

May 23, 2003

Dear Friends,

Trafficking of persons, especially women and children is one of the key issues focused on by the International Union of Superiors General in their meeting in Rome. It has subsequently been taken up by national conferences of religious men and women around the world.

This chapter for Religious Leaders on Trafficking in Persons I wrote it during the six weeks that I was volunteering at UNICEF in NY in preparation for my new assignment to Cambodia where I would be working on the trafficking issue. The chapter is part of a larger UNICEF Handbook that will have a general introduction on trafficking, as well as other chapters written specifically for legislators, law enforcement, teachers and health care personnel. The focus in this chapter for religious leaders is on values.

Please feel free to use the chapter in your congregation, pastoral or multi-faith context. Please give your feedback to Ms. Lisa Kurbiel of UNICEF. Information on how to contact her is on the last page of the chapter. It is important to have an effective tool that will facilitate our collaborative effort to end trafficking - a modern-day form of slavery.

Shalom,

Helene O'Sullivan
Maryknoll Sisters

CHAPTER FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Religious leaders are influential through the witness of how they live out their faith and through preaching and teaching on the sacred texts, beliefs and traditions of their faith for members of their religious communities. Religious leaders strongly impact the moral and ethical values of their communities and societies. In order to stop trafficking it is essential to understand the values, cultural attitudes and mores which prop it up and thus perpetuate it. Religious leaders have the moral authority to lead their faith communities in an exploration of values in their culture and society that are not in line with the highest aspiration of their faith and that rob members of the human community of their God-given rights. This exploration into the depths of one's faith and into the depths of one's culture can lead to profound attitudinal change which is necessary to end the discrimination against the girl child and women that make them especially venerable to trafficking.

Within the different faith traditions, there are religiously-inspired service organizations dedicated to the betterment of the lives of members of their local faith communities and beyond. The religious leaders of these service organizations are motivated by their personal faith conviction and their fidelity to God. They have a profound impact on the religiosity, values and behavior in the home and community. The influence of these religious leaders on movements for cultural and social change which impact issues such as trafficking is strong. Many of the religious leaders of these service organizations are women who relate to other women and so know what is happening in the community. It is imperative that these women leaders be full partners in all efforts by religious communities to end trafficking.

For the purpose of this section of the Handbook it is advised that religious leaders review the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as well as the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography; the Trafficking Protocol and the Palermo Protocol as well as the chapter on the scope of trafficking in today's world presented at the beginning of this Handbook. UNICEF Country Representatives can act as consultants to facilitate this study and help in the preparation of training programs for members of religious communities.

ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

The role of religious leaders in creating a "protective environment" for children which will prevent trafficking involves the following eight interlinked dimensions:

- 1) Be informed and up to date about the status of human rights for children, in the local, national and international spheres
- 2) Articulate publicly the relationship between the sacredness of the human person and the mandate for human rights implementation. Especially note the harm trafficking does to the dignity of the individual and to the society
- 3) Analyze and expose any harmful traditional practices or tolerances within one's own religion or religious community
- 4) Promote awareness of the systemic and structural underpinnings of trafficking that render it a modern-day form of slavery

- 5) Strengthen the moral and community structures within the local faith community so that it becomes a “protective environment for children” in which “no child gets left behind”
- 6) Clearly articulate that the victims of trafficking are not to be stigmatized or blamed. Advocate legally, politically and socially on their behalf
- 7) Collaborate and share resources in multi-faith coalitions to work with civil society and government to end the modern day slavery of trafficking
- 8) Ensure the provision of care and services to promote the healing and reintegration of children and women who have been trafficked

We will now explore these eight interlinked dimensions in greater depth:

1. Be Informed and Up To Date About The Status Of Human Rights For Children, In The Local, National and International Spheres

Religious leaders inform and updated themselves about issues that deeply affect the lives of members of their faith communities. There are two dimensions to this: awareness of the emerging concepts on the rights of children and how to combat trafficking. They act as resource persons for their religious communities on emerging concepts on the rights of the child. In addition to studying basic UN documents such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol, religious leaders cultivate their own on-going education regarding the following three areas and promote an understanding of them throughout their religious communities:

- A. Human rights** as the basis for the rights of the child. Children are not the objects of our charity but subjects with human rights who have a first call on the human and material resources of society. The Convention on the Rights of the Child focuses on children’s rights to health care and education rather than on their need for these services. It is the duty and obligation of parents and the community to promote and safeguard the rights of children who are the most vulnerable members of society.
- B. “Protective environment** is one in which communities and families are committed to upholding children’s rights; in which laws are in place to protect children and prosecute offenders; in which laws are consistently enforced; in which government devotes resources to eliminating exploitation of children; in which the media highlights the issues and challenges discriminatory attitudes; and in which adults who spend time with children - parents, teachers, religious leaders, and others - are able to recognize the signs of abuse and respond accordingly”. *UNICEF, World Health Day, April 7, 2003 “Healthy Environments for Children”*
 “Protective environment” is the unifying holistic goal in regard to creating a world fit for children. Previous approaches were remedial in nature rather than preventative and led to a fragmented single issue approach to helping children which is limited in its success and sustainability. An example of the failure of a single issue approach is promoting primary education for all children in the country but not recognizing that lack of clean water can leave a large number of children too sick to benefit from new educational opportunities.
- C. Recent studies on traditional customary practices which are harmful to children and women** are analyzed from a faith perspective to see if there is any support for these customary social practices in the beliefs or tenets of their faith.

Recent Statements and Best Cases Practices from Religious Communities

Excerpt from Casting the Stone

D. Recent research on the process of stigmatization: its manifestations, goals and impact on affected persons and groups. The research has been prompted in large part due to the stigmatization of persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS which is relevant to the issue of trafficking.

2. Articulate Publicly The Relationship Between The Sacredness Of The Human Person And The Mandate For Human Rights Implementation. Especially Note the Harm Trafficking Does to the Dignity of the Individual and To the Society

Religious leaders have the authority and responsibility to publicly articulate from their faith's perspectives the sacredness and dignity of the human person and how this is implemented in society through legal safeguards for the human rights of all persons. Trafficking is a violation of the human rights of persons and has a devastating impact on the physical, psychosocial and spiritual development of children. Some of the harmful effects of trafficking on children:

- A. Trafficking creates a situation of captivity similar to that experienced by POWs,** hostages and long-term prisoners. (Joyce Braak, M.D., Institute for Research on Women's Health). Children therefore experience a:
 - Lack of safety and loss of trust in adults after this experience of violence
 - Loss of control over own life. After a period of deprivation, disorientation and beatings, the trafficked child is forced to behave in ways the trafficker wants
 - Lack of opportunity and ability to make simple decisions about daily life, i.e. what to eat or when to sleep
 - Constantly being watched, no privacy
- B. Trafficking results in shame and guilt** even though the child/woman is a victim. Fear of returning to the family because of the code of family honor and the fear of bringing shame on the family because of the sexual nature of trafficking and/or failure to bring money to help the family
- C. Trafficking results in stigmatization** by society
- D. Trafficking stunts long-term education/ work opportunities** and marriage prospects.
- E. Trafficking often results in the person not returning or being returned to country of origin** and often becoming a street child or prostitute in the destination country

Within their faith communities, religious leaders discuss the gift that a child is to parents, to the faith community and to the society into which he or she is born. They remind the community of their responsibility to create a "protective environment" for all children which necessitates addressing issues of social justice and gender equality.

Recent Statements and Best Practices from Religious Communities

**Care, Commitment, and Collaboration: The Role
Of Religious Communities in Creating a World Fit for Children.**

Statement by Religious Leaders at the Multi-religious Gathering cosponsored by WCRP and UNICEF on the Occasion of the United Nations Special Session on Children 7 May, 2002

“The Convention on the Rights of the Child sets forth important legal rights of children, including the realization of the special protection owed to a child before as well as after birth. Our religious traditions, however, summon us to regard the child as even more than a legal entity. As religious men and women, we are to assert that the state of childhood, with its attendant vulnerability, dependence, and potential requires special care, based upon recognition of the child's inherent human dignity and founded on a moral principle that the human community must give children's basic needs a priority over competing claims - a first call upon the human and material resources of our society. This principle needs to be accepted as a guide for relevant action in every society and community.

We acknowledge the key roles of our religious communities as frontline actors for children. We embrace the responsibility to translate the challenges to be addressed in the Special Session into action. Our capacities for action are substantial: almost 5 billion people belong to our religious communities. From the smallest villages to the largest city, through districts and provinces, to national and transnational levels, religious communities offer the largest social infrastructure for human care. In hospitals and clinics, schools and academies, orphanages and social service centers, our communities continue long-standing missions to heal the afflicted, educate the unlearned, and provide refuge to the vulnerable. Our religious communities are, thus, uniquely qualified to undertake efforts in each of the four priority areas for children set forth in the Special Session Outcome Document:

- *Promoting healthy lives
- *Providing education
- *Protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence.

Through advocacy and concrete action, we recommend ourselves to enhancing the well being of children, starting with practices within our own communities, especially in those areas where we have fallen short. We pledge to act in partnership with other religious communities, non-governmental organizations, governments, and the United Nations and other international agencies to support and enhance the Global Movement for Children”.

3. Analyze and Expose Any Harmful Traditional Practices or Tolerances within One’s Own Religion or Religious Community

It has often been assumed that harmful traditional practices were religiously sanctioned. In light of evolving concepts of human rights, religious leaders are speaking out on this previously taboo topic in order to de-legitimize harmful traditional practices that violate the human rights of the person particularly children. They are analyzing their sacred texts and traditions to show that these harmful traditional practices are not condoned by God or the core tenets or aspirations of religion. Their analysis also reveals the compatibility between the sacred texts and international standards of human rights.

Some examples of harmful traditional cultural practices include:

- A. Infanticide, abandonment of the girl child and sex selection through abortion devalues the life of every girl-child in society and robs her of her human right to gender equality. Lack of equality makes her more vulnerable to being trafficked
- B. Gender discrimination and a preference for sons that diminishes the self-esteem of girls and leads to the perception that girls are an economic burden especially when it comes to

spending money for their education and dowry. The contribution of girls to the household in terms of household tasks, childcare, and assistance to mothers in informal and cottage industry work go unrecognized

- C. Family honor with an excessive emphasis on preserving female virginity to the point that it creates so much fear that parents keep their girl child at home which results in her loss of further education
- D. Socially constructed dichotomy regarding women's sexuality leads to outright suppression of her sexuality on the one hand or blatant exploitation of it on the other hand. This leads to the social dichotomy of classifying women as either virgin/ whore. In this period of history when societies are becoming more urban and international and girls are receiving more education, religious leaders need to open up the discussion in the religious community on the changing roles of women and men in the family and society within the context of human rights.
- E. Social acceptability of young unmarried men going to houses of prostitution. This creates a "demand" for more prostituted girls and women who are then lured or coerced into prostitution and are trafficked to areas where there is a high "demand." Religious leaders, promote a moral, psychologically and socially healthy view of human sexuality, intimacy, and gender equality within families, children and young people within our religious communities. Discussion between religious leaders and young men and women about traditional and changing gender roles and healthy images of masculinity and femininity is crucial.
- F. Turning the child, especially the boy child into a child soldier during times of armed conflict
- G. Domestic violence which is the physical, psychological, sexual or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. Crime statistics and research both show that domestic violence is gender specific - usually the perpetrator of a pattern of repeated assaults is a man. Within a religious community this cannot be tolerated as a private matter between couples or as a man's right. Violence against women is passed down from generation to generation and renders the family dysfunctional and unable to care for its members. Statistically, trafficked children are more likely to come from dysfunctional families.

Religious leaders are urged to address the above traditional practices and attitudes that are harmful to children and women. The harmful consequences of these traditional practices should be fully explored and exposed in dialogue with those who have been victims of these practices. Any complicity by the religion or members of the religious community in supporting or condoning these harmful traditional practices needs to be understood and stopped. Religious leaders are using every opportunity to preach and teach that religion opposes the subordination, de-humanization, or servitude of children or women. The major religions of the world stand for the dignity of all persons and gender equality and thus the elimination of all trafficking, sexual exploitation and violence.

Case studies of changing harmful traditional practices in different parts of the world and from different faith traditions are helpful and hopeful and should be disseminated widely.

