

UN-ACT

United Nations Action for Cooperation
against Trafficking in Persons

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
2017



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Bali Process	Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime
COMMIT	Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GMS	Greater Mekong Sub-region
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JCHK	Justice Centre Hong Kong
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
M&D	Migration and Displacement
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RBM	Results-based Management
SOM	Senior Officials Meeting
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPA	Sub-regional Plan of Action
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UN-ACT	United Nations Action for Cooperation Against Trafficking in Persons
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIAP	United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNTOC	United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trafficking in persons represents one of the worst forms of human rights abuses, whereby people are severely exploited through means of deception, coercion, or force. Some of the most dynamic human trafficking flows take place in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS: Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam), defined by significant transnational patterns due to long and porous borders, traditional migration trends, important socio-economic imbalances, or cultural linkages.

The United Nations Action for Cooperation against Trafficking in Persons (UN-ACT) is a regional project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), launched in 2014 to counter human trafficking in the GMS and beyond. UN-ACT is the only United Nations project in the sub-region dealing comprehensively with human trafficking, positioned at the strategic intersection of governance, policy, research, coordination, and direct interventions.

UN-ACT provides technical, coordination and financial support to the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT), an inter-governmental body that brings together the six countries in the GMS in a joint effort to counter trafficking in persons. Throughout 2017, the COMMIT governments continued implementing the 4th COMMIT Sub-Regional Plan of Action on trafficking (SPA IV) supported by UN-ACT. Ongoing efforts aim at building national capacities for a more sustainable COMMIT, with related functions being gradually integrated into the countries' own systems and procedures.

2017 was marked by increased COMMIT governments' capacity and ownership of the COMMIT Process. During the 12th COMMIT Senior Officials Meeting (SOM12) held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 29 November 2017, the governments of the GMS countries adopted the Terms of Reference on an annually rotating COMMIT Chair, with China to serve as the first-ever COMMIT Chair in 2018. The governments also agreed on using the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s General Principles and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment as a reference for the development of bilateral agreements between GMS countries.

COMMIT governments have strengthened capacities to counter human trafficking based on systematic collection and tracking of data. UN-ACT provided results-based management (RBM) and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) trainings to five out of six COMMIT governments, which helped them to successfully develop their standardised M&E frameworks and report back their progress at the SOM12.

COMMIT governments have developed and standardised victim identification and referral mechanisms across the region. Following the adoption of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-COMMIT Indicators of Human Trafficking and Related Forms of Exploitation and Common COMMIT Guidelines on Victim Identification and Referral Mechanisms the year prior, UN-ACT encouraged the COMMIT governments to standardise victim identification and referral mechanisms by using the adopted indicators and further supported the governments to conduct initial needs assessments for victim identification.

COMMIT countries have increased their cooperation with other countries and regional actors to effectively counter human trafficking. This includes Malaysia, the Netherlands, ASEAN and the Bali Process.

Policy makers, academia, non-state actors and the public have been able to increase their access to evidence-based research and knowledge on human trafficking. UN-ACT continued to promote access to data on trafficking in persons by conducting and supporting research projects. It published 'The Guidebook – Supporting the Reintegration of Trafficked Persons: A Guidebook for the Greater Mekong Sub-Region' in April 2017. It also organized an International Seminar on Mixed Migration in collaboration with Mahidol University, during which 30 researchers from around the globe presented their academic research on mixed migration.

Civil society and other non-governmental actors have been able to contribute more effectively to anti-trafficking efforts. UN-ACT continued to provide technical and financial support to civil society organizations (CSOs) in the GMS. Fourteen CSOs engaged in discussion with the COMMIT governments at the SOM12. In addition, 813 out of the 1,817 victims of trafficking supported through COMMIT's (trans-) national referral mechanisms in 2017 were referred from CSOs to government agencies, or vice versa.

Finally, UN-ACT collaborated further with the private sector, especially recruitment agencies, to prevent human trafficking through fair recruitment of migrant workers. The Association of Cambodia Recruitment Agencies, the Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation, the Employers Confederation of Thailand, and the Viet Nam International Manpower Supply and Trade Company Ltd were all involved in the development of Fair Recruitment Guidelines for the region.

