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(EAFORD)**

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Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

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Item 6: Specific human rights issues: Contemporary forms of slavery

EAFORD would like to draw the attention of the members of the Sub-commission to some problems related to immigrant workers, which raise urgent human rights issues.

The first of these problems deals with Asian women workers in some Gulf States. Although these women contribute considerably to the economic and social development of their countries, they suffer in several documented cases from contemporary forms of slavery, and become victims of criminal networks and subject to multiple forms of offences.

EAFORD would like to express here its satisfaction with the work of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants and urge the international human rights community to take in consideration the recommendations set in her report on “Specific Groups and individuals Migrant Workers”(E/CN.4 /2005/85 of 27 December 2004).

Receiving states and states of origin of the migrant workers should enter agreements in order to guarantee their rights with appropriate mechanisms and sanctions, and with the monitoring mechanisms and participation of NGOs, UN and ILO.

In immigration policies, states should take into consideration their human rights obligations and incriminate all forms of discrimination. EAFORD wants to commend the measures taken by the Spanish government to regulate the situation of thousands of migrant workers. By doing so it prevents the criminal exploitation of migrant workers, recognise and encourage their positive contribution to the economic and social development of Spain and of their own countries.

We welcome the entry into force of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and the first meeting of the states parties in 2004, but EAFORD regrets the fact that the majority of the developed countries, which are the main receiving countries of migrant workers, did not ratify the convention.

Our organisation would like also to draw your attention to the dramatic situation of thousands of candidates to irregular migration coming from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. These human beings are not only victims of the exploitation of criminal networks, but also of the states failure to address the structural causes of this phenomenon.

The Special Rapporteur reported that: “in the five past years (presumably 1999-2003), more than 4000 bodies have been found on the two shores of the Strait (between Morocco and Spain). To this figure must be added those who have disappeared”(E/CN.4/2004/76/Add3).

African migrant workers, living in Morocco as a transit country, undergo daily ordeals. They live as homeless people, begging, eating from rubbish, and at risk of different forms of aggression. When they are arrested they remain in administrative custody awaiting expulsion without any appropriate legal aid, health care or provisions.

EAFORD expects from the members of the Sub-commission a contribution in drawing the attention of the international community to all issues raised in this statement in order for the states to take seriously their human rights obligations.

EAFORD

9 August 2005