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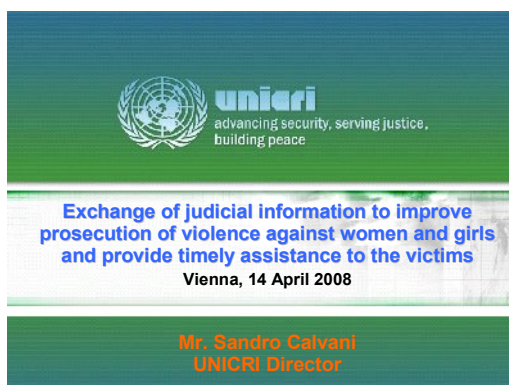
advancing security, serving justice,
building peace

Exchange of judicial information to improve prosecution of violence against women and girls and provide timely assistance to the victims

Speech at the PNI workshop on:
Eliminating Violence Against Women in the Field of Criminal Justice: Forms, Strategies and Tools

By UNICRI Director, Mr. Sandro Calvani

On the Occasion of the
Seventeenth Session of the United Nations Commission
On Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
Vienna, 14 April 2008



Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

I am very honored of this opportunity to address you together with such distinguished speakers, in my capacity as Director of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) to discuss about such terrible shame.

The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute - UNICRI – was created in 1968 to assist intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations in formulating and implementing improved policies in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. In a rapidly changing world, UNICRI's major goals today are advancing security, serving justice and building peace. UNICRI sees itself as 'the first response broker'. It has become known for its

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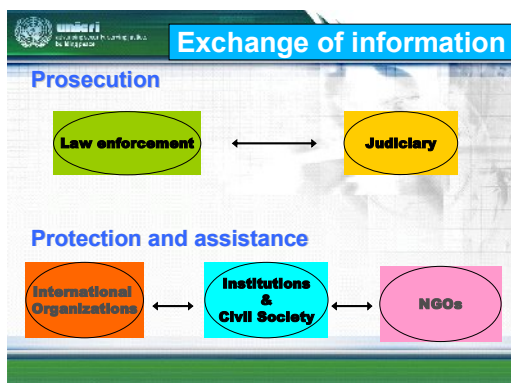
dynamic, fresh and innovative approach in applied research. Knowledge management, creativity in finding solutions and the power of partnerships are the major UNICRI instruments of work. UNICRI operates in selected niches as a 'laboratory of ideas' and its activities help the integration of national and international efforts to search for good practices and adapt them to different national situations. The UNICRI Applied Research Programme is organized in four main work areas: Emerging Crimes and Anti-Human Trafficking; Security Governance and Counter Terrorism Laboratory; Justice Reform and Post-Graduate Training.

Today every single person in this room is here for a common goal: to eliminate violence against women.



Violence against women and girls persists in every country worldwide as an undiminished violation of human rights and a major obstacle to achieve gender equality, development and peace. It transcends cultural, ethnic, economic and generational boundaries. It has devastating consequences for the women who experience it, and a traumatic effect on those who witness it, particularly children. It shames states that fail to prevent it and societies that tolerate it.

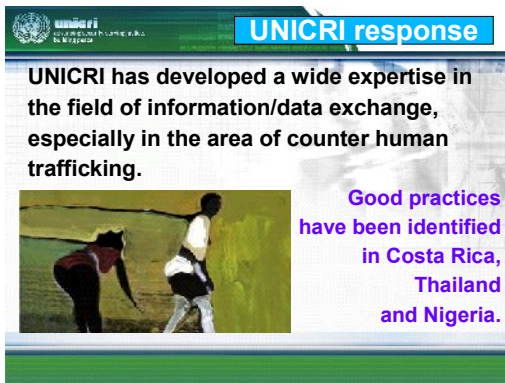
Indeed, we should remember that violence against women must be eliminated through political will and by legal and civil action in all sectors of society. In December 2006, the General Assembly adopted resolution 61/143 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women. In the resolution, the General Assembly urged the entities of the United Nations system to support the strengthening of national capacities and efforts on the collection, processing and dissemination of data for their possible use in the national plans of action against all forms of violence against women. Data on violence against women is essential to inform sound policy, and many entities, at the national, regional and international level, undertake or support the collection of such data.



