

# PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

AN ACTION FRAMEWORK FOR THE  
TRAVEL & TOURISM SECTOR

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# INTRODUCTION

**EVERY DAY, the Travel & Tourism sector is unwittingly used for human trafficking as traffickers transport their victims on planes, trains and buses and book hotel rooms to exploit vulnerable individuals.** Given the sector's inadvertent position in the path of human traffickers, it has a role and responsibility to protect the individuals it serves, transports, accommodates, and employs; and is in a unique position to make a difference.

With **over 40 million individuals subject to human trafficking on any given day in 2016**<sup>1</sup>, it is far from being eliminated. What makes human trafficking such a difficult crime to combat is that it is clandestine, can take various forms and that each case is unique.

While positive steps have been taken to address this crime, from the establishment of legal and policy frameworks and development of best practices to multi-stakeholder collaboration including governments, the private sector, NGOs, and survivors among others, more needs to be done. During 2020, COVID-19 dramatically exacerbated this global challenge with a rise in extreme poverty and in unemployment, with many men and women out of work, and many children out of school<sup>2</sup>; making families and children more vulnerable than ever. In this context, it is essential that we join forces to share and implement tangible solutions to end this global crime. As a sector, we have the power and ability to counteract and to help prevent human trafficking.<sup>3</sup>

Given the importance of this issue and the dedication of many World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Member organisations to end human trafficking, **WTTC formed a Human Trafficking Taskforce** which was launched at the Global Summit in Seville, Spain<sup>4</sup>. To help eradicate human trafficking, the Taskforce developed an action framework which focuses on **raising awareness, education and training, advocacy, and support**.

Ultimately, WTTC aims to bring together the Travel & Tourism sector to strengthen cooperation across stakeholders as well as share best practices and information to raise awareness about how the sector can and does make a difference, provide a forum for collective action, and move closer to the ultimate goal of eradicating human trafficking.

A close-up portrait of a young girl with dark, curly hair, looking directly at the camera. She has freckles on her nose and cheeks and is wearing a small gold earring. The background is blurred.

# **THE CHALLENGE: DEFINED & SIZED**

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING is defined as the action or practice comprised of elements used for the purpose of exploitation, typically for the purposes of forced labour or sexual exploitation.**

The United Nations (UN) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, also referred to as the Palermo Protocol, was ratified by the UN General Assembly on 15 November 2000.<sup>5</sup> It defines trafficking in persons as “*the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs*”. The definition includes both adults and children.

To establish the crime of human trafficking, three factors need to be established namely, the trafficker’s action, the means of force (i.e., force, coercion, fraud) and the purpose of the exploitation (i.e., for sexual or financial gain)<sup>6</sup>. Child sex trafficking occurs when someone under 18 years old is exploited for sexual purposes, even if this does not involve any of the means listed in the Palermo Protocol. In view of the close interlinkage between online and offline environments, it is important to note, that victims can also be trafficked online, through live-streaming and images and videos of their exploitation.

Many governments and private sector organisations deserve acknowledgement for their considerable efforts to address human trafficking. Still, more needs to be done to enhance understanding of the issues surrounding human trafficking, as many common misunderstandings and wrongful perceptions remain. The most common misperception is that human trafficking requires physical transportation from one location to another or across borders and cannot happen within the confines of the victim’s country. However, the Palermo Protocol notes that harbouring or keeping a victim against their will still classify as human trafficking. Harbouring refers to the keeping of an individual in compelled service and “accommodating or housing persons” in their place of exploitation<sup>7</sup>. Indeed, victims could be harboured within their very own neighbourhoods. Human trafficking also crosses over with other forms of exploitation that may occur without a person having been trafficked, depending on a legal definition in a given country, therefore it is important that such exploitative situations are not excluded from attention if they do not fit the definition of trafficking.

