Statement of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons on the occasion of the World Day against Trafficking

30 July 2019

On the occasion of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, ICAT calls on governments to better address the misuse of internet and information technology to facilitate human trafficking, and harness the potential of technology to enhance investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators, as well as the provision of assistance to victims.

The internet is misused by traffickers to recruit, advertise and exploit victims. With the internet, a victim does not even have to leave his or her home, their exploitation can be streamed live and directed at global markets. Victims, traffickers and servers can be in many different locations, sometimes continents apart. Apps and chat rooms can be misused to exploit and abuse children and young adults, most often girls, who are deceived into sham marriages or blackmailed into sexual exploitation. Investigating and prosecuting technology-facilitated trafficking is challenging since these crimes and related evidence may span over multiple jurisdictions.

However, technology can also be harnessed in positive ways to combat trafficking in persons and can act as a force multiplier to increase the capacity of anti-trafficking responses beyond traditional human resources. Applications on data aggregation analysis, facial recognition, blockchain and artificial intelligence can help responders identify victims and offenders, improve investigations and prosecutions, facilitate access to services for victims, and enhance prevention efforts.

Considering the expanding role of technology in relation to trafficking in persons and the need for multi-pronged efforts, ICAT is thus aiming to kick-start a dialogue across countries, involving all stakeholders with a view to developing stronger responses both to the misuse of technology and to harness its useful potential.

To assist in the elaboration of national and international responses, ICAT released an [Issue Brief addressing the intersections of technology and trafficking](). Recommendations to states and practitioners include investing in technology that can help with the identification of victims and perpetrators of trafficking, capacity building and enhanced resources for law enforcement and responders, as well as the importance of building partnerships with the private sector and civil society to improve holistic responses.

ICAT is a policy forum mandated by the UN General Assembly which brings together 23 organizations and partners across the UN system and other relevant international and regional organizations with one unified voice. It is dedicated to promoting coordinated responses against persistent and emerging forms of trafficking to prevent crime, protect its victims and hold perpetrators accountable. By bringing together 23 different organizations with their respective mandates and expertise, ICAT aspires to be a model of effective multilateralism and cooperation across the UN system and beyond.

To launch the Issue Brief, ICAT, through its 2019 co-chairs UN Women and OSCE, co-organized a series of panel discussions in Geneva and New York, together with the 'Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking'. Read the full story at https://bit.ly/32Qhtkb.