

FIRST MEETING OF THE CARIBBEAN MIGRATION CONSULTATIONS COUNTER-TRAFFICKING NETWORK

26-27 April 2018
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

SUMMARY REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

In 2000, the international community defined “trafficking in persons” within the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*. Eighteen years later, despite important advancements, including the development of national counter-trafficking coalitions, specialized responses within police forces, the establishment of multi-sectoral referral systems, and many good practices and minimum standards, human trafficking remains one of the most complex and harmful crimes faced globally. An estimated 40.3 million men, women and children are victims of modern slavery according to Alliance 8.7, the UN alliance which aims to support world leaders in their efforts to reach Target 8.7 of the 2030 Agenda to “take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking [...] in all its forms.”

Survivors of human trafficking suffer important impacts in their health and well-being, and need protection and assistance. Too many victims remain unidentified, or inadequately supported through existing systems, and too many organized criminal groups continue to ruthlessly exploit others to their great profit, despite the efforts of law enforcement. While trafficking in persons can take place within a country, many criminal networks cross borders, making multi-country cooperation essential. Regional actions to align law enforcement efforts, as well as to improve assistance to victims of trafficking through consulates, child protection and other social service actors, require regional cooperation.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has directly supported more than 90,000 victims of trafficking globally, working closely with other UN partners, civil society, and our Member States¹. Since 2016, IOM and UNHCR have facilitated regional cooperation and exchange of information related to migration governance among the countries of the Caribbean through meetings of the Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC). From the very first workshop held in Port of Spain in December 2016, the topic of human trafficking was highlighted as a key priority in the region. The participating countries also endorsed the establishment of thematic networks as a strategy for consolidating the work of the CMC, including the creation of a regional counter-trafficking (CT) network.

Through the generous support of the United States Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, the First Meeting of the CMC Counter-Trafficking Network was hosted by the Government of Trinidad

¹ More details on IOM’s response to human trafficking can be found here: <http://rosanjose.iom.int/site/en/trafficking-persons>

and Tobago in Port of Spain April 26 and 27, 2018, with the support of IOM. The Meeting brought together representatives of the existing counter-trafficking response of the English, Spanish, and Dutch speaking Caribbean countries and territories – including multi-sectoral taskforces, committees and coalitions – as well as key experts and partners. This first meeting of a new Caribbean regional counter-trafficking network that includes both victim protection and law enforcement efforts was a momentous occasion, and another step in the fight against human trafficking.



OVERVIEW OF THE MEETING

Objective

- To form a Caribbean-wide counter-trafficking network in the context of the CMC that includes both victim protection and law enforcement actors, in order to promote regional coordination and cooperation in counter-trafficking efforts.

On April 26 and 27, 2018, more than 30 counter-trafficking experts from 15 Caribbean states and territories met in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago to take part in the [First Meeting of the Caribbean Migration Consultations Counter-Trafficking Network](#). The meeting was hosted by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, supported by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration and facilitated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Migration Agency. The creation of the Caribbean Counter-trafficking Network is one of the first developments of the [Caribbean Migration Consultations \(CMC\)](#), a consultative forum of more than 20 governments and 10 international organizations which exchange information and best practices on a wide range of migration issues.²

Participants

Trafficking in persons is a crime which requires coordination and cooperation across sectors, as well as between countries, in order to identify, assist, and protect victims, as well as to investigate and prosecute those responsible. Experts from national counter-trafficking responses in Caribbean countries and territories, including national multi-sectoral coalitions and specialized taskforces, gathered to share information on current counter-trafficking efforts and to discuss how to better cooperate at the regional level. In addition, key regional partners, such as CARICOM IMPACS and UNHCR, were invited to participate in the Meeting. A full participant list can be found in Annex One.