UN-ACT looks forward to 2018, with China to take office as the first-ever annual COMMIT Chair and serve as host for the COMMIT meetings in 2018 including the 13th

COMMIT Senior Officials Meeting. COMMIT, with UN-ACT's technical support, will implement the COMMIT 2018 priorities upon which the COMMIT governments agreed. This includes bilateral cooperation between COMMIT countries and cooperation with non-COMMIT countries; prosecution; victim identification and sustainable reintegration; prevention and awareness raising; and capacity development of COMMIT countries including improved M&E. In addition, throughout 2018

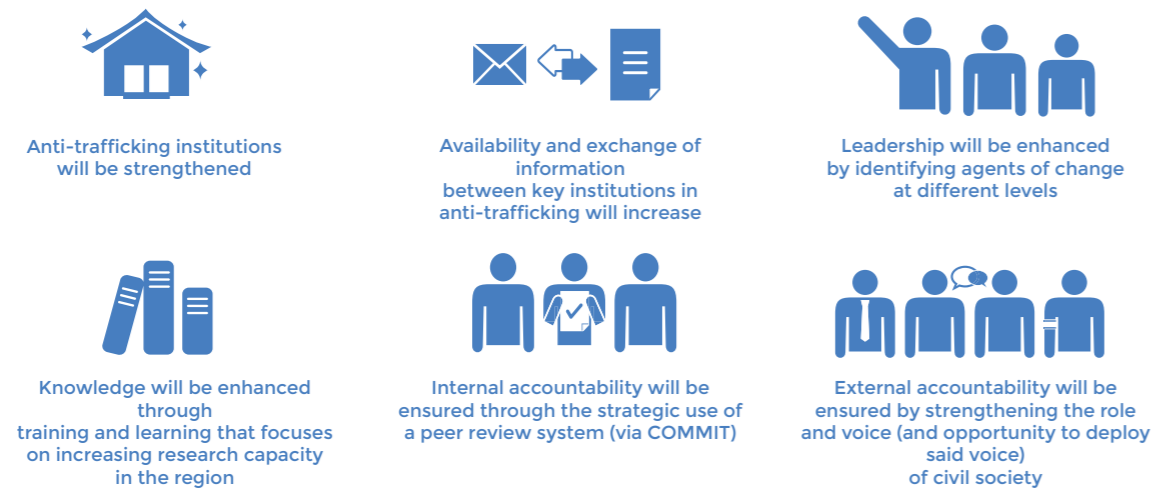
UN-ACT will continue its research to increase the evidence base for policy making and interventions. UN-ACT will also continue to support and build the capacity of youth and civil society through the COMMIT Youth Forum and the CSO Platform to COMMIT, which are platforms for youth representatives and CSOs from the GMS to contribute towards trafficking awareness, prevention and support to victims.

If anti-trafficking stakeholders in the region are capacitated with knowledge and skills in:



Then they will be able to effectively coordinate and cooperate to combat trafficking in persons in the region

