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Hillary Rodham Clinton

Secretary of State

Maria Otero

Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs

Luis CdeBaca

Ambassador-at-Large, Office To Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons

Washington, DC

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UNDER SECRETARY OTERO: Good morning. Wonderful to see all of you here. Welcome to the **10th annual release of Trafficking in Persons Report**. I am Maria Otero. I'm the Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs. And in this role, it's my honor to oversee a wide array of multinational issues that are critical to U.S. foreign policy, including the issue of trafficking in persons.

In Global Affairs, the threat that unites many of the challenges that we face, from refugees to the environment to population, is that of human security. We uplift human security when we help refugees access food and clean water. We bolster human security when members of civil society seek freedom for speech or religious independence, and we elevate human security when we empower women to adapt for climate change. And yet this issue of human security is most at stake when presented with the horrific crime of complete deprivation of liberty, freedom, and independence – the crime of human trafficking.

The announcement of the 2010 TIP Report is not only the result of many months of hard work, from offices – from our embassies and analysts and the Human Rights Trafficking Person – and the Human Trafficking Person, but also the community of NGOs – many of whom who are here – and activists who have dedicated their lives' work to combat this terrible scourge. Today, we come together to recognize over one decade of work.

As many of you know, human trafficking is a byproduct of conflict. It is a threat to national security, public health, and democracy. And it's our understanding, as the crime has evolved, we have developed mechanisms to combat trafficking in persons, both in terms of labor trafficking and sex trafficking. Today, we take a

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moment to celebrate the milestones that our collective work has produced and to recognize the heroes that will motivate us as we continue working forward.

The TIP report is a fair and transparent diagnosis of the impact of human trafficking, and it offers an assessment of how we can partner to end this human rights abuse, because human trafficking cuts across policies and sectors. We are challenged to gather our resources and increase our capacity to fight this crime together.

I'm also proud to say that under Secretary Clinton's leadership, the issue of human trafficking is elevated as never before. Her belief that we must fight human trafficking with every tool has led us to where we are today and motivates us to improve what we are doing in the future. Secretary Clinton's longstanding commitment to this issue has helped make human trafficking a priority under the Obama Administration. Everywhere that I travel, I carry the mandate to address this issue, to raise it with the leaders across the world. I also meet with the advocates, I meet with the victims when I'm on the ground, those who have the real understanding of the impact of the crime.

I am now pleased to introduce our top diplomat, my boss, our passionate leader, and a skilled policymaker. Without her, this issue would not be to where it has gotten here at the State Department. Ladies and gentlemen, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. (Applause.)

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you all. My goodness. This is, if not the largest, certainly one of the biggest crowds we've had here, which makes me very happy. Just don't tell the fire marshals and - (laughter) - we will be okay for the rest of the morning.

I want to thank Under Secretary Maria Otero for her leadership on this and so many other pressing global challenges. I want to thank our own hero, Ambassador Lou CdeBaca, and all the men and women here at the State Department. (Applause.) They are working literally around the clock to shine the brightest of all spotlights on the scourge of modern slavery. Lou and his team work very closely with Melanne Vermeer, our first ever ambassador-at-large for Global Women's Issues. Because human trafficking not only exploits and victimizes women and girls; it also fuels the epidemic of gender-based violence around the world. So thank you, one and all.

I want to - in this crowd, I see a lot of familiar faces and I'm happy to say even more newer faces of people who are new to the struggle. But I want to single out one person because he's a friend and a former colleague that is a champion of human rights and anti-trafficking efforts around the world, Congressman Jim McGovern, who is here with us today. (Applause.)

As you know, Congress has a key role to play in providing the mandates and consequences for these reports, and we deeply value their advice and counsel. But I know that in the Ben Franklin Room today are people who have advocated, organized, legislated, done everything you can to help end human trafficking and modern slavery in all of its forms. And I am honored to have worked by your side for many years.

Today we release the 10th annual Trafficking in Persons Report. I remember very well when we got the wheels in motion for this process because we wanted to document the persistent injustice of modern slavery. We wanted to tell the stories of men, women, boys, and girls held in forced labor or sexual servitude around the world. And for the first time ever, we are also reporting on the United States of America because we believe it is important to keep the spotlight on ourselves. (Applause.)

This report provides in-depth assessments and recommendations for 177 countries, some of whom are making great progress toward abolishing the illicit trade in human beings. Others are still doing too little to stem the tide. But behind these statistics on the pages are the struggles of real human beings, the tears of families who may never see their children again, the despair and indignity of those suffering under the worst forms of exploitation. And through this report we bear witness to their experience and commit ourselves to abolishing this horrible crime.

