April 2016 Newsletter

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UN-ACT ON TWITTER:

- RT @DanielMurphy0: A new book published by a migrantworker started as poetry scribbled on bags of cement in #Singapore https://t.co/8mr07… 10:05PM
- RT @DanielMurphy0: .@IOM_news says majority of trafficking victims they assisted in 2015 were in SEA, with #fishing 1 of 3 main secto… htt… 2:11AM
- Are you passionate about addressing #humantrafficking and labour #exploitation in global supply chains? The… https://t.co/dOQKyeMm1u 2:09A
UN-ACT staff serve as Asia-Pacific focal point for UNDP’s global work on migration and displacement

Migration and displacement patterns have a significant impact on the development of both host countries and countries of origin. An increase in migration can have a number of positive effects. For example, migrants, with their expertise and knowledge, can support and expand the local labor force of immigration countries. In addition, they can contribute to the economic advancement of their country of origin by sending home financial support in the form of remittances or returning with greater skills and insights to establish new businesses.

However, without the proper infrastructure and support, the exponentially increasing rate of mixed migration (both migrants and forcibly displaced people) presents substantial development challenges. Prolonged displacement can lead to economic dependency and instability in both the host and origin country, as well as pose grave risks of abuse and exclusion to the migrant population. Thus, a development-centered approach to resolving migration and displacement issues is key to implementing and sustaining successful solutions.

UN-ACT staff serve as the Asia-Pacific focal point for the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) global work on migration and displacement, adding a human development and resilience approach to the humanitarian framework of other agencies.

UNDP utilizes a three-tiered approach to addressing large-scale migration and displacement in order to maximize the positive effects and minimize the negative consequences. First, UNDP assists countries in developing comprehensive national policy and institutional frameworks to support more planned and orderly migration. This includes strengthening legal protections for migrants and implementing more effective policing of criminal enterprises related to migration.

Second, UNDP manages migration for long-term positive development impacts by addressing the root causes of displacement and capitalizing on the sustainable benefits of migration. This involves working with the host countries to develop dynamic integration strategies as well as supporting the origin countries to establish local programs facilitating remittance transfers and supporting returning migrants.

Third, UNDP promotes resilience-based development solutions for migration and displacement in times of crisis, conflict and disaster. Working with humanitarian efforts, this approach strengthens and implements comprehensive risk analysis and conflict resolution measures in order to improve access to justice and security for migrant communities.

Through these three ‘Areas of Work’, UNDP works with countries to balance short-term migration and displacement responses with long-term sustainable development solutions. Please contact us at UN-ACT to discuss opportunities for cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. You can also find out more in UNDP’s ‘Guidance Note on Migration and Displacement’.
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.

'Exploitation and Abuse of Migrant Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia: A Lesson for Viet Nam' discusses the Agreement of Manpower Cooperation between Viet Nam and Saudi Arabia signed in late 2014 and the general conditions for migrant workers - especially domestic helpers - in the latter. Factors such as gender inequality, the kafala system, 'live-in' arrangements and the use of irregular recruitment mechanisms including social media platforms contribute to migrant workers' vulnerabilities to abuse and exploitation. With numbers of Vietnamese going to Saudi Arabia expected to increase as a result of the new agreement, the Vietnamese authorities need to prepare their citizens for life and work in the country, including for potential problems and opportunities to access assistance. The government may also want to join other important sending countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines, and advocate for structural changes to the kafala system and broader labour conditions in Saudi Arabia.

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'

'Coming Clean: The Prevalence of Forced Labour and Human Trafficking for the Purpose of Forced Labour Amongst Migrant Domestic Workers in Hong Kong', Hong Kong Justice Centre, 2016.

Report on a quantitative study based on interviews with over 1,000 migrant domestic workers (MDWs) in Hong Kong; estimating the prevalence of forced labour and human trafficking for the purpose of forced labour amongst over 336,000 MDWs in the city.

'Modern Slavery in East Asia: Protecting the Rights and Promoting the Autonomy of Domestic Migrant Workers from Indonesia and the Philippines', Farsight, 2016.

