

**STATEMENT BY**

**Luis CdeBaca**

**Ambassador-at-Large**

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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**BEFORE THE**

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION POLICY,**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND PROCUREMENT REFORM**

**MARCH 27, 2012**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Connolly, and Members of the Subcommittee. It's an honor to be here today. We are always eager to update Members of Congress on the Administration's efforts to combat modern slavery, because leaders on both sides of the aisle and on both sides of Capitol Hill have helped drive so much of the progress we've made in the last decade in the fight against trafficking in persons.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 continues to serve as the touchstone for all of our efforts to combat this crime both at home and around the world. That law and its subsequent reauthorizations have bridged administrations and Congresses of both parties, and modifications over the years have allowed us to keep pace with a criminals who are constantly adapting and changing the face of modern slavery.

One of the tools Congress has given us through the TVPA is the annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*. The *Report* has become an unparalleled resource for determining how well governments are responding to modern slavery. It plays a critical role in our diplomacy on this issue and serves as a guide for governments seeking to translate their political will to stop this crime into concrete results.

Focusing squarely on government action, as the *TIP Report* does, is essential, because governments bear the primary responsibility for fighting trafficking in persons. After all, trafficking in persons is a crime. Only governments can arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate traffickers. Only governments can provide legal recourse and status to survivors. We will continue to push governments to aggressively combat modern slavery using the 3P approach of prevention, prosecution, and protection.

But we've also come to understand that the role of government in fighting this crime need not be limited to law enforcement and the provision of victim services. We know that forced labor taints the supply chains of products we rely on every day. We know that labor recruiters are profiting through the use of unscrupulous and non-transparent practices that saddle workers with debts they will never be able to repay. We know that a global market for cheap goods and commercial sex fuels the demand that traffickers exploit. And we know that concerned consumers are pushing more and more companies to do something about modern slavery in their corporate policies.

As Secretary Clinton said earlier this month when she chaired the President's Human Trafficking Task Force meeting, all of that knowledge becomes

particularly important when you think of the buying power of governments.

Governments conduct business on a global scale with a massive roster of suppliers and contractors. Policies that apply what we've learned about supply chain monitoring, responsible labor recruitment practices, and honorable conduct to government procurement and contracting would have ripple effects far and wide into the private sector.

Using governments' reach as consumers as a tool to combat modern slavery isn't just about what governments can do; it's also about what they should do. Governments will remain the primary actors in this fight. Indeed, the growing din of the public outcry and the increased call from consumer activists on this issue does not mitigate government responsibility; rather, it should be heard as a mandate for governments to take aggressive action. When governments take up the cause of fighting modern slavery, their credibility can be undermined if their own policies, procurement, and personnel practices are inadvertently making the problem worse. At the Task Force Cabinet meeting, Deputy National Security Advisor Denis McDonough perhaps said it best when he framed the role the United States needs to play: "We recognize that across the government, there's still an awful lot to do to improve on this in terms of procurement of goods and labor, and the President is demanding that we do more in exactly this area."

We take the President's call to action very seriously at the State Department. To demonstrate our commitment, we are putting in place new prohibitions on our contractors that will no longer allow them to charge recruitment fees to workers. You'll soon hear from my colleague Cathy Read, in the Bureau of Administration, about the excellent work that is being done on these issues.

This is the sort of innovation that will be critical to the future of this struggle. And as in so many other aspects of this important work, we look forward to working with our partners in Congress to keep delivering on the promise of freedom.

Thank you, and I am happy to take your questions.

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## **Luis CdeBaca**



Ambassador-at-Large

OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Term of Appointment: 05/18/2009 to present

In May 2009, Ambassador Luis CdeBaca was appointed by President Obama to coordinate U.S. government activities in the global fight against contemporary forms of slavery. He serves as Senior Advisor to the Secretary and directs the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, which assesses global trends, provides training and technical assistance, and advocates for an end to modern slavery.

Mr. CdeBaca formerly served as Counsel to the House Committee on the Judiciary, where his portfolio for Chairman John Conyers, Jr. included national security, intelligence, immigration, civil rights, and modern slavery issues.

At the Justice Department, Mr. CdeBaca was one of the country's most-decorated federal prosecutors, leading the investigation and prosecution of cases involving money laundering, organized crime, alien smuggling, official misconduct, hate crimes, and human trafficking. He was honored with the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award for his service as lead trial counsel in the then largest slavery prosecution in U.S. history, which involved the enslavement of over 300 Vietnamese and Chinese workers in a garment factory in American Samoa. Additionally, he received the Department's highest litigation honor – the Attorney General's John Marshall Award – and the Director's Award from the Executive Office of United States Attorneys. He has received the leading honor given by the national trafficking victim service provider community, the Freedom Network's Paul & Sheila Wellstone Award, and has been named the Michigan Law School's Distinguished Latino Alumnus. He has convicted dozens of abusive pimps and employers, and helped to liberate hundreds of victims from servitude.

Mr. CdeBaca's family settled in New Mexico in the 1500s. He was raised on a cattle ranch in Huxley, Iowa, and attended Iowa State University. Mr. CdeBaca received his law degree from the Michigan Law School, where he was an editor of the Michigan Law Review.