**On any given day in 2016:**

**40 million+**  
**victims of human**  
**trafficking<sup>8</sup>**  
**25 million**  
**in forced labour<sup>9</sup>**  
**15 million**  
**in forced marriage<sup>9</sup>**

Human trafficking is a global crime that continues to grow and affect the lives of millions. While it is difficult to ascertain an exact figure given the clandestineness of this crime, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that **on any given day in 2016, over 40<sup>8</sup> million people were victims human trafficking, of which 25 million were in forced labour, 15 million in forced marriage, and 71% of which were women or girls<sup>9</sup>**. The UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020 confirmed the 15-year trend of the shifting age and sex composition of detected victims; with adult women becoming, proportionately, less commonly detected, and the share of **children increasing to over 30% of detected victims**, while the share of boys detected rising significantly when compared to girls<sup>10</sup>.

Given the difficulty in addressing this complex crime, human trafficking requires multidisciplinary efforts and multi-stakeholder solutions within and across sectors. For the Travel & Tourism sector, this means involving the expertise of stakeholders, including survivors, and civil society organisations as well as establishing common initiatives. The Travel & Tourism sector needs to work on facilitating an approach which will enhance the understanding of the crime of human trafficking, enable better identification, prevention, and mitigation of potential and actual impacts of the sector, and further public-private collaboration to ensure that appropriate steps are taken by governments when human trafficking is detected<sup>11</sup>.

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

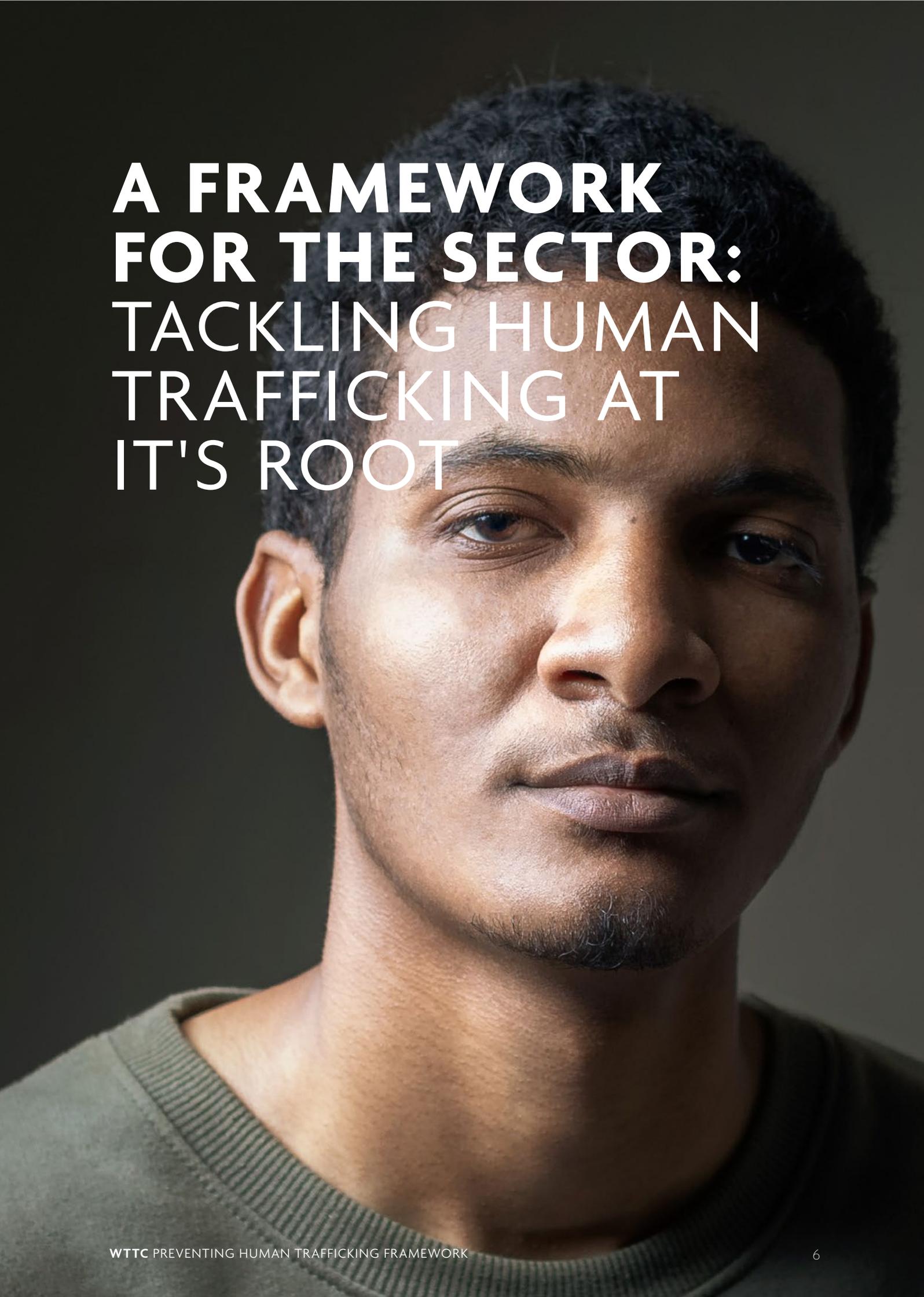
**The COVID-19 pandemic has not only put a spotlight on pre-existing inequalities but has also exacerbated them.** While hundreds of millions of people have suffered the health and economic consequences of COVID-19, those most vulnerable have been disproportionately affected.

