

## **KATHMANDU DECLARATION AGAINST TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

**Date: 16 and 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2014**

We, the members of ATSEC regional network in South Asia having come together to reaffirm our commitment to ending human trafficking, human smuggling and injustices at a large scale to the vulnerable communities and to resolve weak policies in governance. ATSEC South Asia was established in Kathmandu with the representatives of six countries, namely: Nepal, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in the year 1998. ATSEC has now five country chapters and linkages with Afghanistan, Bhutan and Maldives.

ATSEC is the regional body of the NGOs and supported by UN organizations like UNICEF, UNODC, UNWOMEN, UNDP, USAID, AED and other international organizations. ATSEC was formed with a mission to work with a commitment to ensure that all children and women are protected from trafficking and sexual exploitation. ATSEC has a vision for children and women without exception to be protected from being trafficked and sexually exploited by a person/persons. ATSEC does and will stand up against institutionalised crime, which takes advantage of the vulnerability of children and the youth owing to poverty, discrimination and violence.

As aptly recognised by the member states of UN and SAARC the organized crime of human trafficking is growing at an alarming rate victimizing an increasingly large number of vulnerable and weak women and children. The South Asian region has acquired ill reputation for being on the top of the global list in the scale of the crime and in the number of persons victimized. As members of UN and SAARC, the countries have undertaken many AHT measures and to do lot more. The anti trafficking initiatives of the civil society organizations have earned global recognition for their innovativeness and for the success stories they have evolved while working on various fronts in the fight against HT. The region is also known by the cooperation between the two sectors namely the civil society and the governments.

Although the South Asian regional action against AHT is also improving on many fronts it is exposing many gaps and deficiencies too. It is important here to note that the States and CSO collaboration in the ASEAN countries have marched way ahead of the South Asian region in meeting these challenges and filling the gaps. They have developed their human rights' framework and also, position on migration issues.

**We can call upon the member states that:**

- Anti human trafficking efforts in the region must be recast with due attention to the fast changing multi dimensional context eg: climate change, fast growing technology based crimes, etc.
- Review the ongoing impact and challenges at Country, state, district level of the functioning of Anti Human Trafficking, Vigilance Committee to Combat Human Trafficking and develop notification of representative for coordinating rescue and reintegration of rescue survivors.
- Take immediate efforts for economic development and poverty alleviation. These programs should be introduced to the vulnerable communities; income generating programs and awareness of their right and mechanism to the vulnerable especially girls and women. To translate constitutional and policy promises into reality.
- Act to set minimum protection standard for sending the nationals of member countries for employment to other countries and lobby with GCC countries and create anti human trafficking fund.
- Create a database on all children by presuming every child is a potential victim of missing, trafficking and sexual and such other offences.
- The member countries of SAARC should enforce/ratify the various UN conventions and other instruments which have been ratified e.g. 1990 Convention on rights of migrant workers and their families.
- Sensitize and train the government agencies/ non government sectors, NGOs and INGOs and coordinate and collaborate with embassies.
- There can only be procedure of repatriation instead of deportation and push back with right based border management, appropriate time frame for repatriation , issuing of temporary travel and residential documents for new born.
- We also call upon the SAARC Secretariat and its apex body SAIVC to grant ATSEC observatory status for protection of the survivals.

We look forward to receiving positive support from the government bodies of SAARC member states, UN bodies, regional networks, corporate sector, donor agencies, civil society organizations and all other stakeholders to create a better world for our citizens, especially for vulnerable communities.