (DPA) ▪ International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) ▪ International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International Telecommunication Union (ITU) ▪ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict ▪ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ▪ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) ▪ United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) ▪ United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) ▪ United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect ▪ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) ▪ The World Bank |
|--|--|

PARTNERS

- Council of Europe
- Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children

A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS, THE OSCE AND UN WOMEN

2019 has been both a successful and pivotal year in the life of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking of Persons (ICAT). The benefits of this policy forum have been clear ever since its mandate was laid down by the General Assembly in 2007 with the objective of improving coordination among United Nations agencies and other relevant regional organizations. This has been recognized and reinforced with the adoption by consensus of a resolution on Improving the Coordination Efforts against Trafficking in Human Beings in November 2019.



From right to left: OSCE Secretary General Greminger, UN Women Deputy Executive Director Regner, and UNODC New York Representative Monasebian at ICAT high-level event in the margins of the seventy-fourth Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, September 2019 (UNODC/Claudio Formisano)

Trafficking in persons sadly persists on a global scale. The 2018 UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons found that countries have been reporting increased numbers of detected trafficking victims over the last few years. The complexity of the crime has not diminished, and collective, coordinated efforts are needed more than ever. The 25 entities of ICAT have availed of each other's expertise and comparative advantage, with a view to addressing this very complexity. ICAT member organizations have deepened their engagement, and our impact is increasingly seen at the national, regional and global levels.

2019 has also been unique in that it is the first year that ICAT had been led by a co-chairpersonship. We, the OSCE and UN Women, were elected by the Working Group in 2018. This arrangement not only speaks to our shared principles of human rights and gender equality, but also echoes a desire to combine the expertise and resources of a regional security organization with that of a United Nations

entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It is a reflection of the reality that different organizations are working to advance common goals – a core objective of ICAT.

If the co-chairpersonship can be viewed as something of an experiment, it has certainly paid off. It allowed for the successful implementation of an enhanced two-year work plan and facilitated opportunities to increase the profile and reach of ICAT. ICAT has made its collective voice, and furthermore the voices of survivors, heard on the sidelines of seventy-fourth Session of the General Assembly in New York, the forty-first Session of the Human Rights Council, and the twenty-sixth OSCE Ministerial Council. Additionally, we have held working group meetings in Vienna and New York to facilitate broader engagement across members. It is encouraging to see that the number of ICAT members and the level of participation are steadily growing.

As part of the role of ICAT to ensure a holistic approach against human trafficking, the co-chairpersonship has also enabled us to further our collective input to key intergovernmental processes. A primary example of this is our joint submission towards the development of general recommendation on Trafficking in Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). We have also helped initiate important policy discussions on the role of technology in combating trafficking in persons, as well as on countering the impunity of human trafficking offenders. Furthermore, we have led ICAT to invest efforts in adopting, harmonizing and implementing sustainable procurement measures to prevent the risk of human trafficking in United Nations supply chains.

We have continued to utilize the relevance of ICAT as a platform for sharing information, experiences and good practices on anti-trafficking activities. This ensured that synergies were created and duplication was avoided, and furthermore triggered important policy discussions. ICAT continued to jointly produce policy briefs on topics such as technology and non-punishment of victims of trafficking. These outputs support a more comprehensive, coordinated and holistic approach to combating human trafficking.

It is our great pleasure to invite you to familiarize yourself with the achievements of ICAT in 2019 and to see for yourself the integral role that partnership and coordination play in enhancing efforts to end trafficking in persons.

A YEAR IN REVIEW: ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

TECHNOLOGY

Technology has progressively become a ubiquitous issue and essentially constitutes a paradigm shift that has transformed how human trafficking is perpetrated, and how it can be countered.

Technology can facilitate entry into and amplify the size of the human trafficking marketplace, and increase the methods and frequency of recruitment and exploitation, as well as the overall number of victims and perpetrators. Due to gender inequality, women and girls continue to be disproportionately impacted by human trafficking, and can be especially vulnerable to technology-facilitated crime. Technology can also hinder effective prosecution and law enforcement measures as traffickers can hide their identity effectively in the virtual space.



The panellists of an event on technology, held on the margins of the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals in New York, July, 2019. (UN Women)

Conversely, technology offers opportunities for enhanced anti-trafficking efforts and victim protection measures. Data aggregation, facial recognition and even artificial intelligence have already been successfully applied by authorities to track human traffickers. Furthermore, a number of technology-based tools to identify victims and survivors have been developed; for example, applications that allow outreach workers to interview potential victims in different languages.

