

**UN Human Rights Council Tenth Regular Session  
Item 3 General Debate**

**Statement by the Delegation of the United States of America  
March 16, 2009**

Thank you, Mr. President.

We welcome this opportunity to address two issues that have been discussed under Item 3 discussions during this session.

First, we were pleased to hear the report of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues and her work in leading the Forum on Minority Issues. The issue of equal access to education for minorities is important as pervasive gaps in education availability and quality can have profound effects on the full achievement of individual and societal potential. The U.S. supports the Independent Expert's joint efforts with UNDP to elaborate a Policy Note and Resource Guide on Minorities to strengthen programmatic responses to minorities' needs. Initiatives such as the Forum's study of minority access to education and the UNDP Resource Guide are examples of concrete, positive international efforts to identify and address challenges. It is through such substantive and practical initiatives that change on the ground will happen.

Mr. President,

Concrete progress and change on the ground is also the goal of the special rapporteur on trafficking in persons. We support the important mandate of

the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons to look at issues related to trafficking that have not been sufficiently addressed in the international arena. We especially noted Dr. Ngozi's interest in obtaining more information on trafficking in men and boys, since there is so little information and attention given to their situation.

It remains important to continue addressing the situation of women and girls, indeed of all trafficking victims, for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. If possible, we urge the Special Rapporteur to look at the factors that are contributing to the apparent trend of female victims becoming traffickers. Many of these women are former victims themselves, and any analysis must include a full and fair discussion of the complexities associated with this phenomenon.

We urge the Special Rapporteur to encourage governments to fully implement existing legal instruments, especially the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. International efforts are weakest when it comes to prosecution of the traffickers and assistance to the victims.

The United States looks forward to working with the Special Rapporteur as she carries out her mandate over the next three years.

Thank you.