



Permanent Mission of The State of Eritrea
To the United Nations, New York

Statement

By

H.E. Ambassador Araya Desta
Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations
at the General Debate of the
Third Committee of the 68th Session of the UNGA

On

**‘Crime prevention, criminal justice and Human Trafficking’ [agenda
item 108] and ‘International drug control’ [agenda item 109]**

New York, 09 October 2013

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank UNODC's Executive Director, Mr. Yury Fedotov, for his introductory remarks and the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on agenda items: Crime prevention and criminal justice; and International drug control.

Human trafficking is a shameful phenomenon of our times. Its extent and nature requires a comprehensive global response. The convening of the High Level Meeting on trafficking in persons earlier this year was an important forum to assess our global response against this heinous crime.

Mr. Chairman,

Eritrea is a victim of transnational organized crime. For years now, many Eritreans have been lured or forced into the hands of traffickers facing unspeakable agony and death. On its part, Eritrea has long been at the forefront to the struggle to prevent this crime and mitigate its effects on individuals and societies. It has undertaken concrete measures, including: raising public awareness on the nature and manifestation of the crime, provision of assistance to Eritrean victims both inside and outside Eritrea, pursuing and bringing perpetrators to justice and cooperation with regional countries. Active engagement of communities in Eritrea against the crime as well as close coordination with Sudan and Egypt in the region have proven effective towards combating this heinous crime. As we hail the progress made we are also mindful of the long way ahead to fully eradicate trafficking in persons.

Mr. Chairman,

Trafficking in persons as a crime operates within the complexities of migration as an issue. The incident in Lampedusa was tragic and sad. The victims were African migrants, including Eritrea nationals. The incident raises an important question. What more can we do to enhance our cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination to avert such human tragedies from happening again. I say this in a candid manner because behind those numbers, there are faces, families and friends. Unless we work together, from all sides, organized criminal elements and their cohorts will continue to take advantage of the vulnerabilities of migrants and our ability to prevent human tragedies will be undermined.

Mr. Chairman,

The trafficking of persons, often linked to human smuggling that is affecting Eritrea is not an isolated crime nor is it merely motivated by sheer greed of criminal networks. It is evidently perpetuated by those who are creating an enabling environment for the crime to find fertile grounds through generous funding, engaging in vicious propaganda, offering safe havens and supporting acts of destabilization. The end game is to destabilize the country by draining its most productive population, the youth and more specifically the educated. That is why my delegation has officially called on the United Nations to launch an independent and transparent investigation of this abominable affair so as to bring justice to Eritrean victims and to a country that is the target of a malicious, concerted and unlawful campaign. Such an investigation will also serve to expose and bring to account not only the criminals who ply their murderous trade for money, but also those ultimately responsible who cynically abet the crime in pursuit of an illegal and violent political agenda.

Mr. Chairman

The fight against human trafficking is ultimately linked to the struggle for peace, stability and socio-economic development within countries and a fairer and more equitable global order. The Eritrean people who have struggled for over two generations for dignity and human rights, remain steadfast in their effort to combating this crime, and in this regard, my delegation believes UNODC has a role to play.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.