



Vietnamese Children Speak Out On Human Trafficking

“We must protect ourselves and others must protect us better” – Children’s Agenda for Action

Victims and Vulnerable Children Advocate for the Government to Adopt a Cooperative ‘Agenda for Action’ on Child Trafficking and Child Labour

25 August, 2004

For Immediate Release:

Hanoi – Children from areas of Viet Nam worst affected by human trafficking today adopted a Vietnamese Children’s Agenda for Action on Human Trafficking. The Agenda for Action was presented to Government representatives at the close of the four-day event here.

The 15-point Agenda for Action is designed to help local, national, and sub-regional authorities deal with child trafficking and child labour by taking into consideration and acting upon the views of the group most vulnerable to human traffickers – children.

Some of the 15 points for action developed by the children include: Their desire to be heard and their voices and views respected, their need for special protection from traffickers, their right to life in a happy family environment, freedom from poverty, and encouragement to complete their education.

The **Viet Nam National Children’s Forum** was initiated by the **International Labour Organization – ILO** – and **Save the Children UK**. It was organized by the **Viet Nam Youth Union**, with support from Unicef, UNIAP, and IOM.

The children, who spent three days preparing a series of messages to present to the Government, are either previous victims of trafficking or come from areas of the country where trafficking is an ever-present risk. Some of the children attending have been trafficked into begging gangs, prostitution, and domestic servitude. Cross-border trafficking for the purpose of forced marriage is also a problem for some teenage girls and young women.

The Vietnamese Children’s Agenda for Action was designed entirely by the 156 young delegates attending the Forum. All of the participants were between the ages of 10 and 17.

Under Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have a right to participation and consultation in matters that affect their physical and moral well-being. Article 12 states that children should: “be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.”

The ILO's Recommendation 190 on implementing ILO Convention 182 to eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour also calls for child participation.

The Viet Nam National Children's Forum was designed to empower children as full partners in the fight against human trafficking in Viet Nam and beyond. The young delegates have chosen five of their peers to carry their messages to a sub-regional gathering of children. **The Mekong Children's Forum** will take place in Bangkok from the 10th to 16th October. The Vietnamese children will join children from four other Mekong countries.

At the Mekong Children's Forum, a sub-regional **Agenda for Action** will be developed and submitted to sub-regional Governments for consideration within the context of the recently launched Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT). The COMMIT process involves inter-ministerial representation from the countries of the GMS, including Viet Nam. The Governments are expected to develop and endorse a Sub-Regional Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking.

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