January 2016 Newsletter

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UN-ACT ON TWITTER:

- This story holds out hope! In 'Transformation: #Cambodia', our partner International Justice Mission discusses... https://t.co/up71nO9sLP 9:47PM
- RT @UNYouthEnvoy: "Creating jobs for young people at the center of our work." @AhmadAlhendawi on @UN's approach to youth unemployment. http... 9:34PM
- RT @notmylifefilm: Weddings from hell: the Cambodian brides trafficked to China:https://t.co/EpTEluymGu via @guardianUS 9:33PM
ASEAN-COMMIT indicators of trafficking in persons and associated forms of exploitation developed - localization and operationalization next up

The identification of trafficked persons is a critical intervention in counter-trafficking and there are numerous difficulties associated with it. The available data indicates that less than 1% of the estimated number of victims globally are ever formally identified, suggesting that fundamental changes are needed in the victim identification procedures.

The discrepancy in estimated versus identified trafficked persons has a broad impact on counter-trafficking: it affects our understanding of the phenomenon; it affects the ability of trafficked persons to receive the assistance and services they require and are entitled to; and it affects our ability to pursue an effective criminal justice response.

The members of COMMIT, an inter-governmental process between the Greater Mekong Sub-region countries (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) to counter human trafficking, and ASEAN have recognized current challenges in victim identification as a central issue in their counter-trafficking response, and have prioritized the development of common indicators of trafficking between the respective governments to improve cooperation and ultimately rates of identification.

This was manifest in the significant steps made in 2015 in cooperation against human trafficking in the region, namely the adoptions of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons and the COMMIT Sub-regional Plan of Action IV (SPA IV). SPA IV takes a systems-based approach, further developing referral mechanisms in the Greater Mekong Sub-region and prioritizing effective victim identification as requirement for referral mechanisms to come into effect.

Through cooperation developed between these two mechanisms, it was agreed that joint indicators be developed to inform their responses. A workshop in December 2015, hosted by the Government of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur,
brought together the ASEAN and COMMIT members in a technical forum to develop such joint indicators.

The participants looked at human trafficking and associated forms of exploitation, based on international legal frameworks, those of international organisations, and their experiences and frameworks at a national level. As most incidents of trafficking identified occur when the person is in a situation of exploitation, the indicators were based on this understanding.

Through discussions around cases the participants succeeded in defining simple and concise indicators, in as few numbers as possible. As a result, the governments now have a set of clear indicators of trafficking that can be used by frontline officials in identifying possible victims of trafficking, and determining more broadly those who need assistance.

The next steps for both ASEAN and COMMIT will be to implement these indicators, through integration into national victim identification frameworks and the training of frontline responders to put them into practice. They will also be disseminated once formally approved.

The indicators should assist frontline officials and responders to understand where trafficking may be occurring, including situations not previously recognized. Ultimately the expectation and design is such that more victims of trafficking will be identified and removed from situations of exploitation, leading to an overall increase in the effectiveness of responses.

This will only be possible to demonstrate through data collection, monitoring and analysis going forward.

**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 two of our most recent blogs

'**Victim Identification: A Multi-Stakeholder Process**' is inspired and informed by our last Regional Network Meeting. It discusses some of the challenges with identification procedures and proposes a broadened approach incorporating labour inspectors and non-governmental organizations. It also describes why it is important to view victim identification as a process as opposed to a one-off event.
'Cambodia and China Partnering to Protect Vulnerable Migrant Women' discusses latest developments in bilateral cooperation against human trafficking between Cambodia and China. The two sides recently gathered in China to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding, with UN-ACT having played a key role to ensure that the voices of civil society were represented during the discussions.

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’

A pilot study examining the transparency and disclosure statements of a small subset of companies with regards to human trafficking and forced labour.

'An Exploratory Study on the Role of Corruption in International Labor Migration', Verite and The Freedom Fund, 2016
An exploratory research examining three illustrative transnational migrant worker recruitment corridors – Nepal to Qatar, Myanmar to Malaysia, and Myanmar to Thailand – to identify the points in the recruitment process where bribes or illicit payments are solicited and paid; the entities implicated; the range and nature of such payments; and the corresponding benefit that accrues to the employers of migrant workers.