Human trafficking crosses cultures and continents. I've met survivors of trafficking and their families, along with brave men and women in both the public and the private sector who have stood up against this terrible crime. All of us have a responsibility to bring this practice to an end. Survivors must be supported and their families aided and comforted, but we cannot turn our responsibility for doing that over to nongovernmental organizations or the faith community. Traffickers must be brought to justice. And we can't just blame international organized crime and rely on law enforcement to pursue them. It is everyone's responsibility. Businesses that knowingly profit or exhibit reckless disregard about their supply chains, governments that turn a blind eye or do not devote serious resources to addressing the problem, all of us have to speak out

and act forcefully.

Now, we talk often here in the State Department about shared responsibility. Indeed, it is a core principle of our foreign policy. So we have to ensure that our policies live up to our ideals. And that is why we have for the first time included the United States. As this report documents, cases of trafficking persons are found in our own communities. In some cases, foreign workers drawn by the hope of a better life in America are trapped by abusive employers. And there are Americans, unfortunately, who are held in sexual slavery. Some find themselves trapped through debt to work against their will in conditions of modern-day bondage. And this report sends a clear message to all of our countrymen and women: human trafficking is not someone else's problem. Involuntary servitude is not something we can ignore or hope doesn't exist in our own community.

I'm very proud of the bipartisan commitment and leadership that the United States has shown on this issue over many years. For the Obama Administration, combating this crime is a top priority. And the United States funds 140 anti-trafficking programs in nearly 70 countries, as well as supporting 38 domestic task forces that bring state and local authorities together with NGOs like many represented in this room.

It's been 10 years since the United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol was negotiated and the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act was enacted, and I was very proud to have worked on both of those in a prior life sometime back. (Laughter.) And under the paradigm of the three Ps - prevention, protection, and prosecution - and thanks in part to the facts and focus provided by this annual report, governments, law enforcement agencies, international organizations, and families are working more closely together than ever. Now we call for the fourth P - partnership. And that is making a real difference. More countries are updating their laws and expanding enforcement, more criminals are facing prosecution, and more survivors are being helped back into a life of freedom.

This report is a catalogue of tragedies that the world cannot continue to accept. But it is also a record that deserves praise and recognition because it exemplifies hope and action because hope without action cannot be our goal. We have to provide the hope that then leads to the action that changes the reality that we describe.

Now, this report is very thorough. It has very specific recommendations. Countries come to us and ask very forcefully not to be dropped in their category and we hear them out and we tell them. And we increasingly tried last year to do that earlier in the process -we're going to do it even earlier this year - to tell them the kinds of things that we would look to that would demonstrate the commitment that we think would make a difference, to talk about best practices, to share stories. And some countries have listened and the results speak for themselves. Others have not.

Now this is a process that is fraught with all kinds of feelings and I recognize that, but the easiest way to get out of the tier three and get off the watch list is to really act. And we had some real friends, friends - countries that are friends on so many important issues, and they were very upset when we told them that they were not going to progress and, in fact, were in danger of regressing. And then they said, "Well, what can we do?" And we said, "Well, we've pointed this out, we point it out again, and we will stand ready to help you." And I hope all of you will because our goal should not be to point fingers. Our goal should be extending a hand to help people improve and make a difference in how they address this problem.

Now today, we're honoring a number of heroes in the fight against trafficking. These are people who hail from all over the world. You'll meet them in a moment. They have met a common challenge with uncommon heroism. You'll meet a French Dominican friar who started working with the rural poor in northern Brazil and ended up leading a national campaign against slave labor; a woman from Burundi, one of the first to serve as an army officer in her native country, who searches the streets for enslaved children and recently broke up a major human trafficking ring. And thanks in part to her efforts, the Burundian Government made clear progress in combating trafficking over the past year, particularly with regard to identifying victims, investigating potential offenses, and raising public awarenesses.

There are other success stories that can serve as models going forward. Argentina achieved its first conviction under a 2008 anti-trafficking law. Egypt enacted the first-ever comprehensive anti-trafficking law and is starting a rehabilitation center at a major hospital. Police in Ghana partnered with Interpol to host regional training for law enforcement officials from across Africa. So today, we congratulate and thank those countries that have made progress in the last year. We reaffirm the commitment of the United States to do everything we can at home and around the world to end modern slavery and I hope this report galvanizes further action.

