



**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK CITY BAR ASSOCIATION
UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE**

**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
SPECIAL HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING
ORGANIZED BY THE GROUP OF FRIENDS UNITED AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME**

FEBRUARY 9, 2016

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, representatives & guests:

I'm here today on behalf of the New York City Bar Association, an independent non-governmental organization of more than 24,000 members in over 50 countries. The City Bar has a long history of dedication to human rights, including human trafficking.

Much of the work of the City Bar in the area of trafficking has been in support of domestic laws, such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, Violence Against Women Act and New York's anti-trafficking law, passed in 2007 and viewed as a model for other states. Subsequently, the Association made recommendations for legislation, including a private right of action for sex and labor trafficking allowing recovery of damages and attorneys' fees, increased penalties for labor trafficking, and protecting victims of sex trafficking from prosecution for prostitution.

The City Bar has issued many reports on trafficking and trafficking legislation, which are available on our website. We invite you to take a look.

In addition, the City Bar's Justice Center Immigrant Women and Children Project has been providing hands on assistance to survivors of human trafficking since 2002, assisting in immigration, criminal and civil legal matters. The Project accepts cases from the general public, law enforcement and community organizations, such as the Damayan Migrant Workers Association which assists Filipino domestic workers. Clients come from countries around the globe, including China, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad, Colombia, Brazil, India, Nigeria, and Russia.

This work is exemplified by a recent case involving a young Nigerian woman brought to New York by relatives to work as an unpaid domestic servant. She had no money, no legal status, no identification, and lived under threat of deportation. She was forced to take outside jobs and

her paychecks were confiscated. When she learned that her relatives were planning to send her back to Nigeria into a forced marriage, she came to the City Bar. We assisted her in reporting her trafficking to law enforcement and obtaining lawful immigration status as a human trafficking victim. We joined with *pro bono* lawyers to bring a federal civil lawsuit alleging violations of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the Federal Labor Standards Act, false imprisonment, conversion, and assault and battery. The case resulted in compensation enabling this woman to plan for her future. She is now living on her own, working as a home health aide in the process of applying for permanent residency in the United States.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to address you and tell you about our work.

United Nations Committee of the New York City Bar Association
Michael D. Cooper, Chair
Remarks prepared by: Cynthia Rollings