

JULY 2025

THE 2025 CARIBBEAN ANTI-TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE

REFLECTIONS: 25
YEARS OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE PALERMO
PROTOCOL IN THE
CARIBBEAN
COMMUNITY

CONFERENCE REPORT



HELD VIRTUALLY FROM JULY 21-24, 2025

Acknowledgements

We extend our sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the resounding success of the 2025 Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference: "Reflections: 25 Years of the Implementation of the Palermo Protocol in the Caribbean Community." This landmark event, held virtually from July 21-24, 2025, was made possible through the collective dedication and invaluable contributions of many.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the members of the conference planning committee whose vision and tireless efforts were instrumental in convening this vital regional dialogue. Your commitment to advancing anti-trafficking efforts in the Caribbean is truly commendable.

We are profoundly grateful to the Survivor Leaders who graced our panels and interactive dialogues. Your courage, resilience, and willingness to share your lived experiences were the most powerful and transformative elements of this conference, providing indispensable insights for shaping survivor-informed policies.

Our sincere appreciation goes to all the Youth Advocates and Leaders from the Caribbean and other Commonwealth countries who actively participated and shared their perspectives. Your energy, innovative ideas, and clear calls to action demonstrated the critical role young people play in preventing trafficking and building a safer future for the region.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all the Distinguished Speakers and Moderators from various sectors, including survivors, law enforcement, the judiciary, government representatives, regional institutions, international organizations, academia, and civil society. Your expertise, thoughtful analyses, and commitment to justice enriched every session and fostered a deeper understanding of the complex challenges and opportunities in combating human trafficking.

We acknowledge the invaluable support and collaboration from our partner organizations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), CARICOM IMPACS, and Free the Slaves. Your ongoing commitment to regional anti-trafficking initiatives is vital.

Our thanks also go to the YES Leadership Programme, CARICOM Youth Ambassadors, NGOs and community-based organizations across the Caribbean and beyond, including the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), American Bar Association, Families In Action, Beyond Borders, OneChild Network, Youth with Disabilities Connections, Men Can, Finding Your Light Foundation Inc., Beyond Publishing Caribbean, and Trinity Dance Theatre. Your grassroots efforts and innovative approaches are at the forefront of change.

We are grateful to the academic institutions and researchers who contributed their knowledge and insights, including those from the University of Birmingham, St. Mary's University, Twickenham, and McGill University, for enriching the evidence base of our discussions.

Finally, we thank all Participants for their active engagement, thoughtful questions, and unwavering commitment throughout the four days of the conference. Your collective dedication is the driving force behind a more just, equitable, and resilient Caribbean Community.



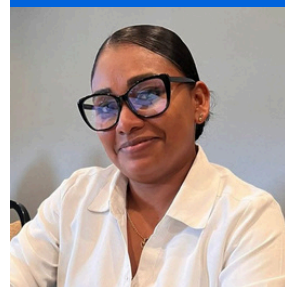
Planning Committee



**Dr. Olivia Smith,
Consultant**



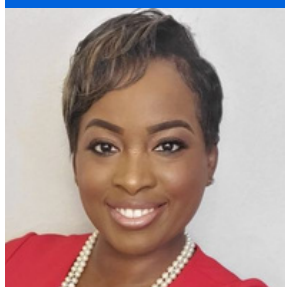
**Diana Shaw, Belize
CSO Anti-
Trafficking
Coalition**



**Stephanie Reina,
Belize CSO Anti-
Trafficking
Coalition**



**Smith Maxime,
Beyond Borders**



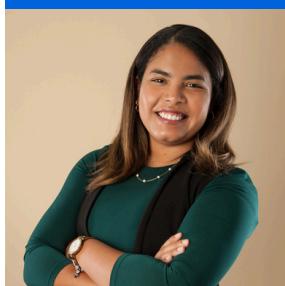
**Shamere
McKenzie,
Caribbean Survivor
Network**



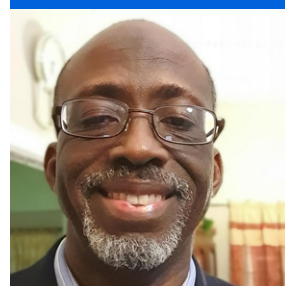
**Joycelyn Hughes,
CARICOM IMPACS**



**Desery Jordan-
Whiskey, IOM**



**Lissette Reyes,
UNODC**



**Adrian Alexander,
Free the Slaves**

Table of Contents

<u>Acknowledgements</u>	01
<u>Planning Committee</u>	03
<u>Executive Summary</u>	06
<u>Key Themes and Insights from the Conference</u>	07
<u>Day 1</u>	10
<u>Introduction</u>	11
<u>Opening Remarks Summary</u>	12
<u>Keynote: Global and Caribbean Progress Since Palermo: What Have We Learned?</u>	13
<u>Panel 1: The Evolution of Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Frameworks</u>	17
<u>Interactive Dialogue: Regional Gaps and Promising Practices</u>	23
<u>Self-Care Session & Adjourn</u>	27
<u>Key Themes</u>	28
<u>Recommendations</u>	30
<u>Day 2</u>	34
<u>Introduction</u>	35
<u>Panel 2: Complexities of Prosecuting Trafficking in Persons Cases</u>	36
<u>Panel 3: Technology and Trafficking – Trends, Threats, and Opportunities</u>	40
<u>Interactive Dialogue: Survivor Leadership and Inclusive Policy</u>	44
<u>Self-Care Session & Adjourn</u>	47
<u>Key Themes</u>	50
<u>Recommendations</u>	52

<u>Day 3</u>	57
<u>Introduction</u>	58
<u>Panel 4: Children, Climate, and Labour – Tackling Risk Factors in 2025</u>	59
<u>Youth Forum: Youth Voices Against Trafficking</u>	62
<u>Interactive Dialogue: Use of Digital Storytelling, Media, and Arts in Anti- Trafficking Work</u>	63
<u>Self-Care Session & Adjourn</u>	68
<u>Key Themes</u>	69
<u>Recommendations</u>	71
<u>Day 4</u>	74
<u>Introduction</u>	75
<u>Preliminary Research Findings: Caribbean Self-Care Research</u>	76
<u>Increasing Data Collection and Use in Anti- Trafficking Work in the Caribbean</u>	79
<u>Interactive Dialogue: Decent Work and Forced Labour in the Caribbean</u>	82
<u>Case Scenario: Cross-Border Prosecution of TiPs and Reintegration of Survivors</u>	84
<u>Panel 5: What's Next? A Regional Roadmap to 2030</u>	87
<u>Closing: Adoption of Key Takeaways & Next Steps</u>	90
<u>Self-Care Session & Adjourn</u>	95
<u>Key Themes</u>	96
<u>Recommendations</u>	98
<u>Forum Evaluation</u>	102

Executive Summary

Reflections: 25 Years of the Implementation of the Palermo Protocol in the Caribbean Community July 21-24, 2025 (on Zoom)

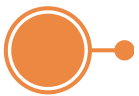
The 2025 Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference, convened by the Caribbean Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons (CCATIP) from July 21-24, 2025, served as a landmark virtual event. It commemorated the 25th anniversary of the UN Palermo Protocol, observed World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, and celebrated CCATIP's first anniversary. The conference gathered a diverse array of stakeholders, including survivor leaders, law enforcement, judicial officials, international organizations, civil society, and youth advocates from across the Caribbean Community.

The conference pursued five core objectives: to assess Caribbean governments' progress in implementing the Palermo Protocol; to share national and regional innovations, challenges, and lessons learned; to evaluate alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 8.7 and 16.2); to facilitate survivor-informed and youth-inclusive approaches across the "4 Ps" (prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership); and to identify strategic priorities for the next 5–10 years in the fight against Trafficking in Persons (TIP) in the Caribbean.



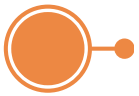
Key Themes and Insights from the Conference:

Across four days of intensive dialogue, critical themes emerged, shaping a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape and future imperatives for anti-trafficking efforts in the Caribbean:



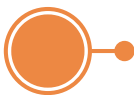
Evolution of the Palermo Protocol and Regional Frameworks

While the Palermo Protocol provides a crucial legal foundation, its limitations in genuinely centering survivor voices and adapting to evolving exploitation were highlighted. Caribbean nations have advanced legislation and task forces, but inconsistencies persist, necessitating greater regional harmonization and a shift from policy checklists to measurable impact on lives.



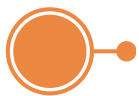
Centrality of Survivor and Youth Leadership

A consistent message emphasized the indispensable role of survivors and young people as agents of change. Panels stressed formalizing their advisory roles, providing direct funding to survivor-led organizations, and integrating their lived experiences into policy, program implementation, and advocacy. Youth were recognized as critical in peer-led education and digital safety campaigns.



Interconnectedness of Trafficking and Broader Vulnerabilities

The conference underscored TIP's deep ties to complex systemic issues like migration dynamics, climate change impacts (leading to displacement and increased child labor vulnerability), economic instability, poverty, gender inequality, disability, and systemic discrimination. Effective responses demand holistic approaches addressing these root causes and intersectional vulnerabilities.



Data as a Pillar of Justice and Accountability

A significant challenge identified was the persistent lack of comprehensive, accurate, and disaggregated data on trafficking, particularly concerning internal exploitation and under-identified vulnerable groups (e.g., men, LGBTQ+ individuals, and Indigenous populations). The critical need for robust, integrated data systems, including trauma-informed audiovisual testimony, was emphasized to enhance investigations, prosecutions, survivor protection, and evidence-based policymaking.



Challenges in Prosecution and the Role of Technology

Panels delved into the multifaceted legal, institutional, and operational complexities of prosecuting TIP cases, including psychological coercion, inconsistent victim testimony due to trauma, and the need for specialized training for law enforcement, prosecutors, judges and judicial officers. Technology was recognized as a dual-edged sword—exploited by traffickers for recruitment and control, yet offering immense potential for disruption, digital forensics, and survivor support tools.



Importance of Decent Work and Labor Market Reforms

The intersection of labour standards, economic vulnerability, and trafficking risks was a key focus. Discussions highlighted that forced labor thrives where legal protections are weak and enforcement is lacking. Promoting decent work, strengthening labor inspectorates, embedding due diligence in supply chains, and engaging the private sector were identified as crucial prevention strategies.



Call for Regional Collaboration and Accountability

The conference concluded with a strong emphasis on deeper regional integration, harmonized legal frameworks, and enhanced cross-border cooperation. Participants called for a unified regional roadmap to 2030, rooted in reliable data, driven by survivor voices, and supported by predictable, long-term funding with robust accountability mechanisms to ensure commitments translate into tangible results.



Well-being of Practitioners

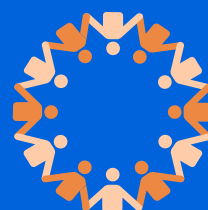
Preliminary research revealed a concerning prevalence of burnout, overwork, and chronic fatigue among anti-trafficking practitioners. A near-universal consensus emerged on the critical need for the movement to prioritize and invest in the mental and physical well-being of its workers to ensure sustainable and effective engagement.



Conclusion

The 2025 Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference served as a powerful catalyst, transforming reflections on 25 years of the Palermo Protocol into a concrete, survivor-centered roadmap for a more just, equitable, and resilient Caribbean Community. The insights and recommendations generated underscore a collective determination to move beyond fragmented responses towards a unified, human rights-based approach that prioritizes prevention, protection, prosecution, and genuine partnership in the fight against human trafficking.

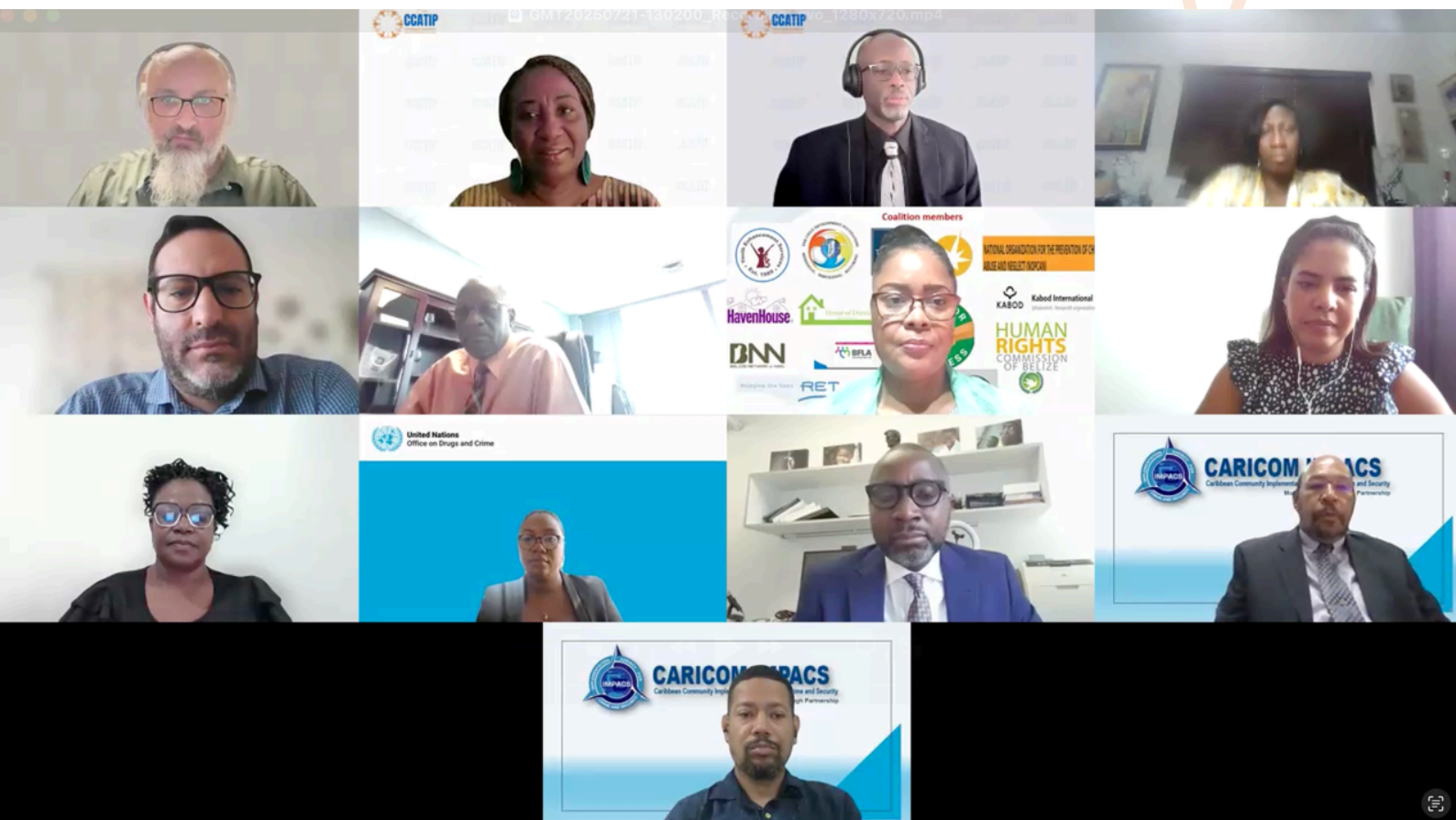
DAY 1 - THE CARIBBEAN ANTI-TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE 2025



Introduction

Day 1 of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference 2025 commenced with a powerful series of sessions designed to set the foundational context for regional anti-trafficking efforts. Marking 25 years since the adoption of the UN Palermo Protocol and celebrating the first anniversary of the Caribbean Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons (CCATIP), the day's discussions focused on historical reflections, the evolution of anti-trafficking frameworks, and the identification of persistent gaps and promising practices across the Caribbean.

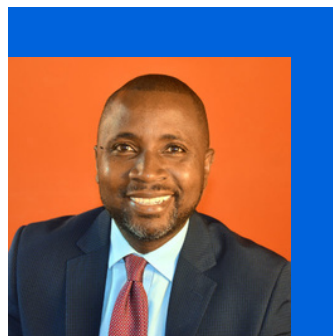
The sessions aimed to assess regional progress in implementing the Palermo Protocol, highlight innovations, evaluate alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and elevate survivor-informed and youth-inclusive strategies across the "4 Ps" framework: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, Day 1 sought to foster open dialogue and lay the groundwork for a forward-looking, coordinated, and survivor-centered approach to combating human trafficking.



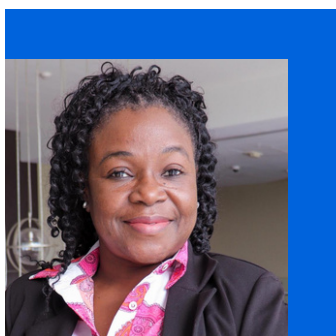
Opening Remarks Summary



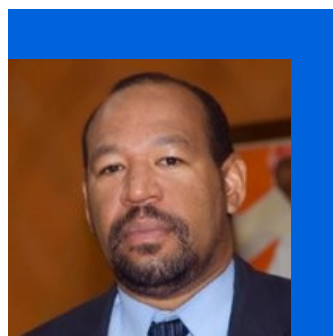
**Diahann Hordon
Harrison, CCATIP**



**Bukeni Waruzi,
Free the Slaves**



**Eraina Yaw, IOM
Caribbean**



**Earl Harris,
CARICOM IMPACS**

The 2025 Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference commenced with a powerful Opening Remarks session featuring four distinguished speakers: Diahann Gordon Harrison, Chair of the Caribbean Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons (CCATIP); Bukeni Waruzi, Executive Director of Free the Slaves; Earl Harris, Assistant Director of Corporate Services at CARICOM IMPACS; and Eraina Yaw, Deputy Sub-Regional Coordinator for the Caribbean at the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Their collective remarks set the tone for a reflective and forward-looking conference, marking 25 years since the adoption of the UN Palermo Protocol and celebrating the first anniversary of CCATIP.

Adrian Alexander, Caribbean Regional Coordinator for Free the Slaves, opened the session, welcoming a wide range of stakeholders from across CARICOM member states, including survivor leaders, law enforcement, civil society, UN agencies, indigenous groups, persons with disabilities, and youth advocates. He emphasized the conference's objective to examine the region's progress in implementing the Palermo Protocol, align efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and elevate survivor-informed and youth-inclusive strategies across the "4 Ps" framework: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership. Adrian underscored that the theme of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons "Human Trafficking is Organized Crime: End the Exploitation" demands coordinated and courageous action across the region.

Diahann Gordon Harrison delivered the first Opening Remarks, grounding her remarks in reflection and gratitude. She acknowledged the tireless efforts of the CCATIP leadership, the Free the Slaves secretariat, and regional stakeholders. Drawing from the Lao Tzu quote “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step,” she observed that 25 years into the anti-trafficking fight, the region continues to make essential strides. Ms. Gordon Harrison urged participants to see this conference as a blueprint for partnership and a platform for scaling up interventions across the Caribbean. She emphasized the significance of the Palermo Protocol as a foundational legal tool and human rights instrument, noting that trafficking is not solely a criminal matter, but a gross violation of human dignity.

Ms. Gordon Harrison outlined the conference’s five core objectives: (1) assess regional implementation of the Palermo Protocol; (2) highlight innovations and lessons learned; (3) evaluate alignment with SDGs 8 and 16; (4) facilitate survivor-informed and youth-inclusive approaches; and (5) identify strategic priorities for the next 5–10 years. She described the conference structure, with Day 1 focused on historical reflections, Day 2 on justice and survivor empowerment, Day 3 on youth engagement, and Day 4 on forward-looking solutions. She closed by calling for “businesslike” and organized action against the business of trafficking, and encouraged open, honest conversations and durable partnerships that will carry the region through the next 25 years and beyond.

Bukeni Waruzi, Executive Director of Free the Slaves, echoed Ms. Gordon Harrison’s reflections and commended the CCATIP leadership. Waruzi provided historical and policy context, reminding participants that the Palermo Protocol, adopted 25 years ago, quickly became the backbone of international efforts to address human trafficking. He celebrated the widespread ratification of the treaty over 170 countries and its contributions to legal, political, and strategic frameworks worldwide. However, Waruzi also noted that the protocol has limitations, particularly in centering survivors’ voices. He emphasized that modern responses to trafficking must go beyond legal frameworks to embrace a survivor-led movement.