Because



Assumptions



Figure 1. UN-ACT's Theory of Change

INTRODUCTION

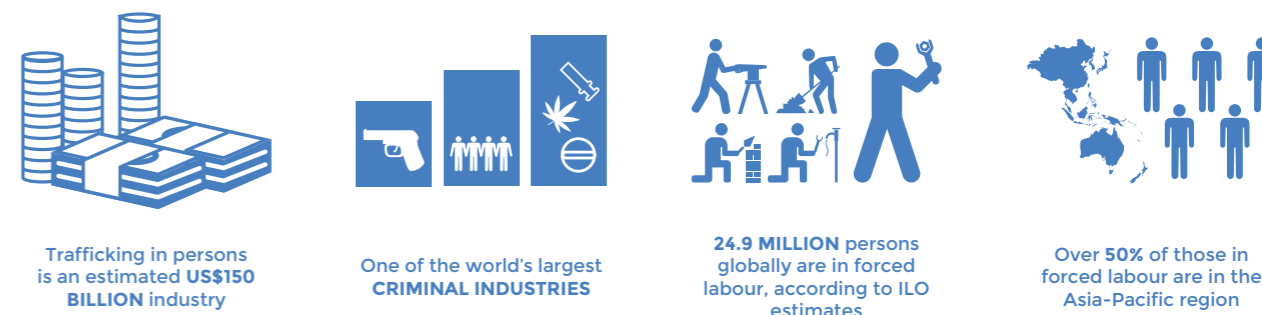
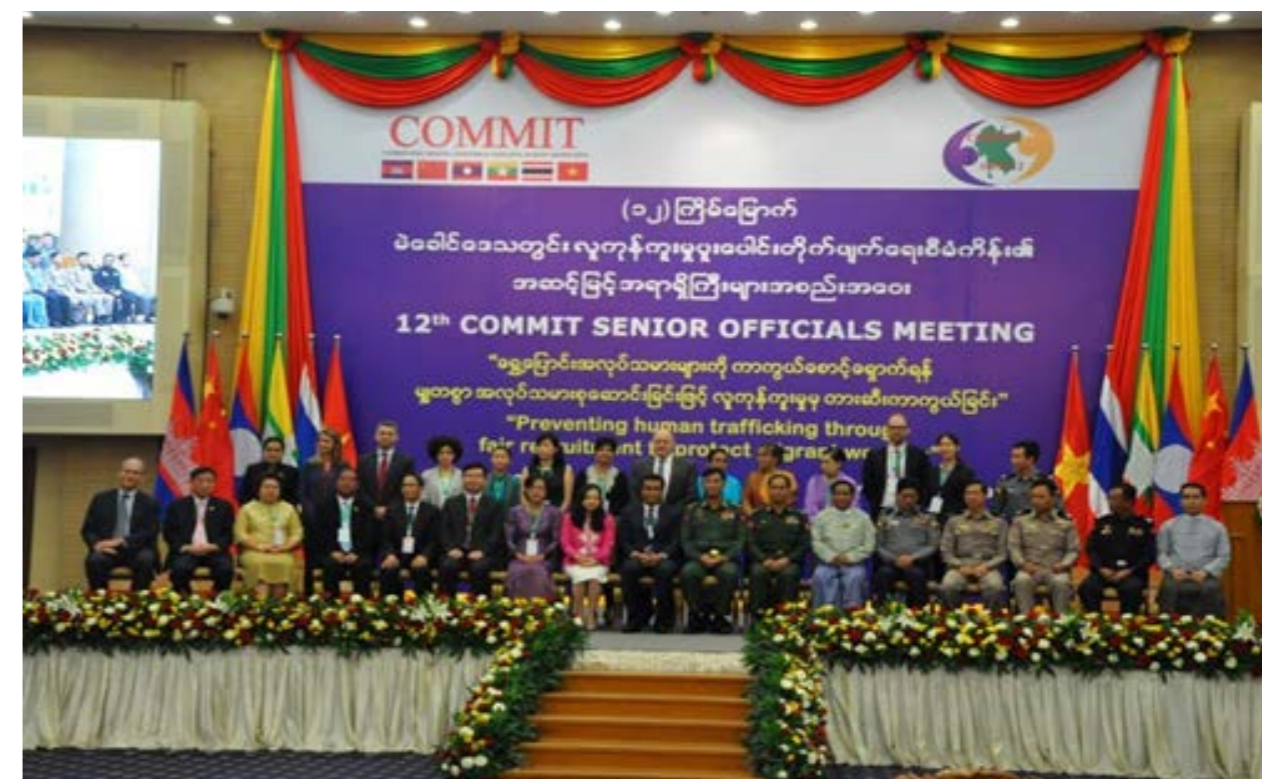


Figure 2. Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in Numbers

UN-ACT is a regional project of UNDP with offices across the GMS countries, namely Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. Working to counter human trafficking in all its forms, UN-ACT aims to build the capacities of governmental agencies, civil society, academic institutions and the private sector. It also facilitates the coordination and cooperation among all relevant stakeholders to work in a mutually supportive manner to effectively combat trafficking.

Key to UN-ACT's work is its support to COMMIT, a government-led, multi-stakeholder process between the GMS countries, established in 2004 to jointly counter human trafficking in the sub-region. In addition, UN-ACT seeks to address patterns of human trafficking that go beyond the COMMIT countries, including in Malaysia and Indonesia. UN-ACT also aims to increase evidence-based research on trafficking issues and conducts research in-house and in collaboration with other institutions.



Group photo of COMMIT representatives, national and international observers at SOM 12

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE GREATER MEKONG SUB-REGION

Trafficking in persons constitutes one of the worst forms of human rights abuses, whereby individuals are severely exploited through means of deception, coercion, or force. From the trade in infants and organs, to marriage trafficking or severe forms of labour/sexual exploitation, human trafficking is a complex and dynamic phenomenon affected by multiple, intertwined factors including socio-economic disparities, weak governance systems, gender inequalities, as well as limited labour rights and migration opportunities.

The Asia-Pacific region records by far the highest rates of trafficking in persons worldwide, with a prevalence three times greater than the second most affected region, namely Africa. Within the Asia-Pacific region, the GMS features some of the most extensive flows, characterized by strong cross-border patterns due to such factors as traditional migration trends, long and porous borders, significant socio-economic imbalances, and cultural linkages.

In 2017, trafficking for forced marriage in China remained a growing issue across the GMS. It constituted an increasing trend in Lao PDR and Cambodia as well as one of the main causes of cross-border human trafficking in Myanmar, the primary source country for victims of trafficking in the region. In addition, traffickers in Cambodia have developed new means to send Cambodian women to China. Instead of flying them directly from Cambodia to China, they now transport them to Viet Nam by bus before putting them on flights from the transit country to China.

