Human Trafficking: Data Collection, Current Trends and Institutional Approaches

11th Metropolis Conference
Lisbon, Portugal, October 5, 2006

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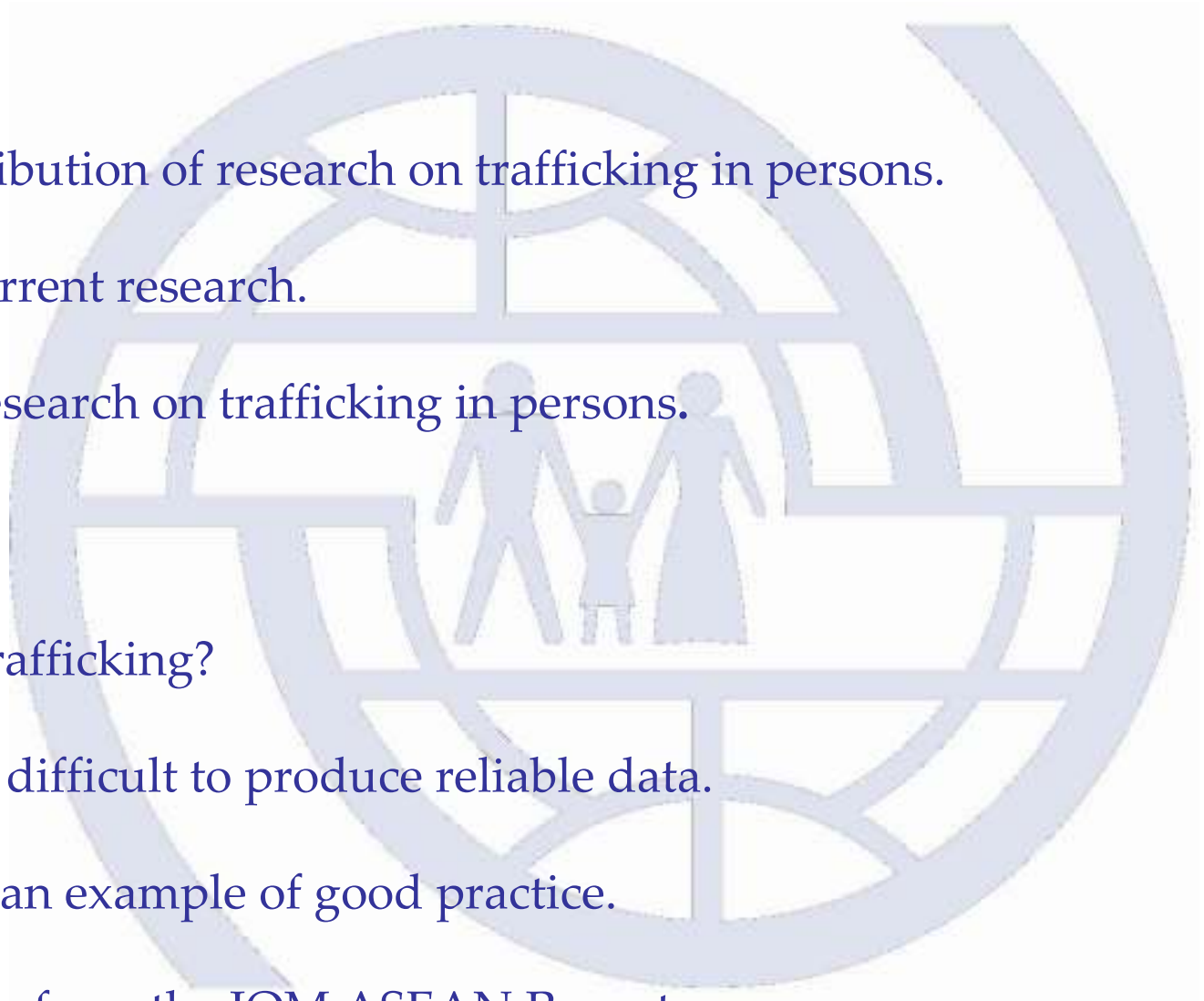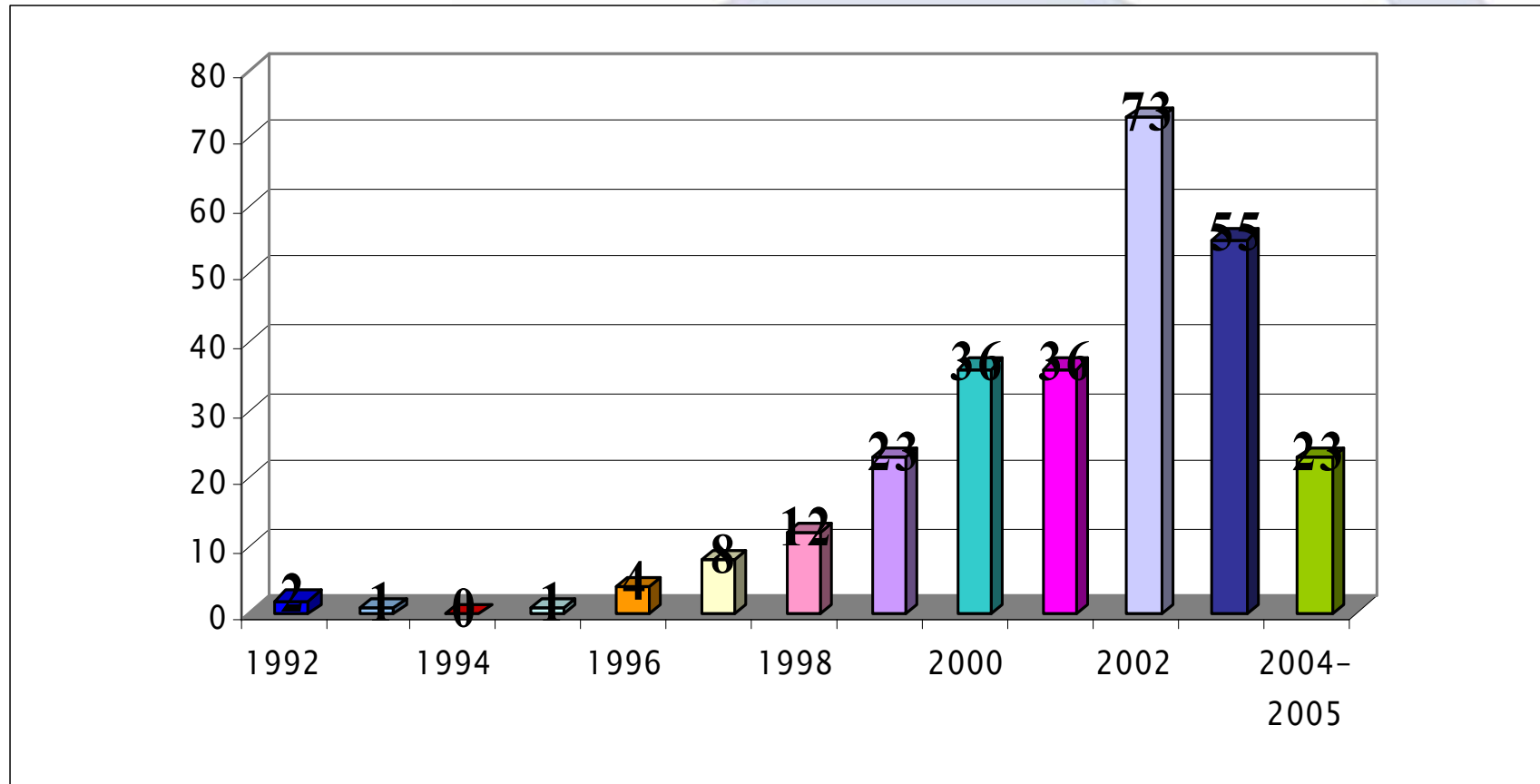IOM Geneva