Research giving insights into the business of migrant domestic work and providing evidence of the systematic exploitation of workers heading to two important destination countries. The report evaluates the experiences of migrants in all steps of the migration process, and analyzes how these experiences have shaped migration outcomes.
Research based on 25 interviews with ethical auditors, business executives, NGOs and supplier firms as well as a number of factory visits, and examining whether audits are effective in identifying non-compliance and driving up standards.

Research examining acute and enduring problems in Taiwan’s fishing industry, particularly in its distant water fleet, the global impact of its behaviour, and the official response to those problems. Concerns centre on the environmental impacts of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, labour conditions on Taiwanese-flagged vessels, human rights and labour abuses at sea, and overfishing.

**IN 'TOOLS & GUIDELINES'**

'Guiding Principles on Memoranda of Understanding between Key Stakeholders and Law Enforcement Agencies on Counter-Trafficking Cooperation', UN.GIFT & IOM, 2009

Guiding principles designed to serve as a practical tool that will help stakeholders including law enforcement agencies, specialized service providers, NGOs, trade unions, the judiciary, the prosecution services, faith-based organizations and others, when developing counter-trafficking agreements.

'Model Memorandum of Understanding', CBSS, 2011

Model MoU designed to enhance cooperation between law enforcement agencies and specialist service providers in the provision of assistance to victims of human trafficking, and allowing for different, tailored bilateral agreements to be developed.

'Guidelines for the Development of a Transnational Referral Mechanism for Trafficked Persons in Europe', ICMPD, 2010

Guidelines providing practical measures and recommendations for the development of transnational referral mechanisms, complementing and building upon standard operating procedures in this area at the national and local level.

**IN 'LAWS & AGREEMENTS'**

'ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children', ASEAN, 2015

Plan of Action complementing the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) and outlining specific actions and policies, as well as relevant international obligations, to address regional challenges common to ASEAN Member States in the context of anti-human trafficking.

'Thailand's Sea Fishery Workers Act', Thailand, 2015

The Sea Fishery Workers Act B.E. 2558 (2015) is Thailand's domestic law relevant to the prevention and protection of victims of forced labour and human trafficking in the sea fishing sector (Thai Version).


UN-ACT Project Brochure, UN-ACT, 2016.
UN-ACT brochure outlines the evolution of the project and its current position as a ‘coordinator’ and ‘innovator’ at the strategic intersection of governance, policy, research and direct interventions in Southeast Asia’s counter-trafficking efforts.

This policy paper outlines the policy positions on the regulatory environment for recruiting, placing and protecting ASEAN migrant workers.

Policy paper providing an overview of the global situation of social security provisions for domestic workers in 163 countries; analysing trends, policies and gaps in terms of legal and effective social security coverage for domestic workers; and outlining a compilation and description of international practices of social security schemes for the domestic work sector, including comparative information.

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.
COMMIT representatives gathered in Bangkok on 18 February, 2016, for a 1.5 day meeting of the Regional COMMIT Task Force!

The representatives reviewed the 2015 implementation of the new sub-regional plan of action, priority areas for 2016 action, and further engagement with ASEAN, youths, and the civil society sector in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

Our partners from the ASEAN Secretariat, Save the Children International, World Vision International and IOM X also participated in relevant sessions.

If you are interested in learning more about human trafficking, then you should check out the world’s first open access ‘e-syllabus’ on forced labour, trafficking, and slavery. These short courses are offered by Beyond Trafficking and Slavery (BTS).

With 167 contributions from 150 top academics and practitioners, the 900-page, eight-volume set is packed with insights from the some of the best and most progressive scholarship and activism currently available.

You can access all information and materials here.
UN-ACT is honoured to have received a token of appreciation for our long-time partnership and support to Cambodia’s National Committee for Counter Trafficking.

The token was given by H.E. Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Chair of the NCCT, to UN-ACT’s National Project Coordinator, Mr. Lim Tith, at the NCCT’s annual meeting to review progress in anti-human trafficking.

The meeting, which also launched Cambodia’s new victim identification guidelines, was attended by around 500 participants from national and sub-national government institutions, embassies, development partners and civil society organizations.

UN-ACT would like to thank our Cambodian partners for the honour and we look forward to further cooperation in counter-human trafficking in the years to come!

YouthSpark events in Bangkok!

Microsoft Thailand, together with the Children and Youth Council of Thailand, World Vision International, IOM X and UN-ACT, organized two workshops on computer science and ICT education to empower youths in Thailand, including to prevent exploitation and human trafficking.

The workshops were a great example of effective multi-stakeholder collaboration, bringing together civil society, international organizations and the private sector.
Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is critical to demonstrate progress in program implementation, learn from challenges and make adjustments where needed. However, the anti-trafficking sector has traditionally been weak in this key area of its work.

UN-ACT has built up dedicated M&E in-house capacities, for internal purposes but also in support of our partners in governments and civil society.

With our assistance, the COMMIT Process has become more results-focused, as reflected in its latest Sub-regional Plan of Action (SPAIV). SPAIV contains a series of indicators to help measure progress against its 8 goals. Governments are now setting baselines and targets, and developing frameworks for reporting purposes.

In Thailand, UN-ACT’s M&E Specialist has just concluded a training with two M&E focal points for SPAIV at the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS). The full-day training covered principles in result-based management (RBM) and helped develop reporting templates on SPAIV implementation in the country.

Similar trainings will also be conducted in the other COMMIT countries, thereby making the process more focused, accountable and transparent!

In April 2016, the Associated Press won a Pulitzer Prize for their stories that exposed human trafficking in the Southeast Asia fishing trade!

The series has resulted in the release of thousands of trafficked fishermen, the prosecution of a number of perpetrators and broader reforms in the fishing sector in the region. In an interview with Poynter, Martha Mendoza, an AP reporter who covered these stories, discussed the process of their investigation, challenges that they overcame, and what she hopes to see in the future of human rights and social justice journalism. You can read the entire interview here.
Here is an opportunity for all businesses working to end abuse and exploitation in their supply chains to have their efforts recognized: the Stop Slavery Award!

Multinational companies are in a position to play an important role in the efforts against human trafficking and forced labor, including by positively influencing the working conditions of employees in their supply chains.

The Stop Slavery Award was created by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, in partnership with global law firm Baker & McKenzie, to honor businesses that continue to go above and beyond ensuring that their suppliers are not exploiting their workers, or profiting of forced labor. The Award strives to create a cycle that will motivate more corporations and companies to be more involved in the investigation, improvement, and eradication of illegal and abusive labor practices in their supply chains.

Nominations can be made until August 26, 2016. Find out more here: http://www.trustwomenconf.com/awards/stop-slavery-award/

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 special issue, titled '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.

The deadline for submissions is July 1, 2016, with the special edition due for publication in April 2017.

You can find the full announcement here.
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 months.

Scarred by Trafficking Abuses, Rohingya Stay Put in Myanmar Camps
Read this in-depth article by Myanmar Now on how Myanmar's Rohingya population is trapped between persecution and discrimination at home and abuse and exploitation elsewhere in Southeast Asia, with quotes from Fortify Rights and the Arakan Project.

Tricked and Indebted on Land, Abused or Abandoned at Sea
Read the story of Eril Andrade, who left his small village in the Philippines hoping to earn enough to replace his mother's leaky roof. Seven months later, his body was sent home in a wooden coffin.

In this detailed article, The New York Times outlines how illegal manning agencies in Singapore trick villagers in the Philippines with false promises of high wages and send them to fishing ships notorious for exploitative work conditions.
Myanmar Migrant Workers Win $1.3M From Thai Tuna Firm

In a rare victory for migrant workers in Thailand’s seafood industry, a Thai tuna processing factory has agreed to pay its staff $1.3 million compensation for labour abuses.

Thailand is the world’s third-largest seafood exporter. However, its $7bn industry has been plagued with human rights abuses and labour exploitation for decades, often affecting migrant workers from Myanmar and Cambodia.

Recently, global consumers of seafood have been putting pressure on Thailand to take measures against unregulated fishing and human rights abuses in the industry. While the EU is contemplating an all-out ban on Thai fishing products, the United States has passed a bill targeting industries that employ forced and child labour.

Find out more about the granted compensation and how it has come about in The Guardian article.