In 2020, COVID-19 contributed to one of the most momentous global economic recessions in recent years, with the IMF estimating that the global economy shrunk by 4.4% in 2020, making it **the most severe downturn since the Great Depression in the 1930s**<sup>12</sup>. This recession is, in turn, leading to rising poverty and inequality both globally and at the national level; with evidence revealing that low-income earners have been most impacted. The economic impact of COVID-19, including mass unemployment, has left many, particularly in less mature economies, unable to pay rent, leaving many across the world with little or no protection; and leading to a rise in homelessness. Such circumstances allow for a much easier opportunity for human traffickers to target, mislead and manipulate the most vulnerable<sup>13</sup>.

**The large volume of school closures in 2020 also increased risks of human trafficking.** Not only did school closures make it more challenging for teachers to identify at risk children and youth, but as many of them were spending more time at home and online, it also resulted in more opportunities for traffickers to prey on and deceive these youngsters<sup>14</sup>. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, there was an **increase from 2 million to 4.2 million reports of online exploitation from March to April 2020**. Moreover, while travelling child sex offenders will seek to resume travel and commit contact offences once restrictions are lifted, the forced shift to online forms of exploitation could result in a more complex role played by technology to commit these crimes.

The shift to a higher-tech, **lower-touch operating environment** in Travel & Tourism as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has led hospitality companies, for instance, to have **fewer interactions with guests, making it more difficult to recognise potential indicators of human trafficking**. As such, targeted action within the Travel & Tourism sector and beyond is urgently needed to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on human trafficking. Such actions often go beyond the responsibility of the private sector and the Travel & Tourism sector, and should prioritise addressing drivers such as poverty, homelessness, and food insecurity, which could push those most vulnerable into hazardous situations. Simultaneously, robust strategies should be developed to reach at risk children and adolescents who are isolated and not able to attend school<sup>15</sup>, or are in situations increasing their vulnerability to trafficking, forced labour and all forms of sexual exploitation.





# A FRAMEWORK FOR THE SECTOR: TACKLING HUMAN TRAFFICKING AT IT'S ROOT

Given the active engagement of numerous private sector organisations, governments, and industry associations in this fight, **WTTC aims to leverage its position to facilitate information exchange and to coordinate efforts across the private sector, to galvanise a coalition and provide a forum for collective action.**

Building on the insights and experience of WTTC members, effective external coalitions as well as international organisations engagement, WTTC has developed a framework to proactively tackle human trafficking. The proposed framework consists of four pillars, notably: **Awareness, Education & Training, Advocacy, and Support.** The following section describes each of these pillars, highlighting best practices across the public and private sector.



