

May 31, 2005, Vol. 11, Issue 7

**FORCED LABOR, TRAFFICKING COMMON AROUND WORLD**

At least 12.3 million people are trapped in forced labor in the world today, and 2.45 million of them are victims of human trafficking. Forty-three percent of trafficking victims, or 1.4 million people, are forced into commercial sexual exploitation such as prostitution. Another one-third are trafficked for economic exploitation. Children under age 18 comprise up to half of forced laborers in the world today.

Those are among the findings of a new report from the International Labour Office – the most comprehensive analysis ever conducted by an intergovernmental agency of the facts and underlying causes of forced labor. It finds that the exploitation of trafficked women, children and men generates about \$32 million in profits each year, or \$13,000 for every forced laborer who is trafficked.

*A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour* finds that many victims of forced sexual exploitation have been deceived into this abusive treatment through misleading advertisements, individual traffickers posing as friends or relatives, or bridal agencies. Technological developments such as the Internet, and the proliferation of tourism, escort agencies and media outlets that advertise sexual services all contribute to the rising demand for commercial sex. Many traffickers are adjusting their strategies to evade law enforcement by using more subtle forms of coercion that are difficult to identify.

The report concludes that discrimination based on gender or ethnic origin is a major determinant of trafficking, and poverty and gender-specific cultural practices make women especially vulnerable.

*A Global Alliance* offers hope that forced labor can be abolished if governments and institutions pursue vigorous enforcement and make a strong commitment to eradicating the practice. “While the eradication of forced labor is a tremendous challenge to all, it is nonetheless a manageable one,” the report says. “With courage and determination to stand up to crime and corruption, and through the allocation of resources to back this up, member States and the international community can make real and measurable headway in eradicating the different forms of forced labor.”

*Information about A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour, and a link to the report, are available at [www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/pr/2005/22.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/pr/2005/22.htm)*