While the Protocol’s “3 Ps”, protection, prevention, and prosecution, remain relevant, they must evolve to include survivors not just as beneficiaries but as leaders. He called for revisions or complementary frameworks that elevate survivor leadership in policy development and implementation. Waruzi also addressed the gap between political will and tangible action, pointing out that many national action plans falter due to inadequate funding. He stressed that meaningful anti-trafficking work requires investment, not just intention. While no country or community is immune from trafficking, he said, fragmented approaches and a lack of global unity have hindered progress. The establishment of CCATIP, however, offers hope, an organic, survivor-led, regionally owned initiative that can guide other regions in building resilient and inclusive coalitions. Waruzi also highlighted the importance of the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), passed in the same year as the Palermo Protocol. He concluded by commending the Caribbean’s leadership and reaffirming Free the Slaves’ commitment to regional collaboration.

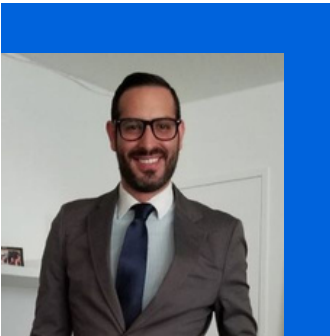
Earl Harris of CARICOM IMPACS followed by acknowledging the progress made since the Coalition's launch one year prior. He recalled the Four Guiding Pillars he shared at the Coalition's inception: Collaboration and Partnership; Prevention and Awareness; Protection and Support for Victims and Survivors; and Leveraging Technology. Harris affirmed that these principles continue to guide CCATIP's development. He praised the advances in national legislation, task forces, and referral systems across CARICOM states and highlighted CARICOM IMPACS's contributions, including the Advanced Passenger Information System and Operation CARISICA. However, he warned of persistent challenges, such as traffickers' use of encrypted digital platforms, low identification rates among vulnerable groups (e.g., boys, LGBTQ+ persons, and persons with disabilities), and the continued scarcity of prosecutions. He emphasized the importance of data for evidence-based policymaking and noted that data gaps remain a significant barrier.

Looking to 2030, Harris outlined CARICOM IMPACS's strategic commitments: improved data sharing, enhanced frontline capacity, deeper collaboration with survivors, and ethical use of digital technologies. He also highlighted the importance of investing in prevention for youth, migrants, and those affected by climate change. Harris concluded with a call to collective responsibility, emphasizing that CCATIP is more than a network; it is the region's shared conscience.

Eraina Yaw, representing the International Organization for Migration (IOM), closed the session by reaffirming the IOM's commitment to safe, orderly, and dignified migration. She emphasized that trafficking in the Caribbean is deeply intertwined with migration dynamics, exacerbated by climate change and economic instability. Yaw shared examples from Trinidad, Guyana, and Suriname, where IOM has partnered with governments and civil society to strengthen identification and protection systems, implement interagency coordination, and advance legal reforms. She stressed that one country cannot tackle trafficking alone, regional crimes require regional solutions.

Yaw praised the conference's focus on SDGs 8.7 and 16.2, emphasizing that trafficking is fundamentally a development and human rights issue. She also lauded the survivor-informed and youth-inclusive lens of the conference, calling for survivors and youth to be leaders, not just contributors in designing and implementing solutions. Yaw concluded with a call to transform 25 years of lessons into a resilient roadmap to 2030, grounded in equity, research, prevention, and sustained survivor support. "Let this week," she said, "be more than a commemoration ... let it be a catalyst."

Keynote: Global and Caribbean Progress Since Palermo: What Have We Learned?



**Mario Cordero,
UNODC**

Mario Cordero Vejar, Programme Officer with the Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), delivered a compelling keynote address at the 2025 Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference. Speaking with both urgency and optimism, Cordero situated the moment as one of deep reflection and renewed commitment, marking the 25th anniversary of the Palermo Protocol and the first anniversary of the Caribbean Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons (CCATIP). He underscored the importance of honoring these milestones not only through remembrance, but through transformative action rooted in dignity, equity, and justice.

Cordero structured his remarks as a six-act story, reflecting on the historical, current, and future trajectories of global and regional anti-trafficking efforts. Act I focused on the global journey since the adoption of the Palermo Protocol in 2000. He described this moment as a global turning point—a time when trafficking in persons, along with arms and drugs, was rapidly crossing borders. The international community recognized that such transnational crimes demanded transnational legal solutions. In Palermo, 147 countries came together to adopt a new convention and three critical protocols, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, now known globally as the Palermo Protocol. This landmark instrument not only provided the first globally agreed-upon definition of trafficking in persons but also established a rights-based foundation for addressing the crime. It marked a profound shift in framing trafficking not merely as a criminal offense, but as a gross violation of human rights. The Protocol introduced what have since become the guiding pillars of anti-trafficking efforts: prevention, protection, and prosecution eventually joined by a fourth pillar, partnerships.

Since its adoption, 181 countries have ratified the Protocol, committing to legal and policy reforms, the creation of national legislation, and the protection of victims and survivors. Importantly, Cordero noted that the role of victims in anti-trafficking systems has evolved. They are no longer viewed solely as sources of evidence, but as rights holders whose dignity must be restored. Survivor protection is increasingly recognized not just as a moral imperative, but as a legal obligation. However, despite these advances, Cordero cautioned that traffickers and trafficking networks have adapted more swiftly than the systems meant to stop them. The emergence of new digital platforms, the misuse of artificial intelligence to create fake jobs or manipulate images, and the rising role of familiar perpetrators such as family members or teachers demand a broader and more nuanced approach to prevention and enforcement.

In Act II, Cordero shifted focus to the Caribbean, acknowledging notable achievements across the region. Nearly all CARICOM countries have enacted legislation aligned with the Palermo Protocol, enabling improved victim identification, law enforcement investigations, and survivor access to justice. Several countries have also established specialized counter-trafficking units, task forces, and national action plans, while regional operations like Operation CARISICA have enhanced cross-border collaboration. Despite these advancements, significant gaps remain. Drawing on the 2024 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, Cordero highlighted several troubling trends: more than 80% of identified victims in the region were trafficked within their own countries, 62% were trafficked for sexual exploitation, and girls made up more than half of all victims.

Detection rates across the Caribbean have declined by at least 32% over the past five years. Other forms of trafficking, such as forced labour particularly in domestic work, agriculture, and fishing are rarely identified or addressed. Vulnerable groups, including boys and LGBTQ+ individuals, are often absent from both data and services, reflecting broader systemic blind spots. Cordero also called attention to emerging forms of trafficking, including forced criminality, drug couriership, gang recruitment, online sexual exploitation, and cyber-enabled scams. He noted a sharp rise in the use of social media apps, encrypted messaging platforms, and even online gaming to recruit and groom youth. These developments, he warned, make trafficking less visible and more difficult to detect using traditional methods. The fact that many victims are trafficked by those they trust further underscores the need for community-based prevention efforts, safe education environments, and trauma-informed law enforcement.

In Act III, Cordero shared key lessons from 25 years of global anti-trafficking work. One of the most critical insights is that trafficking is a rapidly evolving crime. Criminals exploit every available loophole from natural disasters and labor migration to unregulated job platforms and artificial intelligence. Victim identification remains a cornerstone of effective intervention. If survivors are not seen, they cannot be helped. This makes it essential to train frontline responders including healthcare workers, labour inspectors, teachers, and police to recognize the signs of trafficking. Cordero emphasized the centrality of survivor leadership in policy design. He stated clearly that policies developed without the involvement of survivors often fail, while those co-created with survivors tend to be both more humane and more effective. Trafficking, he reminded the audience, is not always transnational or organized it is often local and relational, rooted in betrayal by someone the victim trusted. As such, solutions must address structural vulnerabilities like poverty, gender inequality, limited access to education, and unsafe migration conditions.

Because trafficking is interconnected with other crimes such as money laundering, corruption, and even environmental degradation, addressing it in isolation is insufficient. Financial investigations, Cordero said, have proven successful in disrupting trafficking networks. Following the money is essential to dismantling the business model that underpins exploitation. Stronger data systems are also needed. These must include standardized indicators, shared intelligence dashboards, and survivor-informed metrics to improve decision-making and program design. Additionally, investments in public services especially child protection, education, and healthcare reduce vulnerability and should be central to prevention strategies. Finally, Cordero stressed that no single sector could tackle trafficking alone. Cross-sector partnerships including civil society, government agencies, and the private sector are critical to sustained impact.

Act IV focused on strategic opportunities for the Caribbean over the next five years. First, Cordero urged the region to harness artificial intelligence responsibly to monitor grooming patterns, detect fraudulent job postings, and flag exploitative migration flows. This must be done with transparency and respect for human rights. He also proposed the creation of a Caribbean anti-trafficking data hub supported by CARICOM and UN partners to facilitate intelligence sharing, identify trends, and assess outcomes, not just outputs.

Institutionalizing survivor leadership was another key recommendation. While some progress has been made in establishing survivor advisory roles, Cordero called for deeper integration of survivors into national task forces and the provision of core, long-term funding for survivor-led organizations. He also advocated for a shift in public awareness campaigns. Rather than focusing solely on survivors or potential victims, campaigns must target the demand side those who enable, facilitate, and benefit from exploitation. He called for expansion of campaigns like the Blue Heart initiative to include messaging in airports, schools, taxis, and the media. Finally, he stressed the importance of integrating anti-trafficking efforts into broader crime prevention and development agendas. Anti-gang strategies, migration policies, and anti-corruption programs must include trafficking as a key theme to avoid fragmented responses.

In Act V, Cordero issued a direct call to action. By 2030, he urged, every frontline responder must be trained to detect trafficking, every survivor must have access to comprehensive long-term care, and every trafficker must be held accountable. He called for visible, public commitment such as broadening the reach of the Blue Heart campaign, not just as a symbol of compassion, but as a demand for accountability.

In his final act, Cordero turned to the Caribbean's legacy of resistance, reinvention, and resilience. He called on the region to lead not just with words, but with courageous and coordinated action. The Palermo Protocol, he reminded attendees, was a promise that no person should ever be treated as property, that no woman should be bought, no child sold, and no man broken. He urged that the next 25 years be defined not by commemorations alone, but by measurable reductions in victimization, increases in prosecution, stronger protection systems, and lives restored. The Caribbean, Cordero concluded, has the strength, wisdom, and heart to lead. The time to act united, bold, and unwavering is now.

A person wearing a striped sweater and jeans is standing on a small step ladder, painting the words "STOP TRAFFICKING" in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a dark, textured wall. The person is positioned to the right of the text, with their back to the camera, reaching up to paint the letter 'P' in "STOP". The word "TRAFFICKING" is painted below "STOP". The overall scene is dimly lit, with the white paint providing a strong contrast against the dark background.

**STOP
TRAFFICKING**

Panel 1: The Evolution of Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Frameworks



**Allan Meiguel &
Dane Marie
Marshall,
Trinidad and
Tobago**



**Dr. Warren
Thompson,
Jamaica**



**Jaunna Murrillo-
Palacio, Belize**



**Daniel Griffith,
Guyana**

Moderated by Dr. Jason Haynes, Associate Professor of Law at the University of Birmingham, this dynamic panel brought together national leaders in the Caribbean's anti-trafficking response. The discussion showcased how countries across the region are building systems to prevent trafficking in persons, protect survivors, and prosecute traffickers while acknowledging the persistent gaps and urgent need for coordinated, survivor-centered action.



**Dr. Jason Haynes,
Moderator**

Dr. Haynes opened the session by acknowledging the growing complexity of trafficking in the Caribbean and underscoring the importance of robust national frameworks aligned with international standards. He called for a regional lens grounded in legal accountability, cross-border cooperation, and community engagement.

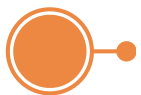
Jaunna Murrillo-Palacio, representing Belize's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council, highlighted the country's efforts to institutionalize cross-sectoral collaboration. Belize has made significant progress in establishing formal mechanisms for coordination between law enforcement, social services, labour, and immigration authorities. She emphasized the importance of training frontline responders particularly police and immigration officers to better identify victims and refer them to support services. Murrillo-Palacio also acknowledged the need to expand shelter capacity and ensure trauma-informed care, particularly for migrant women and girls, who remain disproportionately affected by trafficking. She stressed that while laws and protocols exist, implementation challenges persist. Case management often suffers from limited funding, inconsistent inter-agency communication, and delays in survivor assistance. Still, she expressed optimism, citing improved data collection and increased prosecutions as signs of momentum.

Allan Meiguel and Dane Marie Marshall from Trinidad & Tobago's Counter Trafficking Unit shared a joint overview of national strategies and remaining challenges. The country has established a dedicated task force and has launched targeted awareness campaigns to educate the public about trafficking indicators and reporting mechanisms. Marshall noted that public misconceptions about trafficking remain a barrier to victim identification—many people still associate trafficking exclusively with international smuggling, when in fact most cases involve internal exploitation. Meiguel emphasized the value of community-based training, especially for hospitality workers and labor inspectors, who often encounter trafficking situations in their daily work. The speakers also discussed the role of survivor-informed policy development, noting that while progress has been made, more needs to be done to ensure survivors have leadership roles in national response planning.

Representing Guyana's Inter-Agency Counter-Trafficking in Persons Task Force, Daniel Griffith offered insights into how the country is strengthening cross-border cooperation with neighboring states and enhancing victim protection protocols. Griffith shared that Guyana's national response is built on a framework that includes prevention, prosecution, protection, and partnership the "4Ps" model that has guided anti-trafficking efforts globally. Griffith acknowledged that while legal reforms have improved the framework for victim identification and referral, underreporting remains a significant issue particularly among men, LGBTQ+ individuals, and Indigenous populations. He emphasized the need for culturally sensitive outreach and for reinforcing protection systems that go beyond immediate rescue to include long-term support, livelihood services, and reintegration planning. Griffith also stressed the role of international donors and regional bodies in sustaining anti-trafficking efforts, calling for more predictable and locally directed funding streams.

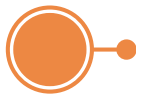
Dr. Warren Thompson, from Jamaica's Child Protection and Family Services Agency, framed trafficking as both a human rights violation and a severe child protection concern. He focused on the vulnerabilities of children in state care, pointing out that traffickers often target youth who are already experiencing trauma, economic insecurity, or family separation. Dr. Thompson called for better oversight in residential care facilities and stronger partnerships between schools, community organizations, and child protection services. He emphasized the need to train educators and youth mentors to recognize grooming behaviors and respond appropriately. He also warned of the growing threat of online exploitation, urging governments to invest in digital safety education and to engage tech companies in the fight against trafficking. Jamaica's evolving strategy, according to Dr. Thompson, includes targeted outreach to boys who remain under-identified as victims and expanding the use of child-friendly interviewing techniques in investigations. He concluded by stressing that prevention must begin early and must be embedded in every level of the education and social service system.

Key Themes and Takeaways



Survivor-Centered Systems

All panelists agreed on the importance of shifting from charity-based to rights-based approaches. Survivors must not only be protected they must be empowered to shape policies and programs.



Domestic Trafficking Dominates

Contrary to public perception, most victims in the Caribbean are trafficked within their own countries. This calls for stronger community-level detection and response strategies.



Training and Awareness

Building the capacity of frontline workers including police, teachers, labor inspectors, and healthcare providers is critical. Without their awareness and confidence to act, victims remain invisible.



Technology and Vulnerability

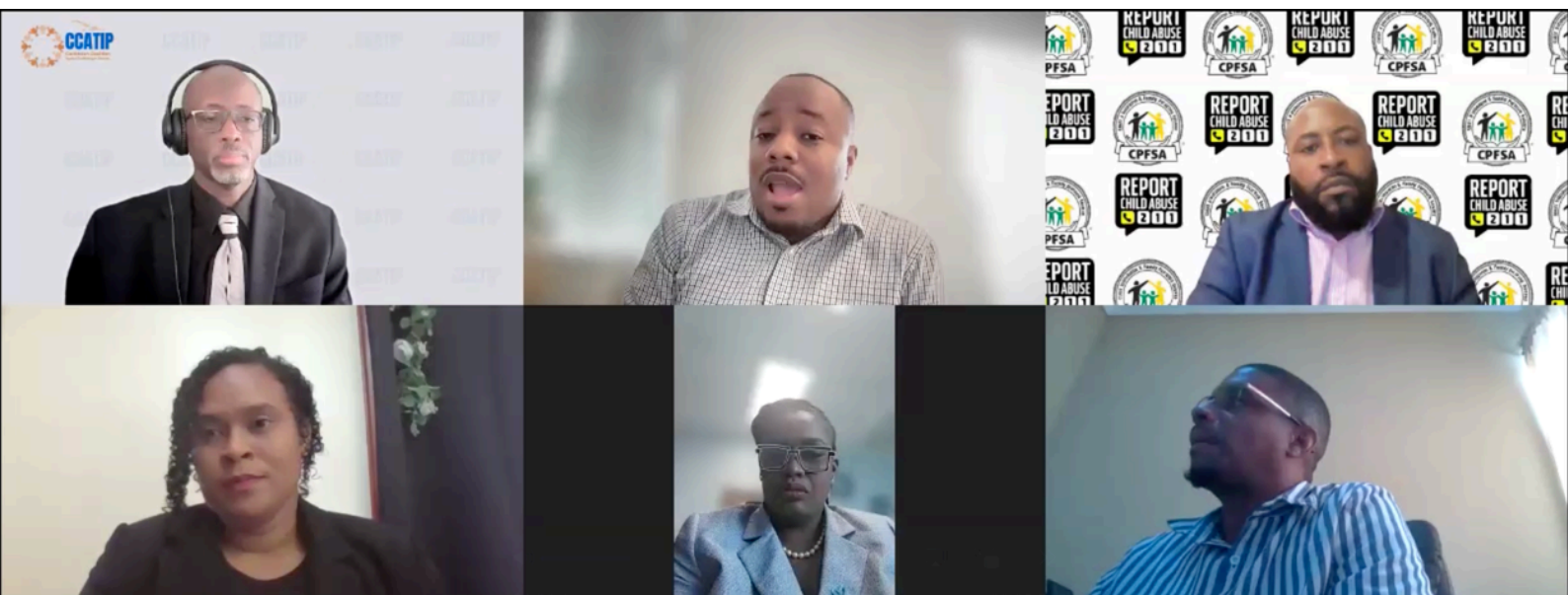
Speakers highlighted the dual role of technology, as both a tool used by traffickers and a potential means for disruption. Governments must strengthen online safety mechanisms and digital literacy, especially for youth.



Funding and Sustainability

While national action plans exist, they often lack sustainable financing. Panelists called for greater investment in survivor services, data systems, and cross-border cooperation.

In closing, Dr. Haynes reflected on the resilience and leadership emerging across the Caribbean. He urged stakeholders to maintain momentum, deepen regional integration, and uphold the Palermo Protocol's core promise: that no one should be treated as property, exploited, or forgotten. The panel's message was clear - progress is happening, but only collective, coordinated, and sustained efforts will turn policies into protection, and commitment into justice.



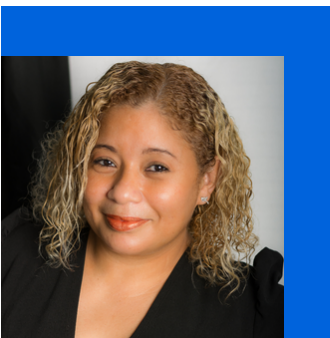
Interactive Dialogue: Regional Gaps and Promising Practices



**Diana Shaw, Belize
CSO Anti-
Trafficking
Coalition**



**Coleen Hedglin,
Beyond Borders**

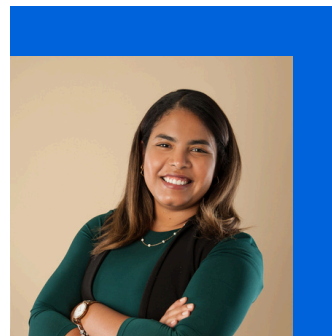


**Andreina Briceno
Ventura Brown, La
Casita**



**Kwasi Cudjoe,
Men Can**

Facilitated by Lissette Reyes, Project Officer for the UNODC's TRACK4TIP Initiative, this interactive session brought together frontline practitioners and community leaders from across the Caribbean. The dialogue focused on persistent gaps in anti-trafficking responses and the promising practices being developed at the grassroots level. The panel showcased survivor-centered approaches, community organizing, and culturally responsive strategies that are reshaping the regional landscape.



**Lissette Reyes,
Moderator**

Opening the session, Lissette Reyes framed the dialogue as an opportunity to bridge regional fragmentation by listening to those directly engaged in the daily work of prevention, protection, and reintegration. She emphasized the importance of lifting local knowledge, lived experience, and collaborative models that center the dignity and leadership of survivors.