² More information on the CMC is available here: <http://cpmg.iom.int/what-cmc>

MEETING SESSIONS

The two-day event included an analysis of the current phenomenon of human trafficking in the Caribbean context, in addition to current responses from countries and territories for the identification and assistance of victims, as well as to investigate and punish human traffickers. Representatives shared information on their current actions and good practices, as well as the gaps and challenges in cooperation at the regional level. They also defined actions that will promote cooperation in the fight against trafficking in the future, through the identification of the priorities of the Counter-Trafficking Network of the CMC and discussions on how the Network could cooperate virtually through the Caribbean Platform for Migration Governance (CPMG). CMC CT Network participants have access to all presentations at the following link: <http://cpmg.iom.int/Events/first-workshop-caribbean-migration-consultations-counter-trafficking-network> (Please contact Sofia Cortés at scortes@iom.int should you have issues signing in)

Opening remarks were made by: Permanent Secretary Vel Lewis, Ministry of National Security of Trinidad and Tobago; IOM Regional Director Marcelo Pisani; and by UNHCR Associate Protection Officer Hannah Cochrane. The speakers recognized the importance of the event and the need to continue to improve the fight to prevent and respond to human trafficking in the region.

Following introductions, a brief presentation on **the background of the meeting within the Caribbean Migration Consultations** was provided by CMC Project Coordinator Brendan Tarnay, where it was noted that human trafficking has consistently been a high priority for this recently formed regional consultative process. This was followed by an **overview of the current counter-trafficking response in the Caribbean** by IOM Jamaica Head of Office Keisha Livermore. Recognizing the region as origin, source, and destination countries for human trafficking, she shared details on the profiles of victims that have been supported through IOM technical assistance, including men, women and children in both sex and labor trafficking. Some were originating in other regions, but others were from within the region. More female victims have been identified than male victims, but cases involving male victims tend to be larger groups. Counter-trafficking challenges in the region include availability of data, with only some countries currently implementing counter-trafficking (CT) databases; confidentiality and security concerns given the size of many countries; and finding support for victims that are not perceived as imprisonment. Other challenges included timelines for prosecution given the pace of many court systems in the Caribbean, as well as building trust for law enforcement generally. As in other parts of the world, the national multi-stakeholder response and related mechanisms also have room for improvement, and require written plans, procedures and processes to ensure they are not dependent on one person. Noted achievements include joint investigations between source and destination countries, as well as regional coordination at the taskforce level between Bahamas, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, and Belize, which began in 2018 under a sub-regional project funded by J/TIP.

The first day of the Meeting featured **an expert panel to share good practice on regional law enforcement cooperation**. Susanne Knowles of the Bahamas shared information about joint investigations carried out with Jamaica since 2013. Given Jamaica's experience, the Government of the Bahamas sent a prosecution team to Jamaica and conducted investigation activities there in close cooperation with the local law enforcement, including searches, interviews with witnesses and other actions. In 2017, a second case involving Jamaica led to further joint law enforcement cooperation, with the officers in Jamaica assisting in the rescue of a victim, and subsequent interviews. The speaker noted how important this cooperation is and how in other cases they were not able to secure this kind of response from counterparts in other countries.

The panel also featured a presentation by Joycelyn Hughes of CARICOM IMPACS, who shared details about how they work with immigration and customs officers within the Joint Regional Communications Center (JRCC) as well as with military and police within the Regional Fusion Centre (RFC) on related activities, including the Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) to review incoming passengers by air. She explained how they handle a "hit" and how they can support investigations through the monitoring of the movement of specific persons or through searching relevant databases. It was also noted that CARICOM IMPACS can also cooperate with non-CARICOM members through specific MOUs.

The **second expert panel featured regional cooperation in the Caribbean in the area of victim protection and assistance**. This included experiences from the Trafficking in Persons Secretariat of the Ministry of Justice of Jamaica, as well as from the Aruba National Coordinator for Anti-TIP. Participants noted that the MOU mentioned in the IOM-led project that has facilitated cooperation among the taskforces of several countries might be a tool that could be expanded to the new Network.

Examples were shared in terms of sheltering victims on other islands in order to better protect them, as well as a shelter which includes all necessary services so trafficked persons do not have to go elsewhere to get the care they need.

