

Counter Trafficking in Persons  
Conference  
Good Shepherd Retreat Centre  
12 -15 April, 2016

The Counter Trafficking in Persons Office (CTIP) of the SACBC & LCCL held its 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference on Human Trafficking at the Good Shepherd Retreat Centre, Hartbeespoort from 12 – 15 April, 2016 during which it held its first launch of “*Taxis Against Human Trafficking*”. The Conference was organised for representatives from *Talitha Kum Southern Africa* which comprises religious sisters and priests from our 7 countries and for those groups formed by them - including those from different denominations – all working under the umbrella of CTIP South Africa. There were 47 participants. Much of the Conference was dedicated to listening to reports from the various groups on the work they have been doing as well as updating ourselves with various issues connected to human trafficking. Sr Annah Theresa reported on the Talitha Kum meeting she attended in Rome on our behalf in January this year.



Sharings were very profound.

Among our guest speakers was Ms Carina Coetzee from National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) who updated us on the South African Trafficking in Persons (TIP) ACT of 2015 and Ms Tafadzwa Makonese from the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) who spoke on migration issues. Although South Africa has no clear statistics on human trafficking what came across quite strongly from participants was the apparent increase in trafficking trends or the fact that we are now more attune to what is happening in areas. Members reported how children go missing never to be heard of again. Child trafficking seems to be more prevalent now in South Africa. Not only is it an internal problem but girls especially between the ages of 14 and 23 are trafficked from across our borders in trucks or in taxis. It was also reported how flows continue from Asian countries - no doubt transported by plane.

A highlight of the Conference was the morning of 14th when, (as a follow up to Conference 2013 when the “Truckers against Human Trafficking” campaign was launched), the Conference renewed its commitment to TAHT by first having a ceremony and blessing at the centre of the driver and truck belonging to Mr Michael Rai. Monsignor Barney McAlear performed the ceremony on behalf of Bishop Kevin Dowling who could not be with us. From there the Conference members, together with a number of visitors for the launch, proceeded to Harties Taxi rank about 7 kilometres away. There Mr Tsheke of Blaldto Association and the Taxi drivers awaited us to show their support to the initiative of the Conference to fight against the problem of Human Trafficking. The ceremony was repeated. There was first the blessing of the taxis and drivers for their safety on the roads and then the launch of the campaign led again by Monsignor Barney. It was emphasised to the taxi

drivers that they have a very important role to play in combatting Human Trafficking. Sr Melanie also told them how they had heard at the Conference that a particular taxi driver who quite often ferried a woman travelling with a child to a setdown point noticed that on her return journey on such occasions she was always alone. That taxi driver reported his suspicion to the police and it was found that the woman in question was trafficking children.



The ceremony concluded by the handing out of T-shirts, caps and stickers on which was written “*Taxis Against Human Trafficking*”. All had fun helping the drivers place the stickers on the Taxis, engaging in conversations and having pictures taken together. Sr Melanie then thanked all those who helped with the launch: Mrs Enency Mbatha,,Mrs Mmoni More, Mr Tsheke of BLALD TO Taxi Association, owners and drivers for joining their project of public awareness to protect potential victims of Human Trafficking. She expressed words of solidarity when she said:

**“TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE”.**



All visitors were then invited to return to centre for lunch

## **Resolutions** taken from important points emerged during the Conference.

### **Fundraising**

- High teas/Soccer tournament/Concert /Varsity doing fundraising in Universities
- Donation forms to fill in/envelops to different parishes/going to shops asking for food and clothes for ----
- vulnerable kids
- Groups register as NPO
- Website
- Selling magazines
- Stand on road with posters
- Make bracelets for sale

### **Networking**

- Groups around form one network (eg: Pretoria Group we meet after a certain time)
- Social network (eg: Facebook, Whatsapp, email...)
- Sharing Information: IOM, DSD, DHA, People in our Communities and churches

### **Culture Vs Human Rights**

- Do more research on Human Trafficking ask the traditional councilors real information about --
- cultural practices (Women and children), Real age for marriage
- Different cultures' diversities and the churches, To Approach (meeting) church leaders
- Know different systems eg. Kgutla system
- Dialogue between the community and local Government during gathering

### **Continue Awareness**

- Workshop for girls, teach the young children in schools about their rights
- Learn how to approach the councilors and church leaders
- Prayer Groups
- Teaching by Drama
- Be continuously aware and learn continuously (be updated), the language used, Music (kids)
- Recruit other workers
- Record the activity done (narrative and statistics reports)
- Media using local radio, Magazines, work with the contact person
- Train the trainers
- Evaluate the groups and keep them updated

### **Implementation of the Law**

- Challenge the Police
  - Educate yourself in order to educate others
  - Engage with DOJ on new acts (keep updated with the law), with SAPS/local police
  - Have contact with kind people (in police) to stimulate the interim of implementation of the law
- Each group to study the resolutions and see how best implement them

**Conclusion** : All participants were thanked for their participation and great work and joined in prayer to carry our light forward. A big thank you from the group to Rob of Marriannahill Press for the notebooks which were very useful.

**Progress Report to be given at the end of 2016.**



-----