## **AWARENESS**

The first pillar focuses on awareness, specifically, to increase industry and consumer engagement in countering human trafficking. In effect, it is proven that the more we know, the more we can do to prevent this crime. Initiatives focusing on awareness lead to a greater mobilisation against this crime which can reduce demand and result in policy and behavior change that increase reporting and victim’s access to support, so that they are ultimately not victimised once again. This pillar is essential to successfully combat human trafficking, as **it enables individuals, whether a manager, an employee or a traveller, to not only notice but to voice and report what they witness.**

For instance, **the US Government, through the Department of Transportation (DOT)**, has also taken effective steps to enhance public awareness and maximise the transportation and travel industries collective impact in combatting human trafficking through its **Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking Initiative (TLAHT)**. Formed in 2012, the initiatives 500+ partners take action to combat human trafficking by issuing leadership statements, signing pledges, developing reporting protocols, training over 1.3 million employees and conducting public awareness campaigns. The campaign used a mix of public awareness strategies including posters as well as initiatives designed to incentivise individuals and entities to think creatively in developing solutions to combat human trafficking<sup>16</sup>.

**WTTC Member organisations including Marriott, Expedia, AMEX GBT, Airbnb, Carlson, and CWT** have put in place strong policies focusing on awareness.

For instance, Marriott raises awareness through its human trafficking training programme, which is required for all on-property associates at managed and franchised hotels. The company has a public goal to train 100% of its hotel associates on human trafficking by 2025. As of year-end 2020, nearly 825,000 associates had completed **Marriott’s human trafficking awareness training**, creating a global workforce that stands ready to recognize and respond to human trafficking. In addition, Marriott donated the training to ECPAT-USA, making it available for free to all members of the hotel and hospitality industry.

**Carlson and CWT** have also taken leadership in this area, **creating an anti-trafficking task force** across the businesses, which includes raising awareness of the issue with employees and clients, strengthening partnerships

with NGOs such as **ECPAT International**, the **World Childhood Foundation** and **Thorn**, and promoting hotlines, such as the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** operated by Polaris, for reporting. CWT runs digital ads on its client-facing platform to raise awareness of human trafficking and in August 2019 ran a global awareness campaign to support the World Childhood Foundation via RoomIt by CWT. Carlson was a leader of the **Super Bowl LII Anti-Sex Trafficking Committee** to prevent and disrupt sex trafficking and helped develop a plan<sup>17</sup> for use in other communities during large-scale events. Both Carlson and CWT have been part of the **High-Level Task Force for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism** that guided that development of an important report in this area<sup>18</sup> and are leaders of the **ECPAT Independent Experts Group on Child Protection in Travel & Tourism** that continues to serve as an advisory group.

**CWT and Expedia are collaborating with Thorn Organization** and have hosted 'hackathons' which have helped to reach tech employees and garnered real interest in human trafficking. **Airbnb** has also focused on leveraging technology and data responsibility to detect possible signs of exploitation through collaboration with Polaris, and invited counterparts from organisations across the bay area to discuss the role of the private sector. Airbnb is also engaged with INTERPOL, the **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)**, the **It's a Penalty Campaign** and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Amex GBT** launched an awareness building campaign in 2019, in conjunction with the **UN Day Against Trafficking of Persons**, to raise employee awareness of indicators of and how to report suspected cases of human trafficking. Amex GBT also shared available hotlines and provide advice on what to do if people witness human trafficking.

In addition to industry and customer engagement, the first awareness pillar, requires increasing businesses engagement as they proactively address human rights issues. 2021 marks ten years since the endorsement of the **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** that define the parameters according to which countries and companies should establish policies, standards, and procedures, based on their respective responsibilities and particular circumstances. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need for developing legislation, beyond voluntary approach, to meet these goals.

For instance, in 2015, the **UK's Modern Slavery Act** that consolidated previous offences relating to trafficking and slavery, created a new statutory defence for slavery or trafficking victims compelled to commit criminal offences, and enabled private sector transparency by requiring big businesses, with turnovers over £36 million, to make public their specific efforts to ensure that slavery and human trafficking are not taking place in their businesses or supply chains<sup>19</sup>.

Still, the sole engagement of the **public sector is not enough**. In effect, **private sector involvement is absolutely necessary to combating human trafficking, both domestically and internationally**. Business leaders and owners are in a unique position to ensure that employees are being protected and their production lines and/or hospitality is not being provided by slave labour<sup>20</sup>. More and more countries require companies to undertake human rights due diligence through their mandatory regulations, and the EU Commission committed to introducing such legislation. The responsibility to conduct due diligence goes beyond a company's own operations, and needs to address the actual and potential impacts it may have through its entire supply chains, customers, governments and partners.