Recent Statements and Best Practices from Religious Communities

Knesset Declares Trafficking in Human Beings a Criminal Offense

“Thanks to advocacy efforts by a coalition of 15 civil and human rights and women’s organizations led by NIF grantee, Israel Women’s Network, the Knesset declared trafficking in human beings a criminal offence punishable by up to 16 years in prison. A well-publicized report by Amnesty International - Israel Section on human rights abuses faced by women trafficked in Israel played a major role in raising awareness of the problem. Since the law passed, 19 indictments have been filed and 12 defendants have so far received prison sentences ranging from one to ten years in length”.

UNICEF Study

The following study undertaken by UNICEF and religious leaders of the Muslim Community explored the compatibility of Islamic Law and CEDAW.

“Gender discrimination in the traditional socio-cultural structures of society, along with frequent misinterpretation of Islam in relation to women, poses serious challenges to women's empowerment. In order to gather key information on the relationship between Islam and culture and relate them to the CEDAW, UNICEF conducted a comparative study in 2002. The study focused on Islamic Law (*sharia*) and Customary law, and it indicated that the doctrines of Islam are compatible and in line with those outlined in CEDAW. The study culminated in a workshop which brought together authorities, religious leaders, legal experts, human rights groups, traditionalists, lawmakers, media, women's groups, international actors and local NGOs. The workshop examined the issues most deeply affecting women including their human, political, economic, social and legal rights. The conclusions reached are proving instrumental in formulating strategies toward a culturally sensitive and yet informed and assertive programme in promoting respect and adherence to the principles of the CEDAW”.

4. Promote Awareness of the Systemic and Structural Underpinnings of Trafficking That Render It a Modern-Day Form of Slavery

- A. Religious leaders together with parents and families, especially with adolescent girls** need to explore gender discrimination and sexual violence and expose it as the basis for trafficking. All forms of violence against girls and women are condemned by all the world’s major religions and cannot be culturally, socially or legally acceptable.
- B. Members of the religious community need to have the facts about trafficking** especially its coercive nature, its magnitude and how lucrative it is for syndicates. Trafficking is organized crime on a transnational level that is third only to the drug trade and arms trade in profitability.

“Globalized crime is outpacing international cooperation to stop it. The 1999 Human Development Report (HDR), which focuses on the benefits and drawbacks of globalization, says that there is a "virulent synergy between globalization and organized crime" and that stronger governance, greater cooperation and new global instruments are needed to thwart criminals who are now able to operate with relative ease across borders and continents. Globalization has opened up many opportunities for crime, the report states. In fact, among those benefiting the most from it are criminals. The smuggling of illicit goods, including weapons and drugs, money laundering and the trafficking of women and girls are among the criminal activities found to have increased with the rise of globalization. ‘The \$1.5 trillion estimated to be the annual revenue of global crime syndicates is larger than the GDP of most countries,’ says Sakiko Fakuda-Parr, Director of the Human Development Report Office, UNDP”.

C. Members of the religious community need to have a clear perspective on trafficking.

Members of the religious communities need to view trafficking from the perspective of the victim. They need to understand the psychological, social and spiritual toll being trafficked has on children (please refer to #2 on p.3.).

The religious community can help prevent trafficking by identifying the child who is at risk:

1. Girl child
2. Poor family
3. Minority Group
4. Lack of school supplies
5. Late in paying school fees
6. Dysfunctional family
7. Abused child
8. Child who already has a small job and talks of getting money to support family
9. An elder sibling has already gone abroad to earn money.

Religious leaders need to expose the lies that traffickers tell to families living in great poverty about the wonderful jobs they can get for their children in the cities or overseas need to be exposed. They promise opportunities as domestic workers, babysitters, in factory jobs or in entertainment. Parents, children and member of the religious community need to be made aware of the evil intent of traffickers and the harm their children will endure.

Short-Term Interventions:

1. Financial assistance to family during crisis or to cover school fees and supplies so that child especially the girl child can continue in school and is not seen as a burden.
2. Refer parents or child to programs that teach skills-training or have income generating projects that would enable the child to continue in school.
3. If rumors of a child or children leaving for city or another country with someone who promised to find them a job, follow-up by working with the school and police so that the rumors may be check out and trafficking prevented.

Methods for promoting awareness regarding trafficking in human persons include:

- A. Religious Study Guides.** Prepare religious study guides on the topic of trafficking; the dignity of the human person; core faith beliefs about the innate goodness of the human sexuality of both men and women and the importance of family as a nurturing environment for both the boy and girl child so that each child may reach his or her full God-given potential.
- B. Radio soap operas** can be an effective tool for consciousness raising of entire villages or regions to the dangers of trafficking. The radio soap operas can focus on how harmful traditional cultural attitudes and practices pave the way for trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation and violence. The lies and manipulation used by traffickers can be exposed through these radio soap operas. They can also be used to create compassion and solidarity for those trafficked and help in their reintegration.
- C. Street theater** with either professionally trained theater groups or newly aware persons and groups can open up previously taboo topics such as trafficking for public discussion.
- D. Special prayer services** to pray for an end to trafficking and to encourage members of the religious communities to take action are excellent ways of increasing awareness and the commitment to eliminate trafficking.

**LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
"TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SLAVERY- THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIMENSION TO TRAFFICKING
IN HUMAN BEINGS"**

Vatican, 15 May 2002

“The trade in human persons constitutes a shocking offence against human dignity and a grave violation of fundamental human rights. Already the Second Vatican Council had pointed to "slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, and disgraceful working conditions... as a supreme dishonor to the Creator". Such situations are an affront to fundamental values which are shared by all cultures and peoples, values rooted in the very nature of the human person.

The alarming increase in the trade in human beings is one of the pressing political, social and economic problems associated with the process of globalization; it presents a serious threat to the security of individual nations and a question of international justice which cannot be deferred.

In particular, the sexual exploitation of women and children is a particularly repugnant aspect of this trade, and must be recognized as an intrinsic violation of human dignity and rights. The disturbing tendency to treat prostitution as a business or industry not only contributes to the trade in human beings, but is itself evidence of a growing tendency to detach freedom from the moral law and to reduce the rich mystery of human sexuality to a mere commodity. Attention needs to be paid to the deeper causes of the increased "demand" which fuels the market for human slavery and tolerates the human cost which results. A sound approach to the issues involved will lead also to an examination of the lifestyles and models of behaviour, particularly with regard to the image of women, which generate what has become a veritable industry of sexual exploitation”.