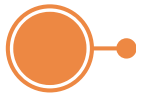
Diana Shaw, representing the Belize-based Civil Society Anti-Trafficking Coalition, underscored the essential role of civil society in closing service gaps, holding governments accountable, and reaching victims often overlooked by formal systems. She emphasized that grassroots coalitions are not merely support services; they are critical infrastructure in the fight against trafficking. Shaw noted that collaboration across sectors including faith-based organizations, legal advocates, and community health workers has strengthened victim outreach and referrals. However, she also highlighted key challenges, such as limited financial support for survivor-led initiatives and the tendency to sideline civil society voices in national decision-making. She called for more transparent funding streams and permanent inclusion of survivor advocates in policymaking bodies.

Andreina Briceno Ventura Brown, of La Casita Hispanic Cultural Centre in Trinidad and Tobago, shared insights from her organization's work supporting migrant and refugee women who have experienced trafficking or gender-based violence. She emphasized the need to understand trafficking through a trauma-informed and intersectional lens recognizing the compounded vulnerabilities faced by women due to migration status, language barriers, economic exclusion, and xenophobia. Ventura Brown stressed that for many survivors, legal remedies and official shelters remain inaccessible or retraumatizing. In contrast, community-based, culturally sensitive support networks have proven far more effective in fostering healing and resilience. La Casita's work includes safe spaces, psychosocial care, and rights education all designed collaboratively with survivors themselves. She emphasized that sustainable change requires shifting power and resources toward local, women-led organizations.

Coleen Hedglin, from Beyond Borders in Haiti, brought attention to the intersection of trafficking, displacement, and structural violence in humanitarian settings. She described how, in the aftermath of natural disasters or political crises, families are often forced into desperate circumstances leaving children and adolescents particularly vulnerable to exploitation, including domestic servitude and sexual trafficking. Hedglin emphasized that survivors must be more than "beneficiaries" of aid; they must be at the center of recovery planning. Beyond Borders has worked with local communities to create "Circles of Protection," where women and youth are trained as peer advocates and where survivors co-design prevention programming. She called for international actors to partner with, rather than bypass local civil society when delivering aid and shaping recovery agendas.

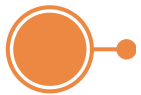
Kwasi Cudjoe, founder of Men Can in Trinidad & Tobago, challenged the perception that anti-trafficking work is only the responsibility of law enforcement, women's organizations, or service providers. He argued that dismantling the systems that enable trafficking—especially sexual exploitation—requires a cultural transformation in how men are socialized and held accountable. Men Can works with young men and boys through mentorship, media campaigns, and community dialogues that promote healthy masculinities and challenge norms that condone control, coercion, or exploitation. Cudjoe pointed out that demand reduction is often the missing pillar in anti-trafficking strategies and urged the regional movement to more explicitly target the attitudes and behaviors that fuel exploitation. “Until we address the demand,” he said, “we’re treating symptoms, not root causes.”

Shared Challenges and Transformative Possibilities



Survivor Leadership Is Essential

Across the board, panelists emphasized that sustainable, ethical anti-trafficking efforts must be led by survivors and those most affected. Inclusion must move beyond consultation to real power-sharing.



Civil Society Fills Critical Gaps

Local organizations, especially those led by women, migrants, and community members, are often first responders. Yet, they face chronic underfunding and limited access to formal policymaking spaces.



Cultural Sensitivity and Language Access Matter

Support services must reflect the linguistic, cultural, and social realities of diverse populations including Creole- and Spanish-speaking migrants, LGBTQ+ individuals, and youth.



Intersectionality Cannot Be Ignored

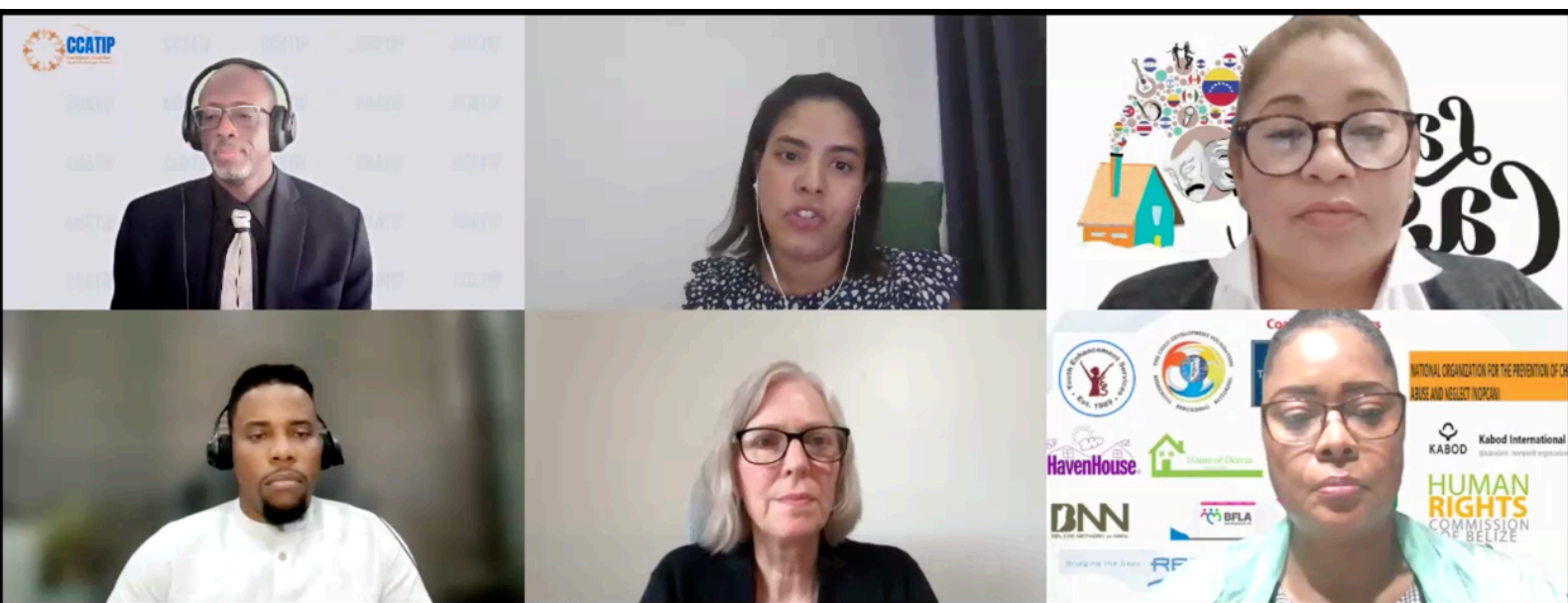
Trafficking does not happen in a vacuum—it is fueled by poverty, racism, gender inequality, migration insecurity, and colonial legacies. Effective responses must address these root causes.



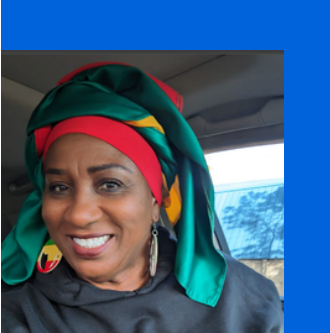
Men Must Be Part of the Solution

Preventing trafficking also means transforming harmful gender norms and engaging men and boys as allies in the movement to end exploitation.

In concluding the dialogue, Lissette Reyes reiterated the need for regional responses that prioritize equity, transparency, and authentic partnership. She emphasized that combating trafficking requires more than criminal justice, it requires investing in the people and organizations at the grassroots level.



Self-Care Session & Adjourn



Sandra Christie Brown, Finding Your Light Foundation, Inc.

In keeping with the focus of the CCATIP on self-care and the Conference being convened in the closing days of International Self-Care Month, Sandra Christie Brown, founder of Finding Your Light Foundation, a survivor leader and member of the Coalition's Leadership Committee, led participants through a grounding and uplifting self-care session with stretches and diaphragmatic breathing.

Sandra shared the ABCs of Self-Care – Awareness (tuning in to ourselves to recognize signs of stress and our body's physical and emotional needs), Balance (create a balance between work and other aspects of life, such as rest, play, and social activities), and Connection (engaging in social activities and building and maintaining meaningful connections with other persons).

GMT20250721-130200_Recording_gvo_1280x720.mp4



**FINDING
YOUR LIGHT
FOUNDATION**



Key Themes

Throughout Day 1 of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference, several cross-cutting themes emerged, highlighting the foundational challenges and strategic imperatives for the region:



Palermo Protocol as a Foundation, Not a Ceiling

While the Palermo Protocol has been instrumental in establishing legal frameworks and a global definition of trafficking, discussions emphasized its limitations, particularly in centering survivor voices. There was a strong call for evolving beyond its initial scope to embrace survivor-led movements and address emerging forms of exploitation.



The Critical Role of Survivor Leadership

A consistent and powerful theme was the necessity of integrating survivors not just as beneficiaries or witnesses, but as leaders and co-creators of anti-trafficking policies and programs. This includes formalizing their roles in national task forces and providing direct, sustained funding to survivor-led organizations.



Interconnectedness of Trafficking and Broader Challenges

Speakers repeatedly highlighted how trafficking is deeply intertwined with other complex issues such as migration dynamics, climate change, economic instability, poverty, gender inequality, and systemic discrimination. Effective responses must adopt holistic approaches that address these root causes.



Data Gaps and the Need for Evidence-Based Policy

A significant barrier identified was the lack of robust, disaggregated data on trafficking, particularly concerning vulnerable groups (e.g., boys, LGBTQ+ persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous populations) and internal exploitation. Improved data collection, financial investigations, and judicial analytics were emphasized as crucial for evidence-based policymaking and targeted interventions.



Capacity Building for Frontline Responders

There was a clear call for enhanced training for law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and other frontline workers (e.g., teachers, healthcare providers, labor inspectors) to improve victim identification, understand the psychology of coercion, and respond with trauma-informed approaches.



The Evolving Digital Threat

Traffickers' increasing use of encrypted platforms, social media, and online gaming for recruitment and exploitation was a major concern. This necessitates strengthening digital forensics capacity, updating cybercrime legislation, and investing in digital safety education, especially for youth.



Importance of Local Ownership and Civil Society

Grassroots and community-based organizations, particularly those led by women and marginalized groups, were recognized as critical first responders and essential partners in closing service gaps and providing culturally sensitive support. There was a strong call for transparent funding streams and greater inclusion of civil society in national decision-making.



Regional Solutions for Regional Crimes

The transnational nature of trafficking, exacerbated by migration dynamics, underscores the need for stronger cross-border cooperation, intelligence sharing, and coordinated responses among CARICOM states.



Shifting Focus to Demand Reduction

Engaging men and boys as allies and challenging harmful gender norms that fuel exploitation was highlighted as crucial, emphasizing that addressing the demand side is a missing pillar in many anti-trafficking strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions and insights shared during Day 1 of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference, the following recommendations are put forth for consideration by various stakeholders:

For Governments and Policymakers



Prioritize Survivor Leadership

Formalize mechanisms for survivor consultation and feedback, establishing funded survivor advisory roles in national task forces and policy development processes.



Invest in Comprehensive Data Systems

Develop and implement robust, disaggregated data collection systems on trafficking, including victim demographics (gender, age, ethnicity, disability, nationality), forms of exploitation (including forced labor and forced criminality), and prosecution outcomes, to inform evidence-based policy.



Strengthen Legal Frameworks

Ensure national legislation is updated to address emerging forms of trafficking, particularly cyber-enabled exploitation, and aligns with international human rights standards.



Allocate Sustainable Funding

Provide adequate and predictable financial resources for national action plans, victim protection services, and survivor-led organizations, moving beyond donor-dependent cycles.



Integrate Anti-Trafficking into Broader Agendas

Embed anti-trafficking efforts within national strategies for crime prevention, migration management, climate change adaptation, and economic development.



Address Root Causes

Develop policies that tackle structural vulnerabilities such as poverty, gender inequality, limited access to education, and unsafe migration conditions that fuel trafficking.

For Law Enforcement and Judiciary



Enhance Training and Capacity

Provide specialized, trauma-informed training for police, prosecutors, judges and judicial officers on identifying victims, understanding coercion, and handling complex trafficking cases, including those involving digital evidence.



Improve Victim Identification

Implement strategies to improve identification rates among under-identified vulnerable groups, including boys, LGBTQ+ individuals, and Indigenous populations, through culturally sensitive outreach.



Strengthen Cross-Border Cooperation

Foster seamless intelligence sharing and coordinated operations with neighboring states and regional bodies like CARICOM IMPACS to disrupt transnational trafficking networks.

For Civil Society and Survivor-Led Organizations



Advocate for Power-Sharing

Continue to advocate for genuine power-sharing in anti-trafficking policy and programming, ensuring that survivor voices are not tokenized but are central to decision-making.



Build Community-Based Networks

Strengthen grassroots coalitions and community-based support networks that provide culturally sensitive, trauma-informed assistance to victims and survivors, especially those overlooked by formal systems.



Leverage Innovation

Explore and utilize innovative approaches, including digital tools and creative arts, for awareness campaigns, victim outreach, and advocacy, ensuring survivor autonomy in these processes.



Seek Diverse Funding

Diversify funding sources and advocate for more flexible, direct funding streams to support local and survivor-led initiatives.

For International Organizations and Donors



Support Survivor-Led Initiatives

Prioritize and provide direct, flexible, and long-term funding to survivor-led organizations, recognizing their unique expertise and critical role.



Promote Regional Solutions

Invest in regional initiatives that foster cross-border cooperation, data sharing, and coordinated responses to trafficking.



Strengthen Capacity Building

Provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to national governments and civil society organizations to enhance their anti-trafficking frameworks and operational capabilities.



Ensure Accountability

Implement robust accountability mechanisms to ensure that funding translates into tangible results and that partners genuinely integrate survivor participation and gender equality principles.

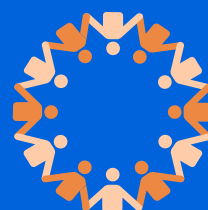


Advocate for Demand Reduction

Support campaigns and initiatives that explicitly target the demand side of trafficking, challenging the attitudes and behaviors that fuel exploitation.



DAY 2 - THE CARIBBEAN ANTI-TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE 2025



Introduction

Chaired by representatives of the Belize-based Civil Society Anti-Trafficking Coalition, Day 2 of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference 2025 convened a diverse array of experts, practitioners, and survivor leaders to delve into the multifaceted dimensions of human trafficking in the region. Building on the foundational discussions of Day 1, this session focused on three critical areas: the complexities inherent in prosecuting trafficking in persons (TIP) cases, the evolving intersection of technology and trafficking, and the indispensable role of survivor leadership in shaping effective and inclusive anti-trafficking policies.

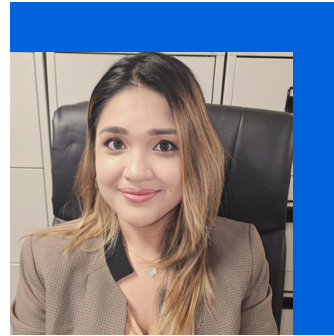
The conference aimed to foster knowledge exchange, stimulate dialogue, and identify actionable strategies to strengthen regional responses to human trafficking. By bringing together perspectives from law enforcement, the judiciary, international organizations, civil society, and those with lived experience, Day 2 sought to illuminate persistent challenges and highlight opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and survivor-centered approaches in the fight against TIP.



Panel 2: Complexities of Prosecuting Trafficking in Persons Cases



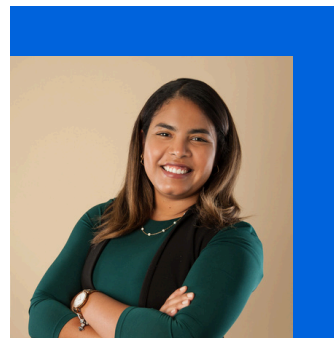
Justice Antoinette Moore, Belize



Vidya Mangalram, Guyana

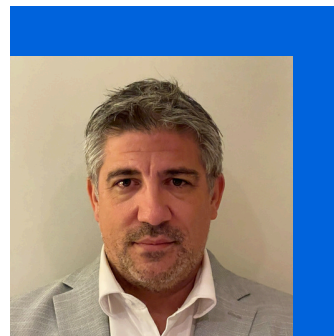


CTU Directorate, Trinidad & Tobago



Lissette Reyes, UNODC

This session explored the multifaceted legal, institutional, and operational challenges involved in prosecuting trafficking in persons (TIP) cases across the Caribbean. Moderated by Marko Magdic, Organized Crime Specialist and Project Director at the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), the panel brought together law enforcement, judicial, and international perspectives to examine how TIP cases are currently managed and where critical gaps remain.



Marko Magdic, Moderator

Panelists included WSgt. Vidya Mangalram, Police Prosecutor from Guyana; Mr. Allan Meiguel and Ms. Dane Marie Marshall of the Counter Trafficking Unit in Trinidad and Tobago; Hon. Madam Justice Antoinette Moore of Belize; and Lissette Reyes Segura from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Moderator Marko Magdic framed the discussion by acknowledging that TIP cases are often among the most difficult to prosecute successfully. He pointed to the need for multi-sectoral coordination and trauma-informed approaches, emphasizing that convictions are rare, not necessarily because of lack of effort, but due to structural, evidentiary, and capacity challenges throughout the system.

WSgt. Vidya Mangalram opened by highlighting Guyana's approach to prosecuting TIP cases. While recent legislation has improved the legal foundation for pursuing traffickers, she explained that frontline police often struggle with recognizing the full scope of coercion involved in trafficking. Prosecutors must rely heavily on victim testimony, which is often inconsistent due to trauma, fear, or distrust. Further, victims may be unwilling to testify due to stigma or community pressure. These factors contribute to a high attrition rate between investigation and prosecution.

Allan Meiguel and Dane Marie Marshall shared lessons from Trinidad and Tobago's Counter Trafficking Unit. They echoed concerns about the dependence on victim testimony, noting that without corroborating evidence or a willing survivor, prosecutions can collapse. However, they also described promising developments, including efforts to increase inter-agency coordination and the use of intelligence-led investigations. One of the recurring themes in their presentation was the difficulty of proving "means" under the Palermo Protocol definition of TIP particularly psychological coercion or abuse of vulnerability. They noted that victims often do not perceive themselves as such, or their accounts are framed by a survival mindset that law enforcement may misinterpret. The team also described situations where traffickers use cultural and emotional manipulation rather than overt violence, further complicating the prosecutorial process and demanding more comprehensive training for police officers, prosecutors, and judges.

Lissette Reyes Segura from UNODC spoke about a Regional TiPs Guide on improving criminal prosecutions – a new tool that UNODC has developed in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank and in coordination with some Member States in the Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname and Belize), CARICOM IMPACS and Latin American stakeholders to improve the prosecution of trafficking in persons cases in Latin America and the Caribbean.

She emphasized the importance of aligning national laws with the Palermo Protocol and the use of a human rights-based approach in prosecution. Reyes Segura stressed that the decline in global TIP convictions reflects not only underreporting but also systemic issues such as poor victim identification, insufficient trauma-informed procedures, and the lack of specialized prosecutors. She advocated for more survivor-centered trials and the integration of digital evidence to supplement or substitute for live testimony where appropriate. She also flagged the underutilization of financial investigations in TIP prosecutions, noting that "follow the money" approaches can provide powerful corroborative evidence and reduce dependency on survivor participation.

A most compelling contribution came from Hon. Madam Justice Antoinette Moore of Belize, who provided a judicial lens on the complexities of TIP prosecutions. Her remarks were grounded in years of courtroom experience and a clear commitment to human rights. Justice Moore asserted that trafficking is a unique and particularly insidious crime, involving not just physical control but psychological domination, deception, and exploitation of economic and social vulnerabilities. As such, she argued that the judicial system must not simply process cases but actively protect the dignity and safety of survivors. She noted that while Belize has made strides in TIP legislation, challenges persist in judicial interpretation, case backlogs, and the provision of survivor protection during trials. In particular, she emphasized the problem of re-traumatization when survivors are subjected to traditional cross-examination methods. "We cannot expect justice if we are re-inflicting harm on those who come forward," she stated. To address this, she advocated for the broader use of pre-recorded testimonies, trauma-informed courtroom procedures, and alternative evidentiary standards where permissible.

