



Human Rights as Human Values

“Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”

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Panelist: Winfred Dohert – text as shared at the event



Thank you for your welcome and invitation to be part of this event. I am indeed privileged...

Human Rights as Human Values, and I will add Spiritual Values echoed in all religions is an interesting interplay with concepts. Basic human values refer to those values which are at the core of being human. What are they? Love, honesty, kindness, compassion, respect and personal and social responsibility. I believe that a newer and deeper consciousness of what it means to be human is emerging as we struggle with so many issues that are death dealing to people and planet – authoritarianism, autocracy, conflict and the impacts of neo-liberal capitalism creating a vicious cycle of devastation. Both people and planet are threatened by forces that appear to be contrary to human values - these forces are based on power, exploitation, aggression overriding values of honesty, kindness, compassion, respect and social responsibility.

I am a catholic sister, and in my advocacy ministry at the United Nations I represent Good Shepherd Mission Partners in 70 countries around the world and all participants in our ministries. Prior to this current ministry I worked with trafficked and prostituted girls and women in different countries. Our ministries focus on the 'dignity of the person' manifested in care for girls and women who because they experience poverty, are migrant, or girl child are exploited by the phenomena of human trafficking and prostitution. Ministries implement rights-based services.

The disparity between the accumulation of extreme wealth and the inescapability of extreme poverty is contrary to human values, offending the dignity of human beings, is an affront to the common good, and tends toward disastrous cyclical misery. Extreme amassment of wealth and refusal to share resources and material goods are both cause and effect of social and spiritual ills. The effects of poverty are both blatant and insidious: malnutrition, ill health, illiteracy, unemployment, homelessness, family rupture, social exclusion, social violence, desperate migration and constant anxiety for children's future. **All referenced already by Dr Maneesha**

Human Trafficking and prostitution are growing global criminal industries that defy human rights, international law and affronts human dignity. It is a violence based on recruiting, harboring, coercing, deceiving, and/or transporting people solely for the purpose of exploitation, most often labor and/or sexual exploitation.

Trafficking is an injustice rooted in dynamics of our global world and current global economy. The phenomenon of trafficking converges with current global flows of migration, patterns of armed conflict and war, climate induced displacement and economic supply chains of consumer goods.

In all our work, we seek to analyze and address root causes, examining and unmasking links between trafficking and policies of economic injustice, violence against women, discrimination of the girl child, militarization, inadequate migration support, and the social acceptance of the prostitution of women and girls – are forces contrary to human and spiritual values.

Structures and systems that intensify social inequality, support patriarchal power, prioritize economic profit above the value of the human person, and diminish the human value of social relationships render untold harms to girls, women and children vulnerable to being trafficked for labor, human organ harvesting, surrogate pregnancy, and/or sexual exploitation and prostitution. Trafficking is congruent with all forms of gender discrimination and gender-based violence, including the industries and governments that sustain prostitution and seek to normalize, and legalize the sex industry and pornography. These are dehumanizing experiences.

The rapid global expansion of human trafficking as a criminal industry has increased the demand for girls and women to be objects of prostitution. Likewise, lack of people-centered and rights-based migration policies increase the incidence of human trafficking and prostitution. In these experiences people are commodified, and objectified.

Technology has been utilized to perpetuate the control of women's agency and sexuality and the continued harassment and violence against women and girls. Technology has opened the door to perpetrators through a screen that exposes women, girls, and children to all types of harm, even within the home. Technology has facilitated the rapid global expansion of human trafficking as a criminal industry, which has increased the demand for women and girls as objects of exploitation, prostitution, and violence. The time is characterized by the absence of legislation to protect women and girls from the corrupted use of technology, The huge volume of online sexual exploitation of children globally is a feature of a society without a moral compass.

We, together must pull humanity back from the brink urging the living of human values ... knowing that these human values are beautifully expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Right. I end by inviting each of us to a renewal of faith in humanity, a humanity that cares and nurtures.

Winifred Doherty

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