The following prayer is from a study guide used during the past year by 5000 School Sisters of Notre Dame to make themselves aware of the causes and scope of the trafficking of children and women. During the coming year they will be involved in activities to end trafficking.

Prayer for an End to Trafficking

Composed by Sr.Cassani, SSND

“O God, our words cannot express what our minds can barely comprehend and our hearts feel when we hear of women and girls deceived and transported to unknown places for purposes of sexual exploitation and abuse because of human greed and profit at this time in our world.

Our hearts are saddened and our spirits angry that their dignity and rights are being transgressed through threats, deception and force. We cry out against the degrading practice of trafficking and pray for it to end.

Strengthen the fragile-spirited and broken-hearted. Make real your promises to fill these our sisters with a love that is tender and good and send the exploiters away empty-handed.

Give us the wisdom and courage to stand in solidarity with women and girls who are trafficked, that together we will find ways to the freedom that is your gift to all of us. Amen”.

5. Strengthen the Moral and Supportive Structures within the Local Faith Community so that It Becomes a “Protective Environment for Children” in which “No Child Gets Left Behind”

A. Micro Level: Local Faith Community, Local Civil society and Government

Form multi-faith coalitions with civil society organizations to examine the role of poverty in the trafficking of human persons. Determine what needs to be dealt with on a micro and macro level. Bring members of your faith community into the discussion to:

Explore the causes of poverty and how it could be alleviated by the sharing of resources within the local community or region in order to prevent trafficking. Ex. Skills building, micro-financing projects, etc.

1. Explore which faith and cultural attitudes help sustain concern for one another in the community and contribute toward a “protective environment” and which faith and cultural attitudes hinder concern for one another especially for children. Explore ways to enhance or change these attitudes.
2. Explore which services are already in place that could be expanded to provide for children that currently fall through the gap and could become the victim of trafficking.
3. Name the methods used for identifying vulnerable families and young people that could fall prey to the false promises of traffickers. A study by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific found that more than half the child in the commercial sex industry came from families where the parents were addicted to alcohol and drugs which reduced their capacity to look after their children. Indeed 80 percent of the children had suffered some kind of psychological or physical abuse within their families. Most have also suffered from some kind of sexual aggression such as rape or incest.
(ESCAP 2000, Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth in Thailand: A qualitative assessment of their health needs and available services in selected provinces. United Nations, New York.)
4. Specify how vulnerable families will be offered the services of the faith community to provide for their children.
5. Designate the human and financial resources that will be available to support poverty alleviation aimed at assisting local families to care for their children and protect them from trafficking.
6. Devise a method to make sure that the plans of the coalitions are known and supported throughout each faith community.

B. Macro Level: National Faith Community, National and International Civil Society and Government

Because decisions and policies that are made on a national level have such a profound impact on different regions within the country it is necessary to work on the national level in order to eliminate trafficking. On a national level, religious leaders are seeing the importance of forming multi-faith coalitions to work towards a *transformed national value consensus* that puts creating “a world fit for children” as a top priority and implements children’s right to have “a first call upon the human and material resources of our society”.

1. Explore the national plan and budget to ascertain what percentage of the national budget is allocated for education, healthcare and anti-trafficking campaigns and compare this with other spending priorities.
2. Examine whether the country has implemented the CRC and whether the national budget priorities are in line with a commitment to creating a “world fit for children”.

3. Advocate and lobby government official for a child friendly social budget. A “child friendly social budget” respects and reflects commitment to the rights of the child as put forth in the CRC and acknowledges that children “have first call on the human and material resources of society.” UNICEF encourages religious leaders to analyze and promote the 20/20 Initiative to achieve universal access to Basic Social Services in their country. . The 20/20 Initiative is a compact between developing and industrialized countries, and calls for the allocation of, on average, 20 per cent of the budget in developing countries and 20 per cent of official development assistance (ODA) to basic social services. The universal provision of basic social services of basic education and primary health care, including reproductive health, nutrition programs and safe drinking water and sanitation is viewed as one of the most effective and cost-effective methods to address the worst manifestations of poverty . UNICEF is strongly committed to the 20/20 Initiative and will continue to provide leadership within the UN on the implementation of the Initiative. Religious leaders also continue to advocate that .7% of the GNP of industrialized countries be allocated to Overseas Development Assistance as well as for Debt cancellation.
4. Engage members of faith communities across the country through the mass media in a process of working toward *a transformed national value consensus* that makes creating “a world fits for children” a top priority.
5. Advocate a vision – a dream - of what “a world fit for children” could look like in you country and what has to be done to achieve it. Involve school children and young people throughout the country in drawing and writing and doing school plays about their vision and dream for a “world fit for children”. This will also further involve teachers and parents in this quest.

Recent Statements and Best Practices from Religious Communities

*The following is A Multireligious Statement of the World Conference on Religion and Peace
Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*

Children and Sexual Exploitation

“Countless children are being exploited through pornography and prostitution. Children are bought and sold, subjected to a contemporary form of slavery. Illegal in most societies, and proscribed by our religions, such practices persist, often deeply hidden and sometimes blatantly ignored.

In commercial sexual exploitation, children are treated as discardable sexual commodities to satisfy the demand for perverse sexual gratification. Their rights to survival, protection, and development are violated.

What kind of a world have we made, where children are seen as mere tradable objects to slake heedless sexual appetites? Materialism, hedonism, and the abuse of power have grave consequences for our children. Our social fabric is torn. The protective mantle of families and communities is fraying. Poverty starves children of their potential and confronts families with tragic choices. Gender discrimination leaves the girl child particularly exposed.

We cry out with all our hearts: Protect our children! They are our sacred trust and future hope.

Each of our religious traditions sees beauty in the sanctity and promise of children, manifest in their openness and trust. This beauty, so elemental and yet so fragile, leaves our children especially vulnerable to the battering of sexual abuse.

Yet the commercial sexual exploitation of children does more than wound their bodies and scar their psyches; the invasion of their openness and the violation of their trust are a desecration of their sanctity and a denial of their promise.

We cannot stand by! Our refusal to confront these evils is a betrayal, our silence an abdication, our complicity a denial of our beliefs. We declare that it can be otherwise. Together we must find the will to save, protect, and care for our children.