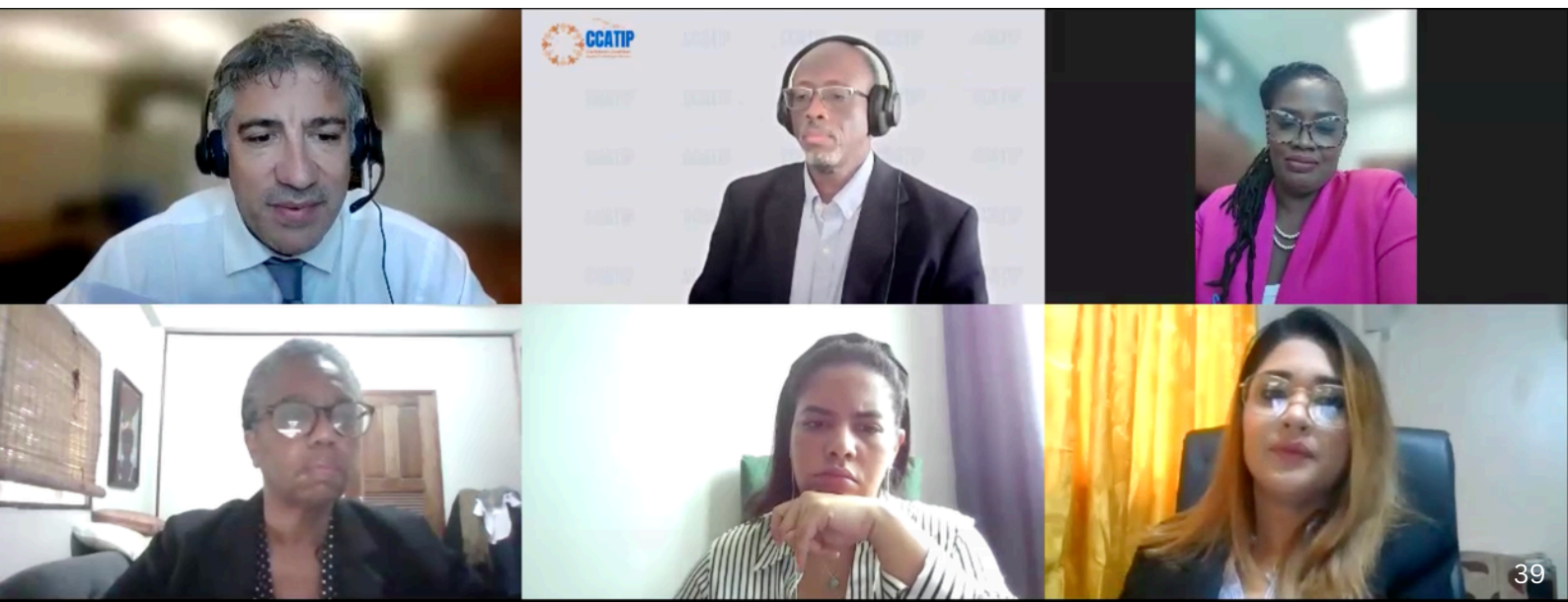
Justice Moore also spoke candidly about the need for judicial education, pointing out that TIP cases are often misunderstood or trivialized in the courtroom, especially when the victim does not present as visibly distressed or when the exploitation is not accompanied by overt violence. "Judges need to understand the psychology of coercion," she said, noting that subtle forms of control such as debt bondage, threats against family, or emotional manipulation must be recognized as valid indicators of trafficking. Another key point she raised was the importance of data. Without robust, disaggregated data on TIP prosecutions, it is difficult to assess patterns, identify bottlenecks, or design appropriate interventions. She called on governments and regional bodies to invest in case tracking and judicial analytics. Justice Moore closed her remarks with a passionate appeal to treat survivors not merely as witnesses but as rights holders. "Justice is not a transaction," she said, "It is a transformation that begins when we see survivors not as broken, but as brave."

The panel underscored that successful prosecution of TIP cases in the Caribbean requires far more than legal frameworks. It demands coordinated interagency action, robust victim protection mechanisms, judicial sensitivity, and specialized investigative techniques.

Key Recommendations

-  **Invest in consistent training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges on the evolving tactics of traffickers and the trauma responses of survivors.**
-  **Reduce reliance on survivor testimony by leveraging financial investigations, forensic evidence, and digital tools.**
-  **Institutionalize trauma-informed courtroom practices to prevent retraumatization.**
-  **Improve survivor access to legal counsel, social services, and long-term protection before, during, and after prosecution.**
-  **Collect and analyze disaggregated judicial data to inform policy and resource allocation.**

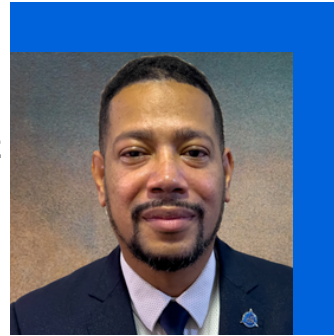
The session concluded with a powerful sense of shared responsibility. As Justice Moore noted, "It is not enough to know the law. We must apply it with courage, compassion, and clarity."



Panel 3: Technology and Trafficking - Trends, Threats, and Opportunities



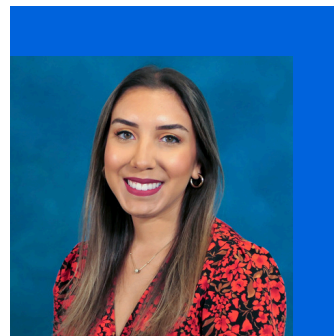
Maria de Gutiérrez Ortiz Monasterio, UNODC



Dale Joseph, CARICOM IMPACS



Chris Reckord, Jamaica



Carole Botello, Moderator

This session explored the evolving intersection of technology and human trafficking, focusing on emerging digital threats, regional vulnerabilities, and innovative strategies for prevention and prosecution. Moderated by Carole Botello, Senior Program Officer at the American Bar Association's Center for Global Programs, the panel featured expert insights from Maria De Gutierrez Ortiz Monasterio (UNODC), Dale Joseph (CARICOM IMPACS), and Christopher Reckord (IT Specialist, Jamaica). Together, the panelists provided a nuanced and urgent analysis of how technology both facilitates and combats trafficking in persons (TIP).

Carole Botello set the stage by acknowledging the dual-edged nature of technology in the context of trafficking. While traffickers are leveraging digital platforms to expand recruitment, control, and exploitation, the same technologies also offer unprecedented opportunities to disrupt trafficking networks and support victims. Botello emphasized the need for increased collaboration across sectors - government, civil society, law enforcement, and tech industries to build adaptive and human-centered responses.

Maria De Gutierrez Ortiz Monasterio offered a sweeping overview of how traffickers exploit the internet and emerging technologies to their advantage. She shared findings from the UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, which show a significant rise in cyber-enabled trafficking since the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdowns accelerated traffickers' shift online, where recruitment through social media, online job platforms, and gaming applications has proliferated. Maria underscored that traffickers often exploit vulnerabilities in cyberspace, including encrypted communication, digital anonymity, and the absence of robust content moderation on platforms. These conditions allow recruiters to groom and manipulate victims especially children and adolescents at alarming rates. She stressed that this trend is not unique to high-income countries; Caribbean and Latin American countries are seeing similar increases in online-facilitated exploitation. UNODC is currently working on multiple fronts to counter these developments, including developing capacity-building tools and training for investigators and prosecutors, promoting public-private partnerships with tech platforms, and supporting regional networks to share data and best practices. Maria concluded by urging Caribbean governments to adopt proactive, technology-informed counter-trafficking strategies and emphasized the need for national legislation that addresses the use of digital technologies in TIP crimes.

Dale Joseph brought a security and intelligence perspective to the discussion. As the Chief Analyst of Cyber Intelligence at CARICOM IMPACS, he highlighted the region's structural vulnerabilities in addressing cyber-enabled trafficking. According to Joseph, many Caribbean law enforcement agencies still lack the digital forensics capacity to investigate and prosecute online trafficking cases effectively. He outlined three core challenges: 1) Limited cybercrime legislation in some member states, which hampers evidence collection and international cooperation; 2) Low technical capacity among police units to track digital footprints, analyze metadata, or retrieve evidence from social media platforms; and 3) Inadequate inter-agency collaboration, particularly between immigration, police, and customs. Despite these gaps, Joseph also pointed to encouraging developments, such as region-wide efforts to standardize cybersecurity frameworks and integrate trafficking-specific indicators into cybercrime monitoring systems. He highlighted CARICOM IMPACS' initiatives to strengthen national capacities through digital training and transnational intelligence sharing. Joseph advocated for a regionally coordinated data hub to facilitate real-time threat tracking and emphasized that addressing cyber-facilitated trafficking requires not only technical tools, but also political will and sustainable investment.



Christopher Reckord provided a tech-sector lens on TIP, sharing how IT tools can—and should—be harnessed to support prevention, early detection, and survivor support. He began by underscoring the need to change the prevailing narrative around technology as solely a threat. “Technology is neutral,” Reckord stated. “It’s how we use it that defines its impact.” Reckord presented several concrete use cases: AI-powered chatbots that allow potential victims to safely report abuse or suspicious job offers; image recognition software to identify missing persons or known trafficking situations; and blockchain technology to improve labor rights transparency and contract verification. He also addressed the privacy concerns and ethical implications of digital surveillance, stressing the need for safeguards to ensure that tools used for protection do not infringe on the rights of users or inadvertently expose victims. Reckord called for more local innovation encouraging Caribbean tech entrepreneurs to develop context-specific digital tools for trafficking detection and victim assistance. He proposed partnerships with universities, civil society groups, and survivor networks to co-design technology that is trauma-informed and community-centered.

Key Themes



The digital landscape is now the primary frontier

Both for trafficking and anti-trafficking work. Online recruitment, exploitation, and grooming are outpacing existing legal and investigative frameworks.



Capacity building is critical

Caribbean states need urgent investment in cybercrime units, digital forensics labs, and multi-agency coordination mechanisms.



Technology can be a powerful ally

With responsible use and ethical oversight, tools like AI, machine learning, and big data can support detection, victim outreach, and prosecution.



Survivor-centered design must be prioritized

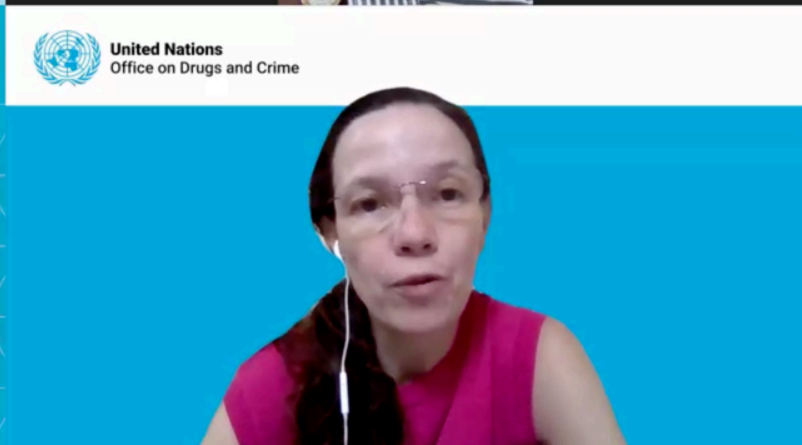
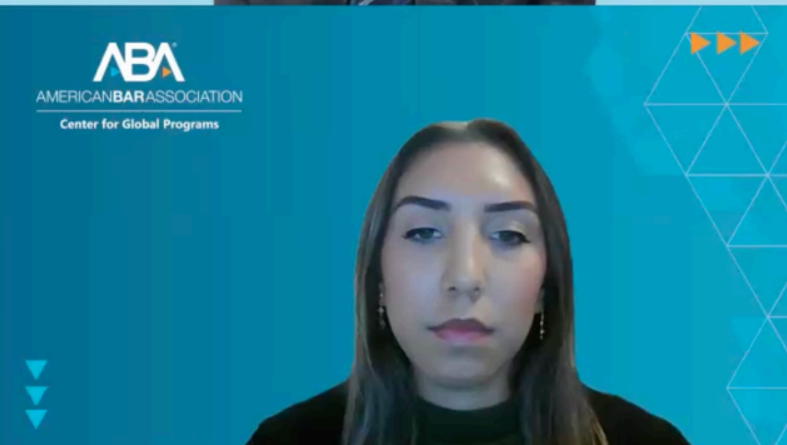
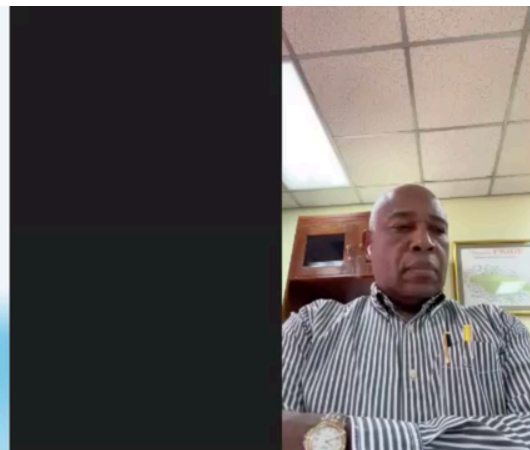
Tools should be accessible, confidential, and created with the input of those most affected.



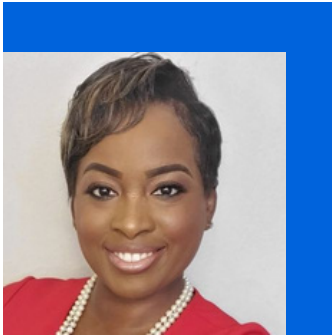
Public-private collaboration is essential

Social media platforms, job boards, and Fintech companies have an obligation to participate in the fight against TIP.

Moderator Carole Botello closed the session by emphasizing that the future of anti-trafficking efforts in the Caribbean must be digital, collaborative, and grounded in human rights. While the risks posed by technological misuse are real and growing, so too is the region's opportunity to innovate, adapt, and lead. She encouraged all stakeholders, governments, CSOs, tech companies, and youth leaders to invest in solutions that are as dynamic as the threats they seek to confront. In her words, "Let us not be passive observers of technological change, but intentional architects of a safer digital space for all."



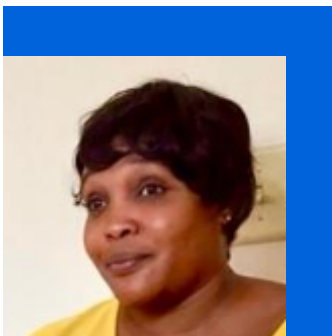
Interactive Dialogue: Survivor Leadership and Inclusive Policy



**Shamere
McKenzie,
Caribbean
Survivor Network**



**Ken Ramdhan,
Families in Action**

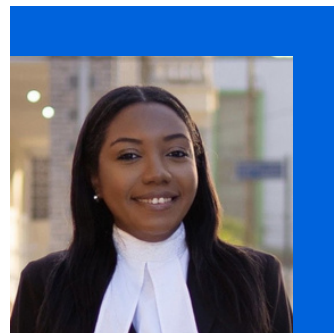


**Stephania Fanfan,,
Beyond Borders**



**Coleen Hedglin,
Beyond Borders**

This session, facilitated by Sharifa Ammon, UN Volunteer and Program Support Officer at UNODC's Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section (HTMSS), explored the vital intersection of survivor leadership and inclusive policy development. Through a dynamic and heartfelt conversation, participants illuminated the transformative role that survivors of trafficking play in shaping policies, services, and advocacy strategies across the Caribbean.



**Sharifa Ammon,
Moderator**

Ken Ramdhan, Project Lead with Families In Action in Trinidad and Tobago, opened the dialogue by stressing the importance of adopting a person-centered approach in anti-trafficking work. He explained that policies must be informed not only by technical experts and government officials but also by the lived experiences of survivors themselves. Ken emphasized that inclusive policy is not merely about inviting survivors to the table. It is about actively listening, respecting their expertise, and resourcing their leadership meaningfully. Survivors should not be tokenized; they should be partners in co-creating solutions.

Stephania Fanfan, speaking through interpreter Coleen Hedglin of Beyond Borders, Haiti, shared moving reflections drawn from her lived experience and advocacy. She emphasized the need to create space for survivors to reclaim their voices in systems that often silence or sideline them. Stephania described the harmful impact of policies developed without survivor consultation. Too often, she noted, interventions are designed based on assumptions rather than genuine understanding, which can lead to further retraumatization or exclusion. Stephania called for governments and civil society organizations to invest in capacity-building programs that support survivor leaders in their healing and professional development. She described the importance of long-term psychosocial support, trauma-informed training, and leadership pathways that allow survivors to grow into advisory, advocacy, and organizational roles. She also highlighted the urgent need for services to be linguistically and culturally appropriate, especially in communities like Haiti, where language barriers can compound isolation. Coleen Hedglin, interpreting and amplifying Stephania's insights while also offering her own reflections, reinforced that survivors should not be asked to share their stories only for emotional impact. Instead, they should be included at every stage of policy and program design, from needs assessments to implementation and monitoring. She explained how Beyond Borders has developed approaches that uplift the dignity and agency of survivors, including peer mentorship models and participatory advocacy campaigns.

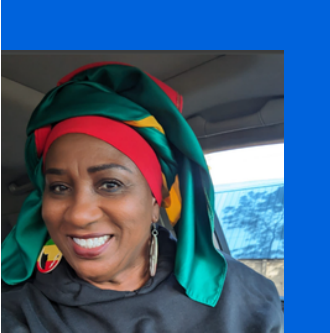
Shamere McKenzie, Founder of the Caribbean Survivor Network, expanded on this theme with clarity and conviction. She noted that survivor leadership is not a matter of optics, it is a matter of justice. Shamere highlighted the gaps in current Caribbean policy frameworks, where survivors are still too often excluded from strategic decision-making processes. She explained that while many governments express support for victim protection, few have formal mechanisms in place for survivor consultation or feedback. Shamere shared how the Caribbean Survivor Network is working to change that, building platforms that connect survivors across the region and provide a collective voice in national and regional forums. She stressed the importance of providing survivors with access to education, economic opportunities, and leadership training not as an afterthought, but as a core element of anti-trafficking responses. She also raised the issue of legal reform, noting that some laws still stigmatize or criminalize trafficking survivors, particularly in cases involving sex work or irregular migration. This, she said, must change.

The discussion moved into questions of accountability and sustainability. All speakers agreed that inclusive policy requires sustained political will and financial investment. It cannot rely solely on donor cycles or symbolic gestures. Stephania (via Coleen) emphasized that many survivor leaders in Haiti and elsewhere are doing the work with minimal support, often retraumatizing themselves in the process. She called for mental health services and peer support networks to be integrated into all survivor engagement initiatives. The panel also reflected on the intersectionality of survivor experiences. Shamere pointed out that not all survivors face the same barriers. Factors such as gender identity, socioeconomic status, nationality, and disability can shape access to services and leadership opportunities. Stephania echoed this, noting the need for policies that address these diverse realities with nuance and care.

As the session ended, facilitator Sharifa Ammon invited the speakers to offer one final message. Ken urged stakeholders across the region to “build with, not for” survivors. Shamere called on governments to formalize survivor advisory roles in national task forces and to fund survivor-led organizations directly. Stephania, through Coleen, left participants with a simple but powerful reminder: “Survivors are not broken. We are resilient. We are ready. But we need you to stand with us, not speak for us.” The session was a poignant and energizing reminder that policies designed without survivors are incomplete and that inclusive policy is not only possible but essential. By centering survivor voices, Caribbean countries can build anti-trafficking systems that are more just, more effective, and more humane.



Self-Care Session & Adjourn



Sandra Christie Brown, Finding Your Light Foundation, Inc.

As the second day of the conference ended, Sandra Christie Brown, founder of Finding Your Light Foundation and a survivor leader, once again led participants through a grounding and uplifting self-care session. Her warm energy, heartfelt affirmations, and trauma-informed wisdom created a safe, communal space for reflection and renewal, reminding participants that care for others begins with care for self.

Sandra began by celebrating the speakers and participants, recognizing their strength, vulnerability, and dedication. She gave a special acknowledgment to fellow survivor leaders like Shamere McKenzie and Stephanie Fanfan, emphasizing the importance of survivor voices being both heard and celebrated. With gratitude and encouragement, she invited everyone to stand, stretch, and move - a gentle ritual that, as in the previous session, helped participants transition from a long day of emotional engagement to a more embodied awareness of the present moment.

She then guided attendees through a breathing exercise, encouraging deep inhalation through the nose, a moment of holding that breath, and then a slow exhale through the mouth. This exercise, she explained, was a way to release the intensity of the day, recenter, and share in a collective sense of calm. With warmth and levity, she “sent love across the virtual world,” reminding everyone that even in a digital space, we can nurture connection.

