

1.

## **Speech**

**Kelvin Thomson**

**Member for Wills**

**World Vision's Vision Generation's *Not In Our Neighbourhood!* Human Rights Forum**

**December 10, 2008**

REV TIM COSTELLO, MY PARLIAMENTARY COLLEAGUE RUSSELL BROADBENT,  
MEMBERS OF VISION GENERATION

TODAY IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT DAY IN THE ONGOING FIGHT FOR  
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS THE 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

IT IS ALSO A TIME TO CELEBRATE THE CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCE FOR MANY  
PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD SINCE THE DECLARATION.

IT IS A TIME TO REFLECT UPON THOSE WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO HELP AND  
WHO CONTINUE TO SUFFER HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES.

IT IS A TIME TO HARNESS OUR PASSION AND FOCUS OUR ENERGIES TO  
DEFEND THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THOSE IN OUR INTERNATIONAL  
NEIGHBOURHOOD WHO ARE UNABLE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS  
MY APPRECIATION FOR THE WORK THAT YOU HAVE ALL BEEN DOING, USING  
THE POWER OF YOUR VOICE, USING YOUR PASSION AND USING YOUR  
FREEDOM TO ENSURE THOSE OPPRESSED IN OUR INTERNATIONAL  
NEIGHBOURHOOD ARE ABLE TO CELEBRATE THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS.

OF ALL THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS EXISTING TODAY, EXPLOITATIVE  
LABOUR & HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS STILL ONE OF THE HARDEST TO MEASURE  
AND TO POLICE. IT'S TRANSNATIONAL NATURE AND INVOLVEMENT OF  
ORGANISED CRIME ACROSS MANY DIFFERENT COUNTRIES REQUIRES A

## 2.

COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO UNDERSTANDING AND RESOLVING THE ISSUE.

THE TREATMENT OF HUMAN BEINGS AS COMMODITIES IS A VIOLATION OF THEIR MOST BASIC RIGHTS TO FREEDOM, AUTONOMY AND HUMAN DIGNITY. IT LEADS TO FURTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES SUCH AS DEBT BONDAGE, VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION.

THIS CRIME IS A CRIME LEVELLED AT ALL HUMANITY.

MEN ARE TRAFFICKED FOR FORCED LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE, FISHING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES.

WOMEN ARE TRAFFICKED FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND FORCED LABOUR IN FACTORIES OR AS DOMESTIC SERVANTS OR WIVES.

BUT BY FAR THE PREDOMINANT VICTIMS OF THIS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION, AND PERHAPS THE HARDEST TO COME TO TERMS WITH, ARE THE CHILDREN.

THEY ARE TRAFFICKED FOR COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND FORCED LABOUR IN ORGANISED BEGGING RINGS, SOLICITING, STREET VENDING, FLOWER SELLING, AS CHILD SOLDIERS AND CHILD BRIDES.

PARENTS GIVE THEM UP WILLINGLY, THINKING THEY ARE GIVING THEIR CHILDREN A BETTER LIFE, AS THE PERPETRATORS OF THESE CRIMES DECEIVE THEM.

IT IS SADDER STILL THAT IT IS NOT UNCOMMON WHEN A CHILD GROWS TOO OLD FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION THAT THEY HAVE ACID THROWN IN THEIR FACES TO DISFIGURE THEM AND ARE FORCED ON TO THE STREET TO BEG FOR MONEY.

WE HAVE AN UNASSAILABLE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN VICTIM TO THIS CRIME, TO PROSECUTE THOSE WHO COMMIT THE CRIME AND TO STOP THE CRIME BEING PERPETRATED IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THE CHALLENGE OF UNDERSTANDING, MEASURING AND RIDDING OUR WORLD OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING REQUIRES A GLOBAL RESPONSE AND A COMBINED GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY RESPONSE.

### 3.

IT IS PRESENT IN SOME FORM ON **ALL** CONTINENTS, IN ALMOST **ALL** COUNTRIES, AND IN **EVERY** KIND OF ECONOMY. ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT ANY GIVEN TIME AROUND THE WORLD, 2.5 MILLION PEOPLE ARE RECRUITED, ENTRAPPED, TRANSPORTED AND EXPLOITED. THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION SAY 12.3 MILLION ARE VICTIMS OF FORCED LABOUR, 2.4 MILLION AS A RESULT OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

IN INDONESIA ALONE, EVERY YEAR, 100,000 WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE TRAFFICKED FOR COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION. EVERY YEAR, THE EQUIVALENT OF 30% OF ALL FEMALE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN VICTORIA ARE SEXUALLY EXPLOITED - IN INDONESIA ALONE.