The second day of the workshop was focused on generating priorities and possible actions needed by the CT Network in the future, through guided small-group work on the following topics: 1) data and information-sharing 2) protection and assistance and 3) police cooperation and investigation. The first session focused on identifying challenges and gaps:

1) Data and Information-sharing challenges and gaps

The group noted challenges including fragmentation of data collection across agencies within countries, lack of a data-sharing culture which allows data sharing between agencies; duplication of efforts; weak institutional capacity to gather data. At the regional level, it was noted that there are issues of who has access to what data, and issues of trust. The group mentioned it might make sense to create MOUs or amendments to relevant legislation to allow or even require CT data to be gathered and shared. A discussion is needed on how to prioritize what CT data to collect, for whom, how often, and that this would require technical support, financial support, and tools for standardization. It was also noted that this should harmonize and complement other reporting needs, such as related to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

2) Protection and Assistance challenges and gaps

The group noted that lack of cooperation from the origin countries of international victims can be a big challenge. Cooperation is needed to ensure assistance and safe return. Language barriers and cultural barriers also exist. Managing cases between countries can be challenging. The group noted challenges related to safe house and shelter, and victims choosing to leave or not accept assistance. There are gaps in assistance, not enough case workers, and problems establishing trust with the victims. In some cases, protection protocols also restrict the movement of victims. There is a need to improve how we cooperate with churches and other partners, to improve reporting as “someone is always watching in the Caribbean”. There are issues of conflating TIP with prostitution in the region. The group also noted challenges related to keeping victims safe, as well as the need to improve protocols for how victims are assisted that take into account good practice.

3) Police Cooperation and Investigation challenges and gaps

The group identified the need for training for law enforcement and judiciary actors, locally and regionally, to ensure that the extensive experience in some countries reaches others. Training is needed with law enforcement and many other stakeholders. Joint investigations and multilateral cooperation is important – some countries do not yet have a CT taskforce, and could learn from countries that do. A regional taskforce network is needed, with regular meetings, online platforms to share information, and a budget to carry out activities. Though the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty exists, being able to travel to each other's countries and jointly investigate would be ideal. There are gaps in awareness and the need for sensitization campaigns, outreach to churches, to schools, to communities. There are funding gaps for many of these activities. Formal processes to support regional cooperation are needed. In some cases, the CT legislation needs to be updated. The group also noted that sometimes requests for information between countries are slow and bureaucratic, so processes could be improved.

On day-two of the Meeting, participants received a presentation by Rosa Corea, the current President of the **Regional Coalition against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in Central America**. She shared the history of the Coalition and the work it does to promote regional counter-trafficking efforts in that region. She presented the tools and guidelines that have been developed by the Coalition since it was formed. The Coalition is based on an MOU which was signed by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of each country, creating a legal space in which to work. In addition, she spoke about challenges, including resources, to continue to function. Good practice and lessons learned included developing a plan with clear indicators, and recognizing that not all countries are at the same level, and that sometimes outside technical assistance is needed.

Sofia Cortes of IOM presented the [online platform of the CMC](#) and how it might be useful to the CT Network, including the capacity to lead discussions, webinars, the document and publication library and other features. It was noted that IOM is moderating the content and that the platform can be adapted to suit the needs of the new CT Network.

Further group work took place on the second day, this time focusing on priority actions to take within each topic area:

1) Data and Information-sharing actions

Participants developed a long list of suggested potential actions to improve CT data collection and information-sharing, including: a CT data information management workshop; analysis legislation related to CT data information; standardized CT data formats and tools; the creation of a regional CT database; a technical assessment of CT data needs and gaps in each country; actions to ensure inclusive regional CT data (e.g., non-CARICOM countries and territories are also included); knowledge capture of experience, good practice, trends to feed into training and further evidence-based actions; and efforts to improve databases in place in some countries.

2) Protection and Assistance actions

Ideas proposed by the group included:

- standardized agreements to ensure cooperation in victim care and assistance across countries (MOU);
- establishment of a regional victim protection program similar to what exists in some countries to allow relocation of witnesses or victims to third countries; regional database of trusted or vetted interpreters and mechanisms to use them virtually or in person;
- exchanges on how to work with victims from specific cultures and languages;
- regional, multi-lingual public awareness campaigns that could be on both sides of a border in airports;

- survivors' activist network that can be consulted, if possible;
- improvements to national CT laws;
- regional victim assistance fund;
- regional reintegration programs;
- regional handbook for service providers, for law enforcement that is relevant to Caribbean context;
- trainings and sensitization for care providers, for law enforcement;
- and building on existing manuals, SOPs and other tools (e.g., sharing online).