We speak hereby to our religious communities, to civil society, to Heads of State and Governments, to the United Nations, and to all, throughout the world, who have held a child in love, with tears for its pain, with joy for its life”.

6. Clearly Articulate That The Victims Of Trafficking Are Not To Be Stigmatized Or Blamed. Advocate Legally, Politically and Socially On Their Behalf

A. Religious leaders recognize their special mission to speak out on behalf of the victims of trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation and violence.

Statements by religious leaders that address the causes and coercive nature of trafficking and the injustice of any form of stigma towards persons who are trafficked can open up the topic for public discussion and begin the process of attitudinal change within the religious community and society. Religious leaders publicly declare themselves to be on the side of those persons who are the victim of trafficking syndicates.

B. Religious leaders recognize and renounce the process of stigmatization operating in their societies and work with members of their communities to expose and renounce this process.

Religious leaders are working with victims, their families and members of their religious communities to remove the stigma that often haunts victims of trafficking and those living with HIV/AIDS. Blame and stigma are often the result of ignorance of the deceptive and coercive nature of sexual exploitation. In addition, stigma often stems from traditional cultural beliefs that see the loss of virginity or sexual experience before marriage as a dishonor and disgrace to the whole family even if the child or young woman was coerced as in trafficking.

Religious leaders work with members of their religious communities to facilitate an understanding of the process of stigmatization and how it operates. Stigmatization functions to maintain social control within society by defining what is “normal” socially acceptable behavior and what is “different” and thus socially unacceptable. Traditionally, only a small group of religious or socially powerful people have had the right to define for all what is acceptable behavior. This serves to create social hierarchies that keep certain people and groups in power. Those persons who are defined as “different” are people of a certain gender, race, ethnicity or class and subsequently these people become subordinated and marginalized and can then be abused and trafficked. (Please refer to #3 on Harmful Traditional Cultural Practices). The process of stigmatization is covert and not openly discussed or recognized and this gives it its power. Bringing the process of stigmatization out into the open and discussing how it is

functioning in a particular faith community or civil community is crucial to overcoming it. Children and women who are trafficked as well as those with HIV/AIDS are blamed for their condition and are stigmatized around the issue of their sexuality and marriageability.

(P. Parker, P. Aggleton, *HIV/AIDS – related Stigma and Discrimination: A Conceptual Framework and an Agenda for Action*. Horizons Program)

All religions promote the dignity of the human person and thus are directly opposed to the process of stigmatization and its devastating impact on vulnerable individuals and groups. Eliminating stigmatization will be especially helpful in the reintegration of victims of trafficking and other forms of sexual violence into their religious communities and societies.

C. Religious leaders illuminate for members of their religious communities the sacred texts and faith traditions that speak of non-judgement, compassion and which oppose speaking ill of others and destroying their reputations.

All major religions promote the right of persons to their good name and reputation and this should help members of religious communities to recognize that the process of stigmatization towards persons who have been trafficked or are living with HIV/AIDS is contrary to their religion.

D. Religious leaders who publicly visit and support religious organizations that assist girls and women who have been trafficked help their communities to overcome the process of stigmatization.

Recent Statements and Best Practices from Religious Communities

7. Collaborate and Share Resources in Multi-Faith Coalitions to Work with Civil Society and Government to End the Modern Day Slavery of Trafficking

Religious Leaders have seen the “human face” of trafficking – the children and women – whose lives have been forever changed by the horrific experiences they have endured. But religious leaders are often not so familiar with the “criminal face” of trafficking. But we must become equally familiar with this ugly face because it reveals to us the urgent need to collaborate together to end this organized transnational modern-day form of slavery in order to save our children.

In a U.S. Congressional Research Service Report: Trafficking in Women and Children: The U.S. and International Response May 10, 2000 (#98-649c) the global magnitude of trafficking was made clear:

Trafficking in Women and Children: The U.S. and International Response
Francis T. Miko., Specialist in International Relations Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Trade Division

Trafficking affects virtually every country in the world. The largest numbers of victims come from Asia, with over 225,000 victims each year from Southeast Asia and over 150,000 from South Asia. The former Soviet Union is now believed to be the largest new source of trafficking for prostitution and the sex industry, with over 100,000 trafficked each year from that region. An additional 75,000 or more are trafficked from Eastern Europe. Over 100,000

come from Latin America and the Caribbean, and over 50,000 victims are from Africa. Most of the victims are sent to Asia, the Middle East, Western Europe and North America”.

The “criminal face” of trafficking in human persons, especially children and women is conducted by highly organized transnational networks. Trafficking is now considered the third largest source of profits for organized crime, behind only drugs and guns, generating 5-7 billion U.S. dollars annually. (New U.N. Trafficking Protocol, 2002) Trafficking in human beings is the fastest-growing business of organized crime. (United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, 2002)

Dr. Donna M. Hughes, Carlson Endowed Chair, University of Rhode Island, conducted research on the trafficking of Ukrainian women during the 1990s and published her finding in *Trends in Organized Crime*. Though her research focused on the Ukraine, it is valid worldwide. Her analysis led her to conclude:

“Trafficking occurs because of a transnational political criminal nexus, which is composed of individual criminals, organized crime groups, corrupt police and government officials, foreign governments, and NGOs. The buying, selling, and abuse of women (and children) earn traffickers, pimps, and brothel owners billions of dollars each year. Traffickers rely on the poor economy to create circumstances under which they can recruit women and children. Traffickers’ methods of operation are flexible and adapted to facilitate the recruitment of victims, the cooperation of corrupt officials, reduce the risk of being detected, and ensure profits. The networks delegate specialized tasks related to trafficking, such as the recruitment of women and children, preparation of documents, organization of travel and delivery of the women and children.

In destination countries, victims are controlled by confiscation of travel documents, debt bondage, threats, and violence. Where brothel keeping and pimping are illegal, police raids can result in the loss of women (and children). Sometimes women escape. The turnover of women (and children) is high; therefore, replacements are needed fairly frequently. Brothel owners, pimps, and pornography producers place orders with traffickers for the number of women (and children) they need”.