Building on the previous day’s ABCs of self-care Awareness, Balance, and Connection, Sandra introduced a more expansive model: the Seven Pillars of Self-Care. These pillars, she explained, represent interconnected aspects of well-being. When tended to intentionally, they help create a more balanced, sustainable, and fulfilling life.

The first pillar was **Mental Self-Care**, which Sandra described as the practice of nurturing the mind through mindfulness, learning, and presence. She encouraged participants to slow down, silence external worries, and stay anchored in the current moment. Being present, she said, is a powerful way to reset and to reclaim mental clarity.

The second pillar, **Emotional Self-Care**, focused on understanding, expressing, and managing emotions. Sandra emphasized self-compassion - being gentle with oneself, especially when things don't go as planned. She reminded participants that the first step in showing empathy to others is offering it to oneself.

Next was **Physical Self-Care**, which involves maintaining the body through hydration, nutrition, movement, and rest. Sandra shared a personal anecdote about visiting her massage therapist, who gently reminded her that she was dehydrated, despite carrying a motivational water bottle. That experience underscored her point: we must do more than intend to take care of ourselves; we must follow through. She urged everyone to aim for at least seven hours of sleep per night and to find joy in physical movement, whether through walking, dancing, or stretching.

The fourth pillar, **Environmental Self-Care**, was a call to declutter and create peaceful, organized spaces. Sandra noted that our physical surroundings can either support or undermine our sense of calm. Especially for those working from home, an untidy or chaotic workspace can increase stress and limit focus. Taking time to refresh one's environment, clearing off a desk or rearranging a room, can be a powerful act of care.

The fifth was **Spiritual Self-Care**, which she framed as nurturing one's sense of meaning, purpose, and connection to something larger. Sandra acknowledged expressions of faith shared earlier in the conference and encouraged everyone to draw strength from their personal beliefs and values. Whether through prayer, meditation, nature, or reflection, finding a spiritual anchor can support inner peace and resilience.

The sixth pillar, **Recreational Self-Care**, emphasized joy. Sandra encouraged participants to engage in activities they truly enjoy, whether it's a hobby, time in nature, or simply stepping outside to admire the sky. She reminded the group that connecting with nature doesn't have to be elaborate it can be as simple as noticing the breeze or the sound of birds. Moments of pleasure and rest, she said, are not luxuries; they are necessary.

The final pillar, **Social Self-Care**, focused on building and maintaining healthy relationships. Sandra emphasized the importance of creating boundaries, nurturing supportive connections, and protecting one's time and energy. She referenced a book she was reading on balance and empowerment and noted how often self-care is connected to how we relate to others. Whether with friends, family, or colleagues, prioritizing relationships that uplift rather than drain us is key to sustained wellness.

Throughout the session, Sandra invited participants to engage by reflecting on their own routines. She asked them to share weekly self-care practices in the chat, reminding everyone that by sharing, they might inspire or support someone else. To close, she mentioned that a quiz link would be shared in the chat - a simple tool to help participants reflect on their self-care habits and identify areas for growth.

With her signature warmth, Sandra concluded by encouraging everyone to give themselves a hug. "I'm sending you a big hug on the virtual platform," she said. "Thank you so much for joining us today, and I'll see you tomorrow with more self-care tips." The session ended on a note of gratitude and affirmation, offering a collective exhale at the close of a powerful day. Sandra's guidance reminded all present that self-care is not indulgence; it is the foundation of effective advocacy, healing, and resilience.



Key Themes

Throughout Day 2 of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference, several cross-cutting themes emerged, highlighting the multifaceted nature of human trafficking and the comprehensive strategies required to combat it effectively:



Challenges in Prosecution

Discussions underscored the inherent legal complexities, the heavy burden of proof, and the challenges associated with victim testimony, often inconsistent due to trauma or fear. Proving psychological coercion and subtle forms of control remains a significant hurdle, exacerbated by gaps in law enforcement and judicial capacity.



The Dual Role of Technology

Technology was identified as both a primary facilitator of trafficking (cyber-enabled recruitment, exploitation via digital anonymity) and a powerful tool for anti-trafficking efforts (AI-powered chatbots, image recognition, blockchain for transparency). The urgent need for enhanced digital forensics capacity and updated cybercrime legislation was a recurring point.



Centrality of Survivor Leadership

A strong emphasis was placed on the indispensable role of survivors in shaping policy and practice. The dialogue highlighted the importance of actively listening to lived experiences, co-creating solutions, building capacity for survivor leaders, and formalizing their advisory roles within national and regional anti-trafficking frameworks.



Intersectional Approaches to Vulnerability

The discussions consistently recognized that vulnerability to trafficking is shaped by intersecting identities, including gender, age, disability, socioeconomic status, nationality, and sexual orientation. Effective responses must adopt nuanced, culturally appropriate, and intersectional approaches to address the diverse realities of those affected.



Critical Need for Capacity Building

Across all panels, there was a clear call for sustained investment in capacity building. This includes specialized training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges on evolving trafficker tactics and trauma responses, strengthening digital forensics capabilities, and providing comprehensive support for survivor leaders and local anti-trafficking organizations.



Inter-agency and Public-Private Collaboration

The complexity of human trafficking demands coordinated action across all sectors. Panelists stressed the necessity of robust collaboration between government agencies (law enforcement, immigration, customs), civil society organizations, the technology sector, and international partners to share intelligence, resources, and best practices.



Importance of Data and Evidence

The need for robust, disaggregated data was highlighted as crucial for understanding trafficking patterns, identifying bottlenecks in prosecution, and informing evidence-based policy and resource allocation. Leveraging financial investigations and judicial analytics were emphasized to reduce reliance on victim testimony and strengthen cases.



Holistic Support for Survivors

Beyond legal and prosecutorial support, the discussions underscored the need for comprehensive, long-term support for survivors, including psychosocial services, mental health care, access to education, economic opportunities, and protection from retraumatization and re-victimization.



Self-Care for Professionals

The concluding session reinforced the critical importance of self-care and mental well-being for all individuals engaged in anti-trafficking work, recognizing the emotional toll of the field and promoting sustainable engagement.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions and insights shared during Day 2 of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference, the following recommendations are put forth for consideration by various stakeholders:

For Law Enforcement and Prosecutors



Invest in Specialized Training

Provide consistent, trauma-informed training for law enforcement and prosecutors on the evolving tactics of traffickers, the psychology of coercion, and the nuanced trauma responses of survivors.



Enhance Investigative Techniques

Reduce reliance on survivor testimony by leveraging financial investigations, forensic evidence, and digital tools to build robust cases.



Strengthen Digital Forensics

Urgently invest in digital forensics capacity, equipment, and expertise within law enforcement agencies to effectively investigate cyber-enabled trafficking cases.



Improve Inter-Agency Coordination

Foster seamless collaboration between immigration, police, customs, and other relevant agencies to facilitate intelligence sharing and coordinated responses.

For the Judiciary



Institutionalize Trauma-Informed Practices

Implement and standardize trauma-informed courtroom procedures to prevent retraumatization of survivors during trials.



Adopt Alternative Evidentiary Standards

Promote the broader use of pre-recorded testimonies and explore alternative evidentiary standards where permissible to protect survivors and strengthen prosecutions.



Enhance Judicial Education

Provide specialized judicial education on human trafficking, focusing on understanding the psychology of coercion, subtle forms of control, and the diverse manifestations of exploitation.



Invest in Data and Analytics

Support the development and utilization of robust case tracking and judicial analytics systems to identify patterns, bottlenecks, and inform policy.

For Governments and Policymakers



Adopt Tech-Informed Strategies

Develop and implement proactive, tech-informed national counter-trafficking strategies that address the digital landscape of human trafficking.



Enact Comprehensive Legislation

Ensure national legislation explicitly addresses the use of digital technologies in TIP crimes, providing clear legal frameworks for investigation and prosecution.



Formalize Survivor Advisory Roles

Establish formal mechanisms for survivor consultation and feedback, including formalizing survivor advisory roles in national task forces and policy development processes.



Collect Disaggregated Data

Mandate the collection and analysis of robust, disaggregated data on TIP prosecutions, victim demographics, and service provision to inform evidence-based policy and resource allocation.



Invest in Survivor Capacity Building

Allocate sustained funding and resources for capacity-building programs that support survivor leaders in their healing, professional development, and advocacy.



Ensure Culturally Appropriate Services

Prioritize the provision of anti-trafficking services that are linguistically and culturally appropriate, especially for diverse and marginalized communities.

For the Tech Sector



Prioritize Survivor-Centered Design

Engage with survivors and anti-trafficking experts to co-design digital tools that are accessible, confidential, trauma-informed, and community-centered.



Develop Context-Specific Solutions

Encourage Caribbean tech entrepreneurs to innovate and develop digital tools tailored to the region's specific needs for trafficking detection and victim assistance.



Strengthen Public-Private Collaboration

Actively participate in the fight against TIP by implementing robust content moderation, addressing digital anonymity exploitation, and collaborating with law enforcement and civil society.

For Civil Society and Survivor-Led Organizations:



"Build With, Not For" Survivors

Actively engage survivors as partners in co-creating solutions, valuing their expertise, and resourcing their leadership meaningfully.



Advocate for Direct Funding

Campaign for direct, flexible, and sustained funding for survivor-led organizations to ensure their independence and operational capacity.



Promote Holistic Survivor Empowerment

Prioritize access to education, economic opportunities, and leadership training for survivors as core elements of anti-trafficking responses.



Advocate for Legal Reform

Work towards legal reforms that eliminate stigmatization or criminalization of trafficking survivors, particularly in cases involving sex work or irregular migration.



Integrate Mental Health Support

Ensure mental health services and peer support networks are integrated into all survivor engagement initiatives to address the psychological toll of advocacy.

For International Partners and Donors:



Provide Flexible and Sustainable Support

Offer flexible and sustainable financial and technical support for survivor-led organizations, recognizing their unique challenges and capacities.



Support Regional Initiatives

Invest in regional data hubs, intelligence-sharing platforms, and multi-country capacity-building initiatives to foster coordinated responses.



Promote Public-Private Partnerships

Actively facilitate and support public-private partnerships that leverage resources and expertise from diverse sectors to combat trafficking.



Ensure Responsible Engagement

Design external support carefully to avoid counterproductive outcomes, tokenistic participation, or placing unrealistic pressure on survivors and local organizations.

Cross-cutting Recommendations:



Prioritize Survivor-Centered Approaches

Embed survivor voices and needs at the core of all anti-trafficking efforts, from policy design to implementation and evaluation.



Foster Multi-Sectoral Collaboration

Strengthen inter-agency and multi-sectoral collaboration across government, civil society, the tech sector, and international partners.



Invest in Comprehensive Training

Ensure continuous, specialized training that addresses evolving threats, digital trends, and trauma-informed care for all anti-trafficking professionals.



Leverage Data for Policy

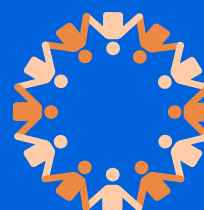
Promote robust data collection, analysis, and sharing to inform evidence-based policy, identify gaps, and measure impact effectively.



Promote Well-being

Normalize conversations on mental health and provide accessible self-care resources for all anti-trafficking professionals and survivors to ensure sustained engagement and resilience.

DAY 3 - THE CARIBBEAN ANTI-TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE 2025



Introduction

Chaired by the Founder of the Caribbean Survivor Network, Day 3 of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference 2025 brought together a dynamic array of voices to explore critical and emerging dimensions of human trafficking. The day's sessions focused on the interconnected vulnerabilities of children in the face of climate change and labor exploitation, the powerful and often overlooked role of youth voices in anti-trafficking efforts, and the transformative potential of digital storytelling, media, and the arts in advocacy and healing.

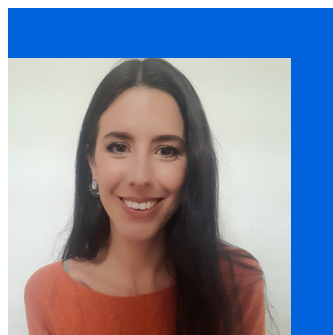
The discussions aimed to deepen understanding of systemic risk factors, amplify the agency of young people and survivors, and identify innovative, culturally relevant strategies to prevent exploitation and support those affected. By fostering dialogue across diverse sectors including security, international labor, youth advocacy, and creative arts, Day 3 sought to generate actionable insights for a more comprehensive and human-centered approach to combating human trafficking in the Caribbean.



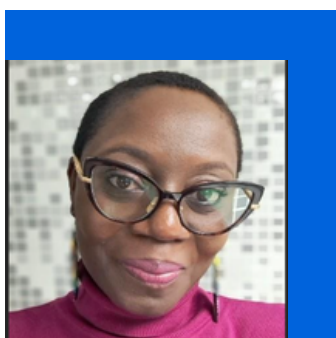
Panel 4: Children, Climate, and Labour - Tackling Risk Factors in 2025



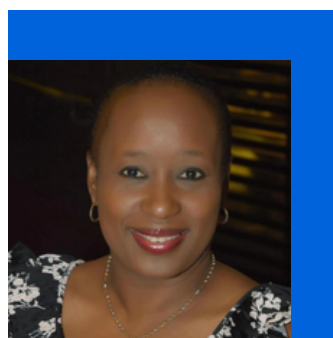
**Christal Parris-Campbell,
CARICOM Youth
Ambassador**



**Dr. Marta Furlan,
Free the Slaves**



**Resel Melville,
ILO Caribbean**



**Joycelyn Hughes
Moderator**

Moderated by Joycelyn Hughes, Border Security Specialist at CARICOM IMPACS, this powerful panel convened a cross-generational and cross-sectoral group of experts to address the urgent and interconnected risks facing children in the Caribbean today—namely, child labor, the effects of climate change, and gaps in protections that leave young people vulnerable to exploitation. The conversation underscored the complex interplay of systemic factors, policy limitations, and the increasingly visible impact of climate-related displacement and economic stress.

Dr. Marta Furla of Free the Slaves opened with a sobering reminder: children are not just affected by climate change—they are increasingly at the center of its most devastating consequences. Drawing on recent FTS research, Dr. Furla explained how environmental degradation, migration pressure, and economic shocks in vulnerable communities contribute to increased rates of child labor, trafficking, and unsafe migration. These stressors are especially acute in small island developing states where livelihoods tied to agriculture and fishing are severely impacted by droughts, hurricanes, and flooding. She emphasized that policies to prevent child exploitation must take a holistic, preventive approach—one that includes climate resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and child-centered planning.

Resel Melville, Programme Officer with the ILO's Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour, provided a regional overview of how child labor persists despite existing legal frameworks. She highlighted data showing that nearly 10.5 million children in Latin America and the Caribbean are still engaged in child labor, a figure that remains deeply concerning in 2025. Melville underscored the ILO's ongoing advocacy for national action plans that not only criminalize child labor but actively fund prevention, rehabilitation, and social protections. She praised examples from countries where interministerial collaboration and community-based monitoring have reduced child labor rates but acknowledged that progress has been uneven. The link between poverty, limited educational access, and informal employment is central to this challenge, she noted, especially in post-disaster contexts.

Youth voice was powerfully represented by CARICOM Youth Ambassador, Christal Parris-Campbell, who offered an impassioned perspective grounded in advocacy, community organizing, and personal observation. Parris-Campbell urged policy actors to consult youth not just as beneficiaries but as critical stakeholders in designing interventions. She described how climate change and migration affect young people's futures by displacing families, interrupting education, and forcing youth into labor to support household survival. She called on regional leaders to create participatory spaces for young people and to fund youth-led solutions that address exploitation and inequality. "Climate justice is social justice," she stated, "and if children and youth are being left behind, then we are failing to act justly."

In her moderation, Joycelyn Hughes helped to connect the regional security implications of child exploitation and climate migration. She pointed to rising displacement and irregular migration as emerging threats that can fuel trafficking networks, expose children to abuse, and overwhelm frontline responders. She also noted the necessity of stronger coordination across CARICOM states and the importance of early warning systems and community policing in areas at heightened risk of disaster-induced displacement.

Throughout the discussion, panelists emphasized that risk factors such as poverty, school dropout, gender inequality, and family breakdown are not isolated phenomena. They are compounded by climate disruption, weak governance, and exclusion from formal protections. The panel repeatedly returned to the need for proactive, inclusive policies that reflect the voices of those most affected, especially children, youth, and families in vulnerable sectors.

Dr. Furla reiterated that research from Free the Slaves points toward the need for more integrated data collection that tracks the intersection of climate vulnerability and child labor risk. Without reliable indicators and disaggregated data, efforts to intervene remain reactive rather than preventative. She called for investment in local civil society organizations and for building bridges between environmental planning and anti-trafficking work. "We cannot continue to work in silos," she concluded. "If we want to protect children, we must work across all the systems that shape their lives."

Resel Melville added that programs must go beyond awareness campaigns and must be backed by financial commitments and long-term implementation. She noted that in many parts of the region, informal labor sectors such as domestic work, street vending, and agricultural labor are largely unregulated, creating environments where child labor can persist unnoticed. She also stressed the importance of promoting access to education as a protective factor and of investing in the livelihoods of families to prevent exploitative work conditions.

Christal Parris-Campbell closed her remarks by advocating for education that is not only accessible but also relevant to the current realities children face. She called for climate education, rights-based curricula, and mental health support for children impacted by migration and exploitation. She urged the region's decision-makers to stop treating youth participation as symbolic and start integrating young people into the heart of governance and program design. "Children know what is happening in their communities," she said. "We are often the first to see the signs of harm."

In closing, Joycelyn Hughes thanked the panelists and highlighted the importance of sustained, collaborative action across agencies and sectors. The panel's message was clear: children must be protected not just through law enforcement but through justice that is restorative, inclusive, and future-oriented. As climate change continues to reshape economies and communities across the Caribbean, the region's response must center the voices of youth, promote resilience in families, and confront the systemic factors that perpetuate exploitation.



Youth Forum: Youth Voices Against Trafficking



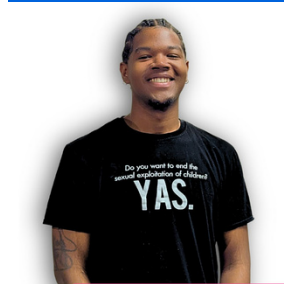
**Dr TeHilla Paul,
YES Leadership
Programme**



**Judy Sango, Youth
with Disabilities
Connections**



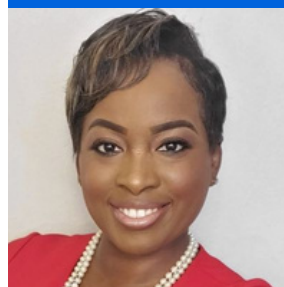
**Ida Alimoradi,
OneChild
Network**



**Darius, OneChild
Network**



**Soleil-Marie
Collins, YES
Leadership
Programme**



**Shamere
McKenzie,
Moderator**

Moderated by Shamere McKenzie, Founder of the Caribbean Survivor Network, the Youth Forum brought together dynamic youth leaders from across the region to amplify young voices in the fight against human trafficking. The session featured youth-led organizations and initiatives with powerful representation from the YES Leadership Programme, OneChild Network, and Youth with Disabilities Connections. Through heartfelt testimony, strategic insight, and calls to action, the panel reinforced that youth are not only vulnerable to trafficking, but they are also powerful agents of change.

Dr. TeHilla Paul and Soleil-Marie Collins, representing the YES Leadership Programme, began by emphasizing the importance of peer-led education and awareness. They spoke of the urgent need for youth to be equipped with knowledge about the tactics used by traffickers, especially in digital spaces. Soleil-Marie highlighted how traffickers often exploit emotional vulnerability, promising love or opportunity as a lure. Dr. Paul added that too often, the education systems in the region fail to adequately prepare young people to recognize and resist these threats. Both speakers stressed that prevention starts with youth-centered outreach and leadership.

Ida Alimoradi and "Darius," both affiliated with OneChild Network, brought deeply personal perspectives to the discussion. Ida described her work in developing youth-friendly resources and facilitating workshops that enable young people to understand and report exploitation. She explained that building trust with youth is essential for any anti-trafficking intervention to succeed. "Darius," a member of OneChild's Youth Advisory Squad, spoke with strength and vulnerability about his own lived experience with trafficking and the long road to recovery. He underscored the need for comprehensive services, not only for immediate rescue and safety but also for long-term healing, education, and inclusion.