Outline

- **Research**

- Growth and distribution of research on trafficking in persons.

- Weaknesses of current research.

- Towards better research on trafficking in persons.

- **Data**

- What is data on trafficking?

- Reasons why it is difficult to produce reliable data.

- IOM Database as an example of good practice.

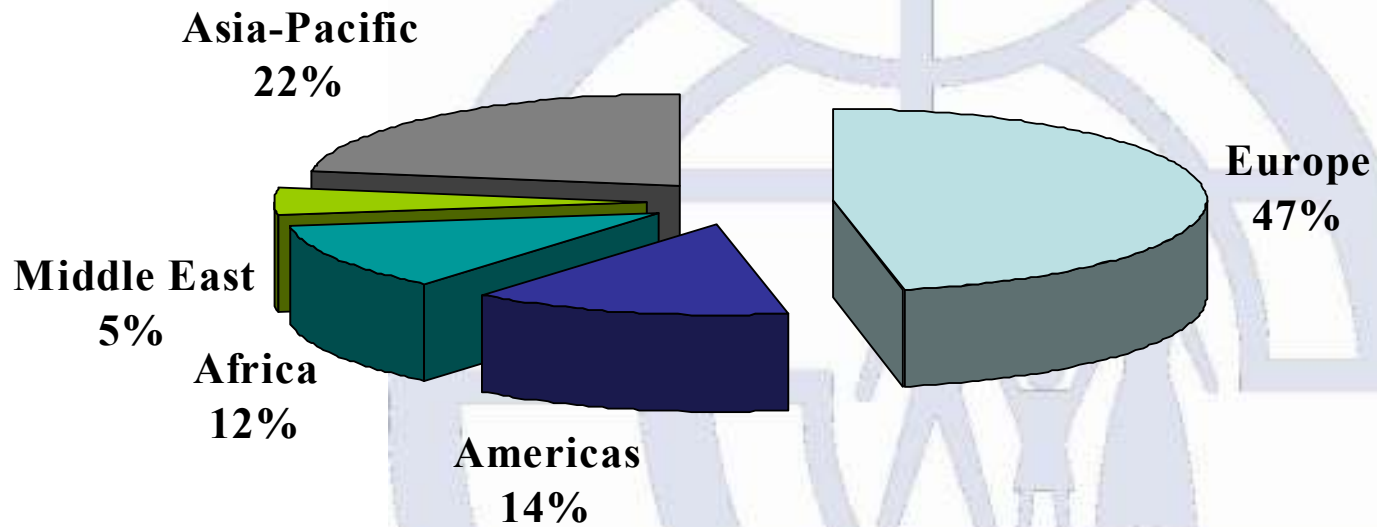- Recommendations from the IOM ASEAN Report.

Increase in Research and Publications on Trafficking

N = 274 titles
Source: Human Trafficking bibliography, IOM, 2005.

Regional Distribution of Studies on Trafficking

Asia-Pacific
22%

Middle East
5%

Africa
12%

Americas
14%

Europe
47%

Total publications: 274.   Source: Human Trafficking bibliography, IOM, 2005.

Acknowledged Weaknesses in Research on Trafficking

- Short timeframe, usually 6–9 months, low budget, few longitudinal studies.

- Focus on trafficking in women and trafficking for sexual exploitation.

- Descriptive studies of legislative and policy measures.

- Few detailed and independent evaluations of policy responses/counter trafficking measures.

- Focus on the 'supply' side and on factors in source and transit countries, rather than 'demand' side in countries of destination.

Towards Better Research on Trafficking in Persons

- Donors to give greater priority to basic research.

- Develop new research agenda and give priority to neglected areas of research, i.e. demand factors and evaluation of policies and programmes.

- Enhance quality of research – develop research methods, tools and guidelines.

- Develop research capacity, especially in developing countries.

- Build research networks.

What is data on Trafficking?

- **Data is comprised of:**
  - ❖ Global estimates
  - ❖ Prosecution data and arrests
  - ❖ Information from support services
  - ❖ Surveys of community knowledge.

- **Sources of data:**
  - ❖ Government agencies
  - ❖ NGOs
  - ❖ Ios
  - ❖ Research Institutes.

  - **But, data often varies significantly in quality and quantity.**

Why is it so difficult to produce reliable data on trafficking?

- Until 2000, there was not a universally-agreed definition of human trafficking.

- Few governments have begun to systematically collect data on trafficking:

  - In many countries, it is common to mix data on smuggling, trafficking and irregular migration.

  - Data on trafficking, if collected, refer only to women and children trafficked for sexual exploitation.

- Low priority given to the combating of human trafficking:

  - Legislation is lacking or not implemented – prosecution is difficult.

  - Victim does not become witness – deported as illegal migrants/ lack of witness protection projects.

Barriers to a Global Estimate

Findings from the 2006 GAO report

- Global estimates are often inaccurate because of:
  - ❖ Methodological weaknesses
  - ❖ Gaps in data
  - ❖ Numerical weaknesses
  - ❖ Discrepencies between the number of observed and estimated VoT.