## EDUCATION & TRAINING

The second pillar focuses on education & training, aiming to train employees and travellers alike on how to identify and report suspected cases of human trafficking and how to develop travel and tourism practices that contribute to protection of vulnerable groups.

To tackle human trafficking at its roots requires human rights due diligence processes for the examination of global supply chains, including labour recruitment and the protection of workers and jobseekers. Governments, the private sector, and civil society alike have placed significant attention to this area in recent years, developing initiatives dedicated to dismantling exploitative labour recruitment practices and developing frameworks for fair and willful employment.

Successful initiatives spearheaded in the past include programmes from the United States' Homeland Security and the Canadian police forces which combined training with awareness raising campaigns on segments of enforcement and transportation.

In the **United States, the Department of Transportation (DOT)** engages in robust programmes to combat human trafficking that incorporate awareness, document as well as training. The DOT's 55,000 employees are trained to recognise and report human trafficking every three years with tailored trainings for bus and truck inspectors. To date, **50 aviation partners have trained 100,000 employees under the Blue Lightning Initiative for aviation personnel**<sup>21</sup>. To enable employees to see the signs of human trafficking and have the tools to report incidents, the Department of Transportation (DoT) enlisted an Advisory Board of Leaders as a coalition of all modes of transport, including transit systems, to proactively train employees<sup>22</sup>. Numerous local and international charity-driven organisations have also dedicated resources to training and partner with interested parties to support them in their quest to end human trafficking. For instance, the **Colorado Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking and Love** have created hotlines to report human trafficking<sup>23</sup>. Another level of local engagement is the proactive effort which was launched in February 2018 by the **Sudbury, Canada police force**. With Ontario being home to 65% of the human trafficking cases reported in Canada, particularly related to domestic sex trafficking, the Sudbury police department decided to take action and get ahead of further increases. Using an infusion of funds provided to all of Ontario by the provincial government, Sudbury Police Department launched an awareness campaign to engage all the citizenry as well as their officers which included a hotline and a specialised resource and recovery centre to support victims<sup>24</sup>.

**ECPAT International's** members have also supported the Travel & Tourism sector in various countries through trainings, e-learnings and programmes in their global efforts to prevent trafficking and all forms of child sexual exploitation in the context of Travel & Tourism<sup>25</sup>.

**WTTC Member organisations** including **Hilton, Marriott, Emirates, Expedia, Airbnb, Carlson, and CWT** have put in place strong policies focusing on education and training. For instance, **Hilton** implemented a robust in-house training programme for employees on risks in labour sourcing. It has also used a **risk mapping tool** to identify where modern slavery is higher and is working to ensure due diligence for hotel supply chains. Hilton also started the **Global Freedom Exchange programme** to support and provide dynamic educational and mentoring opportunities for women leaders in their global efforts to prevent and respond to human trafficking.

**Marriott** has also developed an awareness training and prevention programme on human trafficking for on-property staff in both managed and franchised properties; a programme which is translated from English into 16 additional languages and can also be taken either online or in a classroom setting, so it can be accessed and understood in the 130 countries and territories where Marriott operates. The instruction is broken down by role as the signs that a front-desk clerk sees may differ from those that a housekeeper or bartender sees. The training is now available through ECPAT-USA to ensure that other hotel employees can access it at no cost. Marriott is in the process of developing an updated and mobile-friendly version of the training to provide more context on potential indicators of human trafficking and additional guidance for managers, which will be launched later in 2021.

Similarly, **Emirates** has mandatory training on human trafficking for customer-facing employees, including cabin crew, check-in staff and pilots. The Emirates Airport Security Unit has a large team of trained aviation security personnel that are highly skilled and suitably equipped to conduct aviation security activities in Dubai International Airport. In addition to reviewing travel documents, conducting passenger profiling and behavioural analysis, the security services are trained to detect signs of human trafficking and to be on the lookout for incidents of potential child exploitation activity.