UN-ACT’s new research strategy setting out the conceptual framework for the Project’s research work, the priority areas and methodological approaches. It also discusses UN-ACT’s efforts to help develop standards for research on human trafficking, and how it seeks to promote their application.

'The Role of Recruitment Fees and Abusive and Fraudulent Recruitment Practice of Recruitment Agencies in Trafficking in Persons', UNODC, 2015
Research examining the relationship between recruitment fees and other abusive and fraudulent practices of recruitment agencies and trafficking in persons, with a particular focus on criminal justice measures to address this relationship and whether states use their anti-trafficking legislation to prosecute persons involved in such recruitment practices.

'Unacceptable Forms of Work: A Global and Comparative Study', ILO, 2015
Study identifying unacceptable forms of work (UFW) and devising targeted social and economic policies that aim to eliminate or transform such jobs. It aims to construct a robust conception of UFW that can be operationalized for research and policy intervention. The report has a particular focus on renditions of unacceptability in legal and regulatory spheres and therefore regulatory concepts, mechanisms, and outcomes.

'Modern Slavery and Corruption', Liberty Asia and The Freedom Fund, 2015
Briefing Paper introducing and examining the relationships between the occurrence of corruption, slavery and human trafficking; the prevailing laws/regulations; various industry sectors, banking and finance; and law enforcement both from a banking and securities enforcement perspective and more the familiar criminal enforcement.
IN ‘TOOLS & GUIDELINES’

Guidelines helping companies and employers identify risks of human trafficking and forced labour and avoid being associated with these unintentionally. The report is intended as an information, risk management and prevention tool.

Guide providing an overview of international and regional standards for the identification and protection of victims of trafficking, drawing extensively on examples of good practices from Bali Process member countries.

IN ‘LAWS & AGREEMENTS’

‘ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children’, ASEAN, 2015
The ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children stipulating a regional, legally binding agreement between the ASEAN states, i.e. Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. It was signed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia by the relevant heads of state on 21 November 2015.

‘COMMIT 4th Sub-Regional Plan of Action’, COMMIT, 2015
The 4th COMMIT Sub-regional Plan of Action (SPAIV) providing a framework for cooperation between the 6 Greater Mekong Sub-region countries (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) on human trafficking between 2015-2018. SPAIV was adopted at the COMMIT Senior Officials and Inter-Ministerial Meeting in Cambodia from 28-30 April 2015.

IN ‘PUBLICATIONS’

‘Report on the 10th COMMIT Senior Officials and 4th Inter-Ministerial Meeting’, COMMIT, 2015
Report summarizing the proceedings and outcomes including speeches and presentations of the 10th Senior Officials and 4th Inter-Ministerial Meeting of the COMMIT Process in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 28-30 April 2015.
'Review of the effectiveness of the MOUs in managing labour migration between Thailand and neighbouring countries', ILO, 2015
Review assessing the MOUs signed between Thailand and Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar, and putting forward policy and operational recommendations for more effective MOUs that reflect and complement the changes in the landscape, and will lead to more safe and orderly migration that results in decent work.

'Preventing Trafficking in Persons by Addressing Demand', ICAT, 2014
Policy papers providing guidance to organizations and practitioners by mapping out the dimensions of demand as it relates specifically to trafficking in persons for labour exploitation, as well as highlighting strategies that can be used to address this aspect of the problem.

'Global Labour Recruitment in a Supply Chain Context', ILO, 2015
Working paper seeking to advance and share knowledge on policies, laws, emerging practices and challenges related to the recruitment of workers within and across countries. It aims to stimulate further discussion and effective action to foster fair recruitment practices, prevent human trafficking and to reduce the costs of labour migration.

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 weeks
This story holds out hope!

In 'Transformation: Cambodia', our partner International Justice Mission discusses the significant progress made in Cambodia to address child sex trafficking over the past decade or so, and introduces a number of key personalities leading the way - including UN-ACT's National Project Coordinator, Lim Tith.