Effective prosecution is made possible through tight collaboration between law enforcement and judiciary. Cooperation is a paramount word when it comes to fighting against violence. All the partners involved must work together to counter this ever-increasing threat: international organizations, institutions, civil society as a whole and NGOs.

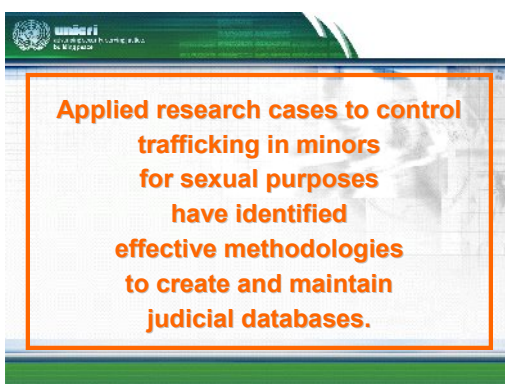
Some progress has been made in documenting some of the most common forms. However, there are still many forms of violence that remain largely undocumented. Under-documented forms of violence against women include, among others, trafficking in women for sexual and other exploitation. Statistics available in the area of trafficking in persons are notoriously unreliable. Many countries do not have trafficking legislation or have legislation that is inadequate. Even where legislation is in place, few traffickers are successfully prosecuted. There is often no centralized agency collecting data on human trafficking. Statistics may be reported by individual government agencies, by NGOs, the media or international or regional organizations, but these data sources are rarely linked and are often not comparable. Trafficked women rarely report their situation to the authorities and are often unwilling to cooperate with law enforcement officials if identified and rescued.

With regard to trafficking, several regional and national initiatives have begun to develop comprehensive databases to provide information on international trafficking routes, sources, transit and destination countries and on the numbers of trafficked victims and offenders.



UNICRI has developed a wide expertise in the field of information/data exchange, especially in the area of counter human trafficking activities. Thanks to information exchange mechanisms it is possible to gather data to follow on the crime trend and address potential solutions as well as adopt new strategies and methodologies. Accurate and comprehensive data and other documentation are crucial in monitoring and enhancing State accountability for violence against women and for devising effective responses. Moreover, because human trafficking is an offence that frequently occurs across borders, States must take steps to ensure that they can cooperate and assist each other in the investigation, prosecution and punishment of offenders. Article 18 of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) establish a comprehensive system for mutual legal assistance.

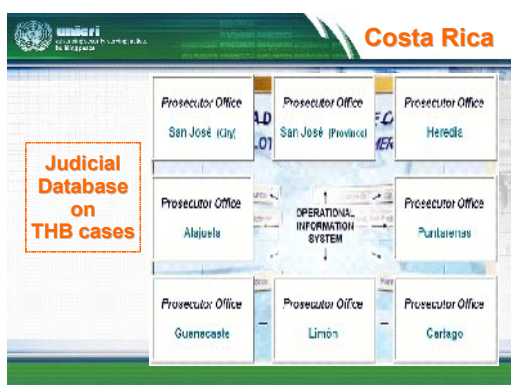
I will now briefly introduce to you three examples of UNICRI applied research programs. Given the multi-faceted dimension of trafficking in persons, the general objective of our projects is to use an integrated approach to strengthen the institutional capacities response - in particular those of law enforcement, the judicial system and NGOs - and to train experts to promote anti-trafficking activities. On this occasion, I will focus on the importance of comprehensive and integrated databases.



