Media Advisory

Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking
10th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM10) and 4th Inter-Ministerial Meeting (IMM4)

What:
Governments from the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS: Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam) and the wider counter-trafficking community will attend the 10th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM10), where they will present overall progress and good practices under the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) during the past 10 years, and establish COMMIT goals for future counter-trafficking efforts in the region.

At the 4th Inter-Ministerial Meeting (IMM4), Ministers from the GMS countries will officially endorse the 4th COMMIT Sub-Regional Plan of Action for the period 2015 to 2018; and reaffirm their commitment to eradicating all forms of human trafficking in the GMS through the endorsement of a new COMMIT Joint Declaration.

The theme of SOM10 and IMM4 is “A Regional Commitment to End Human Trafficking Through Unity and Innovation”. Innovative approaches and partnerships in the fight against human trafficking with entities such as the private sector and the media will be discussed, as well as how to further strengthen a unified regional response to trafficking in the framework of COMMIT.

When:
SOM10: 28-29 April 2015
IMM4: 30 April 2015
(SOMs are held on an annual basis; IMMs are held every three years)

Where:
Sokha Phnom Penh Hotel & Residence
Chroy Changvar Peninsula, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Who:
The meetings will be presided over by H.E. Mr. Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia, Minister of Interior and Chair of the National Committee on Counter Trafficking in Persons. Approximately 500 participants will attend the meetings, including Ministers and Senior Officials from the GMS, Malaysia, ASEAN, international organisations, UN agencies, donors, civil society, youth groups, the media and the private sector, and other entities involved in the regional response to human trafficking.
WHY:

- Human trafficking is one of the gravest forms of human rights abuses, whereby people are deceived or coerced into severe forms of exploitation. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 20.9 million people are victims of forced labour globally, with 55% of them, or 11.4 million, being women and girls. An estimated 26% of all trafficking victims, or 5.5 million, are children.

- Globally 14.2 million people, or 68% of the estimated total, are found in conditions of forced labour exploitation, whereas 4.5 million people, or 22% of the total, are estimated to be in situations of sexual exploitation (with 98% of sexually exploited persons being women and girls). The Asia-Pacific region records by far the highest figure of trafficking victims in the world, with an estimated 11.7 million people (over 50% of the global figure) in conditions of forced labour.

- Within Asia-Pacific, the GMS features some of the most extensive flows of migration, forced labour and human trafficking. Trafficking occurs in this region for a wide range of purposes, including sexual exploitation, forced marriage, and forced labour in the fishing and seafood industries, manufacturing, agriculture, construction, as well as for domestic servitude and begging. The strong cross-border dynamics of human trafficking patterns in the GMS require a coordinated, regional response to the crime.

- In South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific region, 77% of detected victims for forced labour are female and 23% are male, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC).

- Globally, 72% of persons convicted for trafficking in persons are men and 28% of women.

- Continued and recent revelations of severely exploitative conditions in the sex industry, domestic servitude and the fishing sector across Southeast Asia have again highlighted the need for effective cross-border cooperation to counter human trafficking in the region.

- With ASEAN expected to adopt an ASEAN Convention on Trafficking in Persons later this year, including an accompanying Regional Plan of Action, there is a strong momentum for more coordinated counter-trafficking interventions in the region.

- Ten years ago, on 29 October 2004, the six GMS governments signed an historic Memorandum of Understanding against trafficking in persons, vowing to work together in a more effective manner by addressing the need for multi-lateral, bilateral, and government-civil society cooperation to fight human trafficking, and committing the governments to a response to human trafficking that meets international standards.

- The Memorandum of Understanding signed by Ministers from each GMS country marked the launch of the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking, known as the COMMIT Process.

- COMMIT's 10-year anniversary will be celebrated at SOM10 and IMM4.

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1 ILO Global Estimate of Force Labour 2012
2 ILO Global Estimate of Force Labour 2012
3 ILO Global Estimate of Force Labour 2012
4 UNDOC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014
5 UNDOC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014
NOTE TO MEDIA: PRESS CONFERENCE

Media representatives are invited to gain access to the site and register on Thursday 30 April at 7:30 am at the Sokha Phnom Penh Hotel & Residence (Chroy Changvar Peninsula, Phnom Penh).

After remarks from H.E. Mr. Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia, Minister of Interior and Chair of the National Committee on Counter Trafficking in Persons, and remarks from the ministers of the six GMS, media representatives are invited to witness the signing of the COMMIT 3rd Joint Declaration by GMS ministers and to participate in a press conference.

Cambodian Minister of Women’s Affairs Dr. Ing Kantha Phavi and ministers from the other five GMS countries will brief the media on the outcomes of the SOM10 and IMM4 and respond to questions from journalists. Key documents and speeches from the meetings will be available at the press conference.

For further information about these events or to arrange interviews with key participants, interested media may contact:

- **Mr. Phon Puth Borey**, Media Officer, Ministry of Women's Affairs of Cambodia, puthborey@gmail.com & +855-12 990 519
- **Mr. Huot Vichheka**, UN-ACT Consultant, vichheka.huot@gmail.com & +855-12 485 951

For more information on COMMIT, visit [http://notrafficking.org/commit.html](http://notrafficking.org/commit.html)

Further information and pictures of the meetings will be posted on the Facebook page of the Ministry of Women's Affairs of Cambodia at [www.facebook.com/mowa.gov.kh](http://www.facebook.com/mowa.gov.kh)