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Singapore’s Migrant Domestic Workers Face Food Rationing, Long Hours and Sexual Abuse

Singapore has built its economic strength on the back of immigration and migrant labour. However, its current labour law – the Employment Act – is drawing criticisms for not providing basic rights and protections for migrant domestic workers, resulting in multiple accounts of abuse and exploitation. A recent survey of 670 domestic workers found that 65% were not treated with dignity; 67% had their passports confiscated by their employers; 40% did not have the mandated weekly day off; and 7% had been sexually abused. You can read more on ABC here.
As Economy Booms, Child Toil in Myanmar

The opening up of Myanmar’s economy since 2011 has triggered a jump in the demand for labour. One of the side effects of the boom is the sharp increase in the number of children in the workforce.

According to figures from the March census on employment, one in five children in Myanmar, aged 10-17, go to work instead of school. Outside of construction, child labour is most visible in hospitality, with even small children serving food in Myanmar’s tea shops. Many children also work in fish farming and processing.

Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy (NLD), which recently took power, recognizes the negative effects of child labour on the development of Myanmar, and has pledged to tackle the issue and regulate labour laws. Read more on the Reuters here.

The Philippines' Booming Cybersex Industry

The Philippines has become a hub for a billion-dollar cybersex industry, including many child victims of sexual exploitation; some are as young as 2.

Human rights groups estimate that tens of thousands of children in the Philippines alone are forced to perform sexual acts in front of camera in internet cafes or their homes. Globally, there are some 750,000 pedophiles actively searching for child pornographic material around the clock, according to the FBI.

Foreign pedophiles exploit the economic vulnerability of Filipino children. In 2012, the Government of Philippines passed a law to address the problem. However, implementation is weak and Filipino children continue to be recruited to work in this industry. You can read more here.
**Vietnamese Girls Sold as Child Brides in China**

The villages along the Vietnamese-Chinese border are hotspots for human trafficking activities. Young Vietnamese women, even girls as young as 13, are valuable in China, where decades of one-child policy and practices of gender selection due to son preferences have created a severe gender imbalance in the country. It is estimated that there will be 30 to 40 million more men than women in marriageable age in China by 2020.

As Chinese men struggle to find partners at home and the local bride price continues to increase, the bachelors are looking elsewhere for brides. As UN-ACT’s National Project Coordinator in Vietnam, Ms. Ha Thi Van Khanh, points out in the article: “It costs a very huge amount of money for a normal Chinese man to get married to a Chinese woman. This is why they try to ‘import’ women from neighboring countries, including Viet Nam.”

Vietnamese brides are placed with Chinese husbands for upwards of $3000 and they are often considered desirable because of cultural similarities to the Chinese, according to Pacific Links Foundation.

You can read and watch more about the business of forced marriage and child brides [here](#) on CNN.

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**Thai Union Scraps Worker Fees to Tackle Labour Abuses**

Good news for migrant workers in Thailand: Thai Union Group has adopted a ‘zero recruitment fees’ policy, a move aimed at eliminating debt bondage and labour exploitation among its workers.

The vast majority of migrant workers - mostly from Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar - have to pay substantial fees to brokers and recruitment agencies to secure jobs in Thailand. When they start their jobs, they are often not paid for six months to a year as their salaries go towards paying off those debts, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.
Thailand’s multibillion-dollar seafood industry has come under fire in recent years, after multiple investigations by journalists and human rights groups exposed significant patterns of abuse and human trafficking of migrant workers in the industry. Read more in this Bangkok Post article

NEWSLETTER SURVEY

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

We asked you in our previous newsletter: How frequently you would like our newsletter to be published and disseminated? Here are your answers (in percentage of total):

![Bar chart showing survey results]

In response, we have adjusted our publication frequency to quarterly.

This time around, we have the following question for you: What kind of content would you like to see more of in our newsletter? (Please click on the response below that most reflects your opinion)

a) UN-ACT updates  
b) Human trafficking-related news  
c) Analysis on developments in (anti-)trafficking  
d) New resources on human trafficking  
e) Event related to human trafficking

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, 1 June 2016.

This time co-organized with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 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 return/repatriation including the various preparatory steps to be taken in the countries concerned as well as the roles of governments, NGOs and others in that context. 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.