- Improvements in data collection are yet to be implemented.

Source: Human Trafficking: Better Data, Strategy and Reporting Needed to Enhance U.S Antitrafficking Efforts Abroad, GAO, 2006

Towards a Global Estimate

- Develop a reliable estimate through a systematic, multi-agency approach.

- Improve information on the global scope of trafficking:
  - Overall numbers
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Type of exploitation
  - Profile of traffickers.

- The IOM (CTM) Database as a tool to assist efforts to better data.

Source: Human Trafficking: Better Data, Strategy and Reporting Needed to Enhance U.S Antitrafficking Efforts Abroad, GAO, 2006

Measures to Improve Data Collection

The IOM Counter Trafficking Module (CTM) Database as an example of best practice

- Developed to facilitate the management of information gathered from all IOM Counter-Trafficking and Return and Reintegration programmes.

- A pilot database was launched in Central and Eastern Europe.

- The global database currently includes primary data on 9,376 trafficked persons registered since November 1999.

IOM Counter Trafficking Module (CTM) Database as a Research Tool

- The CTM database is a unique research tool because it contains only primary data.

- Currently being analyzed within IOM's Research Department and IOM's Counter-Trafficking Service.

- The findings will be publicized late 2006.

- The objective is to provide an overview of the available data .

- Focus on the causes of trafficking, the profile of the trafficker and the role of trafficking networks in the process, the kind of exploitations experienced by the Victim of Trafficking, and re-trafficking patterns.

- Country case studies will highlight current trends, profiles, routes and patterns of exploitation.

ASEAN Pilot Research Project

- ASEAN Member Countries are always looking for ways to improve their responses to human trafficking.

- In 2005, ASEAN Member countries commissioned IOM to conduct a pilot research project to identify 'best practice' in data collection on human trafficking.

- Assessed data collection (how data is compiled, summarized, reported) by government agencies in four ASEAN Member Countries- Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.

- IOM prepared a 'situation report' to:
  - ❖ Describe government practices regarding data on trafficking
  - ❖ Discuss the major challenges being faced by governments
  - ❖ Provide strategies to overcome the common challenges.

Source: ASEAN and Trafficking in Persons: Using Data as a Tool to Combat Trafficking in Persons

ASEAN Report- Main Findings

- ASEAN Member Countries are taking many practical steps to combat trafficking:
  - ❖ Specific anti-trafficking laws
  - ❖ Specialist anti-trafficking police units
  - ❖ Return and reintergration agreements with neighbouring countries

- But efforts to combat trafficking are being held back by a lack of relevant, reliable data.

Source: ASEAN and Trafficking in Persons: Using Data as a Tool to Combat Trafficking in Persons

Strategies to Overcome Common Data Collection Challenges

- Implement best practice principles- regular and reliable data.
- Clear, comprehensive and user-freindly laws and policies on trafficking.
- Governments need to understand their own 'data on trafficking'.
- Improve communication on data collection
- Training of officials in identifying and handling trafficking cases.
- Effective 'information systems'.
- Policies and procedures regarding the protection of personal information.
- Agree on the fundamentals of what 'trafficking' is.

Source: ASEAN and Trafficking in Persons: Using Data as a Tool to Combat Trafficking in Persons

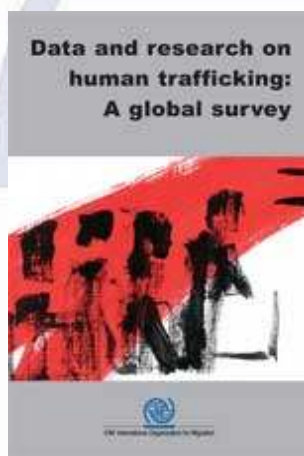## Developing Better Data and Research on Trafficking – some suggestions

- Raise awareness among donors and governments about importance of research and data collection.

- Develop guidelines for collection of data and share 'best practices'.

- Promote more systematic data collection and information sharing by involved agencies, within and between countries.

- Promote a new research agenda to encourage research on neglected subjects (trafficking of males; trafficking for forced labour) and target regions (Africa, Middle East, Americas), where there has been less research.

Thank You

For more information, please contact:

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For further reading…

Data and research on
human trafficking:
A global survey

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