JANUARY NEWSLETTER

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UN-ACT UPDATES
The COMMIT Taskforce met last week to discuss the Sub-regional Plan of Action

MONTHLY FOCUS
This month we take a closer look at Freedom Collaborative and their Registry and Resource Library

IN THE NEWS
Media reports on trafficking cases and issues from the region and around the world

UN-ACT UPDATES
The Latest on COMMIT SPAIV:
After 3 days of constructive negotiations at the Regional COMMIT Task Force meeting last week, the 4th Sub-regional Plan of Action (SPAIV) is close to being finalized. Representatives from all 6 countries agreed on Goals, Outcomes and Outputs as well as key indicators to monitor progress in the new results-based SPA-framework. In addition, a number of regional priorities were selected as focus areas for COMMIT’s work in 2015. SPAIV is expected to be adopted at the SOM/IMM in April. In the meantime, UN-ACT will be inviting key partners, both regionally and nationally, to discuss how the development community and civil society can support and contribute to COMMIT’s work as part of SPAIV. We look forward to the joint tasks ahead!
CAMBODIA

- The revised and approved Labor Migration Policy was launched by the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training in December. The Policy includes clear goals related to migration management and the protection of migrant workers, and includes specific actions designed to achieve these goals.
- UN-ACT facilitated an inter-agency meeting bringing together key non-state anti-human trafficking actors including various UN agencies and civil society organisations to discuss proposed activities for 2015 and explore opportunities for joint activities in the year ahead.

CHINA

- As part of its efforts to deal with the root causes of human trafficking, China’s legislature released draft amendments to China’s Criminal Law for public comment. Among other recommended amendments, the draft proposes more stringent penalties for the “buyers” of trafficked women and children.
- The Chinese government released a new recommendation on child custody regulations which proposes to strip custody rights of parents or legal guardians who “sell” their children.
- In response to increased concerns about cross-border trafficking into China for forced marriage and adoption, UN-ACT supported the training of over 100 anti-trafficking police officers in a 2 day seminar on legal issues surrounding human trafficking. UN-ACT plans to support Chinese authorities develop an operational guide for law enforcement officials on procedures for transnational marriage registration.

LAO PDR

- 2014 saw 133 Laotian victims of human trafficking identified in and repatriated from Thailand, most of them women and children.
- To commemorate International Day Against Human Trafficking this year, the Lao government, with the support of UN-ACT and other partners, organized trafficking awareness-raising events, attended by over 1000 participants from a range of sectors including government ministers, police, army, students and civil society.

MYANMAR

- The Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security of Myanmar, in coordination with the International Organization of Migration, has opened a Migrant Resource Center in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State. The resource centre will help migrant workers when they face difficulties and assist them to file complaints.
- A new transit shelter for trafficked victims was opened at Myawaddy in December.
- International Migration Day was commemorated by the Myanmar Government on 18th December 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw.
THAILAND

- Thai Government officials met with the U.S. Department of State representative working on the 2014-2015 report on monitoring and combating trafficking in persons. Thailand was advised to expedite the enactment of more effective laws and regulations to counter trafficking in persons. Government officials committed to working on issues raised by the US before submitting the results of Thailand’s anti-trafficking efforts in March 2015.
- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) on human trafficking between Thailand and Brunei has been discussed and is in the process of being drafted. The MoU will have a focus on preventative measures and aims to raise awareness and facilitate better information sharing between the law enforcement agencies of the two countries.

VIETNAM

- The Vietnam Government’s Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs has directed 7 northern border provinces between Vietnam and China to implement the bi-lateral Letter of Agreement regarding the management of unskilled workers between border provinces of two countries. It is hoped that this will strengthen the legal framework to combat the trafficking of seasonal workers across the border.
- The governments of Vietnam and Malaysia are in discussions to agree the contents of a bilateral agreement on the prevention of human trafficking between the two countries.

IN THE NEWS

Thailand scraps plans to put prisoners on fishing boats
Thailand's government has decided to drop a controversial plan to get prisoners to work on fishing boats, after labour and human rights groups condemned the project. The foreign ministry said in a statement that the decision was made after industry consultations. BBC News

Thai PM urges action on human trafficking as US deadline looms
Thai PM Prayuth Chan-ocha said on Tuesday his government would step up measures against human trafficking as the country scrambles to improve its record in fighting the illegal trade before a US deadline to show improvement...Reuters

Myanmar seeks to revise anti trafficking laws
Officials of Myanmar’s Central Body for Suppression of Human Trafficking reported that it is renewing its efforts in cracking down human trafficking and mulling revising the Anti-Human Trafficking in Persons Law, enacted 10 years ago, in a bid to bust more human trafficking cases nationwide...Chiang Rai Times

Police in China bust baby trafficking ring
Police in China have rescued 37 babies after swooping on 103 child traffickers across 4 regions in Shandong province. The traffickers had arranged for pregnant women willing to sell their babies to stay in an abandoned factory, where they also gave birth. The Straits Times
Human trafficking cases in Myanmar rise in 2014
Police made 216 arrests in a total of 108 human trafficking cases between January and the end of November this year, as Myanmar seeks to avoid being downgraded – and potentially hit with sanctions – on a US watch list for trafficking. Myanmar Times

No escape for those ‘forced into labour’ in Malaysia
Labour activists say abuse is rife in Malaysia’s electronics manufacturing sector, a vital link in a global supply chain producing components for major brands like Apple, Hewlett-Packard, Sony and Samsung. The Nation

Broker sentenced to 7 years imprisonment for trafficking elderly from Cambodia to Malaysia
A broker was convicted of “unlawful removal for cross-border transfer” under Cambodia’s anti-human trafficking law and sentenced to 7 years imprisonment for trafficking 5 elderly people from Cambodia to Malaysia. Phnom Penh Post

Disgraced anti-sex slavery crusader Mam unveils plans for new group
Disgraced anti-sex trafficking activist Somaly Mam, who was forced to resign from her own foundation seven months ago amid reports her dramatic life story was fabricated, has unveiled plans to launch a new organization in January. Reuters

Same Boatload, Different Outcomes for Victims of Thailand’s Human Trafficking
Ninety-five Rohingya survivors of an illegal voyage by boat and pickup truck through Thailand have been declared human trafficking victims, a police investigator said today. Phuket Wan

Sold in Myanmar and trafficked into China
It’s been a year since Khin Khin Oo was sold by her father. Eight thousand yuan ($1,300; £830): That was the price for a cute four-year-old Burmese girl from a broken home. Myanmar’s north-eastern border region with China has become notorious for the exploitation of young women. China’s one-child policy and its preference for sons has created a shortage of women and wives. RBC News
Working Together Towards Freedom

ABOUT THE PLATFORM
The Freedom Registry is part of the Freedom Collaborative, a free of charge online platform that aims to address trafficking and exploitation of men, women and children by increasing information sharing and networking between anti-trafficking stakeholders (NGOs, government agencies, academics and private sector). Organizations and individuals are invited to join the platform at freedomregistry.org.

In addition to containing the most practical information about stakeholders' locations and programs, Freedom Registry will also document organizations’ implementation of international good practices to better inform, research, referrals and program choices. The global Freedom Registry platform will increase the information available for cross-border referrals and regional collaboration.

KEY PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES
By fostering collaboration, we draw on the combined strengths of every party creating a more informed, influential and effective response, by:

- Facilitating connectivity and referrals through developing national Freedom Registry steering committees, engaging national anti-trafficking stakeholders and providing a secure evidence exchange and victim referral system
- Inspiring commitment to standards in excellence, vetting organizations joining Freedom Registry and developing national and regional Freedom Dialogs on emerging and critical issues and relevant responses
- Improving access to knowledge and resources through national resources in local languages to Freedom Library, linking the Freedom Registry community to a secure tool to share illicit trade intelligence and connecting Freedom Registry community to legal advice and support

HISTORY
Founded as a coalition in Cambodia in 2005, Chab Dai is an international organization working to address human trafficking and exploitation through coalition-building, advocacy and research. The desire of Chab Dai is to see the global anti-trafficking movement increase its capacity to collaborate, develop inter-country and cross-border referral mechanisms, and learn from one another on evidence-based practices and emerging issues.

The vision behind Chab Dai’s Freedom Registry project began in 2009. While contextualizing the organization’s ethos and vision in the development, Chab Dai realized that due to the rapid growth of the anti-trafficking sector, a vital first step in increasing collaboration and networking was to identify where stakeholders were located, and what they were doing.
Freedom Registry was collaboratively designed by a steering committee of individuals representing 7 national organizations, including practitioners, law enforcement, academics, and policy advocates. It was then piloted in 2011 among 30 anti-trafficking stakeholders, and launched to the public in March 2012 in the USA. Currently, the Freedom Registry platform consists of over 900 anti-trafficking organizations both in the USA and globally.

ADDITIONAL PLATFORM FEATURES

Freedom Library:
The Freedom Library is an online international, multi-lingual resource library where participants will have the ability to access, share, discuss and rate resources, toolkits and other research. The library currently has 2100 + resources. All resource can be commented, discussed and voted on through the platform. The filtering of the library items is responsive to whichever is most up voted and commented on. The Freedom Library can be accessed here: freedomcollaborative.org/library

Freedom Dialogues:
Freedom Dialogs are online video dialogues among invited participants on emerging issues and responses to global trafficking and exploitation. These dialogs can be viewed in The Freedom Library: freedomcollaborative.org/library

Future Features:
The next generation of platform features will include a needs matching and collaboration system, legal advice and support, a tip-off and secure evidence exchange system and secure victim referral system.

CONTACT
Freedom Registry is looking for new partnerships in the GMS region to facilitate engagement amongst anti-trafficking stakeholders, contribute to a more efficient cross-border referral system and foster connectivity in the region. If your organization is interested in getting involved, please contact:

Luke Weatherson: luke.weatherson@chabdai.org

For inquiries about Freedom Registry in the following countries, contact:

Thailand: Carter Quinley – thailand@freedomregistry.org
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General Inquiries: Luke Weatherson – luke.weatherson@chabdai.org
UN-ACT is recruiting a **Capacity Development Consultant** to develop a baseline and framework for the development of a capacity building strategy for the six governments within the COMMIT Process.

Qualified candidates can apply online until 6 February 2015. For more details, follow the link:


Stay updated on all the latest job opportunities with UN-ACT at [www.un-act.org/opportunities/](http://www.un-act.org/opportunities/)

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**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

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