



Preventing Human Trafficking among Rural Women and Girls: Integrating Inherent Dignity into a Human Rights Model

**During the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
March 13, 2018 • 1:15 to 2:30 pm
UN Headquarters Conference Room 1**

The trafficking of rural women and girls violates their human rights and tramples their human dignity.

This side-event, taking place during the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women dedicated to the theme of the promotion of rural women and girls, aims to assist all those who incorporate human rights and human dignity into their work on trafficking prevention. Focused specifically on rural women, it will illustrate the cumulative disadvantage rural women often suffer prior to being trafficked. It will also highlight the denial of their human dignity before, during and after the trafficking experience.

This side-event will also encourage greater collaboration among all stakeholders, with the ultimate goal of strengthening rural women and girls as rights-holders who contribute to shaping global policy. Further, it will help states and civil society to focus on prevention as key to meeting their commitments to end human trafficking.

Many rural women and girls lack access to social services such as education and health, and are often marginalized, stigmatized and isolated due to lack of rural infrastructure. The stories of women and girl survivors of trafficking indicate that rural marginalization was a factor in their trafficking experience. This rural vulnerability was recognized by former Secretary General Ban Ki Moon his 2012 message for International Women's Day when he said, "Rural women and girls...make up one-quarter of the global population, yet routinely figure at the bottom of every economic, social and political indicator, from income and education to health to participation in decision-making."

Further, the 2016 UNODC report on human trafficking tells us that "many cases of domestic trafficking involve victims who have been moved from poorer areas of the country to richer areas, from rural zones to cities or tourist centers, or from villages to industrial or economic hubs." The same report indicates, however, that 43 percent of women who are trafficked are trafficked domestically, with no indication of how many of these come from rural areas. Clearly there needs to be a sharper focus on trafficking of women and girls in rural areas in order to address their

specific challenges.

A multi-disciplinary panel will address key aspects relating to the trafficking of rural women, human rights, the denial of human dignity, and human agency.

Included in the discussion will be the following topics:

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- Personal experience of human trafficking survival
- Rights-based advocacy that also assists and strengthens survivors
- Optimal Life-Course Conditions as one model of prevention
- Rural Slavery Supply Chains
- The work of women religious in preventing trafficking among rural women and supporting survivors
- Best practices
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Speakers

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- **Archbishop Bernardino Auza**, Permanent Observer of the Holy See, *Opening Remarks*
- **Ms. Mely Lenario**, *The experience of survival from the perspective of a rural woman in the Philippines*
- **Sr. Annie Jesus Mary Louis, FMM**, who works among poor tribal girls from interior villages in Chhattisgarh, India, will address, *Rural Origins of the Sex Trade Supply Chain*.
- **Sr. Lynda Dearlove, RSM**, Women@theWell and Arise Foundation Trustee, *Hearing Rural Voices in the Fight against Trafficking*
- **Sr. Sheila Smith, RSCJ, Ph.D.**, NGO Representative for the Society of the Sacred Heart at the UN, Co-Founder PACT-Ottawa (Persons Against the Crime of Trafficking in humans), *The mutual relationship between human rights and human dignity in the context of rural trafficking*
- **Sr. Angela Reed, RSM, Ph.D.**, Coordinator Mercy Global Action at the UN (Mercy International Association), will address *Life-Course Conditions as one model of prevention*

Sponsors

Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, Mercy International Association, Mercy Global Action, Society of the Sacred Heart, The Arise Foundation, Women@TheWell, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, UNANIMA and the National Board of Catholic Women (UK).

Registration

To RSVP for the event, **please visit holyseemission.org/rsvp13March2018 by March 7**. All those without UN grounds passes (for example, UN Delegates passes, NGO passes, or CSW passes) must register for a special event pass at this link. Those with UN passes are asked to register as well to ensure that there is enough space for them in the room. If the event fills to capacity, only those who are registered will be admitted.