To address the aviation and hospitality industries response to human trafficking, the **UK Modern Slavery Training Delivery Group**, together with the **International Air Transport Association (IATA)** organised a workshop in 2018, which brought in private sector leaders including Emirates, and law enforcement, to share best practices and training initiatives developed to raise awareness on human trafficking. These in turn led to the creation of a guide for the aviation industry on human trafficking. More broadly within aviation, **ICAO** published in 2018 guidelines<sup>26</sup> to train cabin crew in identifying and responding to trafficking in persons and in 2021 guidelines to report trafficking in persons by flight and cabin crew<sup>27</sup>. On this basis, IATA produced recommendations on course content<sup>28</sup> and potential curriculum, which have been largely adopted by airlines.

To ensure training is available to an even broader spectrum in the industry, the **Carlson Family Foundation** provided **ECPAT-USA** a grant to design an anti-trafficking training module for travel agencies and meetings

and events professionals. It is available in multiple languages and is already being used by companies, including CWT and several industry associations. Another organisation which has taken leadership in this area is **Airbnb**, which has worked to combine **Polaris'** experience with human trafficking with Airbnb's expertise in the sharing economy to address human trafficking. Through this partnership, Airbnb has launched a robust anti-trafficking training curriculum to support any reports of trafficking and help spot signs of possible exploitation. Airbnb has used social media and communications to highlight the topic to its community and is working towards additional training and awareness efforts. The partnership was further expanded in 2020 to broaden training to Hosts, guests and additional Airbnb employees. Activities have included the establishment of a robust training curriculum for Airbnb's support agents and crisis management to identify signs of exploitation and improve reporting, the development of smart protocols to enhance cooperation with law enforcement as well as the design of methods to better flag possible exploitation whilst maintaining the privacy of Hosts and guests. In January 2021, Airbnb also joined **It's a Penalty** global campaign to harness the power of sports to prevent abuse, exploitation and human trafficking.

## **ADVOCACY**

The third pillar aims to bring the private sector together to encourage governments to enact and enforce legislation and policies which recognise human trafficking as a crime through the entire supply chain, and to develop resources and support needed, including national hotlines.

To drive forward meaningful advocacy and enact real change in Travel and Tourism, whether it be the implementation of legislation, adjustment of policies and their enforcement, enhanced collaboration between key stakeholders, including NGOs, relevant government agencies, the private sector, and civil society. **One of the keys to successful advocacy is the adoption of a survivor-based approach**, which seeks meaningful engagement, input, and guidance from survivors in the development and implementation of anti-trafficking programmes, frameworks, and projects. In addition to its proven effectiveness, such an approach can help provide survivors with employment opportunities and offer them the respect and understanding they were previously denied.

Governments including those of **Colombia, Argentina, Egypt**, and the **United States** have implemented constructive policies in their respective nations that have explicitly made the connection between State anti-Trafficking in Human Beings efforts and their Ministries of Tourism. **Argentina**, for instance, has focused on developing human trafficking campaigns at a **federal, provincial and municipal level** which are directed towards NGOs, civil society groups, high school and university students and children. Alongside these measures, Argentina's Ministry of Tourism has developed training in the prevention of trafficking in the tourism industry and has cooperated and worked with international organisations and hotels to draft best practices to dismantle and defeat child sex trafficking. Similar efforts have been undertaken in some other countries in the region that form part of the **Regional Action Group of the Americas** for the prevention of sexual exploitation of children in Travel & Tourism (**GARA**)<sup>29</sup>. Following these efforts, the Province of Neuquen passed a legislation to regulate the monitoring of hotel guests who travel with children. **Protex**, Argentina's anti-trafficking prosecution office, operates a national hotline system with response assistance from the Rescue Programme which, just in 2019, led to 522 of those reports to be referred to the federal courts and 440 to provincial courts.

**Colombia's approach has been a best practice to set anti-trafficking policies and legislation for countries.** As early as 2002, Colombia enhanced its legislation to enforce criminal recourse for human trafficking perpetrators. This, in turn, set the stage for more comprehensive local, state, and national coordination for child protection in Travel & Tourism and the wider spectrum of human trafficking; which were further strengthened in later years. The Tourism Ministry took a nation-wide approach to prevent child sexual exploitation in Travel & Tourism, also establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the cross-border agencies of neighbouring governments. A critical element of the success of Colombia was the close collaboration with local law enforcement agencies to enable survivors to get assistance and ensure the appropriate convictions of the perpetrators of human trafficking.

