



Human Trafficking and Forced Migration

(1) The scourge of human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery. It is an affront to God's gift of human dignity to every human being. The biblical truth compels churches and the ecumenical family to recognize every person, including those in situations of forced migration, as a full bearer of the inherent likeness of God and the dignity that this implies (Gen 1:27). Also, that each person bears the fundamental human right 'to life, liberty and security' and that "no one shall be held in slavery or servitude." (UDHR Articles 3 and 4).

(2) In Asia, we see human beings caught in the vicious cycle of victimization under conditions of forced migration, especially human trafficking in all its forms: trafficking in labour, drugs, human organs, sex, baby-selling, and mail-order brides. Asia has the highest number of human trafficking cases in the world, with South and Central Asia accounting for an estimated 50 million victims. Increasingly, Asia is becoming a flashpoint for the forced coercion of people, including children, through the acquisition of sexual images for circulation through the internet's pornographic channels and websites.

(3) Human trafficking thrives under conditions of wanton poverty, uneven development of economies, and varied forms of violence, including sexual and domestic violence. In Asia, people have also "been forced to flee their homelands due to ongoing wars and conflicts, climate change, including environmental disasters arising from extractive practices that have rendered both the planet and the people vulnerable," and many have become "hapless victims of complex nation-state relations who have been rendered stateless".

(4) Forced migration, including trafficking in and smuggling of persons, is aided and abetted by (a) migrant-sending governments whose labour-export programs are deemed a solution to underdevelopment and (b) migrant-receiving governments whose demand for cheap labour is bound for exploitation by unscrupulous recruiters and employers for greed and lucrative profit.

(5) It is in this spirit that CCA, as a fulcrum of ecumenical cooperation and response in Asia, calls on its member churches and councils to:

- Become places of welcome, healing and hospitality for victims of human trafficking, providing places of sanctuary, legal support, emergency funds, and medical and psychological support,
- Engage governmental policy-making bodies (parliaments and congress) to enact laws and policies that eradicate human trafficking and eliminate the conditions under which forced migration thrive,
- Take an active role in educating local congregations and their local communities on the reality of human trafficking and forced migration in its many diverse form,
- Provide forums and venues wherein the stories, and voice and agency of human beings victimized by trafficking may be heard and their hidden oppression revealed,
- Engage in advocacy and lobbying through international and national networks to ensure that all forms of human trafficking are addressed by governments and their legal, judicial systems.
- Take seriously the Statement of the Pre-Assembly Forum on Asian Ecumenical Migrants Advocacy Network, titled 'The Rights and Dignity of Asian Migrant Workers in the Diaspora'.