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Good Evening, colleagues and friends.

I am honored to participate in the Freedom Network's 8th Annual Conference.

The core mission of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division is to uphold the fundamental rights of all individuals, particularly of some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

The fight to end human trafficking lies at the heart of this mission. Human trafficking is a crime that denies its victims the most basic of their fundamental rights—the right to freedom and human dignity.

It is a crime that preys on members of our society who are too often hidden in the shadows, and whose voices too often go unheard.

And it is a crime that is intolerable in a society founded on freedom and individual rights.

In the words of President Obama, “the victims of modern slavery have many faces. They are men and women, adults and children. Yet all are denied basic human dignity and freedom....We must join together as a Nation and global community to provide [a] safe haven by protecting victims and prosecuting traffickers...Fighting modern slavery and human trafficking is a shared responsibility” [Presidential Proclamation, January 4, 2010]

The Freedom Network exemplifies the highest ideals of this call to action, working tirelessly on behalf of victims from all walks of life, empowering them to become survivors.

The Freedom Network is also a leader in building the partnerships necessary to protect victims and bring traffickers to justice.

The Civil Rights Division is proud of its record of vigorously prosecuting traffickers. In each of the past two years, we have brought record numbers of human trafficking prosecutions. And last year, this included the highest number of labor trafficking cases ever brought in a single year. Each of these prosecutions sends a loud and clear message that the trafficking of human beings, whether for forced labor or commercial sex, will not be tolerated on these shores.

And I can say with great confidence that we have been able to make these significant strides in human trafficking prosecutions for one reason, and one reason alone: partnerships. The Civil Rights Division's specialized Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit provides leadership and expertise on some of the most novel, complex, innovative and high-impact prosecutions – but we could never do so alone. The unit works closely with other Civil Rights prosecutors, U.S. Attorneys around the country, colleagues in the Criminal Division, and federal agents.

But in many cases, it is the partnership with the non-governmental victim advocate that is the most important. I have heard experienced human trafficking prosecutors say that behind every successful case, there is a strong victim advocate – a trauma counselor, a service provider, or a victim's attorney. Someone to support the victim and help her overcome her fears.

This conference brings together individuals from the many diverse groups that have played such a critical role in many of our landmark cases.

CAST LA was a key player in supporting the traumatized victims of the Vasquez-Valenzuela sex trafficking ring that exploited young Guatemalan women and girls in Los Angeles. With the expert assistance of CAST, the victims in that case courageously spoke out during the investigation and prosecution, and it was through that partnership that we were able to sentence the lead defendant in that case to 40 years in jail.

Our colleagues from Safe Horizon tirelessly assisted the young Mexican victims in *US v. Carreto* over the many years it took from the time the victims were first rescued in New York, through the time the lead defendants were sentenced to 50 years apiece, until another defendant was extradited from Mexico, convicted, and ultimately sentenced three years later.

Freedom Network members have provided critical assistance to farm workers in the Navarrete case in Florida; to the domestic servant exploited for 19 years in the Calimlim case in Milwaukee; and to the Nigerian domestic servant abused by her traffickers who were convicted just last month in the Nnaji case in Fort Worth Texas.

It is YOU--the expert victim assistance providers of the freedom network, who make our work possible in so many landmark trafficking cases. It is you who give life to the protections our laws afford to trafficking victims. So often it is you who first earn the trust of the victims and prepare them to speak out and help bring the traffickers to justice.

We never stop working to bring human trafficking prosecutions to the next level. In recent years, we have prosecuted not only record numbers of cases, but cases of unprecedented scope and impact. And we are not stopping there. In the coming months, we will be announcing new initiatives to make our enforcement efforts stronger than ever. We will look forward to working hand in hand with all of you as we take the fight against human trafficking in new and exciting directions.

I and the dedicated attorneys and staff in the Civil Rights Division value your partnership immeasurably. We are honored to be a part of the Freedom Network's Conference. We

congratulate you on your outstanding achievements in restoring the rights, freedoms, and dignity of countless trafficking victims. And we welcome your continued partnership as we move forward together to deliver on the promise of freedom.