Read the full story with some beautiful images [here](#).

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Watch [this video](#) to learn more about how the 6 governments in the Greater Mekong Sub-region are working together in the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT) to tackle human trafficking across the region, with UN-ACT as the secretariat and the support from many of our partners!
COMMIT brings together government agencies, civil society, the United Nations and other international organizations as well as academia and the private sector for a more strategic, more coordinated and more collaborative response to human trafficking, both nationally and regionally.

In early 2015, ministers of the COMMIT countries convened in Cambodia to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Process and adopt a new Sub-Regional Plan of Action guiding its work over the next 4 years. This video is a documentation of the meeting as well as a reflection on 10 years of COMMIT through the eyes of many of the key actors involved in the Process.

*Posted on 3 February 2016*

Here is an exciting opportunity for journalists from Asia interested in gaining hands-on training with the Thomson Reuters Foundation to produce high-impact stories for widespread dissemination in the area of human trafficking.

The Foundation notes, 'a lot of reporting on trafficking and forced labour is mired in cliché, myth and misconception. It often lacks nuanced understanding of the causes of the scourge and the tools to fight it.' In response, Thomson Reuters will be running a three-day 'Reporting Trafficking and Slavery' course in Singapore from April 27th-29th.

The major focus of the course will be on the ethics of reporting on human trafficking, from how to interact sensitively with traumatized survivors to getting past journalists’ own preconceived notions and stereotypes.

For more information on the course and application details follow this [link](#).
The Anti-Trafficking Review (ATR) is a peer-reviewed journal on human trafficking published by the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW).

The ATR is calling for submissions for an upcoming issue entitled "Where's the Evidence?", which will critically explore the question of evidence in both the characterization of human trafficking and in the evaluation of the merit of anti-trafficking work.

View the full announcement here.

UN-ACT was invited by the European Parliament's Sub-Committee on Human Rights to address its hearing on 'The fight against human trafficking in the EU's external relations'.
The Project was requested to outline the global human trafficking situation including numbers and patterns, and to highlight regional trends and particularities in Southeast Asia and the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

Other presenters at the hearing included the International Labour Organization, La Strada International and the European Commission.

You can watch the video here, with UN-ACT’s contributions starting at 00:03:22 and again at 01:22:35.

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Posted on 21 December 2015

The Norwegian Embassy, with the support of UN-ACT and Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation, hosted a Trafficking in Persons Donor Coordination Meeting in Thailand’s Samut Sakhon province, together with a field visit to meet with survivors of human trafficking.

More than 20 representatives from Canada, Japan, the EU, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the US joined the event.

The visit to Samut Sakhon ensured that donors involved in anti-trafficking interventions at the regional level in Southeast Asia were able to coordinate their work and engage directly with those at the heart of their efforts.

To find out more about the events of the day, follow this link to a story on our website.
21 million people in forced labour, $150 billion in illegal profits!

Support efforts to end forced labour and join the 50forFreedom campaign! The goal is to persuade at least 50 countries to ratify the Protocol on Forced Labour by 2018.

The campaign is led by the International Labour Organization, and joined by partners such as the International Organization for Migration, Walk Free Foundation or the International Trade Union Confederation.

Our partner IOM X, supported by USAID, today launched Prisana, a gripping love story set against the devastating underworld of human trafficking in the Asia Pacific’s fishing industry.
“Young people will be drawn to Prisana because it’s a powerful love story with their favourite actors, set to an amazing soundtrack. Our hope is that this story will increase understanding of how human trafficking affects families across the region, ultimately inspiring young people to share what they have learned with others to prevent exploitation and human trafficking in our communities,” said Tara Dermott, Program Leader, IOM X.

IOM X’s Prisana packs some serious star power, with Ananda Everingham at the helm as producer and actors Mario Maurer and Mai Davika Hoorne as the lead characters. This is the couple’s first on-screen reunion since Pee Mak, Thailand’s highest grossing film.

Supporters of the video are asked to hashtag their social media posts with #ICAREDOYOU.

