

“Addressing Human Trafficking and All Forms of Sexual Exploitation: Emerging Trends and Long-Term Strategies”- Diane Martin CBE (10 minutes)

I am delighted to join you today from Scotland and I am honoured to have been invited to speak at what I'm sure will be a historic event and I want to thank and commend the German Alliance Together Against Human Trafficking, the Conrad Adenauer Foundation and OSCE ODHIR for working together and facilitating this forum; I look forward to learning from you all.

Two things immediately strike me as being highly significant, firstly that this world wide conference is situated in Germany, with the potential to be revolutionary. What happens today and tomorrow, what's discussed and shared, the connections made and the networks built will, I believe, be foundational to bringing hope, healing and new beginnings to exploited women and girls across Germany who daily face the brutal realities of prostitution and sex trafficking.

Secondly, the title of the conference, 'Addressing Human Trafficking and ALL forms of sexual exploitation'. This exhibits a clear understanding that to address trafficking in a way that brings real change for victims and society, we **MUST** widen our focus to encompass **ALL** the ways women and girls are sexually exploited. They are not just linked, they are **ONE ENTITY** that finds different expressions.

It is demand that fuels and sustains the oppressive system of prostitution and sex trafficking and it is time to put the emphasis exactly where it belongs, **ON** that **DEMAND**.

On the men **CREATING** the demand, on the men **PROFITING** from it, and on the men who cause **HARM** and **TRAUMA**, by renting the bodies of women and children, trafficked from **OTHER** countries or fast tracked into prostitution **IN THEIR OWN**.

The more demand you have in a country, the bigger the sex industry, the bigger the sex industry, the larger the scale of sex trafficking.

In the same way that markets can grow, they can also be reduced and evidence shows traffickers favour operating in countries where demand is **NOT** tackled.

If we don't address demand we will see **NO MEANINGFUL IMPACT** on sex trafficking and will find ourselves in a revolving door of **CONFERENCE AFTER CONFERENCE** discussing the **SAME** things and letting down the **SAME** people.

This is **NOT** an intellectual exercise, this is about **VERY REAL** harm, visited upon the bodies and minds of women and children. It is happening **RIGHT NOW** and will keep happening if we do not take action.

RIGHT NOW - a woman newly arrived in a city far from home is just realising that the retail job she was promised does not exist, it never existed. Instead, she is locked in a room, raped and told her family will be harmed if she does not do as

she is told. Alone and terrified she is raped by a never ending stream of men who think they can BUY consent; men from ALL walks of life.

RIGHT NOW - a woman stands on a corner of her neighbourhood, another sits in a brothel, while another knocks on the door of a 5 star hotel suite. Far from an empowering career choice, the pathways to the exploitation and violence they encounter every day is strewn with a catalogue of pre-existing vulnerabilities that nearly always proceed involvement in prostitution and are taken advantage of by men.

In my late teens I was exploited through prostitution in London
The architecture that housed my abuse was penthouse suites and diplomatic apartments.

Then, trafficked overseas it was Royal Palaces and Government accommodation.

I've also spent over 25 years supporting other women to escape the brutality of street prostitution.

What I have learned is IT IS ALL THE SAME THING.

Whether sold in London or trafficked abroad there was no difference to what I experienced.

There was nothing empowering about getting raped, or having bite marks on my face or being asked at gun point if my mum knew where I was and if I would like to see her again. She didn't know where I was and to see her was ALL I wanted.

The location or surroundings do not reduce the impact of what is experienced in prostitution.

Whether wearing Prada or Primark
Whether in an alleyway or a palace
The bruises feel the same
The fear feels the same
The hopelessness feels the same
And the resulting trauma feels the same

Prostitution is not about empowerment or labour laws, it is about trapping women and children in a violent and predatory system and is an abuse of their human rights. They have a human right NOT TO BE BOUGHT OR SOLD.

We CANNOT and MUST NOT turn away

The good news is SOMETHING CAN BE DONE!

We need LEGISLATION and POLICIES ADDRESSING demand, and not just to exist on paper, but to be ROBUSTLY IMPLEMENTED

In the UK, I campaign for the adoption of the Nordic Model.

An end demand approach, where prostituted women are never criminalised but instead have access to holistic and tailored support to exit, recover and rebuild their lives and where legislation criminalises sex buyers and all who profit in any way from sex trafficking.

Going forward we MUST understand prostitution and sex trafficking as the same thing and recognise the IRREFUTABLE LINKS between Prostitution, Sex Trafficking and Pornography.

This is key to dismantling these OPPRESSIVE, HARMFUL and HIGHLY GENDER SPECIFIC systems in a strategic and impactful way.

To keep the sex trade going and growing there needs to be a continual stream of new “products’

How on earth can we accept that a subset of women be fodder for the sex industry. Exploited then deemed past their ‘sell by date’; used, abused and crushed, physical, emotionally and spiritually.

We must not just DISCOURAGE demand but aim to ERADICATE it

Where End Demand legislation exists, we must ensure its implementation, leading to successful prosecutions.

It is crucial that we gain buy in from those with operational responsibility by making sure they understand the realities for those exploited and why this approach supports victims and disrupts and reduces the trade in women and children by pimps, traffickers, brothel owners, adult website facilitators and sex buyers.

There is no mystery as to why the minority of men pay for sex, Its about male entitlement, domination and control, they want to and they can, and are supported in this active choice by societal norms that support that sense of entitlement and mainstream the sexual commodification of women.

We ALREADY KNOW that the power differential between a sex buyer and a victim is huge

We ALREADY KNOW that existing vulnerabilities proceed involvement in prostitution

Therefore sex buyers KNOWING or NOT KNOWING about those vulnerabilities is irrelevant.

In fact those of us who have been exploited know that many men gain sexual gratification from the fear and distress shown by victims.

Those of you who are leaders in your field are in unique positions of power. I was paid for and hurt by men who abused their considerable power and position; who felt they were entitled to do whatever they wanted with no accountability. And they did.

I am confident that all of you listening and participating today are here because you care deeply. You have CHOSEN to be here today; listening to the challenging realities for countless victims and to the solutions being put forward.

TOGETHER internationally, we must comply with our legal obligations to suppress and eradicate the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children.

WE NEED your involvement, WE NEED your expertise, and WE NEED your action

The modus operandi of pimps and traffickers and the lengths to which sex buyers will go to get what they want, even in a pandemic, know no boundaries, and neither must we.

I IMPLORE you to listen to survivors and examine the STRONG EVIDENCE BASE that favours an End Demand approach.

There IS no nuance here.

STAND with us, SPEAK out and TAKE action

In conclusion, as Survivors our bodies and minds BEAR WITNESS to the realities of the dehumanising system of prostitution and trafficking.

As Survivor leaders we also BEAR WITNESS through the hearing of the realities experienced by thousands of other women who have trusted us with their stories through the many support organisations we have founded.

I believe that there are LEADERS in Germany who are willing to reexamine the current approach to prostitution, LEADERS who are willing to listen and act upon evidence and the lived experience of survivors, LEADERS who have the courage to take a new path, a path that will literally be a lifeline to sexually exploited women and children in Germany and which will have a ripple effect all over the world.

Are YOU one of those leaders?

Upon WITNESSING the truth, we cannot UNKNOW that truth and feign ignorance.

It requires a response.

Today, what will YOUR response be?