THE STATISTICS ARE FRIGHTENING, THE STORIES EVEN MORE SO.

THE DIFFICULTY IS THAT IT CANNOT BE LINKED TO ANY COUNTRY OR REGION NOR BE DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTED TO ANY ECONOMIC OR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. IT EXISTS IN ALMOST ALL COUNTRIES ACROSS A MYRIAD OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND DIFFERENT STAGES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

IN THE UNITED STATES THERE IS A WEB SITE CALLED CRAIGSLIST, WHERE USERS BUY AND SELL, A BIT LIKE AN ON LINE TRADING POST. IT SEEMS INNOCENT ENOUGH, UNTIL YOU REALISE THAT IN ONE SECTION THEY ARE BUYING AND SELLING CHILDREN FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION. IN ONE STATE THERE IS AN AVERAGE OF 500 NEW ADVERTISEMENTS EVERY DAY LIKE THIS.

NOT SO LONG AGO, 2 CHICAGO WOMEN WERE CHARGED FOR SELLING GIRLS AS YOUNG AS 14 YEARS OLD. THE GIRLS WERE FORCED TO HAVE SEX WITH 10-12 MEN PER DAY, AND THE TRAFFICKERS MADE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS.

THE MAGNITUDE OF THE CHALLENGE THAT IS FACED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS NOT WELL UNDERSTOOD BY THE GENERAL COMMUNITY.

THROUGH MODERN HISTORY, THERE HAVE BEEN 3 MAIN MODELS FOR DEALING WITH HUMAN TRAFFICKING. ARREST AND DEPORT THE VICTIM. JAIL THE OFFENDER. AND PROTECT THE VICTIM.

4.

THE FIRST MODEL 'ARREST AND DEPORT THE VICTIM' WAS USED UNTIL THE LATE 1980'S AND TREATED TRAFFICKING VICTIMS AS ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS AND PROSECUTED THEM.

THE SECOND MODEL, 'JAIL THE OFFENDER' GRANTED SOME LEGAL AND SOCIAL WELFARE BENEFITS TO TRAFFICKED PERSONS, BUT **ONLY** IF THEY COOPERATED BY ACTING AS WITNESSES.

THE THIRD MODEL 'PROTECT THE VICTIM' CONSIDERS THE WELFARE OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS AS A PRIMARY CONCERN.

WHAT IS AUSTRALIA DOING? THE WORLD VISION CAMPAIGN HAS SOME SPECIFIC REQUESTS RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION AND UNITED NATIONS CONVENTIONS AND TREATIES AND TO AUSTRALIA'S OWN ACTIONS INTERNALLY AND REGIONALLY.

THEY ARE ALL VALID CALLS FOR ACTION. LET ME ANSWER THEM.

IN 1932 WE RATIFIED ILO 29, THE FORCED LABOR CONVENTION.

IN 1960 WE RATIFIED ILO 105 THE ABOLITION OF FORCED LABOUR CONVENTION.

IN 2001 WE BECAME A SIGNATORY TO THE UNITED NATIONS OPTIONAL PROTOCOL ON THE SALE OF CHILDREN, CHILD PROSTITUTION AND CHILD PORNOGRAPHY.

IN 2005 NEW FEDERAL OFFENCES CAME INTO FORCE.

IN 2005 WE RATIFIED THE UNITED NATIONS PROTOCOL TO PREVENT, SUPPRESS AND PUNISH TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS THE PALERMO PROTOCOL.

IN 2006 WE RATIFIED ILO 182 THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR CONVENTION.

WE HAVE NOT RATIFIED ILO 138 WHICH RELATES TO MINIMUM AGE. ALTHOUGH WE COMPLY WITH THE BASIC PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CONVENTION, WE ARE UNLIKELY TO BE IN A POSITION TO RATIFY THE

5.

CONVENTION DUE TO TECHNICAL COMPLIANCE ISSUES IN A NUMBER OF JURISDICTIONS. IT DOES NOT ALLOW FOR CHILDREN UNDER 15 BEING PERMITTED TO WORK ON A PAPER ROUND OR IN A FAST FOOD OUTLET IN THEIR SPARE TIME OR SCHOOL HOLIDAYS. THESE ACTIVITIES ARE COMMON IN AUSTRALIA AND ARE CONTROLLED BY LEGISLATION.

