

**Address by the Hon Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.  
Vice-President and Minister of Public Security  
at the  
Launch of National Plan of Action For Prevention and  
Response to Trafficking in Persons (TIPs)  
Guyana Police Force Officers' Training Centre  
Camp & Young Streets  
January 18, 2017**

Your Excellency, President Granger,  
Colleague Ministers,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador Holloway,  
Officers and Ranks of the Police Force,  
Invited Guests,  
Friends,  
All,

Let me immediately express delight at your presence here this morning at this launch of the National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Response to Trafficking in Persons 2017/8. It is a reflection of how popular is the concern about this scourge of human trafficking.....yet another one.....which troubles us here in Guyana and our larger world. It is, too, a reflection of the desire of wanting to know and participate in the fight to stamp it out.

I also want to thank members of the Task Force, coordinated by Mr Profit from the Ministry of Public Security, for managing to make this launch possible this early into the year and in the surroundings of so many challenges.

A thank you must go out to the Finance Ministry for allocating the sum of \$ 12 M to Public Security for this year's activities as planned. I understand some more has been provided to other Ministries for their respective actions and exercises relating to Trafficking in Persons. Lots more funding is required but we are expecting some international support which will be forthcoming from our friends and allies in this fight. Already INTERPOL only last week informed my Ministry that they successfully arranged 5 police officers to travel to Trinidad for training. They may be on their way as I speak, if I am not mistaken. Thanks to all of our partners who have and will support.

There is an important statement at the latter part of this National Plan for the Prevention and Response to Trafficking in Persons 2017/18 which encapsulates the status of affairs we are in at the present moment. It states thus:

***"It is intended for the 2017/18 period to be one where the Task Force on Trafficking in Persons begins to wrest control of the situation in Guyana regarding the crime. It is acknowledged that***

***there is no overnight solution, therefore, patience is required. However, neglect cannot be tolerated".***

This Plan for the next two years approaches this developing scourge in our society through a combination of efforts which are appropriately titled "Prevention", "Protection and Reintegration", "Prosecution", and "Partnership".

This combination is not wholly original but has seen successes in other countries. So it is but a continuation of our effort to initiate what is internationally accepted and to invest in what is locally applicable.

What drives people into this sordid business of human smuggling and trafficking in person, as international experience has shown, sometimes seem surprising, the result of unintended consequences. Doris Meissner, gives the example, (he was top US Immigration Official in the 1990s) about how fisherman switched from tuna to humans. ***"When Pacific fishing nations agreed in the early 1990's to limit seine fishing in the tuna industry to reduce dolphin deaths, Taiwanese fishermen had excess boat capacity that could no longer be used for fishing. Because Taiwan was close to Fijian, Chinese migrants became the new commodity.!!"***

Derek Ellerman an activist from the anti-human trafficking group Polaris Project wrote: ***Whenever there is demand for commercial sex, the trafficker will spread to those areas”.***

The complex operations of trafficking in humans also happen and are managed to be pulled off successfully for long periods because of corrupt and complicit Public and State officials. Those officials can be within State-owned labour export agencies, immigration authorities, port employees and even tourists departments. And in other quarters least expected. So the very people who need to be champions to end it, are the reason sometimes the problem becomes entrenched.

And then others who see the profit that can be made from such a business say that they must indulge notwithstanding the immorality, the violence and inhumanity of this crime. This then leads to an acceptance and a state of numbness of not wanting to speak out! This is so dangerous and destructive and is what leads to that culture of crime and corruption. This Plan seeks to diminish that acceptance by bringing awareness and urging victims and families to speak out. Silence is violence! And this crime and corruption is not a culture. It is not, it is a choice. And a choice we have to halt! People must not be struck in a cycle of negativity and lose hope. We have to dream that this job can be done, the job of halting trafficking in humans, in drugs, in violence domestic and personal, of crime in all its ugly forms.

There is a lovely statement from a foremost authority on this question of solving the problem of violence against our common humanity. Co-authors Gary Haugen and Victor Boutros in "The Locust Effect – why the end of poverty requires the end of violence" dealt extensively with human trafficking as they did with other crimes of violence and exhorted that we have to professionalise law enforcement in every respect. And so their call is to shift the centre of gravity towards believing that law enforcement is not hopelessly corrupt, apathetic, nor brutish. There is too much damning negativity which can be overcome. I quote them:

***“Over time we have noticed a dynamic we call the 15-70-15 Rule. The rule in every respect has no real scientific precision, but it expresses the observation that within criminal justice systems in the developing world, it seems that about 15% of the personnel wake up every day intent on using their coercive power and authority for purely predatory purposes. Another 15% wake up every day with an earnest intent to do good and to serve the public. The vast majority – the 70% - are simply waiting to see which of these two factions is going to prevail. As long as the brutal corrupt 15% prevails, the rest 70% are going to go along. In such a context, it then looks and feels as if 85% of law enforcement is aggressively and irredeemably committed to the ways of venality and violence. However, and indeed, if it appears to the middle 70% that the virtuous 15% are going to prevail and***

***control the culture, then they will with surprising alacrity, begin to clean up their acts to stay out of trouble. A virtuous circle can and does emerge.”***

I want to believe this is happening here in Guyana. And with the public’s support and bi-lateral and multi-lateral international support so much more can happen. Let us commit to individually lend a hand in this effort against trafficking in persons and all illicit, illegal activities.

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY**

**JANUARY 18, 2017**