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**“Best Practices and Next Steps:
A New Decade in the Fight Against Human Trafficking”**

*Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights Subcommittee
Excerpts of Remarks by Chairman Chris Smith
June 13, 2011*

Thank you for joining us this afternoon to focus on the continuing fight to end human trafficking. Significant progress has been made since I authored the landmark legislation, the Trafficking Victim’s Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), to address trafficking around the world almost a decade ago, but new forms and methods of trafficking are constantly emerging and we have to constantly recalibrate our efforts to stay ahead of them.

At this hearing, we will be examining in particular the most effective policies and tools developed by the government and the private sector to combat human trafficking. No country and few industries are untouched by this pervasive human rights abuse. Traffickers use airlines to move their victims, hotels to exploit sex trafficking victims, and unsuspecting buyers to pay for goods that have been made with raw materials tainted by forced and bonded labor. It is estimated that there are anywhere from 12 to 27 million sex and labor trafficking victims in the world at any given time.

We know that organized crime, street gangs, and pimps have expanded into sex trafficking at an alarming rate. It is an extremely lucrative undertaking - a trafficker can make \$200,000 a year off of one victim. Unlike drugs or weapons, a human being can be held captive and sold into sexual slavery over and over again. And we are just beginning to understand the full scope of labor trafficking. The International Labor Organization estimates that countries import and export billions of dollars worth of goods made by the labor trafficking victims. Unsuspecting buyers purchase these goods, perpetuating the profits of traffickers and the misery of the victims.

The TVPA of 1998 was a landmark bill with a bold strategy that included sheltering, asylum, and other protections for the victims; long jail sentences and asset confiscation for the traffickers; and tough sanctions for governments that failed to meet minimum standards prescribed in the TVPA.

It was met initially with a wall of skepticism and opposition. People both within and outside of government thought the issue of human trafficking was merely a solution in search of a problem. One major objection, especially from the Clinton Administration, was the naming and ranking of countries based on compliance with the establishment of common-sense minimum standards—clearly articulated prevention, protection and prosecution benchmarks—enforced by sanctions and penalties against egregious violators. Fortunately, reality won out over ignorance, and the TVPA was signed into law two years later in 2000.

The Trafficking in Persons Report, which is written by the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Human Trafficking currently headed by Ambassador Lou CdeBaca, not only summarizes the rankings and performance of each nation every year, but also provides detailed recommendations as to how each country can improve its efforts.

The report has become a resource and diplomatic tool of extraordinary value. In the last 10 years, we have seen over 130 countries change their laws to better fight trafficking. Successful prosecutions have increased dramatically. The number of victims identified and rescued goes up significantly every year. But there is still much more work to do. In 2009, close to 50,000 victims were rescued worldwide—more than any other recorded year—yet this is just a fraction of the 12 to 27 million slavery victims suffering around the world.

Parts of the TVPA were re-authorized in 2003, 2005, and 2008. We are now preparing to reauthorize sections of the legislation again this year. This hearing provides an important opportunity to see what new and effective measures are being taken by various stakeholders, and what the U.S. Government can do to help encourage and facilitate those efforts.

Of particular interest are the evolving roles of public-private partnerships. In the past five years, several effective initiatives that aim to prevent trafficking and assist victims have been undertaken by the private sector. Joining us at this hearing is a representative of Carlson Wagonlit, which has taken the lead in developing best practices for the hotel industry. The Body Shop is using their brand to raise awareness of human trafficking and to campaign for country-specific solutions. Airline Ambassadors, a non-governmental organization, is identifying gaps in trafficking prevention on airlines and developing training for the worldwide industry. Other NGO's, such as All Girls Allowed, have exposed government policies, such as China's one-child policy, that fuel trafficking demand and contribute directly to the exploitation of girls and women.

I am particularly pleased to welcome Mr. David Abramowitz as a witness before the subcommittee today. Prior to his current position with Humanity United, Mr. Abramowitz served for many years as chief counsel with the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and he has been involved in the drafting and negotiating of the TVPA since it was first introduced in 1998. Mr. Abramowitz is well-known as a leading expert in the human trafficking field and as a stalwart advocate of trafficking victims around the world, and it is a privilege to have him with us today.

This hearing will highlight the need to harness the insights and expertise of government and various actors from civil society alike. Such coordinated efforts should always be an

emphasis of public policy, but are particularly necessary in times of severe budgetary constraints such as those now facing our global economy. Such partnerships bring together a broader range of expertise, leverage resources to obtain better results, and spread awareness to people who can make a difference but who may otherwise never hear about human trafficking.

I look forward to hearing the testimonies of our witnesses as we look to strengthen the global fight against human trafficking.