WE, the Ministers and representatives of the Governments of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the founding members of the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Human Trafficking, hereinafter referred to as the COMMIT Process, meeting in Phnom Penh, 11 years after the endorsement of the COMMIT MOU, 8 years after the first COMMIT Joint Declaration was signed in 2007, and 3 years after the second Declaration was signed in 2012, join together in,

REAFFIRMING our commitment to the COMMIT Memorandum of Understanding, hereinafter referred to as the COMMIT MOU, signed in Yangon, Myanmar on 29 October 2004, COMMIT Joint Declaration signed in Beijing, China on 14 December 2007 and in Hanoi, Viet Nam on 16 February 2012, and the COMMIT Sub-regional Plans of Action (2005–2007, 2008–2010, 2011-2014) together with other resolutions/decisions, demonstrate our strong political will to cooperate among the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) countries and beyond, to combating trafficking in persons especially children and women,

REAFFIRMING our solemn dedication to continue advancing the goal of eradicating any situation where human beings are traded, bought, sold, abducted, forced into marriage, and placed and maintained in exploitative situations that deprive them of their most fundamental and inalienable human rights,

REITERATING the importance of placing trafficked persons at the centre of all anti-trafficking interventions including the recognition of their potential to contribute, on a strictly voluntary basis, to the development, implementation and evaluation of anti-trafficking interventions, and respecting the human rights of trafficked persons in all anti-trafficking interventions,

RECOGNIZING trafficking in persons as a criminal phenomenon that affects human beings, and the need for strong national and regional criminal justice responses to severely punish traffickers and secure justice for victims of trafficking,
REITERATING the critical importance of international and regional cooperation and inter-sectoral and multidisciplinary responses to human trafficking, and highly appreciating the efforts of the senior officials of the National COMMIT Taskforces who have carried forward the work of the COMMIT Process,

RECOGNIZING that while the response to the human trafficking problem in the GMS has progressed since the signing of the COMMIT MOU in 2004, the signing and implementing of the COMMIT Joint Declaration through the first Sub-regional Plan of Action (2005-2007), the second Sub-regional Plan of Action (2008-2010) and the third Sub-regional Plan of Action (2011-2014), there remains constraints and challenges in addressing trafficking in persons,

RECOGNIZING that no country can combat trafficking in persons alone and the important role of the COMMIT Process in encouraging member countries towards self-dependency and sustainability to ensure its effective operational progress,

DEDICATING ourselves to addressing the constraints and challenges that undermine an effective response to trafficking in persons and the associated abuse and exploitation, including further strengthening law enforcement, enhancing and empowering persons who are vulnerable, and agreeing that this requires continued urgent action in the spirit of solidarity and cooperation between and among the countries in the region, in line with the COMMIT MOU and international treaties to which member countries are parties,

ACKNOWLEDGING the contribution of all other international and regional instruments, initiatives and commitments to combat trafficking in persons,

HEREBY JOINTLY DECLARE our firm commitment to further enhance the spirit of COMMIT in unity and solidarity and the continued operation of this vital regional mechanism of cooperation to successfully reduce and/or end trafficking in persons including all forms of abuse and exploitation of the vulnerable and marginalized people through:

1. Firm commitment to the fight against slavery in all its forms as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments; and recognising the importance of international instruments relevant to trafficking in persons as listed in the COMMIT MOU;

2. Firm intention to share experiences among members of the COMMIT Process, as well as with other regions and forums to combat human trafficking more effectively on a global level;
3. Commitment to preventing trafficking in persons and associated harms through actions aimed at improving victim identification procedures and protecting trafficked and at risk persons at every point in the trafficking and migration cycle; and to ensure that all official actions with respect to trafficked persons protect their safety, dignity and rights as a primary concern;

4. Firm intention to continue bilateral and multilateral consultations and collaborations between and among countries in the sub-region (both sector specific and general) as well as with international and regional bodies such as the ASEAN;

5. Firm determination to further strengthen the capacity of National COMMIT Taskforces and relevant stakeholders to implement coordinated actions entrusted under the COMMIT framework and to ensure they and their work continue to enjoy strong support from the highest levels of government;

6. Firm commitment towards a genuine collaborative approach that actively seeks and sustains the involvement of civil society groups, victim support agencies, international organisations, vulnerable communities, trafficked persons and the private sector in the implementation of anti-trafficking policies and programmes including the design, development, monitoring and evaluation of these;

7. Firm undertaking to work towards achieving a sustainable COMMIT Process by enhancing resources allocated by the governments of the member countries;

8. Firm belief in the practical and symbolic value of an approach which places the individual and his or her rights at the centre of any trafficking law, policy or intervention;

9. Adherence to a policy of zero tolerance for any public and private sector complicity or involvement in the crime of trafficking in persons;

We, the Ministers and representatives of the governments of the countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, hereby reaffirm our commitment to the pledges made in the COMMIT MOU and COMMIT Joint Declarations, and solemnly pledge to take steps individually as well as in solidarity, and through international assistance and cooperation, with maximum available resources, with the view to achieving progressively and by all appropriate means, the full realisation of the commitments recognised in the COMMIT MOU and COMMIT Joint Declarations.

With the above in mind, we acknowledge the need for innovation as expressed through the Fourth Sub-regional Plan of Action which will fulfil the potential of the COMMIT MOU to
become a sub-regional Transnational Referral and Protection Mechanism, encompassing the policy, partnership and prevention measures needed to combat human trafficking. We recognize that this will further establish COMMIT as a global best practice in the fight against human trafficking. We urge the United Nations system, development partners, the private sector, all women, men and children as well as non-governmental organizations, with full respect for their autonomy, and all sectors of civil society, to cooperate with Governments, to fully commit themselves and contribute to the COMMIT Process.
Signed in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, this 30th of April 2015

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

H.E. Dr. Ing Kantha Phavi
Minister of Women’s Affairs
Vice Chair of the National Committee On Counter Trafficking in Persons

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

H.E. Mr. Wang Jian
Assistant Minister of Public Security

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LAO PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

H.E. Brig. Gen. Kongthong Phongvichid
Vice Minister of Public Security

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR

H.E. Brig. Gen. Kyaw Kyaw Tun
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Home Affairs

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND

H.E. Mr. Vichien Chavalit
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Social Development and Human Security

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

H.E. Sen. Lt. Gen. Le Quy Vuong
Vice Minister of Public Security