

Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates, colleagues and friends.

I am grateful to the Secretary-General and all participants for their warm welcome today. I am honoured and humbled to take on this important task. I am inspired by the Secretary-General's compassion, commitment and vision which underpin his approach to this shameful issue. I am also inspired that so many member states are determined that there will be a new approach. And I congratulate all the States who are here today demonstrating that they wish to champion the victims of the conduct they so clearly condemn.

The Secretary-General has outlined his four-pronged strategy to address the inhumane behaviour that a minority of individuals who have a duty to uphold the highest standards engage in. This behaviour is rooted in inequality and abuse of power. It violates

ethical standards, UN standards of conduct and in some cases international law. It crushes the dignity of those most at risk.

And my role is to advocate for those who are most at risk. This is a two-pronged task which involves identifying ways to prevent abuses and, if they occur, the promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of victims.

These are multifaceted and complex undertakings which cannot be carried out by one person or entity alone. They require joined-up action and cooperation across the UN system, particularly including Resident Coordinators and heads of mission. They require engagement with structures outside the UN, including regional and sub-regional bodies and other expert and political frameworks. They require the expertise, experience and energy of civil society. And importantly, they require States to participate and share national-level best practices of provision of justice and remedies to victims which respect, protect and fulfil their rights.

I am privileged to be the first UN Victims' Rights Advocate.

However, I am conscious that the recognition of the dignity and rights of victims is not new. Much has been done by Member states to place the perspectives of victims of crime at the centre of their criminal justice response. Civil society, including grass roots and community groups, national human rights institutions, faith-based organizations has also been active in encouraging victims of sexual exploitation and abuse to come forward. They have assisted them through gender and child sensitive complaint mechanisms, protecting their interests during investigations, seeking accountability and ensuring that they are informed and able to participate and make their voices heard in the processes that concern them. I aim, in partnership with all stakeholders, to gather these experiences and identify strategies which should underpin a consistent, transparent, gender, child and disability sensitive focus on victims. Much solid work, such as policy development, tools and training, has occurred within the UN itself. I will build on this,

and, with the support of the field-based victims' advocates, seek to elevate it so that the victim's concerns are central from complaint to outcome.

The Secretary-General's new approach is ambitious and principled. I am proud to be part of its implementation. I pledge to work inclusively, transparently and openly as I seek, with all who have come here today, to devise measures of protection and humane treatment of victims, as well as accountability and reparation, if protection fails.