**NEWS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE MEKONG REGION**

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 weeks.
Weddings from hell: the Cambodian brides trafficked to China
Article about Cambodian woman and girls lured to China on the promise of better work and a better life only to find themselves trafficked into forced marriages. The story also discusses the plight of those who manage to escape and return home but remain outcasts, shamed and blamed for abuses suffered. UN-ACT is currently conducting research on this phenomenon, with a report expected to be published in a few months time. The Guardian

Nestlé admits slavery in Thailand while fighting child labour lawsuit in Ivory Coast
Article about the results of a year-long investigation by Nestlé confirming media and other reports about the seafood industry in Thailand being riddled with human trafficking, and that forced labour was involved in the production of its Fancy Feast catfood brand, with the company announcing a new era of self-policing of its own supply chains. The Guardian
Vietnam signs MoU with Laos, Cambodia to fight human trafficking
Article about a new MoU between Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Cambodia to strengthen the exchange of information and experience in tackling human trafficking, signed at a meeting in Viet Nam last month. Thanh Nien News

At Least 30 Trafficking Victims Rescued In Phuket
Article about 30 Burmese human trafficking victims who were rescued from confinement in a fishing port in Thailand’s Phuket province with the assistance of the Anti-Human Trafficking Division of Thailand. The Irrawaddy
Family of 'Trafficked' Women Appeals to Cambodian Government, Rights Group For Help

The story of a family of two Cambodian women who were sent by a local employment agency to work in Malaysia appealing to national police and a domestic rights group to help free the pair after Malaysian authorities jailed them for trying to escape from the company when they discovered that it intended to 'sell' them. Radio Free Asia

Fishermen agree to return to Indonesia for long-sought justice

The story of 14 victims of human trafficking rescued from fishing trawlers and repatriated to Myanmar from Benjina Island in May and June last year who have agreed to return to Indonesia to testify in court against the Silver Sean Fishing Company in an attempt to extract unpaid salaries and compensation for victims. Myanmar Times
China busts child trafficking ring, recovers 15 infants-Xinhua
Article about a law enforcement success in China, where local police broke a child trafficking ring, arresting 78 suspects and rescuing 15 infants now cared for by a local civil affairs department. Reuters

New Lao-Thai centre to help tackle trafficking
Article about a recent agreement between Thailand and Lao PDR to build a Thai-funded social development centre providing rehabilitation support to victims of human trafficking in Vientiane. The Nation
NEWSLETTER SURVEY

In every newsletter, we will be asking you a survey question - Mailchimp can only handle one question per time - to help us improve the frequency, format and content of our newsletter, and hence to make it more useful to you as our readers.

We will present the results of your answers in the next newsletter and respond to how we will incorporate your inputs, or simply do it!

Our first question is this: How frequently would you like our newsletter to be published and disseminated?

Monthly
Every 2 months
Quarterly
Every 4 months
Every 6 months

If you have other thoughts and ideas to share on our newsletter or otherwise, please don’t hesitate to get in touch via unact@undp.org. We look forward to your feedback!

UPCOMING UN-ACT EVENTS

Regional Network Meeting, Bangkok, 15 February
This time co-organized with World Vision’s ETIP, the quarterly event brings together organizations with anti-trafficking programming in the region to discuss the latest trends and developments in human trafficking, exchange information on interventions and identify opportunities for collaboration, as well as jointly explore a thematic focus of common interest. The thematic focus at the next meeting will be on legal support and the rights of victims in the criminal justice response to human trafficking. All organizations with a regional outlook in their anti-trafficking efforts are welcome to attend! If you are interested, please get in touch with Mr Wanpiya Techo, Regional Project Assistant, at wanpiya.techo@undp.org.

Regional COMMIT Task Force Meeting, Bangkok, 18-19 February
As the Secretariat to the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT), UN-ACT will be welcoming representatives from the 6 countries involved
Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) to review implementation in 2015 and plan the year ahead. Among the areas to be discussed will be the draft COMMIT capacity baseline and development strategy, reporting on indicators and targets in SPAIV, COMMIT-ASEAN cooperation as well as further engagement with civil society stakeholders including youth. Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat, IOMX, World Vision and Save the Children will join the meeting for certain sessions as well.