And now it's my great personal pleasure to turn the podium over to Ambassador CdeBaca, who has been doing a superb job in coordinating these efforts, to introduce you to the heroes that we have gathered here today, to tell you a little more about their stories, and to use their example as a way to spur others to take such actions.

Ambassador. (Applause.)

AMBASSADOR CDEBACA: Well, first of all, happy anniversary. (Laughter.) Ten years. There are a lot of people in the room, and especially the Secretary, who over a decade ago were fighting something that people did not want to talk about and some seemed not to care about. Human trafficking, if people thought of it at all, was a little-understood crime that took place in the shadows, cast a darkness over our fundamental rights whether constitutional, international norms, or personal liberties. And so the White House and the Hill and the international community got involved and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the Palermo Protocol at the UN became not just our governing documents but our guiding principles, very simple principles: Trafficking should be prevented, survivors should be protected, and traffickers should be prosecuted.

Ten years ago, the law caught up with what so many people in this room knew – what you knew, what you cared about long before this was a hot issue. The injustice, though, was still as great. So we honor your leadership from within government and civil society. On shoestring budgets and with incomparable resolve, you had the courage to identify weaknesses and victims, to build shelters and best practices, and to trust and support survivors. We hope to use the same courage, the same strength, and the same tenacity as we celebrate 10 years of progress, but also 10 years of learning.

Indeed, in our first Trafficking in Persons Report, we cited the U.S. only as a destination or transit country, oblivious to the reality that we, too, are a source country for people held in servitude. We have all had successes and we have all made mistakes. And we will continue to make them as we reach toward solutions that the victims of this crime so desperately need. We have an involuntary servitude problem now just as we always have throughout history. But the American story is one of striving for perfection; the perfection we believe in and overcoming the great challenges that stand in our way. In our striving to become a more perfect union, we will not shrink away from the promise; the promise of freedom that Abraham Lincoln made almost 150 years ago.

So let our next anniversary be a celebration of the bold steps that we took to fight modern slavery, dedicating the resources that it takes to address this problem and risking, frankly, failure as we struggle for innovation, as we struggle for new ways in service of more meaningful successes. If we move boldly, innovatively, and humbly forward, we will prevail. But to do that, we need heroes, people who persevere no matter how desperate the fight against modern slavery can get.

Each year, the Department of State honors individuals around the world who devoted their lives to the fight against human trafficking: NGO workers, law makers, police officers, concerned citizens, all who are committed to ending modern slavery. We recognize them for their tireless efforts, despite resistance, opposition, and threats to their lives as they protect victims, punish offenders, and raise awareness of the ongoing criminal practices in their countries. We are joined by seven of our nine heroes this year – two of them, from Mongolia and India, who are unable to be here today.

I would ask the heroes, as I call their name, to please join Under Secretary Otero and Secretary Clinton on the far end of the podium: Brother Xavier Plassat, in recognition – (applause) – in recognition of his courageous leadership in denouncing cases of slave labor in Brazil, his dedication to rehabilitating victims of forced labor, and his intrepid advocacy for enforcement of laws; Christine Sabiyumva – (applause) – in recognition of her resolute commitment to reducing human trafficking in Burundi through investigations and public awareness campaigns; Iren Adamne Dunai, (applause) in recognition of her tireless efforts within the Government of Hungary to expand and improve victim services; Linda al-Kalash – (applause) – in recognition of her pursuit of groundbreaking legal action against those who would enslave and abuse domestic workers in Jordan; Aminetou Mint Moctar – (applause) – for her stand against domestic servitude and other forms of trafficking in Mauritania; Natalia Abdullayeva – (applause) – for forging unprecedented partnerships in Uzbekistan between the private sector and the government; and finally, Laura Germino – (applause) – and we'll hear a little bit more about Laura in a second.

Laura, if you could join me here at the podium.

Laura is going to give a few remarks on behalf of the heroes today, but in the introduction of Laura, we talk about a multi-sectoral approach, tapping NGOs, law enforcement, labor inspectors and the survivors,

themselves. And the pioneer of that approach here in the United States is Laura Germino. In the early 1990s, Laura began to not just give a voice to escaped slaves, but traveled to Washington on her own dime to hold the federal government accountable to – investigate and prosecute these cases. And when I say federal government, I mean me – (laughter) – and I think Leon Rodriguez, who is here with his children today. (Applause.)