(The Transnational Political Criminal Nexus of Trafficking in Women from Ukraine," *Trends in Organized Crime*, Vol. 6, and No. 3- 4: Spr.-Sum. 2001. *Trends in Organized Crime* is a quarterly journal that draws on research from international organizations, public policy institutes, law enforcement organizations, intelligence agencies, and independent scholars. TOC reports on international efforts to anticipate the development of organized criminal activities and to devise strategies to counter them.)

The coercive nature of trafficking and the violence done to women and children to force them into compliance with the demands of traffickers is graphically described:

“Sometimes the methods used to constrain women into prostitution are reminiscent of the concentration camps of the nazi regime: There is a preparatory period of three months during which they are raped, beaten, and without adequate food and water. A great number of the women bear the marks of severe beatings”.

(Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, “Trafficking in Women and Children: Greece, a Country of Destination and Transit”, Mediterranean Migration Observatory Working Paper No.2, August 2001.)

Ira Emke-Poulopoulos, in her report on trafficking in women and children, explored the reasons for the increasing demand for trafficked women and children:

“The prostitution market is demand driven. The demand for women comes from brothels, clubs or bar owners who pay the suppliers and put women to work. Above all, it comes from clients. Collapse of values and the view that with money one can buy everything, the bodies of women, even the bodies of underage children, characterize the clients. The clients’ choice is for a foreign woman...poverty-stricken, so that she may comply with all their wishes.”

Given the sophisticated transnational organization of trafficking and its magnitude in terms of sheer human misery, what is the specific role that religious leaders are called upon to play to end trafficking?

A. Religious leaders must expose and open for public scrutiny the destructive realities and values behind the “demand” side of trafficking as well as the “supply” side.

A crucial aspect of the trafficking industry is the “demand” generated by clients who buy and use the bodies of children and women.

As stated above, “demand” drives trafficking and is the result of:

- the collapse or lack of values regarding the dignity of all human persons,
- the commercialization of sex shown in the view that with money one can buy everything even the bodies of underage children and
- the unequal power of men and women that permeates all aspects of life in society.
- the spread of globalization that has facilitated organized crime’ control over sexual slavery through the unrestrained movement of money, people and labour across borders.

The factors that contribute to the “supply” side of trafficking are:

- poverty,
- gender discrimination as manifest in the harmful cultural practices,
- ignorance
- globalization and with it consumerism and materialism

Religious leaders need to work in their faith communities to break the silence around these two aspect of trafficking – demand and supply - if they are to contribute to the elimination of trafficking in human persons.

Because trafficking disproportionately affects the girl child and women, religious leaders must look for the religious and cultural underpinnings that perpetuate this phenomenon. Only when we have publicly challenged the unspoken assumptions, unreflected expectations and internalized values regarding gender, power and money in our faith communities and in society will change in the “demand” and “supply” mentalities be possible and the end of trafficking in sight.

B. Religious leaders undermine both the “demand” and “supply” side of trafficking, by promoting religious and ethical values that initiate socio-cultural change and bring about a *transformed national value consensus* in the service of upholding the human dignity of every member of society especially the most vulnerable. In relation to children this specifically means working for a “protective environment” that prevents the horror of trafficking.

C. Religious leaders contribute to creating the “political will” and faith inspired commitment necessary to end trafficking.

The manifestations of genuine cultural change and a *transformed national value consensus* will be evident in the creation of a “*political will*” among members of the faith communities, civil society and government that re-orders national and regional priorities in favor of a “protective environment” for children, the most vulnerable members of society.

Thus, urged on by the human misery caused by trafficking and seeking to create the “political will” for social transformation, religious leaders are pledging to:

1. work within their own faith communities;
2. collaborate with each other in multi-faith coalitions and
3. engage civil society and government

in order to create and sustain a “protective environment” for children and specifically to end trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation. We will now explore these three activities in greater depth.

1. Work within their own faith communities on:

Religious Leaders open the dialogue on the factors that perpetuate the “demand” and “supply” side of trafficking.

a. Gender discrimination towards the girl child and its insidious manifestations in diminished educational opportunities, access to health care and issues of self-esteem and self respect as a moral subject.

Analyze sacred texts and traditions that speak of feminine images of God or feminine principles or qualities in relation to the Supreme Being. These references remind believers that all peoples – men and women alike are made in the image of God or are reflections of the Creator.

b. Unequal power between men and women in the family, the religious community and society and how this is contrary to the will of God. Members of the religious communities need to overcome this in their relations with one another.

c. Violence against women and its manifestations in the local faith and civic community. Illuminate sacred texts and traditions to de-legitimize violence against women. Ask members of the religious community to show its connection to trafficking.

Gender-based violence can be defined as: "violence involving men and women, in which the female is usually the victim and which arises from unequal power relationships between men and women". Violence against women and girls is often referred to as "gender-based violence" because it evolves in part from women's subordinate gender status in society. In most cultures, traditional beliefs, norms and social institutions legitimize and therefore perpetuate violence against women.

The use of the term "gender-based violence" provides a new context in which to examine and understand the long-standing phenomenon of violence against women. It shifts the focus from women as victims to gender and the unequal power relationships between women and men created and maintained by gender stereotypes as the basic underlying cause of violence against women. Instead of just focusing on each case of violence or on individual men's acts of violence against women, the entire culture that creates current male roles and identities – defined as “masculinity” – need to be analysed and challenged. This means recognizing the various pressures placed upon men that may result in violent reactions, as well as the need for men to take responsibility for their actions.

- d. *Distorted Images of masculinity and femininity*** in the community, in society, mass media and literature that disfigure the human dignity of men and women.
- e. *Commercialization of sex*** in advertising, mass media, prostitution and trafficking. There is often an ignorance or innocence in large parts of society about how human sexuality is manipulated, imaged and packaged by the advertising industry and mass media as well as by the commercial sex industry. “Demand” and a sense of entitlement to access to the bodies of children and women can be created by those interested in making huge profits while ignoring the suffering of those sold.
The profit motive and the economics behind the trafficking industry must be exposed and denounced by all especially members of the faith communities.
- f. *War*** including civil war plunges a country deeper into poverty by destroying much of the infrastructure. Communities are often broken apart and cannot provide a “protective environment for children”. Social priorities are cut from the budget to finance the war thus weakening families while strengthening the position of the traffickers.
- g. *Poverty especially the feminization of poverty*** in society is contrary to what is presented in sacred texts and tradition. No one should be forced into the modern-day form of slavery due to poverty and the lack of basic needs. Faith communities are urged to review the government’s spending priorities and plans for sustainable development within the country. Use *a gender perspective and a focus on children* to analyze national and regional budget priorities as well as the budgets of faith-based organizations. Publicly advocate and lobby for needed changes.

