Quarter 3 2017 Newsletter (1 July - 30 September)

IN THIS ISSUE:

- UN-ACT PROJECT UPDATES
- LATEST UN-ACT BLOGS & ANALYSES
- NEW RESOURCES ON THE UN-ACT WEBSITE
- UN-ACT FACEBOOK HIGHLIGHTS
- NEWS ON TIP IN THE MEKONG COUNTRIES & BEYOND
- UPCOMING UN-ACT EVENTS

UN-ACT ON TWITTER:

- RT @CaroRobins0n: New report: 'What do companies annual reports tell us about their workers?' @thePLSA @lancasteruni shockingly finds just…
- RT @louise_arbour: https://t.co/iuT2LtRL84 At the three-day stocktaking meeting, UN Member States, civil society and other stakeholders wi…
- RT @tagesschau: Das Deutsche Institut für Menschenrechte hat die anhaltende Ausbeutung von Arbeitskräften in Deutschland kritisier…
Recruitment practices constitute human trafficking when they are deceptive or coercive and have exploitative intentions. They can also create vulnerabilities to forms of exploitation, such as when they involve excessive fees. Ensuring fair recruitment is hence a key prevention strategy for human trafficking.

In support of SDG 16.2 on ending human trafficking, UN-ACT, in its capacity as the Secretariat to the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT), convened a workshop with relevant ministries and civil society organizations from COMMIT member states (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) to develop principles and guidelines for fair recruitment.

Held in Bangkok from 27-29 September 2017, the event drew upon the latest international standards, based on the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment, and received technical and financial support from ILO, IOM and UNODC. The outcome is set to be discussed at the COMMIT Senior Officials Meeting in November before being operationalized at the national level.
Preparations for Appraisal of Global Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons


Adopted in 2010, the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (UNGPA) has been the key driving mechanism for policy development and enhanced cooperation globally in the fight against human trafficking.

The objective of the workshop was to enhance understanding of the UNGPA; to strengthen collaboration between government agencies, CSOs, international organizations and the private sector in its implementation; and to prepare for the second High-Level Appraisal at the UN General Assembly on 27-28 September.

Addressing Forced Marriages in China

UN-ACT’s efforts to address forced marriages in the context of marriage migration continue in China. The findings and recommendations from our Cambodia-China forced marriage research are channeled into policy discussions wherever
possible, and the innovative identification app for law enforcement officials is promoted in police trainings in various parts of the country.

Further, legislation and regulations pertaining to marriage in China have been translated into relevant GMS languages and are actively being disseminated among key stakeholders in source countries for marriage migrants. The latter is to help ensure that individuals considering marriage with Chinese partners do so on the basis of accurate information about their rights and entitlements, as well as limits thereto, in China.

UN-ACT has also facilitated contacts between the Cambodian consulate in Guangzhou and a government-run shelter in the province to explore how trafficked Cambodians awaiting repatriation may be assisted in the facility.

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Mid-Term Review of NPA in Cambodia

Cambodia's National Plan of Action (NPA) to combat human trafficking is currently undergoing a mid-term review. A draft report has been prepared, with development partners now sending in feedback. UN-ACT has been providing technical support to the mid-term review process, including by coordinating inputs from civil society and UN agencies on their collective counter-trafficking interventions assisting the implementation of the NPA.
Workshop on Bilateral SOPs for Case Management, Repatriation and Reintegration between Thailand and Myanmar

A joint workshop on bilateral SOPs for case management, repatriation and reintegration of trafficked persons between Myanmar and Thailand was held on 30-31 August in Thailand. UN-ACT Myanmar provided technical support to the country’s Department of Social Welfare in the development of the SOPs and the strategy for the consultations. The objective of the Chiang Mai meeting was to facilitate common approaches between the two countries for the operationalisation of the SOPs.

Training of Labour Inspectors in Thailand

The Thai Ministry of Labour, with support from UN-ACT, organized a 2-day training for 100 labour inspectors from both central and provincial levels on 18-19 September. The training was implemented in the framework of the COMMIT Sub-Regional Plan of Action (SPAIV), with the objective of strengthening the capacities of frontline officials to identify cases of exploitative labour and human trafficking. The COMMIT-ASEAN indicators of human trafficking were introduced and discussed as tools and standards for labour inspectors to draw upon in their work.
UN-ACT Supports Development of Standard Operating Procedures for Return and Reintegration in Viet Nam

Work continues in Viet Nam on the establishment of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for referrals and reintegration of trafficked persons. In recent months, this has seen the development of leaflets on survivors' rights, checklists for assistance needs, and a directory of existent service providers including support offered.

The zero draft of the SOPs has been completed, with a review process well underway involving relevant government agencies as well as development partners including UN-ACT. Technical meetings and consultation workshops are being organized to facilitate coordinated discussions and inputs.

