

Opening by **Michel VEUTHEY**,  
*Ambassador to monitor and combat trafficking in persons*,  
**Sovereign Order of Malta**

Allow me to open this side event by expressing my **deep gratitude** to Mr. Rabih EL HADDAD, UNITAR Director of the Division for Multilateral Diplomacy, and his colleagues, in particular Dr. Anna Sabrina WOLLMANN, for our Memorandum of Understanding on an online course on human trafficking that we plan to organize from 20 January to 12 February 2026. This course, entitled THE NEED FOR TANGIBLE ACTION MAKING A DIFFERENCE will be a unique opportunity to join a **distinguished panel of international experts** to learn and discuss how to prevent and combat human trafficking. In 2024, the International Labour Organisation estimated that **annual profits from forced labour would amount to US\$236 billion**. The new study on forced labour in the private sector reveals a 37 per cent increase in illicit profits from forced labour since 2014. This amount of illegal profit is equivalent to the **GDP of a country like Portugal** or the state of Kansas in the US. And the number of contemporary slaves is estimated at **50 million**, more than ever before in history.

And that is why we are planning two sessions per week from **January 20 to February 12, 2026**, Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 4 to 6 p.m., 8 sessions:

1. Tuesday, January 20 - INTRODUCTION
2. Thursday, January 22 - FORCED LABOR & SUPPLY CHAINS
3. Tuesday, January 27 - SEX TRAFFICKING
4. Thursday January 29 - CAUSES & DEMAND
5. Tuesday February 3 - TECHNOLOGY & AI
6. Thursday February 5 - HEALTH
7. Tuesday February 10 - MIGRATION
8. Thursday, February 12 - NEW PARADIGM

This programme is organized and led by myself, UNITAR, and Kevin Hyland, an internationally recognized expert, former first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner of the UK Government from 2014 to 2018, and Chief Executive of PRAEVENI GLOBAL. Kevin Hyland is constantly working on advocacy and action on behalf of victims and survivors of human trafficking. He is planning to be in Geneva in May (7, 8 and 9). We are planning to have meetings with several Permanent Missions and Organisations.

Training and multi-stakeholder cooperation are essential to better prevent and combat trafficking, and to effectively protect and rehabilitate survivors.

That's why the Order of Malta welcomes this harmonious cooperation with UNITAR, which could be supported by other organizations from the UN system and academia. Prior to the first online course in January 2026, we are **open to consider participating in other training courses**, online or in person, in Geneva or elsewhere.

Let's hope that this event will initiate or **strengthen dialogue and cooperation** among all interested parties.

Geneva, 28 March 2025