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## **New Investigative Research Reveals Growing Demand for American Youth in the Sex Trafficking and Sex Tourism Markets**

Arlington, VA — DEMAND., a new report and documentary developed by Shared Hope International (SHI), with funding from the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, U.S. State Department, reveals the opportunistic and sophisticated **business model** for sex trafficking and sex tourism—modern-day slavery. DEMAND. exposes the **market drivers** that fuel and normalize a business that prostitutes children and women in America and around the world.

SHI's 12-month investigation of commercial sexual exploitation in the culturally, economically, and historically diverse nations of Jamaica, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States revealed that **these countries share a culture of tolerance that allows major markets for local and international sex tourism and trafficking to flourish.** In the United States, investigations in Atlanta, Las Vegas, and Washington, D.C., found that large numbers of American children are prostituted on the streets, through escort services, and in pornography and erotic dancing—and large numbers of American men are buying these services.

"This study is unique in that it focuses on the business of sex trafficking and sex tourism by investigating the markets that comprise the sex industry," said Linda Smith, Founder and President of Shared Hope International. "It is basic economics—supply and demand. In order to stop this victimization we need to end demand for the product—many of whom are children."

DEMAND. examines three critical pieces of the sex tourism and sex trafficking marketplace: the buyers who bring demand, the traffickers and recruiters who supply victims (like products to market), and the facilitators that feed the market.

"The market for sex trafficking and sex tourism is just like a shopping mall," noted Smith. "Buyers can choose from a variety of human products of various ages and colors, and as long as buyers continue to purchase this human product and facilitators support the market, the shopping mall stays open."

In the commercial sex markets, demand exceeds supply. Traffickers manipulate, coerce, and force victims into the industry to meet demand. The easiest prey are juveniles.

While institutions and individuals facilitate the sex trafficking and sex tourism markets in every country, **technology is the single greatest facilitator** and the engine behind the growth of the global sex industry. The use of the Internet for commercial sex services—particularly pornography and escort services—offers website visitors and owners anonymity and supports an illicit market. **Since 1997, the number of child pornography images on the Internet has increased by 1,500 percent.**

## **Four-Country Focus**

### *Jamaica*

Jamaica's tourist industry, especially its adult-only resorts, encourages tourists to demand any pleasure they wish. Jamaica's economic dependence on tourism and extensive poverty create a culture of "making do" in which the prostitution of youth is common.

### *The Netherlands*

The Netherlands has legalized prostitution and its red light districts are promoted around the world. This legalization has provided a veneer of legitimacy allowing an illegal commercial sex market to flourish, with demand for services by both local and international visitors. This market is fed with trafficking victims.

### *The United States*

U.S. pop culture glamorizes pimping and prostitution, reducing the moral barriers to accessing commercial sex without regard to the origin or condition of the trafficked women and children. In addition, U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents under the age of 18 are increasingly being recruited into the commercial sex markets to service the demand resulting from the normalization and promotion of commercial sex across America.

### *Japan*

Japan has a very large market for commercial sex. The Japanese equate sex with physical health, and the patriarchal society has normalized the Japanese male's "need" for sex. In fact, Japan has a nearly universal acceptance and tolerance of the commercial sex industry.

## **Research Methodology**

The research employed an interdisciplinary approach to the marketplace analysis using both primary resources (conversations with the victims, survivors, and buyers) and secondary resources (NGO studies, government reports and statistics, websites, and other documentation). Field investigation was critical to examining the reality of the marketplace of sexual exploitation and the impact of demand on the sex tourism and sex trafficking markets.

## **About Shared Hope International**

Shared Hope International (SHI) rescues and restores women and children in crisis. For almost a decade, SHI has worked diligently around the world in partnership with local groups to prevent trafficking and to rescue and restore the victims of sexual slavery. SHI is bringing hope to women and children everywhere.

For more information about DEMAND, or to view the documentary and report, visit [www.enddemand.org](http://www.enddemand.org) or [www.sharedhope.org](http://www.sharedhope.org).