In 2019, ICAT undertook a number of concrete steps to facilitate coherent and comprehensive responses and action by governments and private sector entities alike.

The ICAT issue brief on technology presented a common framework for responding to the misuse of technology, as well as for harnessing its potential in addressing the crime. Through the multi-pronged expertise of its members, a number of aspects were highlighted, including the impact of technologies on victims of trafficking, and the cutting-edge development of technological tools used to counter it.

Besides being widely disseminated, including to INTERPOL, specialized anti-trafficking law enforcement officers, state officials, national anti-trafficking rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms and academia, the recommendations of ICAT on the topic have triggered policy discussions and action by global civil society actors and private sector entities in multiple countries.

Indeed, to facilitate multi-stakeholder discussions, ICAT organized, together with the Group of Friends United Against Human Trafficking, a side event at the forty-first Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. Panellists, including Ambassador Ambrazevich of Belarus, and representatives of UNODC, OSCE and UN Women highlighted trends, challenges and opportunities deriving from the intersections of technology and trafficking, and helped lead a policy discussion on how to harness the power of technology and of public-private partnerships.

Through a joint ICAT statement and a social media campaign launched on the occasion of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, ICAT called on States and practitioners to invest in technology that can help with the identification of victims and highlighted the importance of perpetrators of trafficking, capacity-building and enhanced resources for law enforcement and responders, and highlighted the importance of building partnerships with the private sector and civil society to improve holistic responses.



Participants at an ICAT event at the City Bar Justice Centre in New York watching a video address by the European Union Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, Dr. Myria Vassiliadou

Approximately one week later, ICAT, in partnership with the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking and the International Telecommunication Union, convened a thematic event on the margins of the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals in New York. The event, which was attended by more than 80 participants, focused on the positive contributions technology can make to the fight against trafficking. Through her powerful contribution, Melanie Thompson, a human trafficking survivor and activist, described her personal experience and urged stakeholders to increase survivors' engagement in any discussions on trafficking and emphasized the importance of addressing the sexual exploitation of women and girls online.

Building upon such concerted initiatives, ICAT will continue to utilize its role as an inclusive and collaborative centre for policy development and exchange of expertise to further promote and advocate for cohesive multilateral action against all forms of trafficking, including the role of technology in facilitating trafficking and in tackling it.

"Probably the best, and most concise summary of the role of technology on human trafficking I've read to date. I'll be pointing people to the issue brief as an excellent primer on the role of tech in trafficking"

Eric Anderson, Human and Digital Rights at British Telecom

"The increasing use of the internet has changed the nature of trafficking and how it must be addressed. We welcome the release of Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) issue brief addressing the intersections of technology and trafficking. This is an important issue that must be addressed and we welcome ICAT's leadership in the discussion."

Equality Now, "Technology and Trafficking", August 2019

SUPPLY CHAINS

International and regional organizations have an integral role to play in preventing trafficking in persons in their own supply chains. In 2018, 39 United Nations organizations reported a collective US\$18.8 billion in procurement of goods and services. A number of Security Council resolutions, such as 2331(2016) and 2388(2017), called upon United Nations system organizations to enhance measures to mitigate the risk of trafficking in persons in supply chains through sustainable procurement.



Ambassador Kupchyna of Belarus (left), and Martin Fowke, UNODC, during an ICAT briefing on sustainable procurement, Vienna, September 2019 (UNODC/Claudio Formisano)

Moreover, the Secretary-General, in his 2019 Report pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/195 entitled "Improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons", encouraged "the Inter-agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons to work jointly with the Committee on Management¹ to take action to minimize the risk that their vendors or suppliers might engage in trafficking in persons for the purpose of labour exploitation, as well as other types of exploitation".

Following the establishment of a Task Force entitled "Development of Joint Approach in Combating Trafficking of Human Beings in Supply Chain (Task Force)" under the United Nations High-Level Committee on Management, the OSCE as 2019 co-chair of ICAT launched a flagship initiative to support the United Nations Procurement Network in implementing these efforts.

The modalities of ICAT support for the procurement specialists in the implementation of the objectives of the Task Force are now under discussion, including specific preventative measures and objectives to be implemented in order to create incentives for responsible business conduct, especially in the often complex settings around the world where international organizations operate.

¹The HLCM identifies and analyses administrative management reforms with the aim of improving efficiency and simplifying business practices. The Committee is comprised of senior administrative managers from the member organizations of the United Nations system who meet twice a year.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES

ICAT has continued to contribute to measures to advance the anti-trafficking agenda by providing collective input to key intergovernmental processes. In 2019, as part of its mandate to promote a comprehensive, coordinated and holistic approach to human trafficking, which is gender and age-responsive and grounded in a human rights based-approach, ICAT submitted a joint submission to the CEDAW committee to inform the drafting of the General Recommendation.² The submission highlighted key priority areas for ICAT in relation to the trafficking of women and girls and recommended:

- Promoting a more gender-transformative global approach to human trafficking that works on reversing the structural, social and economic inequalities that make women and girls disproportionately affected by this crime;
- Ensuring comprehensive prevention efforts that address the underlying gender norms, stereotypes, attitudes and behaviours, including harmful masculinities, that perpetuate all forms of violence against women and girls, including human trafficking;
- Strengthening policy coherence to address the gendered nature of the linkages between migration, labour and human trafficking;
- Integrating gender-transformative measures in conflict and humanitarian preparedness and response measures, including by fully mainstreaming anti-trafficking efforts into the women, peace and security agenda;
- Ensuring comprehensive essential services and long-term support for survivors that aim at their social inclusion by providing sustainable measures that promote their independence and empowerment;
- Countering impunity by promoting a gender-responsive approach to access to justice, including through gender mainstreaming, training and increasing women’s participation in law enforcement.

Such joint initiatives are an example of how ICAT serves as a centre for the collection of diversified views on anti-trafficking policy issues and as a platform to develop a set of balanced and coherent priorities for a “one UN” response.

POLICY BRIEFS

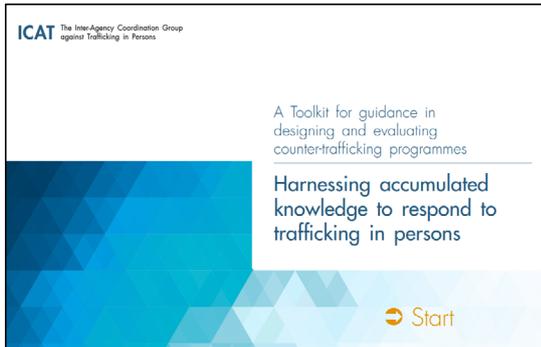
Over the years, ICAT has produced multiple concise policy briefs, seeking to provide a “one UN” approach to trafficking topics such as:

- The role of the sustainable development goals in combating trafficking in persons
- The gender dimension of human trafficking
- Trafficking in persons and refugee status
- Trafficking in persons in humanitarian crises
- What is the difference between trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants



²At its sixty-ninth session, held from 19 February to 9 March 2018, in Geneva, Switzerland, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women decided to elaborate a General Recommendation on Trafficking in Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration. The aim of the current General Recommendation under elaboration is to interpret the definition, scope and expectations regarding States parties’ obligations in relation to article 6 of the Convention to suppress all forms of trafficking in women and girls, ensuring that the human rights of women and girls are respected, protected and fulfilled in accordance with international law.

Similarly, the ICAT Toolkit to design counter-trafficking programmes published in 2016 provided a set of practical programming tools collectively agreed upon by ICAT members to inform both their work and counter-trafficking responses at the country level.³



In 2019, three additional issue briefs were produced on:

- Human trafficking and technology: trends, challenges and opportunities
- Trafficking and forced labour, offering a user-friendly yet comprehensive analysis, as well as recommendations to respond to the reality that many victims are trafficked within a country or across borders and sectors
- Non-punishment of victims of trafficking, which is generally described as follows: trafficked persons should not be subject to prosecution, penalized or otherwise punished for illegal conduct that they committed as a direct consequence of being trafficked (will be released in early 2020)

³ The English versions of these documents are accessible here: <https://icat.network/publications>

THE YEAR AHEAD



ICAT focal points at the Working Group meeting hosted by UN Women, New York, September 2019 (UNODC/Claudio Formisano)

In 2020, ICAT will continue utilizing its unique position as a convening power, in order to further its core objectives, including by:

- Stepping up the impact of ICAT in facilitating greater policy coherence at the field and country level will be a primary focus in 2020, to be advanced through better dissemination, sharing of knowledge and collaboration with regional and country offices. This includes translating and sharing widely ICAT material in United Nations official languages other than English to practitioners
- Discussing a mid-term strategy marking the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Transnational Organized Convention's Protocol on Trafficking in Persons
- Developing more tools on issues such as the prevention of trafficking in persons in supply chains, ending the impunity of perpetrators, and the gender dimensions of trafficking
- Leveraging other important spaces including the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action
- Interacting further with other relevant inter-agency mechanisms such as Alliance 8.7 and the United Nations Migration Network





ICAT

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