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Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul

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26<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Human Rights Council – Item 2 & 3 – General Debate

**Joint oral statement**

**“Human Trafficking simply cannot be tolerated”**

APG23 - and the others co-signing NGO's - welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Person, especially Women and Children and thanks Ms Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, for her outstanding work.

APG23 has a long experience in helping women enslaved into prostitution and wishes to thank the Special Rapporteur for her recent visit to Italy where she met also the civil society.

As explicitly stated by the Special Rapporteur *“the problem of human trafficking continues to be endemic in all parts of the world”*.<sup>1</sup>

Trafficking is a new form of slavery that cannot be any more tolerated. It is a reality that affects especially the most vulnerable in society. *The human person ought never to be sold or bought as if he or she were a commodity. Whoever uses human persons in this way and exploits them, even if indirectly, becomes an accomplice of this injustice.*<sup>2</sup>

We think that trafficking in human beings in all its forms, including trafficking for sexual exploitation and prostitution, is a crime against humanity that should be prosecuted.

All stakeholders, at all levels, have a moral and legal duty to eradicate this grave violation of human rights and to ensure that all human beings co-exist in freedom, equality and dignity, in accordance with the values that are common to our shared humanity.

States, above all, have the primary responsibility to eradicate this phenomenon.

There is need of shared responsibilities and a firmer political will to prevail together against human trafficking. A legislative and coordinated intervention in all the countries of origin, transit and arrival is very much needed. As mentioned by the Special Rapporteur in the report *“the majority of States have criminalized trafficking in their national laws”*<sup>3</sup> but this is not enough.

In order to achieve positive results, the efforts to combat human trafficking must also aim to sensitise public opinion. Furthermore, particular attention should be paid to the protection of victims by creating adequate laws and effectively implementing them.

Finally, the co-signing NGOs urge that the fight against Human Trafficking should be reflected in and carried forward by the Post 2015 Development Agenda so that, *“in every part of the world, men and women may never be used as instruments, but always respected in their inviolable dignity”*<sup>4</sup>.

Thank you, Mr President

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/26/37, p.18;

<sup>2</sup> Address of Pope Francis to the new ambassadors accredited to the Holy See on the occasion of the presentation of the letters of credence, 12 December 2013;

<sup>3</sup> A/HRC/26/37, p.6;

<sup>4</sup> Idem nota 2.