On June 20, 2014, Washington, DC. Secretary of State, John Kerry, released the launch of the 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report. The 2014 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report is a congressionally mandated report that reviews governments around the world and what they are doing to combat trafficking in persons – modern slavery – through the lens of prevention, protection, and prosecution. Human trafficking affects over 20 million people worldwide, including the United States. The term “human trafficking” is umbrella term that the United States Government considers to cover all of the activities involved in reducing someone to or holding them in a condition of compelled service for purposes of labor, services, or sex. The State Department looks of the populations that are victimized by trafficking and what their governments are doing: How are they helping them? Are they prosecuting the perpetrators and bringing them to justice? And are they working to prevent trafficking?

As part of the TIP report release, the State Department selected an assembly of individuals and professionals representing leaders in the anti-trafficking movement, including law enforcement, non-governmental organization (NGOs), advocacy groups, advocates, and human rights activists, to attend. "All of us in this room are really all too aware that there's perhaps no greater threat to human dignity and no greater assault on basic freedom than the evil of human trafficking," stated Secretary of State, John Kerry.

Katherine Kaufka Walts, Director, Center for the Human Rights of Children (CHRC) at Loyola University Chicago, was invited to attend the 2014 TIP report release. “I am excited to represent the Center for the Human Rights of Children and the work that Loyola University is doing to combat trafficking of children in the US and abroad. Our Center conduct outreach, research and scholarship, and advocacy to advance children’s rights, preventing child trafficking and other human rights abuses from occurring, and to also improve outcomes for children who are trafficked,” states Ms. Kaufka Walts. For example, CHRC created the first interdisciplinary course on child trafficking in the country, currently offered through the Schools of Law and School of Social Work. The CHRC and its students produced a shadow report on child labor trafficking in the US, which was submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, and presented before the Committee in Geneva, Switzerland in 2012.

For more information about the CHRC’s work on the issue of child trafficking, please see http://www.luc.edu/chrc/humantrafficking/