Our staff's contributions to these deliberations have drawn on the 'After Trafficking' research, the [reintegration guidebook](https://example.com) developed based on the research's findings, and the [COMMIT guidelines on victim identification and referral mechanisms](https://example.com).
Have you ever wanted to make a difference in the lives of people affected by or at risk of forced exploitation?

Human trafficking is one of the gravest forms of human rights abuses and poses a serious threat to many individuals seeking a better life in the Southeast Asian region. UN-ACT has the experience, knowledge and relations to help fight this phenomenon, but we need your help.

We are excited to announce the launch of our campaign page on UNDP’s fundraising portal. With the simple click of a button you will now have the power to directly contribute to achieving a brighter future for trafficked persons and those vulnerable.

Help us counter #humantrafficking and promote safe migration in the Greater-Mekong Sub-region – donate today!

Share [this link](https://www.un.org) with your networks and spread the word!

'Irregular Migrants, Refugees or Trafficked Persons?' - Deadline fast approaching for Anti-Trafficking Review

The submission period for the latest Anti-Trafficking Review (ATR), a peer-reviewed academic journal housed under the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), will be ending on 7 January 2018.
Titled 'Irregular Migrants, Refugees or Trafficked Persons?', the publication follows the theme of the recent 'International Seminar on Mixed Migration in Southeast and East Asia' and will be guest-edited by staff from UN-ACT and Mahidol University. All papers presented at the event will be automatically considered as submissions for the ATR.

More information is here.

LATEST UN-ACT BLOGS & ANALYSES

UN-ACT routinely publishes analyses and opinion pieces on latest trends and developments in anti-trafficking. Here are links and summaries of our most recent blogs

"The Importance of Narrative in Understanding Human Trafficking" reflects upon latest developments in research on human trafficking, especially the evolving prominence of big data. It argues that, despite the current hype around quantitative approaches, narrative research continues to serve important, complementary functions to improve our understanding of human trafficking - and must hence not be neglected.

NEW RESOURCES ON THE UN-ACT WEBSITE

UN-ACT maintains a comprehensive resource center related to human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region and Southeast Asia on its website, covering research, tools & guidelines, laws & agreements, and other publications. Below is a list of latest additions to the resource center including brief summaries and links for downloads
IN 'RESEARCH'

*Global Estimates of Child Labour* - ILO, 2017
Research outlining both the scale and key characteristics of child labour in the world today, as well as changes in the global child labour situation over time. It also discusses key policy priorities in the campaign to reach the 2025 target of ending child labour.

*Traffickers and Trafficking. Challenges in researching human trafficking operations* - IOM & NEXUS Institute, 2014
This research paper was published as part of a collective IOM/NEXUS Institute research series, which seeks to enhance the current knowledge base on human trafficking. The series also aims to assess various methods and approaches to trafficking research in different settings and in response to different situations. This report assesses the knowns and the unknowns in the trafficking world and how these gaps in knowledge can be responded to.

IN 'TOOLS & GUIDELINES'

*Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons* - UNODC, 2008
Toolkit seeking to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and information among policymakers, law enforcers, judges, prosecutors, victim service providers and members of civil society who are working at different levels to prevent and combat human trafficking, protect and assist victims, and promote international cooperation.

IN 'LAWS & AGREEMENTS'

Agreement between Viet Nam and Malaysia stipulating the principles, terms and actions for their joint efforts in addressing various forms of transnational crime including human trafficking

IN 'PUBLICATIONS'

*Going Home. Challenges in the Reintegration of Trafficking Victims in Indonesia* - NEXUS Institute, 2016
*Going Home* tracks the uncertain and precarious path toward recovery faced by many trafficked persons in Indonesia. It was published with the goal of both assisting trafficking survivors as well as increasing effective prevention and control of trafficking.
Addressing the impact and effectiveness of anti-trafficking interventions in the criminal justice sector: a discussion paper on issues, obstacles and opportunities - Gallagher et al, 2011

This report responds to the growing calls for transparency and accountability within the anti-trafficking sector by investigating the appropriate methods to evaluate impact and effectiveness. The research focuses in particular on measuring the successes and failures of anti-trafficking interventions in the criminal justice sector.

UN-ACT FACEBOOK HIGHLIGHTS

UN-ACT maintains an active Facebook presence with frequent updates on key news stories, the latest from UN-ACT as well as our partners. Below are some of the highlights from Facebook over the last few months.
“On any given day in 2016, 40 million people were victims of modern slavery.”

The Global Estimates of Modern Slavery are now publicly available online for all those interested to review the most current global findings on this social, economic, cultural and legal phenomenon.

The data is broken down into two main issues of forced labour and forced marriage. The International Labour Migration and the Walk Free Foundation have worked in partnership with the IOM to release these findings.

The report emphasises the need to further improve the evidence base on modern slavery to better inform future policy and response, and promotes the idea that there can be no “one-size-fits-all solution” to this diverse and multifaceted problem.