That was the first of many. There have been many cases exposing servitude for both sex and labor in Florida. And the Coalition of the Immokalee Workers and Laura Germino have always been there. They've been important partners and, more importantly, an independent and pressing voice as they uncover slavery rings, tap the power of the workers, and hold companies and governments accountable.

Laura, the podium is yours. (Applause.)

MS. GERMINO: Ambassador CdeBaca is too kind. Madam Secretary, I thank you. I thank you on behalf of myself, on behalf of my colleagues at the Coalition of the Immokalee Workers, above all, on behalf of the TIP heroes here today for your always – ever since the day you took office, your resolute and genuine stance on fighting this issue, this horrible human rights abuse in our country and all around the world. (Applause.) We thank Secretary Clinton for this tremendously humbling honor. And while this is a much appreciated recognition of our work, it is also an awesome responsibility with which you are entrusting us all today by calling us heroes. And I want to assure you that we understand that. Freedom is a fundamental human right, maybe the fundamental human right. And we will all continue to work, from Brazil to Burundi, Hungary to Jordan, Mauritania to Uzbekistan, and yes, here in the United States – it does happen here in the United States – until we can reach a day without modern slavery.

I and my colleagues at the CIW also want to take this moment to salute the overseas TIP heroes for your unflinching courage and grace and progress made under extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances in which you work overseas. You have our deepest respect. I want to share with you all very briefly some of our experience in fighting forced field labor in the U.S., because it's a hopeful message.

Twenty years ago – we're turning the clock back – there was no State Department TIP Report. There was no Justice Department Anti-Trafficking Unit. There was no Trafficking Victims Protection Act, no freedom network of NGOs. Farm workers like Julia Gabriel and thousands of others had not yet escaped to freedom. Farm bosses like Ron Evans or Sebastian Gomez and a dozen others had not been brought to justice. There was no admission yet by this great nation that the unbroken threat of slavery that has so tragically woven through our history, taking on different patterns, but always weaving the horrendous deprivations of liberty – that it was a constant.

But here's the good part: There was nowhere to go but up. (Laughter.) What we found is the mills of justice grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine. I have to say at times those mills ground really slowly. (Laughter.) But change can and does come. Twenty years later, we see those changes, and you don't have to take my word for it. You can ask Ambassador CdeBaca.

Fifteen years ago, Ambassador CdeBaca was a young prosecutor – younger prosecutor – (laughter) – sitting in our office in Immokalee with me and my husband and colleague, Greg Asbed, who should be up here with me today, puzzling about how to bring a violent, armed boss who was holding more than 400 farm workers, to justice. Our work together on that case eventually put that employer, Miguel Flores, behind bars for 15 years hard time. And as Ambassador CdeBaca was saying – (applause) – that prosecution helped lay the groundwork for the TVPA, amongst others.

So when we struggle with our frustration at the pace of change, we remember those days and realize how far things have come in such a short time. Today, we have a renewed hope for change thanks to the growing number of transnational global corporations that have adopted new purchasing policies, thanks to the Campaign for Fair Food that includes zero-tolerance – enforceable zero-tolerance policies for slavery in their supply chain.

How does that happen? It takes a village to raise a child; it takes a whole community to fight slavery. Together, we want you to know that with colleagues of mine like Lucas Benitez, Romeo Ramirez, Julia Perkins, organizations like Student/Farmworker Alliance, Interfaith Action, prosecutors like Susan French, agents like Mike Barone and Charlie Frost, all our overseas colleagues fighting in this same fight, we will continue – we commit ourselves, our continued efforts to our collective fight to wipe slavery off the face of this earth. We are fighting for tier zero.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Yes, yes.

MS. GERMINO: Thank you. (Applause.)

UNDER SECRETARY OTERO: Thank you, Laura Germino, for inspiring words, for wonderful vision, and for a great statement on behalf of all of the heroes, all the trafficking in persons heroes here today.

I want to thank all the heroes myself for their work and for their inspiration to us. I also want to thank all of you for coming here today on this annual occasion, for the work that you do, and for the importance of us being able to be here together and recognize the work that we are doing. Distribute the TIP Report to everybody you know, send it out, and make it circulate. It's an important way to express why this issue is one that should be on the top of everyone's agenda.

I want to also encourage you, as we complete the event here this morning, to join us on a tour, which is in the front of the State Department, of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the Modern Slavery Museum, which is there for everyone to be able to visit. And I hope that you will be able to join us. Thank you so much. (Applause.)

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