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Delegations from Cuba and the United States hold exchange on trafficking in persons

14/02/2018



On February 13, 2018, the Fifth Exchange on the Trafficking in Persons was held in Washington D.C. between multi-sectoral delegations from Cuba and the United States. Both parties gave updates on the advances made, experiences gained and the challenges they face in the prevention of and combat against the trafficking in persons and in their work to protect victims.

The Cuban delegation was led by Johana Tablada, Deputy General Director for US Affairs of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was composed of officials from the Peoples' Supreme Court, the Attorney General's Office, the Ministries of Justice, the Interior, Education, Labor and Social Security, Public Health, Tourism and the Federation of Cuban Women. The U.S. delegation was led by Joel F. Maybury, Acting Director of the Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, and was composed of representatives from the Departments of State, Justice, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, and Labor.

The Cuban party ratified the zero-tolerance national policy against human trafficking and shared new and important actions that were undertaken in the years 2016 and 2017, which contribute to strengthening further the response of

the State and the society in the face of this scourge of global incidence.

Underlined as part of these new steps were the adoption of a National Plan of Action for the 2017-2020 period to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons and to Protect the Victims thereof, the setup of a Commission to implement the multidisciplinary actions contained in said Plan, and the results of the visit to Cuba by Ms. María Grazia Giammarinaro, UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children.

During the exchange with the U.S. counterpart, the Cuban officials talked about concrete actions and results that, as part of their work, contributed to enhance the prevention, detection and perception of risks in the face of a crime that has become increasingly complex worldwide.

Standing out in this regard are the establishment of a Family Protection Division and the operation of a Unique Telephone Line of the Attorney General's Office. In addition, the specialized training seminars for prosecutors, judges and law enforcement officers, the workshops and training courses for educators, and the celebration of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons were also highlighted, among other measures that will continue to be implemented.

Underlined in this exchange were the preventive nature of the National Health System and the important role played by the Cuban medical doctors in the early detection and attention of potential victims of human trafficking, both in Cuba and in other countries where our nation provides medical cooperation.

In 2016, 21 cases were prosecuted in Cuba for crimes with typical features of trafficking in persons, through the typified crimes of "Corruption of Minors" and "Procurement and Trafficking in Persons". In this same period, Cuba maintained international collaboration for the investigation and solution of cases transcending the national territory.

The Cuban representatives proved that the low incidence of trafficking in persons in Cuba is associated with the social and public safety achievements, the equal opportunities and the policies and programs aimed at empowering women, providing free access to health services, education, culture and sports, which reduces the country's vulnerability and strengthens its capacity to increase international cooperation in this field, as a State Party to the legal instruments signed on this and other related matters.

Both parties ratified the usefulness of the exchange, which took place in a professional and respectful ambiance, and agreed to continue holding these exchanges in the future.

