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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

May 21, 2021

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro:

I am writing to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) undertake a review of Child Protection Compacts, a key Department of State effort to combat international child trafficking. Trafficking in persons is a longstanding and pervasive problem throughout the world. According to estimates by the International Labor Organization, in 2016 there were an estimated 25 million victims of human trafficking worldwide. A recent GAO report determined that the Department of State managed the largest number, among several agencies, of international projects intended to combat human trafficking -- about 120 such projects, with over \$160 million in funding -- in fiscal year 2018 and the first half of 2019.

Tragically, children are trafficked and forced into abhorrent activities such as prostitution, forced begging, and fighting in armed conflicts. According to UN reporting, about 30 percent of detected trafficking victims in 2016 were children, with girls making up the majority of child victims. While girls are trafficked primarily for sexual exploitation, boys are mostly trafficked for forced labor reasons. Child trafficking data show a clear increase in detections of children, with both girls and boys more than doubling their shares of the total number of detected trafficked victims from 2004 to 2016.

The U.S. government recognizes the importance of combatting child trafficking around the world and has taken various steps to help address this scourge. Congress authorized Child Protection Compact (CPC) Partnerships in 2013. A compact partnership is a multi-year plan developed jointly by the United States and a particular country that documents the commitment of the two governments to achieve shared objectives aimed at strengthening the country's efforts to effectively prosecute and convict child traffickers, provide comprehensive trauma-informed care for child victims of these crimes, and prevent child trafficking in all its forms. The authorizing legislation calls for the selection of CPC countries based on criteria set by the Department of State, in consultation with other agencies, and to include a high prevalence of child trafficking and a commitment to address the issue on the part of the partner government. Since 2015, compacts have been signed with Ghana, the Philippines, Peru, Jamaica and, most recently, Mongolia. These compacts are one of many anti-trafficking efforts administered by the Department of State's Office

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to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and have been funded in amounts of up to \$5 million per compact with durations of four to five years.

In light of the urgency to effectively address the tragedy of child trafficking, and given that CPCs have now been underway for five years, I request that the GAO review these compacts to assess their progress and accomplishments so far. Specifically, I request that GAO address the following questions:

1. What criteria did the State Department utilize to select CPC partner countries pursuant to 22 USC 7103a d(4) and d(5)?
2. To what extent were eligible countries selected based on objective, documented, and quantifiable indicators?
3. What is the purpose of these compacts and how were the goals and objectives developed?
4. How are CPC efforts different from, or complementary to, other Department of State anti-trafficking projects?
5. What have been the U.S. funding levels and activities of CPCs over the past 5 years, and what resources and assistance have partner countries provided?
6. What is known about CPC performance to date, based on State Department's monitoring and evaluation efforts?

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



JAMES E. RISCH  
Ranking Member  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee