

AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE LUIS CdeBACA
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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Bass, Members of the committee: Good morning, and thank you for the invitation to testify about the State Department's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*. And thank you for your concern and leadership in our country's effort to rise to the challenge of modern slavery.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle and on both sides of Capitol Hill continue to be staunch supporters of eradicating modern slavery. As the Obama Administration works to enhance our whole-of-government approach to modern slavery, we value our partnership with Congress. Bipartisan congressional engagement and support were instrumental in securing the reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) earlier this year. We all realize that part of American leadership requires us to stand up for universal values—freedom, justice, the dignity of all people—here at home and around the world. Those are the values that drive our work in this area.

At the same time, this Administration has made combating trafficking in persons a priority in domestic and foreign policy because doing so is in our country's strategic interest. Trafficking in persons is a crime that threatens the rule of law. It feeds the vulnerability of marginalized populations, creating further instability and damaging communities. It corrupts the labor markets and global supply chains that are essential to a thriving global economy. Fighting trafficking in persons is the smart thing to do, and as President Obama made clear in his speech at the Clinton Global Initiative Meeting last fall, "the United States will continue to be a leader in this global movement."

At the State Department, we press this fight forward through assistance to organizations working on the front lines providing aid to victims and helping governments build up their capacity. We bring more stakeholders to the table through our partnership efforts, harnessing the expertise of civil society, the resources and innovativeness of the private sector, and the

commitment of groups and individuals who, like us, reject slavery in the 21st century. And through our diplomacy, we urge governments to fully embrace their responsibility to deal with this crime and we offer to work with any government that takes this problem seriously.

One of our most important diplomatic tools is our annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*. This *Report*, which Congress called for in the TVPA of 2000, has become the gold standard in assessing government action on this issue. This morning, I'd like to briefly discuss some of the major findings in this year's *Report* before making myself available to your questions.

This *Report* reaffirms a trend we've seen as long as we've been assessing this issue: trafficking in persons affects every country in the world, and no government is doing enough to fight it. As Secretary Kerry said last month, "this report is tough, because this is a tough issue, and it demands serious attention."

The major focus of this *Report* is the importance—and the challenge—of effective victim identification. We know that a victim-centered approach, guided by the 3P's—prevention, protection, and prosecution—is the best way to deal with this crime. When done well, victim identification opens the door to the support and services victims of trafficking need. It also leads to more investigations and prosecutions of traffickers. And it allows survivors the opportunity—if they choose—to share their experiences and have a voice in the way we shape our anti-trafficking policies and practices. Victim identification is the critical first step in stopping this crime.

The *Report* estimates that, based on the information that governments have provided, only around 40,000 victims were identified in the last year. In contrast, social scientists estimate that this crime victimizes as many as 27 million people at any given time. That massive gap illustrates how far we have to go in this effort to identify, rescue, and provide support and services for the millions who toil unseen and beyond the reach of law; and to bring to justice the traffickers who exploit and abuse their victims with impunity.

At the same time, we continue to see modest gains on a global scale when it comes to anti-trafficking efforts. The number of victims identified does represent an increase from the previous year. We've seen more countries adopting modern anti-trafficking laws consistent with the U.N. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and

Children (Palermo Protocol), and more countries moving toward the whole-of-government approach to this crime, the approach that we've found so effective.

Beyond these global trends, this *Report* reflects individual assessments of 188 countries and territories on their governments' effectiveness in combating this crime according to the 11 minimum standards established by Congress in the TVPA.

This year, 30 countries, including the United States, have been placed on Tier 1 in the *Report*, reflecting that the governments of those countries are complying with the minimum standards. It's important to note, however, that a Tier 1 ranking doesn't suggest that a government has achieved total success in dealing with this challenge. Indeed, no government's response is perfect, and this remains a crime that affects every country in the world.

This year, 92 countries were placed on Tier 2. Tier 2 includes those governments that do not meet all the minimum standards, but are making considerable efforts to do so.

The Tier 2 Watch List comprises 44 countries in this year's *Report*. The Watch List was established for countries that, despite making some efforts to combat modern slavery, aren't seeing increasing efforts or where the situation may actually be getting worse.

Tier 3 countries are those where the governments are found not to be taking the affirmative steps needed to fight human trafficking, and this year there are 21 countries with that status.

In the 2008 reauthorization of the TVPA, Congress created a new requirement in the Report that, going forward, if a country was on the Tier 2 Watch List for two consecutive years, it would be automatically downgraded to Tier 3 unless sufficient progress had been made to merit an upgrade to Tier 2. In other words, a country couldn't simply camp out on the Watch List year after year without making progress.

The law allowed for the mandatory downgrade provision to be waived for up to two additional years, meaning that a country could be on the Tier 2 Watch List for a total of four consecutive years, if a government provided a written

plan designed to bring that country into compliance with the minimum standards.

This is the first year in which a number of countries could no longer receive waivers and faced an automatic downgrade. There were six such countries facing that situation in this year's *Report*: Azerbaijan, China, Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), Iraq, Russia, and Uzbekistan.

In looking at those countries and applying the facts to the TVPA reauthorization of 2008, three of those countries, Azerbaijan, Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), and Iraq, had demonstrated a fair amount of progress, and received an upgrade to Tier 2. In China, Russia, and Uzbekistan, we did not see the same sort of progress, and as a result, they had to be placed on Tier 3 of this year's *Report*.

But even though this *Report* takes a hard, thorough look at this issue around the world, it isn't meant to be punitive. We aren't claiming to have all the answers, because we know we don't. Instead, we're proceeding on the idea that the better information we have about modern slavery, the more effective we will be in confronting it. We aren't pointing the finger, but rather extending a hand in partnership to anyone who agrees that this is a problem we need to grapple with. This *Report* is a guide—for ourselves, for governments around the world, and for anyone who shares our goal of a world rid of modern slavery.

Thank you for your commitment to advancing this struggle, and I'm eager to answer your questions.