Applying gender analysis to the budget is not simply a technical exercise. It requires thinking about government finances in a new way, looking beyond the household as a single unit of analysis to examine the situation of each of its members, male and female. It requires a focus on the unpaid care economy, in which much of women's time is spent. Gender sensitive analysis and gender-specific statistics are required for development and budget planning.

(World leaders (94% men) spend \$800 billion on militarization each year but won’t spend the \$80 billion needed to end poverty.

Women work two-thirds of the world’s working hours and produce half of the world’s food, but earn only 10% of the world’s income, own less than 1% of the world’s property, and are the majority of the world’s poor. This has a profound impact on the lives of their children.) UNDP and WEDO.

- h. *Globalization is the complex context in which trafficking thrives.*** The spread of globalization that has facilitated organized crime’s control over sexual slavery through the unrestrained movement of money, people and labour across borders.

Globalization with its emphasis on communications and mass media have led to a form of modernization and development programs that result in gaps between urban and rural development that contribute to the trafficking of rural children.

Materialism and consumerism are a part of globalization that measure a person’s worth by how much money they have and how much they own. Materialism and consumerism gives those with money who go to brothels a false sense of entitlement - they unjustly feel “entitled” to buy anything they want - including access to the bodies of children and women who are available because of living in poverty. Materialism and greed motivate these “consumers” as well as the traffickers who are only after pleasure and profits for themselves at the expense of the physical, psychological and spiritual suffering of those trafficked and enslaved.

Materialism and consumerism can generate in those who do not have money an overwhelming desire to get money in whatever way possible. In families, this includes allowing children and young people to go off with traffickers. Among police and government officials this leads to corruption and dereliction of their duty to defend the rights and lives of the most vulnerable members of society.

Those who are motivated by materialism and consumerism often cover or justify their actions by saying they are benefiting the child or woman by helping them escape poverty by giving them work or permitting them to seek better opportunities in the cities or abroad. In fact, trafficked persons are guarded and have no control over their lives, the type of work they do, where they do it, how many hours a day they work or their working conditions. Those who profit from trafficking are profiting from a modern-day form of slavery.

2. Collaborate in multi-faith coalitions

Religious leaders collaborate with other religious leaders to:

- A. *Share experiences, best practices, and resources regarding*** work in their own faith communities on factors that perpetuate the “demand” and “supply” side of international trafficking in persons.
- B. *Envision what a transformed national value consensus would look like*** and how the coalition could contribute to the process of social transformation.
- C. *Develop strategies to create “political will”*** in their faith communities and in society to end trafficking.
- D. *Plan for specific ways the coalition will engage civil society and government officials*** for the purpose of creating a “protective environment for children” and to end trafficking.

3. Engage Civil Society and Government

Religious leaders proactively work with entities in society in order to create and sustain a “protective environment” for children and specifically to end trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation.

A. Educators

- work with education officials, principals and teachers to formulate measures to be implemented in the short-term to keep children in school who would be removed due to family poverty and thus at risk for being trafficked.
- encourage local and national teachers’ organizations to work with UNICEF to develop materials and training on trafficking especially on identifying children who are at risk of being trafficked and what follow-up is necessary.
- through visits and serving on committees, show support for faith-based and local schools in their efforts to promote positive values that recognize the dignity of all persons and expose negative values and harmful traditional practices that deny or diminish the human right of certain persons and groups.
- work with parents and school principals to implement equal education for girls in faith-based schools. Illuminate the sacred texts and faith tradition that recognize the God-given rights of all children including the girl child as the reason for this action.

B. Media

- be proactive in developing relationships of mutual respect and trust with influential media persons in your area. Call together a group with representatives from among religious

leaders, Educators, Police, and Social Workers to meet with editors of influential newspapers and journals to give them “in-depth backgrounders” on both the issue of trafficking and on efforts to create a “protective environment” for children. The meeting(s) should be of several hours duration to ensure sufficient depth and understanding of the local and national implications of the issue. Give them extensive material on trafficking that they can quote in future articles. Encourage them to do in-depth articles that do not sensationalize the issue of trafficking but promote the positive values of a “protective environment” for children.

During these meeting the specific contribution of the Religious Leader is:

- to promote the understanding of trafficking as a modern-day form of slavery because of its negation of the dignity of the human person;
- to promote an understanding of the destructive values that perpetuate trafficking and how these are contrary to religious values on the dignity of each person;
- to promote an understanding of the positive values of love, care, compassion and responsibility that both the religious and civil community need to implement in specific ways that benefit and protect all children such as creating a “protective environment” for children.
- Develop with editors and reporters approaches to writing the story as well as standards for what is sensationalizing and re-victimizing children, i.e. the use of photos and names should not be done.
- Meet with owners and managers of radio and TV stations to give them “in-depth backgrounders” and ideas for programming that exposes trafficking as a modern-day form of slavery.
- Be pro-active in offering scenarios for radio soap operas around the issue of trafficking in all its dimensions. Be sure the scenario has a clear focus on positive faith-based values that uphold the dignity of the human person and the rights of the child. Values around individual, family and community responsibilities for all children need to be woven into the scenarios. It is important to expose the process of stigmatization and to begin to breakdown the discrimination against children and women who have been trafficked or sexually exploited in other ways and who may be HIV positive.
- Work with the reporters and photographers who will be covering a story on trafficking regarding the sensitivity needed in interviewing former victims of trafficking.

C. Legislators and Law Enforcement

- multi-faith coalitions of religious leaders meet with legislators to advocate long-term and short-term strategies to end trafficking. Inform them of the faith-communities concerted efforts to end trafficking. Focus on Poverty as a cause for trafficking. Show support for sustainable development efforts and advocate for budget priorities to reflect the country’s commitment to creating a “protective environment” for children.
- urge legislators to resist pressure from those with vested interest to reduce trafficking in human persons to an issue of labor mobility.
- request that a special National Task Force on Trafficking in Women and Children be established to do accurate and complete data-gathering on trafficking throughout the country and to recommend strategies to combat trafficking.
- support the movement for “good government and transparency in government” as well as anti-corruption campaigns and organizations.
- request legislators to implement a gender perspective requirement in criminal research and reporting.