THERE IS NO SINGLE SOLUTION FOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS. AUSTRALIA USES A RANGE OF STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS PEOPLE TRAFFICKING , WHICH ARE SET OUT IN OUR TRAFFICKING PROTOCOL.

TO ENSURE AUSTRALIA'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE PALERMO PROTOCOL, WE HAVE ADOPTED A STRATEGY WHICH HAS FOUR CENTRAL ELEMENTS: PREVENTION, DETECTION AND INVESTIGATION, PROSECUTION, AND VICTIM SUPPORT AND REHABILITATION.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS COMMITTED \$20 MILLION TO ADDRESS HUMAN TRAFFICKING. THIS INCLUDES:

AN ACTION PLAN TO ERADICATE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS WHICH COVERS CRIMINALIZATION, PROTECTION, PREVENTION, AND REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

WE HAVE NEW AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE TEAMS TO INVESTIGATE TRAFFICKING OPERATIONS WHICH HAVE ALREADY UNDERTAKEN MORE THAN 250 INVESTIGATIONS.

WE HAVE A NATIONAL POLICING STRATEGY TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN FOR SEXUAL SERVITUDE.

A NEW 3 PHASE VICTIM SUPPORT PROGRAM WHICH COVERS ACCOMMODATION, HEALTH CARE, LEGAL ADVICE, COUNSELLING AND LIVING ALLOWANCES AS WELL AS \$1M TO SEVERAL NGO'S TO PROVIDE VITAL OUTREACH FOR TRAFFICKING VICTIMS AND TO CONDUCT EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING INITIATIVES..

AND IMPROVED LEGISLATION TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.

6.

AUSTRALIA'S SUCCESSES HAVE BEEN BUILT ON THE STRONG PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AT THE STATE AND FEDERAL LEVELS. WE ALSO RECOGNISE THAT NGO'S SUCH AS WORLD VISION ARE KEY PARTNERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING.

TO BUILD STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND NGO'S WE ESTABLISHED A ROUNDTABLE WHICH MET FOR THE FIRST TIME IN JUNE THIS YEAR.

ONE OUTCOME OF THAT ROUNDTABLE WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING GROUP, CHAIRED BY THE AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION; TO DEVELOP GUIDELINES FOR NGO'S WHO ARE DEALING WITH TRAFFICKING VICTIMS.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THAT IT HAS A REGIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE IN COMBATING PEOPLE TRAFFICKING AND CHILD SEX TOURISM IN ASIA.

OUR AID PROGRAM, THROUGH AUSAID, ADDRESSES THE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, THROUGH ITS FOCUS ON POVERTY REDUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

AUSAID SUPPORTS A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC PROJECTS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF VICTIMS, IMPROVE THE PROTECTION, RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION OF VICTIMS AND PREVENT THE EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN.

WE CONDUCT ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT ASIA TO STRENGTHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT, JUDICIAL AND PROSECUTORIAL RESPONSES TO TRAFFICKING AND IMPROVE POLICY, LEGAL, RESEARCH AND OUTREACH CAPACITY.

WE CURRENTLY FUND CHILDWISE TO DEVELOP AN ASEAN 5 YEAR PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE RESPONSE TO CHILD SEX TOURISM.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TAKES THIS ISSUE SERIOUSLY AND WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT THE INCIDENCE OF LABOUR EXPLOITATION AND

7.

CONTINUE TO PROSECUTE THE PERPETRATORS AND WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE VICTIMS.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING TO WORK WITH AGENCIES SUCH AS WORLD VISION IN AN ATTEMPT TO REINSTATE THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE VICTIMS OF LABOUR EXPLOITATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

CLAIRE MALLINSON, THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAID RECENTLY ‘HUMAN RIGHTS ARE THE ESSENCE OF OUR HUMANITY. THIS PLACES ON EACH OF US THE DUTY TO STAND UP, NOT JUST FOR OUR OWN RIGHTS, BUT ALSO FOR THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS.’

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CAN COME AT A COST, BUT APATHY TO OUR NEIGHBOURS NEEDS COMES AT A FAR GREATER COST.

I CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR. THEY SHOW THAT YOU HAVE EMBRACED YOUR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

I WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT CAMPAIGN RAISING AWARENESS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN EXPLOITATIVE LABOUR SITUATIONS AND I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT YOU WILL CREATE CHANGE BY MAKING IT CLEAR TO PERPETRATORS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE THAT THIS IS NOT OK, “NOT IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD”.

THANK YOU

**KELVIN THOMSON MP**  
**Federal Member for Wills**