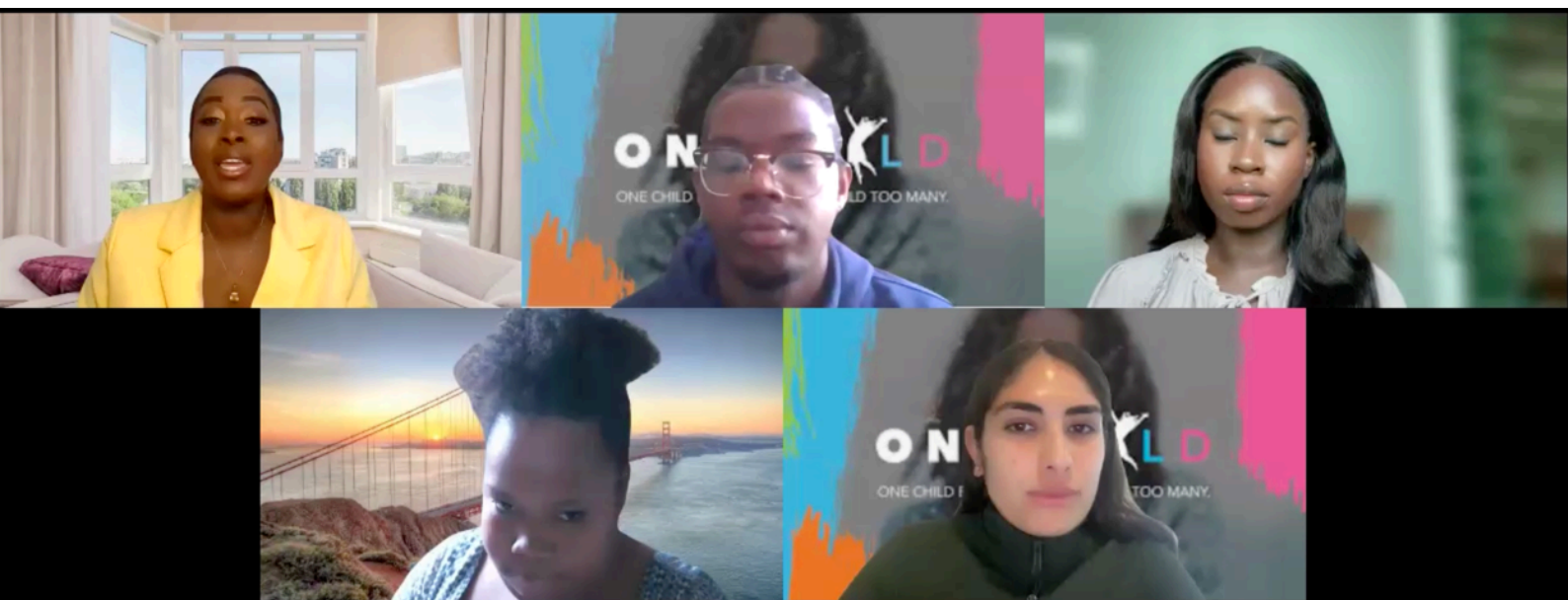
Judy Sango, President of Youth with Disabilities Connections, introduced the crucial perspective of youth with disabilities, noting that they are disproportionately at risk of trafficking due to isolation, lack of access to services, and systemic discrimination. She emphasized that inclusion must not be an afterthought but a cornerstone of all anti-trafficking policy and programming. Sango called for accessible communication strategies, disability-inclusive education, and leadership opportunities for youth with disabilities. Her contribution reminded the audience that fighting trafficking requires an intersectional lens that addresses all forms of marginalization.

Throughout the forum, Shamere McKenzie guided the discussion with empathy and urgency. She encouraged the speakers to reflect on both challenges and solutions, making space for honest dialogue about the systems that fail to protect youth and the ways in which youth are stepping up to lead change. She emphasized that this forum was not a symbolic platform but a space to influence real policy and action.

A recurring theme across all speakers was the need for intergenerational partnership. Youth do not want to be spoken for, they want to be supported. The panel called on governments, NGOs, and international organizations to invest in youth-led initiatives, to consult young people in policy processes, and to resource mentorship programs that connect survivors and youth advocates.

As the session ended, each speaker left the audience with a call to action. Soleil-Marie urged adults to "believe young people when they speak up" and to create spaces for their stories and leadership. Ida called for digital safety campaigns led by youth. Judy demanded that disability inclusion be treated as a core human rights issue. And "Darius" reminded everyone that behind every statistic is a story of survival, and that survivors need more than awareness, they need opportunities.

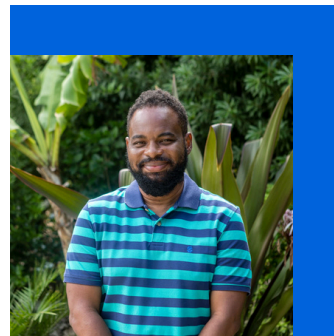
The Youth Forum was a powerful testament to the leadership, resilience, and clarity of young people across the Caribbean and beyond. Their voices underscored a central truth: if we are to end human trafficking, youth must be at the forefront of designing the future.



Interactive Dialogue: Use of Digital Storytelling, Media, and Arts in Anti-Trafficking Work



Dr. Allan Balfour,
Trinity Dance
Theatre



Alan Lynch,
Beyond Publishing
Caribbean

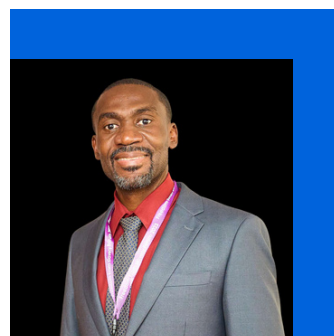


Ida Alimoradi,
OneChild
Network



**Pania, OneChild
Network**

Moderated by Smith Maxime, Co-Executive Director of Beyond Borders Haiti, this session explored how digital storytelling, media, and the arts are transforming anti-trafficking advocacy across the Caribbean. The discussion brought together creative practitioners and survivor leaders who are using narrative, performance, and visual media not only to raise awareness but to humanize survivors, challenge stigma, and build solidarity. Through a dynamic conversation that moved between personal testimony, creative strategies, and structural critique, the session illuminated the power of art to foster healing and catalyze change.



Smith Maxime,
Moderator

Alan Nigel Lynch of Beyond Publishing Caribbean began the session by speaking to the power of words and lived experience. He shared reflections on his work publishing narratives of resilience, noting that too often stories about trafficking are told for survivors, not by them. His mission, he explained, is to change that dynamic by building platforms where survivors and advocates can shape their own stories on their own terms. Lynch emphasized that authentic representation has the power to disrupt the savior complex and invite audiences into a deeper relationship with justice. He also highlighted the importance of cultural specificity in storytelling—ensuring that stories reflect the region’s unique contexts and histories.

Ida Alimoradi and "Pania," both representing the OneChild Network, brought a survivor-centered lens to the conversation. Ida described OneChild’s model of equipping youth with the tools to tell their own stories through digital media. This includes short films, animations, and social media campaigns that challenge the myths and misinformation surrounding trafficking. "Pania," another member of OneChild’s Youth Advisory Squad, spoke movingly about her own journey of turning pain into power through storytelling. She explained how the creative process helped her reclaim her identity and advocate for systemic change. Together, they shared how storytelling can foster peer support, raise awareness among policymakers, and dismantle harmful stereotypes.

Dr. Allan Balfour, Artistic Director of Trinity Dance Theatre in Trinidad and Tobago, discussed the role of performance and embodiment in healing. He spoke of how dance and movement offer a nonverbal yet deeply expressive medium for survivors to process trauma and reclaim agency. Through community-based workshops and performances, his organization collaborates with survivors to co-create pieces that reflect their stories and truths. Balfour emphasized that art, when facilitated ethically, can be both transformative and protective. He cautioned that using survivor narratives in art must always be done with consent, care, and clear boundaries, ensuring that no one is re-traumatized in the process.

Throughout the session, Smith Maxime guided the dialogue toward the systemic implications of creative work. He asked panelists to reflect on how storytelling and art can influence public policy, resource allocation, and the visibility of marginalized voices. In response, Lynch noted that published stories and survivor-authored essays have the potential to shift public discourse and pressure leaders to act. Ida added that youth-led digital storytelling campaigns have already influenced school curricula and community training programs in several countries. Balfour shared how performances rooted in anti-trafficking themes have led to deeper engagement with justice officials and social workers, helping to train them in more trauma-informed approaches.

A recurring theme across all contributions was the importance of survivor autonomy in the creative process. Storytelling, the panelists agreed, should never be extractive or sensationalized. Instead, it must be empowering, participatory, and protective. "Pania" stressed that being given the opportunity to create one’s own narrative, in one’s own voice and medium, can restore a sense of control that trafficking had stolen from a person.

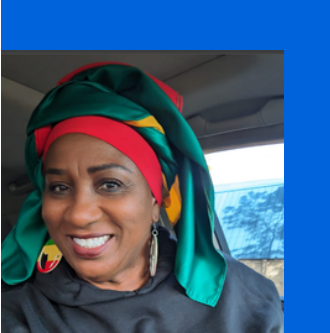
The panel also touched on the power of digital media to reach broad and diverse audiences. From social media storytelling to short film festivals, the arts can connect with communities that may not engage with traditional reports or policy briefs. Panelists emphasized that youth are already using digital tools to tell stories, organize, and challenge exploitation and that these platforms must be supported, funded, and treated as serious tools for change.

In closing, Smith Maxime invited each panelist to offer one reflection on how stakeholders can better support creative approaches to anti-trafficking work. Lynch called for more investment in survivor-led publishing and mentorship. Ida encouraged partnerships between youth media collectives and anti-trafficking organizations. "Pania" reminded the audience that "our stories are not just stories, they are bridges." And Dr. Balfour urged the sector to treat art not as a side activity, but as an essential pathway to healing and justice.

This session affirmed that storytelling, media, and the arts are not merely communication tools they are powerful instruments of resistance, solidarity, and healing. When placed in the hands of survivors and youth, they become a means of rewriting narratives, reclaiming dignity, and imagining futures free from exploitation.



Self-Care Session & Adjourn



Sandra Christie Brown, Finding Your Light Foundation, Inc.

Sandra Christie Brown collaborated with Shamere McKenzie to close out the day's proceedings. Shamere shared examples of how she intentionally structures self-care – ensuring that she plans activities by the day, week, month and year. Participants were encouraged to prioritise downtime so that they can recover physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally from the challenges of doing anti-trafficking work.



Key Themes

Throughout Day 3 of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference, several cross-cutting themes emerged, highlighting the interconnectedness of vulnerabilities and the imperative for holistic, youth- and survivor-led responses:



Intersectional Vulnerabilities

The discussions consistently highlighted how factors like age, climate change impacts, disability, and socio-economic status intersect to heighten children and youth's vulnerability to trafficking. Climate-induced displacement and economic stress were identified as significant drivers of child labor and exploitation.



Youth as Agents of Change

A central message was the critical role of young people not merely as beneficiaries but as powerful leaders and advocates in anti-trafficking efforts. Youth-led education, peer-to-peer outreach, and direct participation in policy design were emphasized as essential for effective prevention and response.



The Power of Narrative and Art

Digital storytelling, media, and the arts were showcased as transformative tools for advocacy, healing, and challenging stigma. These creative approaches humanize survivors, foster empathy, and can reach broader audiences than traditional methods, particularly when survivor-led and culturally specific.



Holistic Survivor Support

Beyond immediate rescue, there was a strong call for comprehensive, long-term services for survivors, including psychosocial support, mental health care, education, and economic opportunities, to facilitate true healing and reintegration.



Capacity Building and Resource Mobilization

All sessions underscored the need for sustained investment in capacity building for law enforcement in digital forensics, for youth leaders in advocacy, and for survivor-led organizations in organizational development and access to flexible funding.



Intergenerational and Multi-Sectoral Partnerships

Effective anti-trafficking work requires collaboration across generations and sectors. This includes governments, NGOs, international organizations, tech companies, and crucially, youth and survivor-led initiatives working together to co-create solutions.



Data and Evidence for Action

The importance of integrated, disaggregated data was a recurring theme, particularly for understanding the intersection of climate vulnerability and child labor risk, and for informing evidence-based policy and programmatic interventions.



Ethical Engagement and Autonomy

Discussions emphasized the ethical imperative of ensuring consent, care, and clear boundaries when working with survivor narratives, and prioritizing survivor autonomy in all creative and advocacy processes to prevent re-traumatization.



Climate Justice as Social Justice

The panel on children, climate, and labor explicitly linked climate action to social justice, arguing that protecting children from exploitation in the context of climate change requires integrated policies that address both environmental resilience and social inequality.



Recommendations

Based on the discussions and insights shared during Day 3 of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference, the following recommendations are put forth for consideration by various stakeholders:

For Governments and Policymakers



Integrate Climate and Child Protection Policies

Develop and implement holistic national action plans that explicitly link climate resilience strategies with child protection and anti-trafficking efforts, recognizing climate change as a key risk factor for child labour and exploitation.



Strengthen Child Labour Prevention

Actively fund prevention, rehabilitation, and social protection programs to combat child labour, particularly in informal sectors and post-disaster contexts.



Formalize Youth Participation

Create and fund participatory spaces for young people, integrating youth voices and leadership into governance and program design for anti-trafficking initiatives.



Ensure Disability Inclusion

Treat disability inclusion as a core human rights issue in all anti-trafficking policy and programming, ensuring accessible communication strategies, disability-inclusive education, and leadership opportunities for youth with disabilities.



Strengthen Regional Coordination

Improve inter-agency and cross-CARICOM state coordination for intelligence sharing and early warning systems related to child exploitation and climate-induced migration.

For Education Systems



Develop Relevant Curricula

Integrate climate education, rights-based curricula, and mental health support into educational programs for children, especially those impacted by migration and exploitation.



Empower Youth through Education

Equip young people with knowledge about trafficking tactics, particularly in digital spaces, and foster youth-centered outreach and leadership in prevention.

For Civil Society and Youth/Survivor-Led Organizations



Prioritize Peer-Led Initiatives

Support and invest in peer-led education and awareness campaigns, recognizing youth as effective communicators for prevention.



Build Trust and Provide Comprehensive Services

Focus on building trust with youth and survivors, offering not only immediate safety but also long-term healing, education, and inclusion services.



Leverage Creative Advocacy

Utilize digital storytelling, media, and arts-based projects to raise awareness, humanize survivors, challenge stigma, and influence public policy.



Ensure Survivor Autonomy

Uphold survivor autonomy in all creative processes, ensuring consent, care, and clear boundaries to prevent re-traumatization.



Advocate for Direct Funding

Campaign for direct, flexible, and sustained funding for youth-led and survivor-led initiatives and resource mentorship programs.

For International Partners and Donors



Invest in Integrated Data Collection

Support research and data collection efforts that track the intersection of climate vulnerability, child labour risk, and trafficking, ensuring disaggregated data.



Provide Flexible Funding

Offer flexible and sustained financial commitments to programs that go beyond awareness campaigns, backing them with long-term implementation and support for local CSOs.



Support Youth and Survivor Leadership

Resource mentorship programs and platforms that connect survivors and youth advocates, ensuring their voices are genuinely integrated into policy processes.



Promote Ethical Engagement

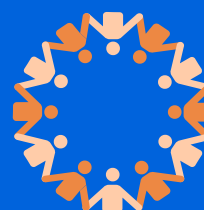
Ensure that all engagements with survivors and youth in creative or advocacy work are conducted with the highest ethical standards, prioritizing their safety, well-being, and autonomy.



Bridge Silos

Actively work to build bridges between environmental planning, child protection, and anti-trafficking efforts, moving beyond siloed approaches.

DAY 4 - THE CARIBBEAN ANTI-TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE 2025

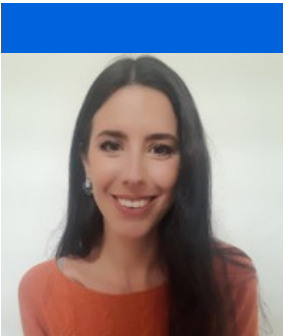


Introduction

Day 4 of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference 2025 served as a pivotal culmination, synthesizing insights from the previous days and charting a forward-looking roadmap for regional anti-trafficking efforts. The sessions focused on critical areas including the preliminary findings of groundbreaking research on self-care within the anti-trafficking movement, the transformative role of data in prosecution and survivor support, and the intersection of decent work and forced labor. The day concluded with a strategic discussion on a regional roadmap to 2030 and a comprehensive summary of key takeaways and next steps, reinforcing the collective commitment to a more coordinated, survivor-centered, and resilient response to human trafficking in the Caribbean.



Preliminary Research Findings: Caribbean Self-Care Research



**Dr. Marta Furlan,
Senior Program
Manager for
Research, Free
the Slaves**

Presented by Dr. Marta Furlan, Senior Program Manager for Research at Free the Slaves, this session unveiled the initial findings of a pioneering survey on self-care within the Caribbean's anti-trafficking movement. Timed to coincide with International Self-Care Day, the presentation reflected Free the Slaves' commitment to embedding well-being within the core of its regional and global advocacy. Dr. Furlan, introduced by colleague Adrian Alexander, noted his consistent encouragement of self-care as a critical component of sustainable anti-trafficking work.

The research, conducted across CARICOM countries, aimed to assess the emotional, psychological, and physical stressors experienced by those working to combat human trafficking. The goal was to identify self-care challenges and good practices, illuminate existing gaps, and determine what resources and structures are needed to better support anti-trafficking practitioners. The survey prioritized anonymity and voluntary participation and adhered to rigorous ethical research standards, ensuring confidentiality and safeguarding participants' wellbeing.

Dr. Furlan outlined four central research questions: What are the daily challenges faced by anti-trafficking workers? What role does self-care currently play in their lives? What positive self-care habits have been developed? And what do individuals working in the movement need to improve their self-care practices? These questions provided the foundation for the analysis.

Key demographic trends among respondents included a majority identifying as women, with most participants aged between 35 and 64. The data also showed that 53% were married or partnered, and 31% were single. Notably, 94% of respondents did not identify as having a disability, 96% were not survivors of trafficking, and 73% did not identify as Indigenous. These statistics raised an important question: Are survivors, people with disabilities, and Indigenous persons being adequately included and supported within the anti-trafficking movement in the Caribbean? Dr. Furlan acknowledged the need for further outreach to ensure these voices are represented in both research and programming. Geographically, most responses came from Trinidad and Tobago and Haiti, with minimal representation from other parts of the region. Dr. Furlan emphasized the need to broaden participation in the survey to better capture the diversity of the Caribbean context. She also noted that most respondents were native to the region and had not migrated from other countries.

The research revealed several troubling patterns related to overwork and stress. Many respondents reported working significantly more than the hours for which they were officially employed. For example, those contracted for 40-hour weeks often worked well beyond that, sometimes reaching 48 to 50 hours. This prompted reflections on whether such practices stem from organizational culture, implicit expectations from colleagues or supervisors, or personal dedication to the cause. When asked about daily leisure time, a third of respondents reported having just two to four hours per day, and nearly another third had less than one hour. Sleep patterns were similarly concerning: 47% of respondents reported sleeping less than six hours a night, and 41% described the quality of their sleep as poor or average. These insights pointed to chronic fatigue as a significant factor in the daily experience of many practitioners. Regarding vacation and rest, 71% of respondents reported taking between one and three weeks of annual leave, while only 10% took less than seven days. However, even when on leave, 71% of participants said they were unable to fully disconnect from work—either due to expectations, personal commitment, or persistent worry about work-related responsibilities. Many described continuing to monitor emails or attending meetings during their holidays.

Burnout emerged as a common experience: only 24% confidently stated they were not experiencing burnout. The rest either believed they were burned out or were uncertain. Nonetheless, there were signs of resilience: most participants said they had access to personal support systems, whether through friends, family, or community organizations. Still, only 12% reported never feeling overwhelmed by work, while 40% believed their job had a significant negative impact on their mental and physical health and their personal lives. When asked to assess their work-life balance, most participants rated it as suboptimal. Over time, balance had deteriorated for many, possibly due to increased responsibilities or the emotional toll of long-term engagement in anti-trafficking work. Dr. Furlan posed a critical question: As we move forward in our careers, are we truly learning to manage the pressures, or are we simply adapting to more stress at the expense of our well-being?

