

When victims matter: ending demand for prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes *A new paradigm and a just policy*

Tuesday 14 March 2017, 6.30pm

Conference room 12, United Nations Headquarters

CSW 61 side-event co-sponsored by Sweden and France

Organised by CAP international

Ending exploitation of prostitution: a fundamental component of States' policies to eliminate all forms of violence against women and to promote gender equality, opening remarks by:

Åsa Regnér, Swedish Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality

Laurence Rossignol, French Minister for Families, Childhood and Women's rights

Prostitution – a form of sexual exploitation

Sissela Kyle, actress and gender equality debater

Profile of persons in prostitution and victims of trafficking for sexual purposes reached by CAP international members in 12 countries

CAP international, presentation by its member organisations

Over-representation of indigenous women and minorities in prostitution (CSW 61 focus area)

Cherry Smiley, Founder of *Indigenous Women Against Sex Industry* (Canada)

Presentation of French 2016 framework legislation combatting the system of prostitution and protecting its victims

Catherine Coutelle, French MP, chair of the Women's rights delegation of the National Assembly

Moderation by *Per-Anders Sunesson*, Swedish ambassador at large for combating trafficking in persons



Background

On 1 January 1999, Sweden became the first country in the world to introduce legislation criminalizing the purchase, but not the sale, of sex. The proposal to criminalize the purchase of sex was part of a Government Bill on Violence against Women (Kvinnofrid, 1997/98:55) including a large number of measures aiming to combat violence against women in all sectors (private life, public space and working life).

After Sweden, several countries (Iceland, Norway, Canada, Northern Ireland and France) have adopted similar legislation, shifting the focus from the persons in prostitution to their economic and sexual exploiters: pimps, traffickers and sex buyers. It is key to note that, based on the Global Gender Gap report 2016¹, the top four countries listed as having the best global record in terms of gender equality include the three first countries in the world to have introduced this kind of legislation.

On 13 April 2016, France enacted the Act Aiming to Strengthen the Fight Against the Prostitution System and to Assist Prostituted Persons. This framework legislation does not only shift the criminal charge from persons in prostitution to sex buyers but also includes a set of measures to increase the protection, access to justice, and social inclusion of victims of prostitution, pimping and trafficking. The new legislation also foresees education, prevention and training of professionals' programs.

Objectives

This side event is sponsored by Sweden and France, two States that have adopted similar comprehensive and ambitious public policies in order to fight against the exploitation of the prostitution of others. The event is organized in partnership with the NGO CAP international. CAP international is a coalition of 15 frontline NGOs providing direct assistance to prostituted persons and victims of trafficking in human being for the purpose of prostitution in 13 countries.

The side event will aim at:

- 1- Sharing concrete information about the realities of prostitution and its exploitation worldwide ;
- 2- Explaining why prostitution is a human rights violation, a form of violence against women, and an obstacle to gender equality;
- 3- Presenting just, comprehensive, and efficient policies aiming at ending impunity and demand while protecting victims.

Thanks to the participation of a representative of indigenous women, this event will also feed the discussions about the focus area/emerging issue (The empowerment of indigenous women).

The Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution (CAP international) is a coalition of 15 frontline NGOs providing direct assistance to prostituted persons and victims of trafficking in human being for the purpose of prostitution. CAP international and its members stand in support of all women, men and children affected by prostitution and in opposition to the system which exploits their precariousness and vulnerabilities.

Members of CAP international : Apne Aap (India), Breaking Free (USA), Embrace Dignity (South Africa), Fondation Scelles (France), KAFA (Lebanon), La CLES (Canada), KFUKs Sociale Arbedje (Denmark), Comision Malos Tratos (Spain), Marta Center (Latvia), Medicos del Mundo (Spain), Mouvement du Nid (France), Reden (Denmark), Ruhama (Ireland), Solwodi (Germany), Women@thewell (UK).

¹ <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/top-ten/>