The government of **Egypt** is also dedicated to the fight against human trafficking. Egypt's Ministry of Tourism has conducted inspections of hotels to ensure compliance with regulations to prohibit the entry of children

vulnerable to sex or labour trafficking. One of the most successful and well-thought-out initiatives was rolled out in 2018 and involved the implementation of training to 32 travel agents through an online course focused on how to identify victims. To enrol in the online course, the Ministry of Tourism requires every workforce to include the contracts of their foreign workers so that legal authorities could verify adequate work conditions and salaries<sup>30</sup>.

The **United States** government has been a leader on anti-trafficking policies, collaborating with NGOs and the private sector to address the issue at the **local, national, and international level**. One example of this collaboration is the **U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline**, which is operated by **Polaris** and strongly promoted by both **ECPAT-USA** and companies in Travel and Tourism. The U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB), which is composed of private sector members from the sector, has recommended action to the Secretary of Commerce on the anti-trafficking issue. The U.S. also ensures that survivors are heard when forming policy. For instance, the **United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking** appoints survivor leaders to advise the Executive Branch on anti-trafficking policies<sup>31</sup>.

**Speaking with one voice and developing coalitions**, including with NGOs, to influence government legislative and policy action is vital, from the local to the federal/national level. In effect, children continue to fall victim to trafficking and sexual exploitation through gaps in policy and legal frameworks. To close these gaps, based on the recommendations of the first **Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel & Tourism** which was a consolidated effort of 67 partners around the world, a **legal checklist**<sup>32</sup> with key legal interventions to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation in the context of Travel & Tourism with its online elements, was developed to support governments in effectively improving their national legal frameworks. To galvanise results, **enhanced cooperation among all the key law enforcement agencies with cross border legal capabilities** is required. Collaboration with key UN agencies such as the **UN Office for Drugs and Crime** (UNODC), and **UNICEF** should also be pursued to identify and reach governments already committed to the guidelines and principals set forth by the **UN Human Rights Office** (OHCHR). Amplifying the dynamics and voice of the specific trade association efforts, including **IATA** and **ACI**, will enable the Travel & Tourism sector to be engaged on several fronts in combatting human trafficking.

## SUPPORT

The fourth pillar of the framework focuses on support, aiming to provide **assistance, rehabilitation services, employability training and opportunities for re-integration into the workforce to human trafficking survivors**.

Providing support to survivors is multi-faceted. In effect, **the emotional and psychological needs must be funded and met first** before employment can be offered. Identifying programmes addressing these needs is a tangible way of providing support, including those created by ECPAT members and numerous other NGOs including the **Down to Zero Alliance**<sup>33,34,35</sup>.

There is no question that **employment is a vital asset for recovery**. A good example is that of **Marriott**, which partnered with the **Global Fund to End Modern Slavery** (GFEMS) to co-develop a job readiness and hospitality training curriculum for survivors of human trafficking. A number of private sector organisations are also engaged with the **Global Business Coalition Against Human Trafficking** (GBCAT) whose mission is to harness the power of business across sectors to prevent and reduce modern slavery, and support survivors by focusing on survivor empowerment and employment, SME capability building, and navigation of existing resources.

Promising recruitment campaigns include the joint campaign by the **Issara Institute** and the **ILO**, which sheds light on ways the Travel & Tourism sector can adapt to help the fight against human trafficking and provide support and employment opportunities for survivors and vulnerable jobseekers. **The Ethical Recruitment Program**, spearheaded by the Issara Institute, focuses on bringing employers and recruitment agencies together to examine their current recruitment practices, identify strengths and weaknesses, receive feedback from employees and then implement improvements so that jobseekers feel more secure and validated during the recruitment process. The Issara Institute helps both businesses and recruiters improve their processes of recruitment by assessing and recommending different strategies with the help of worker feedback, including their workers' contracts and capacity building trainings.