In 2005-2006, UNICRI implemented the "Action Programme against Trafficking in Minors for Sexual Purposes", to contribute towards reducing

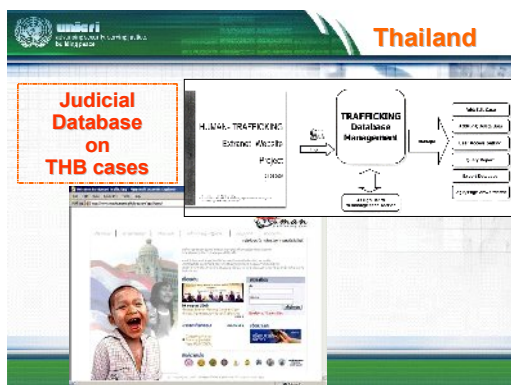
trafficking in minors for sexual exploitation and the serious violations of children's fundamental rights linked with this phenomenon. It involved three countries: Costa Rica, Thailand and Ukraine.

In Costa Rica, UNICRI has set up, in cooperation with the local NGO Fundación Paniamor, an operational information system to follow up cases relating to commercial sexual exploitation of children and trafficking, targeted at specialized Public Prosecutors' Offices, dealing with domestic violence and sexual exploitation of minors' cases. The system is an important tool for data collection that can help such Prosecutors' Offices to build stronger cases against sexual exploiters and improve their investigating skills and strategies.



In order to enhance the effectiveness of the State's response to violence against women, the creation of specialized courts can improve efficiency, minimize the burden on victims and improve case outcomes. UNICRI trainings for immigration officers and border police and for judges and prosecutors dealing with sexual exploitation represent also a sound effort to avoid re-victimization of women in the criminal justice process, because they help in creating a system that respects the privacy, dignity and autonomy of all victims and is conducive to reporting.

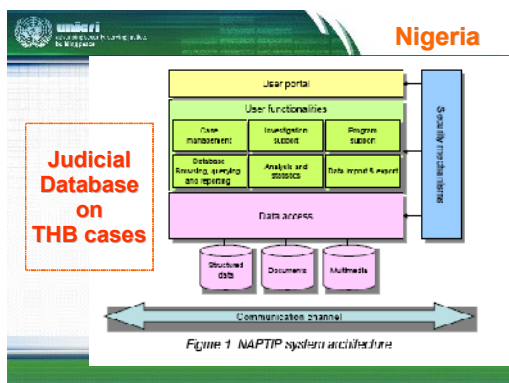
The system was very well received by the prosecutors and allowed an increase of efficiency of the relevant offices. According to the latest data of the Fiscalía General since 1 Jan. 2007 through 15 Feb 2008, 762 criminal files were opened, while 2543 were the reports involving trafficking cases to the Public Prosecutors Offices, and 1285 are the ongoing criminal proceedings.



Also in Thailand UNICRI developed national database on human trafficking. The database has been conceived as an intranet website, providing holistic data on both the prosecution of cases and victims assistance. It is also an important tool in strengthening the exchange of information among stakeholders (including NGOs), and in helping government authorities in the formulation of policies as well as in their planning, monitoring and evaluation.



In Nigeria, in the framework of a pilot programme ended in 2004, UNICRI has created the National Monitoring Centre on Trafficking in Persons (NMC) within the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP). In Phase 2 of the programme, started in March 2008, UNICRI is currently contributing to the creation of a comprehensive and integrated centralized database for the National Monitoring Center, to support the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases and to ensure the compatibility of these data with those collected in Italy and other European countries.



UNICRI will adapt the database used by the Italian National Antimafia Bureau (DNA), the SIDDA 2000, to the Nigerian context. This operational tool is the result of several years of work and consolidated experience on behalf of the DNA. It was selected by Eurojust as a model for the creation of similar databases in other European countries. As a result, data and judicial information on trafficking and criminal networks may be exchanged on a broader scale.

2008 is the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This should remind us of the serious commitments which the international community has taken. The Millennium Declaration explicitly recognizes that the equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured and MDG 3 specifically addresses the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

I strongly believe that eliminate violence against women – both as an extreme manifestation of gender inequality and a means of perpetuating it – is highly relevant to all of the Goals.



Thank you very much for your attention.