For the full report visit, click here

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“It’s a cat-and-mouse game: the laws against trafficking get stronger, and then the traffickers get smarter and more sophisticated” states Nguyen Tuong Long, the head of Lao Cai’s provincial Department of Social Evils Prevention in Viet Nam.

This article highlights the increasingly reported phenomenon of human trafficking between Viet Nam, Myanmar and Lao PDR into China for the purpose of forced marriages.
Situations of trafficking and exploitation come into focus through the narratives of young girls from the H'mong ethnic group being coerced and manipulated by boys of their own age-group to be sold into the bride industry in China. More here.

Posted on 18 August 2017

“A solution to trafficking is indeed within our grasp. But it will require (...) a commitment to being in this for the long haul - and a willingness to question even the most comforting of our assumptions.”

Dr. Anne Gallagher, Independent Scholar and Legal Advisor to the United Nations and ASEAN, urges actors in the anti-trafficking space to move beyond widespread assumptions in order to face the complex reality of the global human trafficking phenomenon.

She argues that we must critically examine assumptions the international anti-trafficking field have abided by for so long in order to reassess existing approaches and make changes that better engage with the current situation. Only then will we be able to maximize the effectiveness of political capital, resources and expertise being invested into combatting labor exploitation and modern slavery. More here.
"Migrant workers’ vulnerability to exploitation is exacerbated by the absence of fair, efficient and accessible means to resolve grievances when they occur”, said Ben Harkins, Technical Officer for the ILO Triangle in ASEAN programme.

On 30 July, for the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, the ILO released its new report on access to justice for migrant workers in South-East Asia. The study finds that migrant workers continue to face major obstacles to lodging and resolving complaints. It also underlines the link between the lack of effective channels for migrants to denounce abuses and cases of forced labor and human trafficking.

The report is based on over 1,000 complaint cases involving more than 7,000 women and men migrant workers in Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, the largest dataset of migrant complaints compiled in the region. More here

NEWS ON TIP IN THE MEKONG COUNTRIES & BEYOND

UN-ACT closely monitors news and developments on human trafficking, especially related to the Greater Mekong Sub-region and Southeast Asia. Below are some of the key stories that have been published in newspapers around the world over the last few months

Channel NewsAsia’s recent series on Asia’s toughest jobs provides a visually engaging insight into the challenges faced both by small-scale fishermen and at-risk migrant workers in the seafood industry on the West coast of Thailand.
Seafood stocks are in rapid decline, meaning work at sea is increasingly challenging, especially in the face of competition created by commercial fishing vessels. The economic pressure pushing commercial fisheries to cut labour costs, has fueled trafficking and labour exploitation, resulting in migrants like Soe Min Thein being trapped on fishing vessels for up to 3 years in slave-like conditions.

The Thai government has employed various measures to better control its ports and regulate the activity on fishing vessels, however there is much more work to be done.

More [here](#).

"It is a dire challenge but slavery can be a thing of the past, it is just a question of political will and determination", says Professor Kevin Bales from the University of Nottingham.

This article shows how modern slavery is more lucrative than it has ever been, with trafficking into sex work reaping the greatest rewards. Higher profits per victim are produced thanks to quick and inexpensive modern transportation and lower risks.

Huge global migration flows are producing a ready and easily exploitable supply of victims who can be fed into a large number of industries linked to the global economy such as fashion, beauty, seafood and commercial sex.

More [here](#).
This article illustrates on what basis the International Labour Organization called for collaboration and knowledge-sharing among key stakeholders to ensure skills training and recognition for migrant workers during the Inter-Regional Expert Forum on Skills and Migration in the South Asia-Middle East Corridor.

Deborah Greenfield, Deputy Director General of the International Labour Organization stated: “More collaboration and knowledge-sharing are fundamental to improving the efficiency of skills recognition systems for migrant workers”.

More [here](#).

'Trafficking in People from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar to Thailand' is the first joint report of its kind exploring human trafficking in the region; how migrants smuggled from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar fall ‘in the shadow of criminal networks’, ending up trafficked in the Kingdom.

Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ) Executive Director, Prof. Kittipong Kittiyarak, states: "We must prepare a proper, convenient and legal migration process for migrants. All countries involved must not look at migrant workers as problems. These migrants can be of benefit for Thailand and their homeland."

More [here](#).
Regional COMMIT Task Force and Senior Officials Meeting in Myanmar

COMMIT’s annual Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) is set to take place in Myanmar on 29 November 2017, proceeded by a Taskforce Meeting the day before. On the agenda are COMMIT’s efforts in improving the recruitment of migrant workers as a key component in effective prevention interventions for human trafficking.

In addition, representatives from COMMIT governments will provide updates on their implementation of the COMMIT Sub-regional Plan of Action (SPAIV), agree on the way ahead and engage with key partners in dedicated sessions on ASEAN, the private sector and civil society/youth.

Around 150 people are expected to attend the meeting held in the Myanmar capital, Nay Pyi Taw.