

# **COUNTER TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS CONFERENCE FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

## **COMMUNIQUE**

### **A. Preamble**

Human trafficking is an evil business in which more than 24.9 million victims are currently trapped in modern day slavery globally. Human traffickers are believed to gross more than US \$ 150 billion (KShs 15 trillion) per year. Locally, Kenya serves as a source, transit and destination for hundreds of thousands of men, women and children who are subjected to forced labour and sex exploitation. Quite notably is that children are subjected to forced labour in domestic service and exploited in prostitution throughout the country.

We, representatives from the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA), Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), Organization of Africa Instituted Churches (OAIC), The Salvation Army, The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) have gathered from 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018 to deliberate on this grave matter of Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery and identify strategies to counter it for the sake of our brothers and sisters.

We especially took inspiration from the Holy Scriptures which state that all people are created by God, and are worthy of dignity. No one should be dehumanized by being treated as a commodity for trade.

### **B. Invisible Suffering**

We are gravely concerned that as Kenyans we have not taken this matter of human trafficking and modern slavery seriously even it happens right in our midst and even in our homes.

It behoves on every one of us to play a role in countering this trade, for every one of us is at risk of being trafficked.

Having considered the factors that facilitate and promote this dehumanizing trade, we wish to share for the following messages:

### **C. Message to the Government**

We call upon the National Treasury to allocate more funds to the Counter Human Trafficking secretariat to facilitate an enhancement of the implementation of the National Plan of Action on Anti Trafficking of Persons.

Further, we urge the President to empower the relevant government ministries, departments and agencies to prioritize the implementation the Counter Trafficking in Persons Act 2010. Among other things, this will facilitate coordination of the various actors in the counter human trafficking sector.

A key concern to us is that prosecution of offenders should be based on the Counter Trafficking in Persons Act as opposed to the current practice.

### **D. Message to the Media**

We call upon the media to endeavour to profile and give prominence to the subject of Human Trafficking. We especially recommend that focus be put on educating the general public on how to identify and assist victims of trafficking.

### **E. Message to Kenyans**

We urge all Kenyans, as individuals and as corporates and organisations, to join the Stop The Traffik – Kenya. Stop The Traffik – Kenya is a coalition of individuals and institutions dedicated to ending human trafficking and modern slavery. The coalition undertakes research on human trafficking, builds capacities of communities and institutions to prevent the trade, and engages in advocacy for a favourable legal regime.

### **F. Our Commitment**

On our part, we have made the following commitments:

- a) We will use our platforms to preach against human trafficking and modern slavery

- b) We will use our platforms to create awareness among our religious communities to empower them to identify and assist victims of human trafficking
- c) We will raise resources to assist victims of human trafficking to be restored to their families and rebuild their lives
- d) We will network with other actors in the sector and strengthen referral mechanisms to care for victims
- e) We will expose and support the prosecution of persons who engage in human trafficking and modern slavery

## **G. Conclusion**

We conclude by calling to mind the message recorded in the Bible in Mark 12: 30 – 31

*“The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

*Also, “You are not a believer until you love for your brother, what you love for yourself”(Prophet Mohammad (pbuh))*

Let us all love our fellow human beings and support the destruction of human trafficking networks.

May God’s peace and love be with you all.