Encouragingly, 78% of participants said that self-care is not considered a taboo topic in their workplace. Conversations about self-care are possible with colleagues and supervisors. However, this openness does not yet translate into tangible emotional or psychological support at work, with many rating such support systems as minimal or lacking. Dr. Furlan concluded her presentation with a powerful finding: 94% of survey respondents believe that the anti-trafficking movement must do more to support self-care. This near-universal consensus underscores a growing recognition that the well-being of practitioners is not peripheral, but foundational to the integrity and sustainability of anti-trafficking work.

The session served as both a call to action and an invitation to reflection. By making space for honest conversations about burnout, workplace expectations, and the need for inclusive well-being strategies, Free the Slaves is leading an essential dialogue in the Caribbean and beyond. The next phase of the research will expand this survey to additional countries and regions, allowing for comparative insights and collaborative learning. On this Self-Care Day, the session powerfully reinforced that caring for those who care for others is not optional, it is essential.



Increasing Data Collection and Use in Anti-Trafficking Work in the Caribbean



**Allan Meiguel,
CTU Director,
Trinidad &
Tobago**

In the session titled "Increasing Data Collection and Use in Anti-Trafficking Work in the Caribbean," Mr. Allan Meiguel, Director of the Counter Trafficking Unit in Trinidad and Tobago, presented a compelling reflection on the fundamental role of data systems in combatting trafficking in persons. His remarks underscored both the institutional mandates for data collection and the transformative power of strategic, survivor-informed data practices.

Meiguel began by grounding his presentation in the legal framework that governs anti-trafficking efforts in Trinidad and Tobago. Section 11 of the country's Trafficking in Persons Act mandates that the Counter Trafficking Unit must maintain comprehensive records related to trafficking activity. For Meiguel, this legal obligation is not merely a bureaucratic requirement but a foundation for action. He emphasized that no investigative unit could function effectively without a robust data infrastructure. He articulated a powerful analogy, describing the successful investigative unit as composed of three essential pillars: a dedicated team of professionals, an efficient work process, and a strong ICT (information and communications technology) platform. These components, when synchronized, allow for responsive, accountable, and well-coordinated investigations. Meiguel described this triad as the "Holy Trinity" of investigative success.



Historically, he noted, data within law enforcement agencies was dispersed across disconnected platforms: handwritten notebooks, phone calls, and information stored in isolated silos. Today, such fragmentation is not viable. Modern trafficking response requires integrated case management systems capable of real-time data capture, analysis, referral, coordination, and secure record-keeping. Upon assuming leadership of the Counter Trafficking Unit, Meiguel encountered ongoing efforts by CARICOM IMPACS, CariSECURE, and UNDP to upgrade law enforcement ICT systems. Recognizing the opportunity, he proactively approached these agencies to include the Counter Trafficking Unit in their modernization efforts. Despite coming in during the tail end of the project timeline, his team collaborated with international partners—including the International Organization for Migration and a Canadian tech firm—to develop a customized case management system tailored to the unit's needs.

Importantly, Meiguel highlighted that frontline operators were deeply involved in designing the platform. Their insight allowed the system to anticipate and resolve potential issues during the development phase, enhancing usability and functionality. However, these efforts faced a major hurdle when a change in U.S. administration led to funding disruptions for the UN agencies supporting the initiative. As a result, the team was left with software but no accompanying hardware to run it. Faced with this challenge, Meiguel turned to the Ministry of National Security to secure the necessary infrastructure. He stressed the urgency of this investment, particularly in the context of trafficking, where timely and coordinated response can make a critical difference in survivor protection and case outcomes.

A key element of the upgraded system is the integration of an audiovisual recording room aligned with court standards. Meiguel explained that this technology provides a more trauma-informed method for collecting survivor testimony. Rather than forcing survivors to recount traumatic experiences multiple times in formal, often intimidating settings, the audiovisual system enables survivors to share their stories at their own pace. This method not only reduces the risk of re-traumatization but also ensures more accurate and consistent documentation. Furthermore, audiovisual recordings create admissible evidence that can be evaluated for both content and emotional tone. In cases where survivors are no longer within jurisdiction or unable to testify in person, these recordings can be presented in court, allowing judges and juries to assess not only what was said but how it was conveyed. This approach enhances the legal robustness of survivor testimony and mitigates the impact of attrition.

In discussing the broader implications, Meiguel pointed to several anticipated benefits of implementing a comprehensive case management system. First, the structure of data collection will improve, ensuring consistency, standardization, and reliability. Second, disaggregated data—sorted by variables such as gender, age, nationality, and religion—will provide insights into trends, vulnerabilities, and resource allocation. Third, centralization will improve data sharing across agencies and borders. This regional interoperability, Meiguel noted, is essential for addressing the transnational nature of trafficking. As an example, he referenced recent requests for data integration with the CARICOM IMPACS Fusion Centre, an encouraging step toward a regional approach to anti-trafficking intelligence.

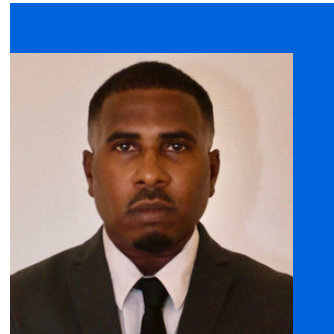
Meiguel's remarks concluded with a recognition that while his presentation was brief, the implications are long-term. Effective anti-trafficking efforts depend not only on laws and enforcement, but also on systems that reflect the complexity of the issue. Data is not just numbers; it is the story of survivors, the coordination of protection, and the accountability of systems. His presentation ultimately reaffirmed the importance of sustained investment in ICT systems and survivor-centered data practices. It also served as a call to action for Caribbean states to prioritize data infrastructure as a pillar of anti-trafficking strategy, not just for compliance, but for justice and dignity.



Interactive Dialogue: Decent Work and Forced Labour in the Caribbean

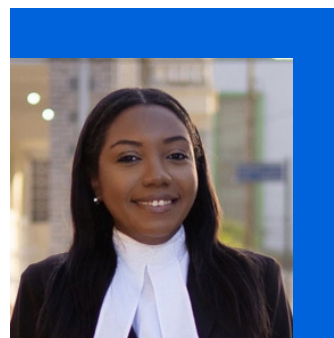


**Ruben McSween,
Caribbean
Employers
Confederation**



**Andre Charles, St.
Lucia Bureau of
Standards**

The session titled "Interactive Dialogue: Decent Work and Forced Labour in the Caribbean" brought together regional experts to address the intersection of labor standards, economic vulnerability, and trafficking risks. Moderated by Sharifa Ammon of the UNODC Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section (HTMSS), the conversation featured key insights from Ruben McSween, a Director of the Caribbean Employers' Confederation, and Andre Charles, Head of the Standards Development Department at the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards.



**Sharifa Ammon,
Moderator**

Sharifa Ammon opened the session by framing the discussion around the necessity of decent work as a core pillar in the prevention of trafficking and forced labor. She emphasized that labor exploitation often thrives in environments where legal protections are weak, labor standards are not enforced, and vulnerable workers lack access to safe reporting mechanisms. She invited the panelists to reflect on the current gaps in labor protections in the Caribbean and explore how international frameworks can be better leveraged to strengthen national responses.

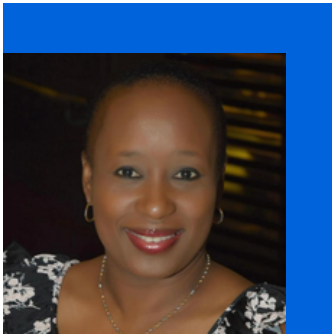
Ruben McSween provided a critical perspective on the responsibilities and challenges facing employers across the region. He noted that the concept of "decent work" as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) encompasses fair income, job security, social protection, and freedom to organize—yet many workers in the informal economy remain excluded from these protections. McSween highlighted the role of employer confederations in raising awareness among businesses about their ethical obligations and compliance with national and international labor standards. He acknowledged that while many employers strive to maintain fair practices, others exploit gaps in enforcement and weak inspection systems. Strengthening labor inspectorates, ensuring access to grievance mechanisms, and embedding due diligence into supply chains were presented as necessary reforms.

Andre Charles spoke from the perspective of standard-setting and regulation. He is working as co-secretary lead from the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards with the British Standards Institute to develop an international standard in the ISO 37200 – Managing the risk of modern slavery: Guidance for the prevention, identification, and response to human trafficking and forced labour. (A copy of the draft standard was shared with attendees) Mr. Charles underscored the importance of integrating decent work indicators into national quality infrastructure systems, including those related to trade, procurement, and occupational health and safety. He explained that standards development bodies like the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards play a strategic role in formalizing decent work principles through the establishment of guidelines, codes, and certification schemes. Charles noted that one of the key challenges is bridging the divide between policy and implementation, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, domestic work, and tourism—where informal labor arrangements are common and workers are especially vulnerable to abuse.

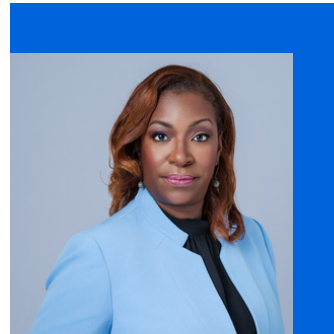
Both speakers agreed that regional coordination is essential. They discussed how organizations like CARICOM and the Caribbean Employers' Confederation could be mobilized to support harmonization of labor standards, cross-border monitoring, and training initiatives that promote decent work. McSween called attention to the need for private sector engagement in anti-trafficking strategies, stating that businesses must become active stakeholders in building safer labor environments. He also raised the importance of engaging youth and marginalized groups in these efforts to ensure long-term sustainability.

Throughout the dialogue, participants emphasized that addressing forced labor is not solely a criminal justice issue but one that requires labor market reforms, inclusive economic development, and survivor-informed policy design. The conversation concluded with a reaffirmation of the role that labor and standards institutions must play in both preventing exploitation and creating enabling environments where all workers—especially migrants and those in informal sectors are protected, empowered, and able to access justice. This session underscored the need for multisectoral collaboration, investment in public institutions, and the integration of human rights principles into economic planning. It also reflected growing momentum in the Caribbean to shift from reactive approaches to proactive, rights-based frameworks that address the root causes of trafficking and labor exploitation.

Case Scenario: Cross-Border Prosecution of TiPs and Reintegration of Survivors

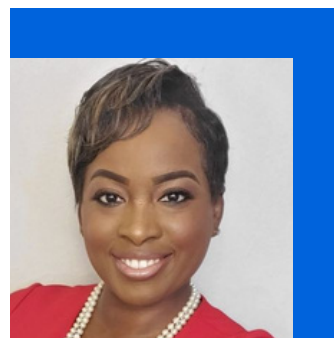


**Joycelyn Hughes,
CARICOM IMPACS**



Desery Jordan-Whiskey, IOM

The session titled "Case Scenario: Cross-Border Prosecution of Trafficking in Persons and Reintegration of Survivors" brought together regional stakeholders to engage in a dynamic, scenario-based discussion exploring the operational and ethical complexities of transnational trafficking cases. Facilitated by Joycelyn Hughes of CARICOM IMPACS, the session featured contributions from Shamere McKenzie of the Caribbean Survivor Network, Desery Jordan-Whiskey of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Jason Haynes, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Law and Deputy Head of Postgraduate Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK.



**Shamere
McKenzie,
Caribbean Survivor
Network**

The session unfolded around a fictional, yet realistic case study designed to illustrate the layered challenges involved in investigating, prosecuting, and supporting survivors in a cross-border context. Participants were invited to follow the journey of a survivor who had been trafficked from one Caribbean country to another, facing multiple forms of exploitation before being identified and helped.

Joycelyn Hughes introduced the case scenario by emphasizing the purpose of the exercise: to highlight gaps in regional cooperation and to reflect on best practices for both justice and survivor care. She explained that trafficking in persons does not respect national boundaries, and as such, an effective response requires synchronized legal, social, and institutional action across countries. Hughes also noted that CARICOM IMPACS is working to strengthen data sharing and investigative capacity to respond more effectively to cross-border crimes, including trafficking.

Jason Haynes brought a critical legal perspective to the scenario, helping to unpack the jurisdictional and evidentiary hurdles associated with prosecuting transnational trafficking cases. He stressed the importance of regional legal harmonization and mutual legal assistance treaties that facilitate cooperation between jurisdictions. Haynes underscored that legal definitions and procedural requirements vary widely across the Caribbean, which can complicate efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases effectively. He also emphasized the need to balance due process for accused individuals with the imperative of survivor protection, particularly when victims may be reluctant to testify due to fear or trauma. Drawing on his academic and legal expertise, Haynes highlighted model laws and recommended strategies for improving the efficiency and fairness of cross-border TIP prosecutions.

As the case unfolded, Shamere McKenzie, a survivor leader and advocate, stepped in to provide critical reflections grounded in lived experience. McKenzie highlighted the importance of maintaining a trauma-informed approach throughout every phase of the legal and support process. She noted that while prosecution is essential, survivors must not be retraumatized or treated merely as witnesses. Their rights, safety, and autonomy must remain at the center of every decision. She also underscored the need for survivors to have access to comprehensive services regardless of which country they find themselves in, including safe shelter, healthcare, legal support, and reintegration pathways that recognize their long-term needs.

Desery Jordan-Whiskey contributed by outlining how the IOM supports victim identification, referral, and reintegration across jurisdictions. She emphasized the importance of clear protocols for interagency cooperation, particularly when survivors are repatriated or relocated. Jordan-Whiskey stressed that successful reintegration requires coordination with local service providers, community sensitization, and survivor-informed program design. She cautioned against "one-size-fits-all" approaches and highlighted the emotional, cultural, and logistical barriers that must be addressed when working with cross-border survivors.

Participants in the session were asked to reflect on the actions they would take in real time at each step of the case scenario. Questions included: What agencies need to be involved early in the process? How do we ensure the survivor is not criminalized for migration or labor violations? What does meaningful consent look like in a trauma-informed context? And how do we navigate differences in legal definitions and judicial procedures across national borders? A key theme that emerged was the challenge of maintaining continuity of care and protection when survivors move between jurisdictions. Several participants noted the need for survivor case files and support services to be portable and confidential, and for frontline agencies to operate with shared definitions, standards, and protocols. The session also addressed the issue of victim credibility, and the burden often placed on survivors to "prove" their experiences, which can undermine their dignity and impede justice.

Toward the end of the dialogue, Hughes reiterated the importance of operationalizing regional frameworks, such as the CARICOM Regional Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons and integrating survivor voices into the design and evaluation of policy. Haynes echoed this call for regional coordination and noted the importance of ongoing training for prosecutors, law enforcement, and the judiciary to ensure a consistent understanding of trafficking indicators and survivor rights. McKenzie closed by encouraging all stakeholders to shift from reactive, fragmented responses to proactive and coordinated systems that place survivor wellbeing and justice at the core. This interactive case study session provided participants with an opportunity to reflect on real-life constraints, ethical dilemmas, and promising practices in the pursuit of cross-border justice and survivor reintegration. It reinforced the need for trust-building, information sharing, and sustained investment in both institutional capacity and survivor-centered care models throughout the Caribbean.



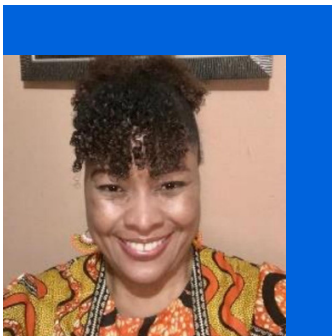
Panel 5: What's Next? A Regional Roadmap to 2030



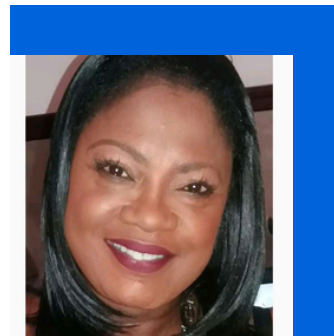
**Dr Jason Haynes,
Consultant**



**Sherwin Toyne-
Stephenson,
CARICOM**

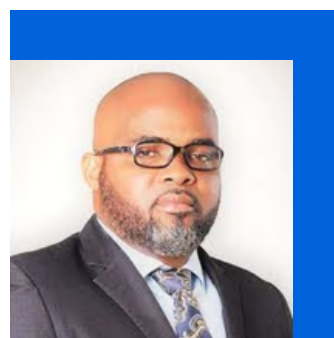


**Diana Shaw,
Consultant**



**Dr. Olivia Smith,
Consultant**

The final panel of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference convened a high-level discussion titled "What's Next? A Regional Roadmap to 2030." Moderated by Rufus Ferdinand, Chief Legal and Compliance Officer at CARICOM IMPACS, the session brought together regional experts and consultants to examine strategic priorities, gaps, and opportunities in shaping the future of anti-trafficking work in the Caribbean.



**Rufus Ferdinand,
Moderator**

Dr. Jason Haynes opened with a strong emphasis on the importance of regional legal harmonization. He underscored that while Caribbean nations have made progress in enacting anti-trafficking legislation, inconsistencies persist across jurisdictions, particularly in the definitions of trafficking, victim protection standards, and penalties. These discrepancies hinder the ability of law enforcement, prosecutors, and service providers to coordinate across borders. He advocated for a model law or a legally binding protocol among CARICOM states that could guide domestic reforms while fostering cross-border coherence.

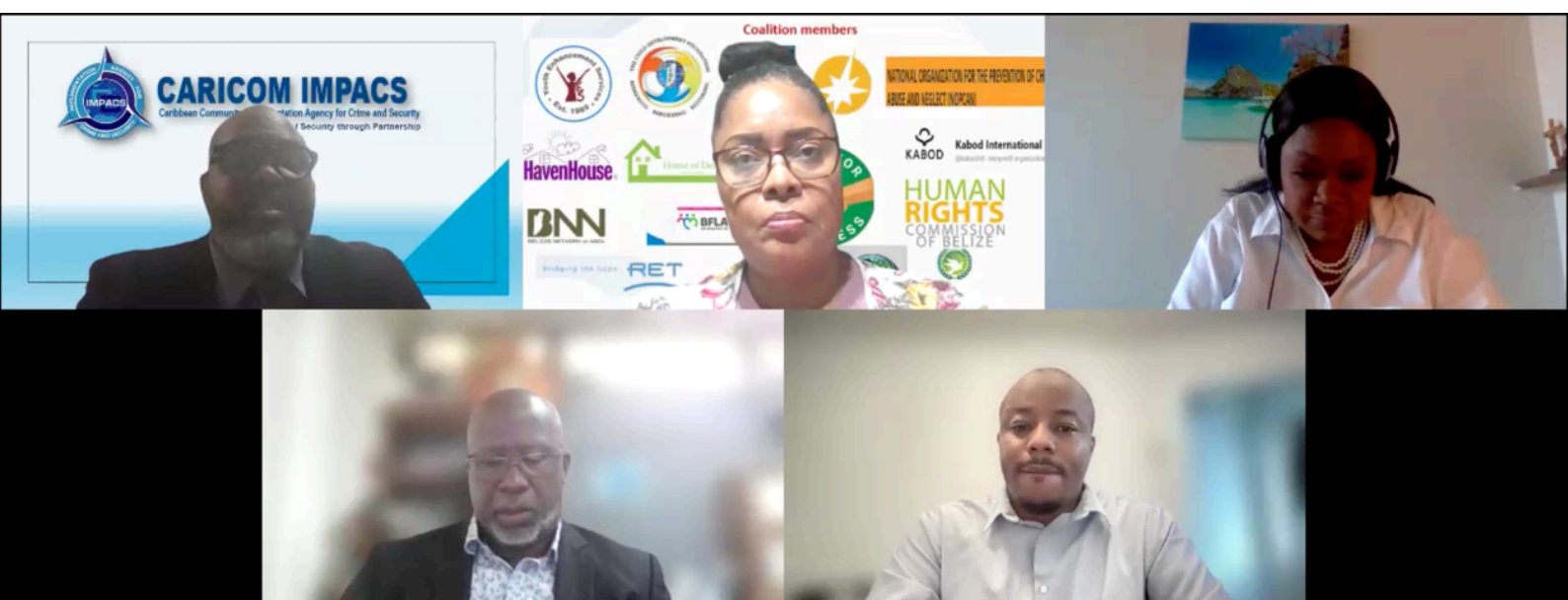
In particular, he called attention to the necessity of aligning laws with the Palermo Protocol and the ILO's conventions on forced labour and child labour. Haynes also identified the critical role of legal training for prosecutors and judges. He noted that while laws exist, implementation remains uneven due to gaps in understanding the complex dynamics of trafficking, especially distinctions between smuggling and trafficking, the non-criminalization of victims, and the gendered and intersectional nature of exploitation. Training programs, he argued, must be sustained, embedded within legal education, and led by both legal experts and survivor leaders to ensure relevance and impact.