3) Police Cooperation and Investigation actions

The participants identified a range of proposed actions, including:

- regional training, including through a regional academy, building on what already exists;
- harmonization of CT legislation in countries and territories; victim assistance funds from monies seized from criminal networks;
- language training for investigators;
- training of partners including NGOs to support investigations and victims during investigations;
- efforts to ensure a multi-agency approach with immigration, customs, and other frontline officers;
- and tools to support interviews with victims.

CONCLUSIONS

The First Meeting of the CMC Counter-Trafficking Network in Trinidad and Tobago in April 2018 brought together representatives of the existing counter-trafficking coalitions and taskforces of the English, Spanish and Dutch speaking Caribbean countries, along with key experts and partners. During two days of intense discussions, the participants identified a range of challenges and gaps, as well as existing knowledge and good practice that can be replicated further in the region.

The primary outcome of the Meeting is the decision to form the first regional counter-trafficking network in the Caribbean that focuses on both victim assistance and protection as well as investigation and prosecution. Countries and territories that were unable to join the first meeting will be invited to participate in the future. The participants requested the continued support of IOM to facilitate the Network within the Caribbean Migration Consultations, and to support related fund-raising to allow further strategic discussions in terms of key actions and next steps of the Network. As part of this support, the CMC online platform ([Caribbean Platform for Migration Governance](#)) will be made available for the use of the Network, including private spaces that are not accessible to non-members. There is

interest to formalize the Network further in the future, but while possible mechanisms to do so are analyzed, the participants agreed that this important regional counter-trafficking work continue in the meantime.

The establishment of the CMC Counter-Trafficking Network, a regional taskforce made up of local CT taskforces, is a major accomplishment that will no doubt lead to future regional activities and improved coordination in the region to counter trafficking in persons in the Caribbean.

Annex One: Participant List

Country	Name	Organization and Title
Antigua and Barbuda	Phillisha Francis	Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Secretariat & Secretary of the TIPPC, Administrative Assistant
Antigua and Barbuda	Marvin Hall	Task Force for Human Trafficking, Head of Cases
Aruba	Jeanette Richardson-Baars	Aruba Police Academy; National Coordinator for Anti-Human Trafficking and Smuggling, Director
Bahamas	Susanne Knowles	TIP Inter-Ministry Committee, Ministry of National Security, Chair
Bahamas	Adrian Strachan	Private Sector Security Services Unit, Ministry of National Security, Manager
Barbados	Veronica Shepherd	Human Trafficking Unit, Royal Barbados Police Force, Station / Sergeant in Charge
Belize	Judith Alpuche	Ministry of Human Development, CEO
Costa Rica (regional)	Rosilyne Borland	IOM Regional Office for Central and North America and the Caribbean, Senior Regional Thematic Specialist
Costa Rica (regional)	Sofia Cortes	IOM Regional Office for Central and North America and the Caribbean, CMC Content Assistant
Costa Rica (regional)	Marcelo Pisani	IOM Regional Office for Central and North America and the Caribbean, Regional Director
Costa Rica (regional)	Brendan Tarnay	IOM Regional Office for Central and North America and the Caribbean, CMC Project Coordinator
Curacao	Norman Marchena	Human Trafficking Taskforce, Coordinator
Dominican Republic	César Pérez González	Consejero Ministro, Embassy of the Dominican Republic to Trinidad and Tobago
Grenada	Esau Pierre	Immigration and Passport Department, Officer in Charge
Guyana	Argentina Santacruz	IOM Guyana, Counter-trafficking Programme Officer
Guyana	Tanisha Williams	Counter Trafficking Unit, Coordinator
Honduras (regional)	Rosa Corea	Regional Coalition on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (Central America)
Jamaica	Keisha Livermore	IOM Jamaica, Head of Office

