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AMERICA/ECUADOR - Against human trafficking, a scourge that affects more than 6 000 people only in Ecuador

Quito (Agenzia Fides) - Every year about 800 000 people around the world are victims of human trafficking, a growing business that is based on slavery, deceit or violence, said Hiroshima Villalba, Undersecretary to the democratic guarantees of the Ministry of Interior of Ecuador, while the Deputy Minister of the Interior, Javier Cordoba, said that in Ecuador the victims are more than 6 000, and 90% of the women involved suffer sexual violence.

These statements were made during the presentation of the International Meeting on human trafficking, in progress (14 and 15 May) in Quito, with the title "Meeting on human trafficking and smuggling of migrants", attended by specialists from Costa Rica, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay and the United States. Ecuadorian authorities have stressed that the Constitution of Ecuador and their national development plan for welfare, manifest the willingness to reduce this illegal practice. The government of Ecuador has also signed with Peru a border binational protocol to provide complete assistance to victims and survivors of trafficking. The initiative aims to protect women, children and adolescents against these crimes in the areas of El Oro, Loja and Zamora, in Ecuador, and Tumbes, on the northern border of Peru.

Only a few days ago, the Vatican insisted on the importance that the Church cooperates with international organizations in terms of prevention, support and rehabilitation of victims of trafficking. "We put at the service of the fight against human trafficking all our network of religious in the world," said Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in the World during the Conference held at the Vatican on this scourge. He also insisted on the common work of the Church, governments, institutions and humanitarian organizations worldwide, to address the problem effectively. The final declaration of the event reads: "the problem is becoming more dramatic and real, and is the second most lucrative international crime, illegal trade after weapons." (CE) (Agenzia Fides 15/5/2012)

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