To promote and ensure fair recruitment, the ILO developed General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment in 2016. The non-binding principles and guidelines, which cover recruitment guidelines for all workers, domestically and internationally, were designed to inform national legislatures, private sector organisations and social partners across sectors on how to enable fair recruitment. The guidelines provide clear tenets for the protection of workers throughout the recruitment process and detail the specific responsibilities of both governments and private sector<sup>36</sup>.

At the regional level, the European Union is implementing a strategy<sup>37</sup> on **Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025)**, published in April 2021, which focuses on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims and addresses among other sectors the hospitality industry. While there are no perfect examples at the national level, with much need for improvement to effectively support victims, different countries have implemented policies which are moving the needle. The government of **France**, for instance, developed policies to support human trafficking victims; providing funding to victims who filed a complaint with the Police. This consists of a monthly allowance of 464 Euros, including medical care, legal counsel, shelter and necessary psychological counselling. It is working in close partnership with NGOs and the private sector to undertake these initiatives. In cases of repatriation, the French government works the victim's country of origin to ensure that the individual is kept safe and assisted with legal options and medical care. Over 150-victims received residence cards in 2013 alone. Victims of trafficking in France are allowed a period of reflection amounting to 30 days, during which time, the victim can remain in the country to decide whether they want to cooperate with legal authorities. Unfortunately, in practical terms, this legislative measure is not very well known and rarely applied. A renewable 6-month residence permit is given to those who choose to cooperate with the police. If the perpetrators are eventually sentenced, victims have the possibility of permanent residence in France<sup>38</sup>.

As countries enhance their policies, it is important to provide secure national system for children who fall victims of trafficking. Child victims of trafficking are often placed in accommodation, which is not adapted to their specific needs and does not guarantee full security and recovery. To overcome such challenges, local protocols between actors from justice, education, civil society organisations and police are needed to promote coordination and rapid response. Because survivors of sexual exploitation require medical, psychological, social, legal, and other services; multi-disciplinary teams are best to ensure that victims receive the help they need, including overcoming obstacles hindering access to compensation for exploited children.



# TAKING THE CONVERSATION FORWARD



**In this past year, COVID-19 shifted the way people live and interact with one another, leading to a rise in financial instability, poverty, food insecurity and domestic violence.** While human trafficking happens both within and across international borders, **the restrictions on mobility and economic activities have undoubtedly led to more extreme and dangerous methods being implemented.** In this context, it is essential to recognise the impact of COVID-19 on human trafficking, review where needed and put in place measures to combat it. Indeed, the drivers of human trafficking that were exacerbated by the pandemic can be minimised through more investments into job creation and economic recovery, with its social dimension in focus.

A robust post-COVID-19 recovery plan should include the examination and implementation of **safe journeys and routes for migrants and refugees.** Furthermore, in depth and specific strategies are needed to meet the needs of those who are most at risk and those who have already been exploited. Anti-human trafficking strategies, which should be integrated as part of holistic sustainability strategies, will have an important role to play as it relates to the contribution to the **UN Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 agenda**, both at the national and destination level. More broadly, as the Travel & Tourism sector recovers, investing in the long-term sustainable and inclusive future of the sector, and **supporting those who are most vulnerable** will be critical.

Ultimately, and no matter how governmental and private sector policies and actions are effective in fulfilling their intended goals, the public and private sector alike should continuously examine and test their approaches, by conducting **human rights due diligence** processes through repeated assessments that may be necessary during the time of the COVID-19 crisis and as part of the recovery phase, to strengthen how they contribute to addressing and deterring human trafficking. **Working with various stakeholders, experts and survivors is the key to moving towards a future where human trafficking becomes a rare and remote crime.**

The Travel & Tourism sector has a shared responsibility to protect vulnerable individuals and to ensure that it is as safe and welcoming as possible. While WTTC and its Member organisations can jointly, through the **Human Trafficking Taskforce**, play a meaningful role across all four pillars, building on the many successful initiatives undertaken, **WTTC will aim to ensure a cohesive approach of the Travel & Tourism sector and focus its efforts on driving forward advocacy surrounding human trafficking by engaging with WTTC Members, ECPAT International and other leading organisations** in this space. To do so, an initial assessment of which countries to target for policy shifts will be undertaken, on the basis of which strategies and coalitions will be developed to ultimately make a lasting difference.



# Endnotes

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