



## Emerging Law and Global Agreements on Human and Drug Trafficking

---

*Professor Jeffrey Sachs*

Thank you very much. We're all very lucky to be together. This is a remarkable gathering and, for me, this is one of the most remarkable rooms in the whole world.

I can only share my sense that when we get together amazing things happen that are really in many ways unexpected and extremely powerful, so it's always a thrill to be here. In addition to the common law and the civil law we have the international law and the international framework, and this is an important moment for the international community – as we've heard from President Archer in her opening.

2015 was a very particular year from the point of view of the international community.

I would say three amazing developments occurred. First, in September 2015 the new framework of global cooperation on sustainable development was adopted, what is called Agenda 2030, including 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and several of them are addressed towards our topic today.

A few weeks after, that the Paris Climate Agreement was agreed on December 12, so that, for the first time, the world has agreed on a framework for implementing a path to climate safety. And the third development, which in very important ways made those two possible, was Pope Francis's Encyclical *Laudato si'*, which was a remarkable eye opener for the world. It resonated very rapidly all over the world.

It called for an integral approach to our challenges, it called for an integral human and sustainable development and, importantly, it called for what Pope Francis calls a common plan for our common home. And world leaders heard that call in very important ways, in very literal ways, to make possible the agreements in September and December. And one has to emphasize with the United Nations this is not easy!

There are a hundred ninety three members, and if a single member state at either of those two occasions had raised its hand and said "we don't like this framework", that would have been, from a legal point of view, the end for the moment at least, because these are processes that only operate by global consensus. So we have a framework that we did not have before. Of course it's extraordinarily fragile.

It is, I think, our responsibility and our best hope to help put this into implementation in a global and inclusive manner. And time is short, of course, because agreements like this have great fragility and if they are not implemented and not moved forward they fade from view.

What's essential about this framework is the interconnected challenges. The whole theme of sustainable development is that society must simultaneously and in an integral manner put economic, social and environmental considerations together, and when we think about human trafficking and modern slavery, while those are first and foremost social crises of exclusion and extreme vulnerability and extreme injustice – crimes against humanity – they result from economic factors of poverty and desperation, they result from environmental factors increasingly, of physical environments that are so degraded and so much subject to upheaval and shocks that they are displacing millions and tens of millions of people.

So we have the world's attention and we have, right now, with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement a call for every nation to put forward national plans of action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, to achieve the Paris Climate Agreement and to work together with other countries and across all sectors of society to make it possible to have success. In the UN international legal context, the Sustainable Development Goals, of course, build on specific treaties and conventions as well. One can mention the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which was adopted in 2000, and the underlying Protocols – the so-called Palermo Protocols – on human trafficking, that aim by international law to implement the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Also one should mention that in 2010 governments agreed to a global plan of action on human trafficking, and there will be a review that was just announced in the UN General Assembly next year, in 2017, on this global plan of action, but clearly it needs tremendous reinforcement and increase of commitment and energy and specific resources for success, which is one of the principal aims of the Sustainable Development Goals. As President Archer mentioned, the Sustainable Development Goals, thanks to the wonderful work of President Archer and Monsignor Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo and many people in this room, Kevin Hyland and many

others, incorporate the objectives of fighting human trafficking and modern slavery and I would mention very quickly that there are three key provisions in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Under the goal of eliminating gender and equality there's a target to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

You saw a moment ago Target 8.7 which says to "take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour" and then Target 16.2, under the rubric of

peaceful and inclusive societies, calls for ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against, and torture of, children.

There are also the means of

implementation mentioned in this Agenda 2030 and just very briefly they go along what is sometimes called the 3 Ps: prevention, protection and punishment.

There is a clear recognition that I think we need to always keep in mind that it says that we need to address the social, economic, cultural, political and other factors that make people vulnerable to trafficking in persons, such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, humanitarian emergencies, including armed conflicts, natural disasters, sexual violence and so on.

So we have a framework. We also have a new effort to measure, because the measurement is obviously extraordinarily difficult and fragile, and a UN expert commission on measurement for the SDGs has called for several indicators to be collected now for the first time at a systematic level, including the number of victims of human trafficking per population, and then disaggregated by gender, age group, and forms of exploitation, and other indicators along the same lines.

This is the context internationally. There's attention, there is attention because of Pope Francis, there's attention because of the urgency of the challenge of sustainable development. I think that it is fair to say that we're dealing with an issue which is one of the most intractable and deeply embedded in our societies and in the world.

It is probably not by accident that human trafficking is actually at the crux of the great drama of the Old Testament, because the whole drama of the escape from Egypt started with human

trafficking, which brought Joseph to Egypt at the start,

when his own brothers sold him for 20 pieces of silver. And we know that that beginning had consequences of ramification for all of society, putting a whole society into slavery over time, and leading to the redemption from slavery that is actually the great drama of human history. And I think it's important to remember that the definition of justice in the Old Testament starts with the declaration "Remember your slaves in Egypt" and this is the essence of the call for justice and with Jesus, I think, it is the underpinning of the most fundamental call to remember "the least among thee".

It's a remarkable idea, it's an idea that continues to move humanity, it's the idea that if we can remember the least among us, we not only dignify each individual but we protect all of humanity, and that's the service of justice, so I think we're very, very privileged to be here. Thank you.