- support “Ethics-based training” of law enforcement officers in police training academies and in on-going education courses. Offer to provide training on the religious perspective on trafficking in human persons and on corruption by persons in positions of public trust. It is essential to convey and understanding of trafficking as a form of modern-day slavery because of its negation of the dignity of the human person.
- meet with local and regional police officials to discuss the religious and civil community’s strong opposition to trafficking from a human rights perspective. Let them know the efforts being taken by religious communities to change attitudes and values that have tolerated or perpetuated trafficking.
- work with the police to facilitate awareness among members of the tourist industry about ways the industry can help prevent the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children. Work with the national ECPAT Office on this issue.

8. Ensure the Provision of Care and Services to Promote the Healing and Reintegration of Children and Women Who Have Been Trafficked

All the world’s major religions promote care and compassion for those who are the victims of violence, loss, natural disasters and illness. Those who have been trafficked are the victims of horrendous violence especially sexual violence and have a human right to be cared for both by their faith-community and civil society. Indeed, the inclusion of Article 39 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child was promoted and advocated by religious leaders. It states:

“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child”.

In most cases, the structures for providing services for children are already in place in both the faith-community and the civil society. What then is the specific role of the religious leaders in promoting the healing and reintegration of children and women who have been trafficked?

A. Advocate and assert the right of the child to healing and reintegration.

In countries where the national budget is small and in times when financial resources are scarce, government officials who have to decide priorities may be hard pressed to allocate funds for the provision of services to children who have been trafficked and who may be HIV positive. Religious leaders need to advocate government officials on the child’s rights to healing and reintegration and the government’s responsibility to allocate resources for this. Religious leaders need to remind their faith communities of their responsibility to contribute resources for services for the healing of children in their communities.

B. Special training to meet the particular needs of children who have been trafficked

Religious leaders make provision for special training for themselves, for professionals in faith-based service agencies and for members of their faith-communities to meet the particular needs of children who have been trafficked.

C. Workers trained in an understanding of the process of stigmatization

In faith-based social service agencies, religious leaders see that all workers are trained in an understanding of the process of stigmatization and can help the child and family understand and deal with it.

D. Conduct special religious services in houses of worship for the child

If appropriate, special religious services in houses of worship are conducted for the child. A small group of family members and a hand-picked group of faith community elders are invited to celebrate the child's return and to welcome the child again to her/his rightful place in the faith community. The child and family should be assured of the care and support of the faith community.

E. Prepare the larger faith community to support the reintegration

Religious leaders work with social service workers, teachers and health care workers to prepare the larger faith community to support the reintegration of trafficked children.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

A key role of religious leaders is to work towards a *transformed national value consensus*. The values of human dignity, social justice, equality especially gender equality and care and compassion contribute towards a "protective environment for children" and counter trafficking in persons.

A *transformed national value consensus* is not arrived at in a vacuum but in the nitty-gritty process of public debate around implementing concrete measures that reflect important values. This process can itself become transformative when religious leaders and all people of goodwill focus the public debate on the *responsibility* and *duty* incumbent on all to safeguard the *rights* of children especially those at risk of being trafficked.

Recommendations:

1. Network to Create the Political Will to End Trafficking

- Work with legislators and law enforcement, teachers, media and health personnel on national media campaigns, community action programs and school curriculum to combat trafficking.

2. Advocate for Anti-Trafficking Legislation and for Law Enforcement:

- Enact laws that criminalize trafficking and all activities related to trafficking. This includes facilities that are used for trafficking such as nightclubs, bars and brothels because owners of these facilities profit from trafficking.
- Enact laws that providing victims of trafficking with legal, medical, counselling, safe shelter and humanitarian visas.
- Make immigration laws more "victim friendly" so that victims of trafficking are not summarily deported without any investigation into the circumstances of their entrance into the country.
- Enact corruption prevention laws that create harsh penalties for public officials and institutions involved in trafficking.

3. Promote Quality Education for Girls

- Lack of education and not being in school leaves girls vulnerable to being trafficked. While education for all children is a global priority, it is now recognized with supporting research evidence that educating girls provides leverage for the education of all children, girls and boys alike. For UNICEF, girls' education refers to a programmatic approach to quality education for all children by focusing on the largest single group of children who are denied their right to education – girls. This requires not simply expanding educational opportunities for girls, but systematically eliminating all the barriers that keep girls from getting into and succeeding

in school. Research suggests that in most countries these barriers affect girls more than boys, so a focus on girls' education allows us to concentrate on all the barriers that affect access and performance in education for all children. Moreover many of these barriers are outside the education sector and need to be addressed through inter-sectoral interventions to tackle all forms of gender-based discrimination against girls and boys alike.

4. Create Income-Generating Projects to Eliminate Poverty

- Poverty is one of the causes of trafficking. Encouraging and supporting micro- and small-scale enterprises strengthens the family's ability to support itself and keep children in school. Families which are able to keep their children in school are less likely to be influenced by traffickers. Consult with your country UNICEF representative and other partners about how to work with your community on appropriate micro- and small-scale income generating projects.

- UNICEF encourages religious leaders to analyze and promote the 20/20 Initiative to achieve universal access to Basic Social Services in their country. . The 20/20 Initiative is a compact between developing and industrialized countries, and calls for the allocation of, on average, 20 per cent of the budget in developing countries and 20 per cent of official development assistance (ODA) to basic social services. The universal provision of basic social services of basic education and primary health care, including reproductive health, nutrition programs and safe drinking water and sanitation is viewed as one of the most effective and cost-effective methods to address the worst manifestations of poverty . UNICEF is strongly committed to the 20/20 Initiative and will continue to provide leadership within the UN on the implementation of the Initiative. Religious leaders also continue to advocate that .7% of the GNP of industrialized countries be allocated to Overseas Development Assistance as well as for Debt cancellation.

5. Demonstrate the Value of the Girl Child

- Invite and welcome the equal participation of the girl child in religious ceremonies and in activities within the faith community. This will manifest her human dignity which is to be respected by all within the faith community.
- Promote women's leadership in groups and structures within the religious community.

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