Sherwin Toyne-Stephenson, Programme Manager for Crime and Security at the CARICOM Secretariat, echoed Haynes's call for legal coherence, while emphasizing the need for greater political will and institutional coordination. He pointed to CARICOM's Crime and Security Strategy (CCSS) as a framework for action but acknowledged that trafficking has not always been prioritized at the level it demands. He proposed the development of a standalone Regional Roadmap on Trafficking in Persons, aligned with Agenda 2030 and regional human rights commitments. Such a Roadmap, he suggested, would include a set of core indicators, timelines, and accountability mechanisms helping to move the region beyond fragmented efforts toward a unified front. Toyne-Stephenson also highlighted the strategic role of CARICOM IMPACS and other regional bodies in supporting member states with technical expertise, interagency cooperation, and the development of centralized databases for TIP cases. However, he cautioned that data must be used ethically and disaggregated meaningfully to support both policy reform and victim-centered programming.

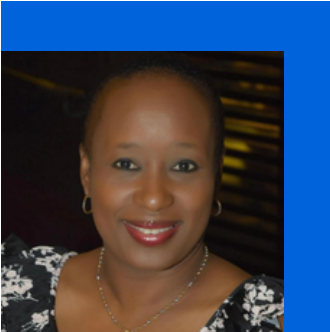
Dr. Olivia Smith, drawing from her extensive work in research and program evaluation, brought forward the crucial importance of using data to inform policy. She noted the persistent lack of comprehensive, accurate, and timely data on trafficking in the region, not just on the number of victims or cases prosecuted, but on the lived experiences of survivors, the socio-economic root causes of exploitation, and the barriers to accessing justice and services. Dr. Smith stressed the value of survivor-centered and participatory approaches to data collection and analysis, ensuring that affected communities are not merely subjects of study but active agents in shaping solutions. She also proposed the establishment of a Regional Research Hub or Observatory dedicated to trafficking and modern slavery in the Caribbean. Such an initiative would foster collaboration among academics, civil society, government agencies, and survivor networks, generating evidence to support cross-sectoral action. In her closing remarks, Dr. Smith urged stakeholders to look beyond punitive approaches and toward strategies that address the continuum of vulnerability from poverty and migration to gender-based violence and discrimination.

Diana Shaw, a consultant and longtime anti-trafficking advocate in Belize, grounded the discussion in practical realities on the ground. She affirmed the need for regional cooperation but warned against top-down approaches that overlook the capacities, priorities, and constraints of local actors. Drawing from her own experience working with CSOs and survivors, Shaw highlighted that progress is often stymied not only by lack of resources but by lack of trust between governments and communities, and sometimes between different arms of government itself. Shaw emphasized that any Roadmap to 2030 must be inclusive, and survivor informed. This means ensuring that people with lived experience of trafficking have a seat at the table not only as consultants but as decision-makers, trainers, and monitors. She also advocated for deeper engagement with youth, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ communities, and indigenous groups - communities that remain underrepresented yet face elevated risks of exploitation. For Shaw, regional progress must be measured not only in prosecutions but in prevention, protection, and the empowerment of those most affected.

Moderator Rufus Ferdinand closed the session by synthesizing the key takeaways. He reiterated that a Regional Roadmap must be bold yet achievable, rooted in legal harmonization, informed by reliable data, and driven by the voices of survivors. He committed CARICOM IMPACS's continued support in convening stakeholders, fostering cross-border cooperation, and embedding TIP priorities within the broader regional security and development agenda. In conclusion, the panelists painted a hopeful but realistic picture of what lies ahead. The Caribbean has made measurable progress in recognizing and addressing trafficking in persons, but the path to 2030 will require deeper integration, sustained political will, and a steadfast commitment to human rights and dignity. The Roadmap to 2030 must be one that bridges silos, centers survivors, and reflects the collective strength of the region in confronting modern slavery.



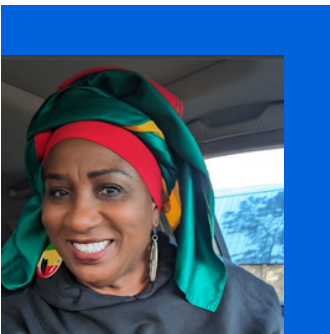
Closing: Adoption of Key Takeaways & Next Steps



**Joycelyn Hughes,
CARICOM IMPACS**



**Diahann Gordon
Harrison, CCATIP
Chair**



**Sandra Christie
Brown, Finding
Your Light
Foundation, Inc.**

The closing session of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference was led by Joycelyn Hughes, Border Security Specialist at CARICOM IMPACS. Speaking with both gratitude and urgency, Hughes brought together the reflections, insights, and aspirations that emerged over the four days of dialogue. Her remarks honored not only the milestones being commemorated such as the 25th anniversary of the Palermo Protocol and the first anniversary of the Caribbean Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons, but also the collective determination to transform those commemorations into sustained, coordinated regional action.

Hughes began by recognizing the event not simply as a conference, but as a space of purpose and resolve - a space where truths were spoken boldly, new strategies were imagined, and survivor voices were elevated. She walked the audience through the core takeaways of each day, synthesizing the momentum that had built across sessions.

Day one, she said, reminded the region of its legacy and unfinished work. While the Palermo Protocol marked a critical global milestone, it is only meaningful when viewed through a survivor-centered lens. This requires moving beyond ratification to realization, ensuring that national action plans are measured not by policy checklists, but by the real lives they protect. Hughes emphasized the need for a regional review mechanism to monitor implementation of the protocol, along with technical support for harmonizing legislation and data collection across CARICOM member states.

Turning to day two, she highlighted the challenges in securing justice for trafficking survivors. Delays in the judicial process, survivor intimidation, and institutional distrust continue to obstruct effective prosecutions. Nevertheless, countries such as Guyana, Belize, and Trinidad and Tobago presented valuable strategies for overcoming these barriers—particularly in ensuring safe testimony and avoiding retraumatization. At the same time, technology emerged as a critical front, both as a tool used by traffickers and as a means of exposing and dismantling trafficking networks. Hughes emphasized the importance of investing in cybercrime infrastructure, digital forensics, and victim protection protocols that address both online and offline harm.

Day three turned the focus to youth and vulnerability. Hughes described how speakers addressed the compounded risks posed by climate change, displacement, and poverty—factors that create fertile ground for exploitation. She reflected on the powerful testimonies about how child labor increases after natural disasters and how digital tools can protect as well as endanger young people. Importantly, the arts and storytelling were elevated as not only healing tools, but also powerful instruments of resistance. The takeaway from this day was clear: human trafficking prevention must be woven into disaster preparedness, education systems, and climate policies. Children must be seen not only as victims to be rescued, but as agents of change whose voices shape the regional response.

On the final day, Hughes turned attention inward—to the emotional and psychological toll of anti-trafficking work and the need to embrace healing and self-care. Discussions emphasized systems and partnerships—not only across agencies and sectors, but also across generations. She called for a future-ready CARICOM that is digitally resilient, legally harmonized, and fundamentally survivor- and youth-centered.

From these reflections, Hughes proposed a series of next steps to guide regional collaboration moving forward. These included the legal harmonization of anti-trafficking legislation across CARICOM states and the creation of regional Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with formal buy-in from all member governments. She also advocated for the creation of a Regional Survivor Leadership Council to guide advocacy, policy, and program design; and the launch of a youth-led anti-trafficking leadership initiative that would train young champions in prevention, education, and innovation.

Additionally, Hughes proposed building a Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Network that would bring together governments, NGOs, survivors, artists, youth groups, faith-based organizations, and the private sector. She also called for greater use of digital storytelling and cultural expressions as platforms for resistance and education—especially when youth are at the forefront of the narrative.

Before concluding, she raised two provocative questions for the region to consider as it shapes its future:

- 1. Is it time to establish a regional network of national rapporteurs on trafficking in persons—similar to those in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Jamaica—to ensure transparency and accountability?**
- 2. And should CARICOM convene a dedicated group of regional trafficking experts to set Caribbean-specific standards aligned with international frameworks such as the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act?**

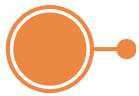
For Hughes, these are not just administrative ideas—they are critical steps toward asserting the region's own leadership and voice in the global anti-trafficking space. The goal, she stressed, is not merely to respond to international assessments, but to proactively shape a Caribbean strategy that reflects the region's unique context and needs.

Closing her remarks with a renewed sense of commitment, Hughes invoked a call first made on day one of the conference: the region must become as coordinated and determined as the traffickers it seeks to dismantle. She called for a “quiet force” rooted in dignity, solidarity, and collective action. On behalf of CARICOM IMPACS, she thanked the participants for their presence, passion, and promise—and affirmed a continued commitment to the journey ahead.

Chair of the CCATIP Leadership Committee, Mrs. Diahann Gordon Harrison, brought the conference to a thoughtful close by reflecting on the richness and intensity of the four-day dialogue. Despite its virtual format, she noted the event's engaging atmosphere and record participation, underscoring the commitment and passion of both presenters and attendees.

Her central message emphasized that all anti-trafficking stakeholders working in and for the Caribbean—whether regionally based or international—possess valuable expertise that, when coordinated effectively, can contribute to sustainable solutions.

Six Key Takeaways



Survivor and Youth Inclusion

She emphasized the proactive inclusion of survivors and youth at the design stage of all policies and programs. Both groups offer critical insights—survivors through lived experience, and youth due to their heightened vulnerability to trafficking.



Meaningful Role for NGOs and CSOs

She called for recognition and authentic integration of NGOs and community service organizations into the anti-trafficking framework, cautioning against mere tokenism.



Collaborative Partnerships at All Levels

Harrison advocated for broad-based collaboration—including with the judiciary, law enforcement, and non-traditional actors—highlighting the ripple effect their awareness (or lack thereof) can have on trafficking cases and survivor outcomes.



Attention to Emerging Risk Areas (e.g. Climate Change)

She encouraged a deeper examination of how natural disasters and environmental crises increase vulnerabilities, making populations more susceptible to trafficking. Emergency preparedness and climate-informed strategies must be part of anti-trafficking planning.



The Dual Role of Technology

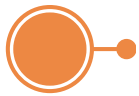
Harrison identified technology as both a tool of exploitation and empowerment. While traffickers use social media and encrypted messaging to lure victims, anti-trafficking actors must use technology for intelligence gathering, evidence collection, and improved prosecution—while confronting fears around tools like AI.



Culturally Relevant Outreach

She stressed the importance of creative public engagement, including storytelling, music, and Caribbean-rooted narratives, to raise awareness in ways that resonate with local communities and promote prevention.

Next Steps



Harmonize Legislation & Guidelines Across the Region

Where full legal alignment isn't feasible, she urged the adoption of common protocols or sentencing guidelines, citing the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court's framework as a promising model.



Interrogate Supply Chains

Harrison recommended examining the supply chains of imported goods to avoid indirectly supporting labor exploitation. She noted that economic pressure—by cutting off unethical suppliers—can create real change.



Elevate TiP at the Regional Political Level

She called for the upcoming CARICOM Heads of Government meeting to treat trafficking in persons as a central issue, with concrete outcomes and country-specific action plans developed and implemented.

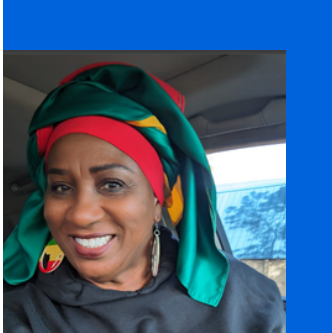


Invest in Research and Evidence

To keep pace with traffickers' evolving methods, she emphasized a commitment to continuous research, data analysis, and innovation, which are essential for refining regional strategies.



Self-Care Session & Adjourn



Sandra Christie Brown, Finding Your Light Foundation, Inc.

Sandra Christie Brown, a survivor leader and representative of the Finding Your Light Foundation, brought the conference to a close with warmth, gratitude, and an emphasis on collective well-being. As in previous days, she led participants in a light physical stretch and deep breathing exercise to ground and energize them after extended screen time.

She expressed deep appreciation for the richness of the four-day conference and praised both speakers and participants for their dedication and contributions. Acknowledging her full engagement throughout the sessions, Sandra encouraged everyone to send virtual love and appreciation to those who shared their knowledge and lived experience.

In her remarks, Sandra emphasized the importance of continuing best practices and regional collaboration, particularly in developing and uplifting survivors as leaders. She advocated for ensuring survivors are given platforms to grow, lead, and inspire others.

To close, she led participants in a collective Self-Care Resolution, encouraging everyone—panelists and attendees alike—to commit to prioritizing their mental, physical, and emotional well-being. The resolution included pledges to:

- Engage in joyful activities
- Practice mindfulness
- Maintain healthy routines (exercise, sleep, and nutrition)
- Strengthen social bonds
- Learn new skills for personal growth

Sandra ended with heartfelt thanks, expressing love, hugs, and blessings to the audience. Her final words reinforced the importance of community, healing, and sustainable leadership in anti-trafficking work.

Key Themes

Throughout Day 4 of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference, several cross-cutting themes emerged, highlighting the path forward for regional anti-trafficking efforts:



Well-being as Foundational

The preliminary self-care research underscored the pervasive issue of burnout, overwork, and chronic fatigue among anti-trafficking practitioners. A near-universal consensus emerged that the movement must prioritize and invest in the mental and physical well-being of its workers for sustainable and effective engagement.



Data as a Pillar of Justice

The discussions on data collection emphasized its critical role beyond mere compliance. Robust, integrated, and disaggregated data systems, including trauma-informed audiovisual testimony, are essential for effective investigations, prosecutions, survivor protection, and evidence-based policymaking.



Decent Work as a Prevention Strategy

Forced labor is not solely a criminal justice issue but deeply intertwined with labor market vulnerabilities. Promoting decent work standards, strengthening labor inspectorates, and engaging the private sector are crucial for preventing exploitation and fostering inclusive economic development.



Complexity of Cross-Border Cases

The case scenario highlighted the intricate legal, operational, and ethical challenges in transnational trafficking. Effective responses require regional legal harmonization, mutual legal assistance, and seamless interagency cooperation to ensure continuity of care and justice for survivors.



Roadmap to 2030: Integration and Inclusivity

The vision for 2030 calls for a unified Regional Roadmap rooted in legal coherence, informed by reliable data, and driven by the voices of survivors. This necessitates bridging silos between sectors, fostering political will, and ensuring genuine inclusion of marginalized groups in all strategic planning.



Survivor-Centered Systems

Across all sessions, the imperative to place survivors' rights, safety, and autonomy at the core of every decision was reiterated. This includes trauma-informed approaches in legal processes, culturally sensitive support services, and empowering survivors as leaders and co-creators of solutions.



Sustained Investment and Accountability

The need for predictable, long-term funding for anti-trafficking initiatives, particularly for local and survivor-led organizations, was a recurring call. Coupled with this is the demand for robust accountability mechanisms to ensure commitments translate into tangible results and that resources are used effectively.



Recommendations

Based on the discussions and insights shared during Day 4 of the Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference, the following recommendations are put forth for consideration by various stakeholders:

For Governments and Policymakers



Prioritize Practitioner Well-being

Implement policies and allocate resources to support the mental and physical well-being of anti-trafficking workers, addressing issues of overwork, burnout, and lack of emotional support.



Invest in Data Infrastructure

Prioritize and fund the development and implementation of integrated, comprehensive, and disaggregated data management systems for anti-trafficking units, ensuring regional interoperability.



Strengthen Labor Protections

Enforce decent work standards, strengthen labor inspectorates, and ensure access to grievance mechanisms, particularly for workers in informal sectors vulnerable to forced labor.



Harmonize Regional Legislation

Work towards regional legal harmonization and mutual legal assistance treaties to facilitate cross-border prosecution of trafficking cases and ensure consistent victim protection standards.



Develop a Unified Regional Roadmap

Collaborate on a standalone Regional Roadmap for anti-trafficking to 2030, with clear indicators, timelines, and accountability mechanisms, aligned with Agenda 2030.

For Law Enforcement and Judiciary



Adopt Trauma-Informed Data Collection

Utilize audiovisual recording technologies and other trauma-informed methods for collecting survivor testimony to reduce re-traumatization and enhance evidentiary robustness.



Enhance Cross-Border Investigative Capacity

Strengthen data sharing and investigative capacities to respond more effectively to transnational trafficking crimes.



Ensure Continuity of Care

Develop clear protocols for interagency cooperation to maintain continuity of care and protection for survivors moving between jurisdictions.

For Civil Society and Survivor-Led Organizations



Advocate for Well-being Resources

Champion the need for increased resources and structures to support the self-care and mental health of anti-trafficking practitioners.



Promote Survivor-Informed Data

Advocate for data collection methodologies that are survivor-centered and participatory, ensuring their lived experiences inform policy and programming.



Lead Community-Based Solutions

Continue to develop and implement culturally sensitive, community-based support networks that provide holistic care and reintegration pathways for survivors.

For International Organizations and Donors



Fund Well-being Initiatives

Provide dedicated and flexible funding for self-care, mental health, and well-being programs for anti-trafficking professionals and survivors.



Support Data Modernization

Invest in the modernization of data systems and ICT platforms for anti-trafficking units in the Caribbean, ensuring long-term sustainability.



Promote Decent Work Initiatives

Support programs that strengthen labor protections, promote ethical employer practices, and address the root causes of forced labor.



Facilitate Regional Integration

Provide technical assistance and financial support for regional legal harmonization efforts and cross-border cooperation mechanisms.



Ensure Accountability

Implement robust accountability mechanisms to track the effectiveness of anti-trafficking interventions and ensure genuine survivor participation and impact.

Cross-cutting Recommendations



Prioritize Self-Care

Recognize self-care as a foundational element for the sustainability and integrity of anti-trafficking work.



Leverage Technology Ethically

Utilize technology to enhance data collection, improve victim identification, and facilitate cross-border cooperation, always with strong ethical safeguards and privacy protections.



Foster Multisectoral Collaboration

Strengthen partnerships across government, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations to address the complex and interconnected challenges of trafficking.



Center Survivor Dignity and Justice

Ensure that all efforts, from data collection to prosecution and reintegration, prioritize the rights, safety, autonomy, and long-term well-being of survivors.

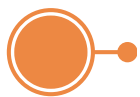


Forum Evaluation

To evaluate the effectiveness of the 2025 Caribbean Anti-Trafficking Conference and to document participant experiences, we conducted a post-event survey, receiving 23 responses from NGOs, government, law enforcement, youth advocates, and researchers. The survey assessed progress against the conference objectives, quality of learning, applicability of content, presenter performance, and the usefulness of self-care sessions, alongside open-ended feedback on strengths and areas for improvement.



23 responses from 8 countries, led by Trinidad and Tobago (8), Jamaica (7), and Belize (3)



Roles most represented: NGO representatives (7), government representatives (6), law enforcement (5), youth advocates (4), and researchers/SMEs (3)

Conference Objectives:

- ✓ Assessing alignment with the Palermo Protocol: 95.7% Yes, 4.3% Not sure
- ✓ Sharing national experiences, challenges, and lessons: 100% Yes
- ✓ Evaluating alignment with the SDGs: 91.3% Yes, 8.7% Not sure
- ✓ Facilitating survivor-centered prevention and protection: 95.7% Yes, 4.3% Not sure
- ✓ Identifying 5–10 year regional strategies: 95.7% Yes, 4.3% Not sure

Experience and Learning

- ✓ Knowledge gained: 100% satisfied or very satisfied (82.6% very satisfied)
- ✓ Ability to apply learning: 82.6% Yes, 17.4% Maybe
- ✓ Presenters' performance: average 9.04/10 (median 9; 43.5% rated 10/10)
- ✓ Expectations: 87% said the conference exceeded expectations; 13% said it just met expectations
- ✓ Self-care sessions: 100% Yes (helpful)

What Participants Valued



Cross-country learning, practical innovations and programs, ISO-related developments, and engaging, relatable sessions.



Representative feedback included:

- “Learning about the different ways of combating trafficking in the different countries.”
- “The fact it was engaging as well as very informative and relatable.”

Areas to Improve:



Desire for more hands-on workshops.



Centralized access to presentations/materials after the event.



Consider extending to a week rather than four days.



A few noted that online delivery was less ideal for self-care content.



THE 2025 CARIBBEAN ANTI-TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE

JULY 2025



WEBSITE: CCATIP.ORG