



ATTENTION ASIA NEWS EDITORS AND CORRESPONDENTS

Young People Demand They Be Consulted in The Fight Against Human Trafficking

Pledges and High Level Meetings 'Not Enough' to Prevent Trafficking in Southeast Asia

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BANGKOK – Southeast Asian children and young people exposed to the risks of human trafficking are raising their voices demanding a greater say in national and sub-regional action to prevent the labour and sexual exploitation that result from trafficking.

Beginning in Bangkok later this week, and then spreading across the Greater Mekong Sub-region, hundreds of young people will take part in a series of national forums to examine the work that is presently being done to prevent human trafficking and make recommendations for improvements in policy and approaches that, at a minimum, should include the direct and systematic consultation of young people.

More than just a review of Government policies, the participants aged 13 – 19 from Cambodia, China¹, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, will focus their collective attention on six areas for improvements in both policy and implementation. The young people – all from areas where trafficking is an ever present risk – will consider ways to improve:

1. Participation of young people and accountability to young people by policy makers
2. Victim protection
3. Education (access to quality education, and as an alternative to prevent premature migration and child labour)

¹ A provincial forum was held in Yunnan, China in January.

4. Mainstreaming of prevention methods at community and family level that are supported by governments and civil society but are community-driven
5. Rights to nationality and citizenship
6. Migration and the special risks faced by migrant workers and their families

The young people are expected to hold discussions with high-level Government Officials in each of their respective countries during the forums. Some of the young people who attend the national forums will then take part in a sub-regional forum scheduled for 2 – 9 September in Bangkok where they will again meet with senior officials from their countries who are participating in a sub-regional inter-governmental plan of action to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts across the GMS.²

The Mekong Youth Forum on Human Trafficking is the 2nd round of consultations with young people in the GMS following the Mekong Children's Forums on Human Trafficking in 2004. The recommendations from those forums are available for viewing and download at www.mekongchildrensforum.com.

While these forums are not open to the media, access to some of the young participants will be possible through a series of special media events typically held on the last day of each of the national and sub-regional forums. Some pre-selected one-on-one interviews will also be possible. B-Roll of the sub-regional forum will be made available to national and international TV broadcasters by the event organizers.

The Mekong Youth Forum on Human Trafficking is supported through a partnership of the International Labour Organization (IPEC Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women), Save the Children UK's Regional Cross Border Project, United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (UNIAP) and World Vision's Regional Advocacy Child Trafficking Project.

The National Forums are scheduled as follows:

Thailand National	28 – 30 March, Bangkok
Cambodia	26 – 27 April, Phnom Penh
Lao PDR	7 – 11 May, Vientiane
Viet Nam	1 – 3 August, Hanoi
China	Date TBA, Beijing

The Sub-regional Forum 2 – 9 September, Bangkok

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² For more on the COMMIT process, please visit the UNIAP's Website at www.no-trafficking.org