

In response to the call I am enclosing my views

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Question 1) The 2030 Agenda commits to universality, human rights and leaving nobody behind. How do you interpret these principles in relation to sex work/trade or prostitution?

The 2030 Agenda is based on the fundamental principles of human rights, their protection and promotion. This means, in my view, that sex work/trade or prostitution can, in no way, be considered in line with the Agenda.

While forced prostitution, as well as human trade that is often behind it, are clearly perceived as human rights violations in line with human rights instruments, including CEDAW, the so-called sex work/trade is often subject to doubts and erroneous interpretations defending that it may be a personal option, that it is an acceptable type of work that should enjoy a status similar to other types of activity regarding rights, social protection, taxes, etc

In my view there is no such thing as a totally free choice in the selling of one's own body for money and for someone else's enjoyment/exploitation. There is, certainly, always a motive for entering prostitution, even if not clearly realized for "choosing" such a "work" - poverty, misery, violence, despair, fear, coercion, even if only psychological...

The answer to such problems, if seen in the framework of the Agenda 2030, is certainly not in the recognition of sex trade as an acceptable form of work like any other, as the conditions of personal freedom and dignity are not safeguarded and the positions of power on the part of the ones exploiting and of subjection on the part of the ones being exploited are not questioned, but accepted as normal.

Question 2) The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out to [achieve gender equality and to empower all women and girls](#). The SDGs also include several targets pertinent to women's empowerment, such as:

- a) **reproductive rights**
- b) **women's ownership of land and assets**

- c) **building peaceful and inclusive societies**
- d) **ending the trafficking of women**
- e) **eliminating violence against women.**

How do you suggest that policies on sex work/trade/prostitution can promote such targets and objectives?

If the above-stated objectives are to be achieved, policies on sex work/trade/prostitution have to be seriously evaluated. Prostitution or sex trade will never empower women or make them totally free and autonomous persons.

Serious research, thinking and debate are essential to make clear how negative for women such realities are, even if not always those involved are fully aware of that. Women's NGOs, youth organizations, interested academics, political parties together with social organizations working in the field and knowing the "crude reality" of prostitution and sex work have to find positive answers to what is no more than a negative commercial activity of human persons, their bodies, their will and their dignity.

The aims targeted in the Agenda regarding freedom from violence or trafficking are totally incompatible with the existence of sex work/trade and prostitution, as these realities are intrinsically part of the system that allows it; and women's reproductive rights are certainly not fully respected when their own bodies are used as objects. On the other hand, peaceful and inclusive societies are not built upon exploitation and humiliation exercised by some persons upon others in a totally unbalanced, unequal situation.

Question 3) The sex trade is gendered. How best can we protect women in the trade from harm, violence, stigma and discrimination?

It must be a global, concerted response. Legal provisions and their strict application penalizing those that promote and benefit from sex trade and prostitution, namely pimps and clients, together with promotion of social awareness of the real meaning of such activities, education and information of women starting from school, media involvement and above all, political commitment to respect, defend and promote human rights.

For those women already involved in such networks, special support programmes are necessary, including safe houses to allow them the possibility of escaping from the trade and its supporters, as well as legal and social support, professional training to rebuild their lives, etc

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