Jamaica	Keshia West	Trafficking in Persons Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, Manager
Saint Lucia	Elda Michel	Ministry of Home Affairs and National Security, Deputy Permanent Secretary
St. Kitts and Nevis	Sheldon Jeffers	Royal St Christopher and Nevis Police Force, Police Constable
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Junior Simmons	Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU)
Trinidad and Tobago	Jewel Ali	IOM Trinidad and Tobago, Head of Office
Trinidad and Tobago	Hannah Cochrane	UNHCR, Associate Protection Officer
Trinidad and Tobago	Radica Gajadhar	Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, Immigration Officer ii
Trinidad and Tobago (regional)	Lydia Rose Geny	ECLAC, Associate Social Affairs Officer, Statistics Development Unit
Trinidad and Tobago (regional)	Joycelyn Hughes	CARICOM IMPACS, Border Security Affairs Specialist
Trinidad and Tobago (regional)	Nikita Pardesi	University of the West Indies
Trinidad and Tobago	Sheldon Pierre	Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, Organised Crime Intelligence Unit, Acting Inspector
Trinidad and Tobago	Alana Wheeler	Counter Trafficking Unit, Ministry of National Security, Director
United States (regional)	Gregory Holliday	US Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, Migration Officer, Office of International Migration

**First Workshop of the
Caribbean Migration Consultations
Counter-Trafficking Network**
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago – 26-27 April 2018

Day 1: Thursday, 26 April 2018	
8:30 – 9:00	<i>Registration</i>
9:00 – 9:30	Opening Ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vel Lewis, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Security of Trinidad and Tobago- UNHCR, Hannah Cochrane, Associate Protection Officer- Marcelo Pisani, Regional Director, International Organization for Migration, Regional Office for Central and North America and the Caribbean
9:30 – 9:40	Official Workshop Photo
9:40 – 10:00	Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rosilyne Borland, IOM Senior Regional Thematic Specialist on Migrant Protection and Assistance
10:00 – 10:15	Overview of the Caribbean Migration Consultations <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Brendan Tarnay, IOM CMC Project Coordinator
10:15 – 10:45	<i>Coffee Break</i>
10:45 – 11:00	Current Counter-trafficking response in the Caribbean Keisha Livermore , IOM Head of Office, Jamaica
Day 1: Thursday, 26 April 2018 <i>continued</i>	

11:00 – 12:30	<p>Panel: Regional CT Cooperation in the Caribbean: investigation and prosecution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Country Experience in CT Joint Investigations”, Susanne Knowles, Chair, TIP Inter-Ministry Committee, Ministry of National Security of The Bahamas - “Regional Experience in joint investigations” Joycelyn Hughes, Border Security Affairs Specialist, CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime & Security (IMPACS)
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch Break</i>
13:30 – 14:30	<p>Panel: Regional CT Cooperation in the Caribbean: victim protection and assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “CT TaskForce MOU in the Caribbean”, Keshia West, Manager, Trafficking in Persons Secretariat, Ministry of Justice of Jamaica - “MOU on Victim Assistance in Dutch territories”, Jeannette Richardson-Baars, Director of the Aruba Police Academy, National Coordinator for Anti-Human Trafficking and Smuggling
14:30 – 15:30	Small Group Activity: Analysis of current regional counter-trafficking cooperation
15:30 – 16:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
16:00 – 17:00	Discussions continued
17:00	Day One Conclusions

Day 2: Friday, 27 April 2018

8:30 – 9:00	<i>Participants arrive</i>
9:00 – 9:30	Welcome back
9:30 – 10:30	Experience of CT networks from other regions - Rosa Corea , President, Regional Coalition on TIP and SOM (Central America)
10:30 – 11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:00 – 11:30	Caribbean Platform for Migration Governance - Brendan Tarnay , International Organization for Migration
11:30 – 12:30	Small Group Activity: Possible CT Network actions
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch Break</i>
13:30 – 14:00	CT Network actions, continued
14:00 – 15:30	Plenary discussion: priorities, mechanisms
15:30 – 16:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
16:00 – 16:30	Next steps
16:30 – 17:00	Conclusions

Annex III: Photos from the Meeting

All Photos from the workshop can be found on flickr via the [event webpage](#):

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/125892493@N05/sets/72157668446249688/with/26939091467/>