New patterns in the way traffickers lure potential victims into vulnerable situations and trafficking have been observed in Viet Nam, characterised by an increasing use of the internet, especially gaming sites and social media. For instance, traffickers entice young women and girls with online dating relationships to persuade them to move abroad, then subject them to forced labour/sexual work or forced marriage often involving labour/sexual exploitation and other abuses. As a result, the number of reported incidences of Vietnamese women being trafficked internally or across



Behavior Change Communication (BCC) campaigns to prevent human trafficking between Viet Nam and Thailand were conducted in cooperation with CSAGA and Quang Binh Women's Union. About 1,600 participants including local people (children, youth and the elderly), migrant workers and local authorities attended events in 5 communes.

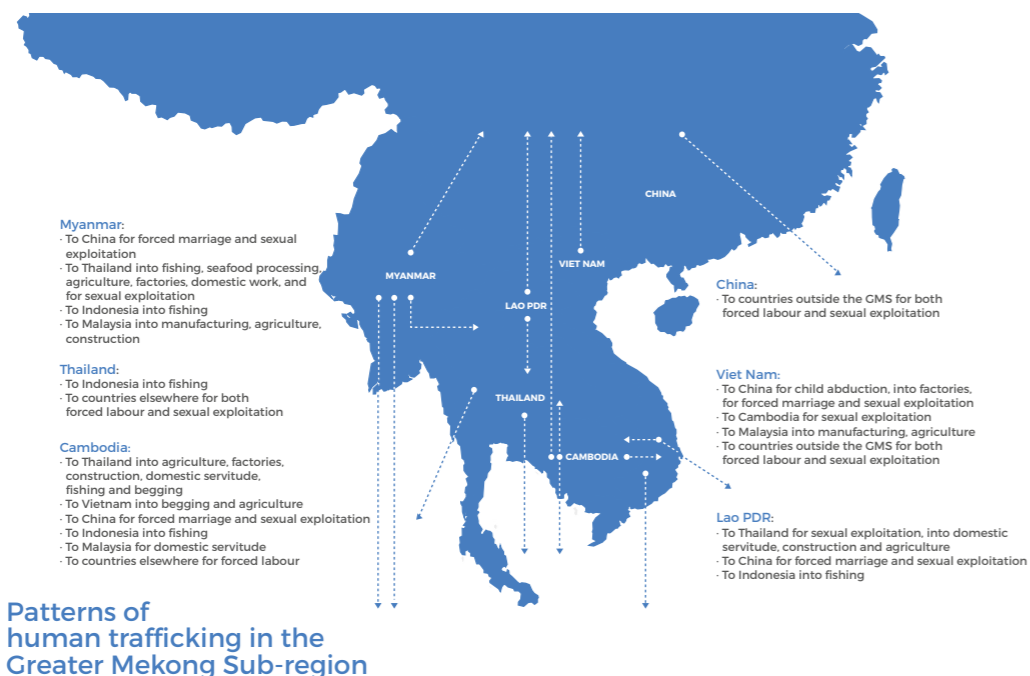


Figure 3. Patterns of human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region¹

¹The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations or UNDP concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

borders has risen in recent years. Vietnamese organized crime networks also recruit Vietnamese adults and children under pretences of lucrative job opportunities and transport them to Europe, particularly the United Kingdom, to subject them to forced labour in cannabis farms and nail bars.

While Lao PDR witnessed an increased record of internal human trafficking in 2017, with victims being mainly trafficked from rural areas to big cities or exploited in banana farms and rubber plantations, a decrease in official victim identifications and deportation cases compared to previous years was also observed. The reasons of this decrease may relate to victims not wishing to be identified.

In Thailand, the Criminal Court concluded the 2015 Rohingya human trafficking and mass grave case, sentencing 62 defendants to four to 94-year imprisonment. This is considered as Thailand's historic human trafficking case and the biggest smuggling and human trafficking crackdown to date. Human trafficking in fishing and related industries also remained a priority focus of the government. There was an increase in investigation, protection and prosecution of human trafficking cases in 2017. Prominent cases in 2017 include the Long Kung shrimp peeling factory and Kantrang cases.

Lastly, 2017 saw an increase in the trade of organs in Viet Nam, especially from the southern provinces of the country to hospitals in China and Singapore. In Cambodia, authorities arrested two of their nationals for allegedly trafficking over ten organ donors for illegal kidney transplants in India.



Training on human trafficking and video production for participants in the BCC campaign

DETAILS OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS FOR UN-ACT'S FOUR OUTPUTS

Output 1: The COMMIT Process is strengthened to become sustainable and self-reliant

Activity Result 1.1: COMMIT accountability and transparency enhanced

Governments have shown increased accountability and have taken more ownership and responsibility over the COMMIT national Taskforce meetings conducted in 2017. In addition, the Government of Myanmar organized the Regional COMMIT Taskforce Meeting and SOM12 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 28-29 November 2017, with UN-ACT technical support. The SOM12 successfully brought together the COMMIT leadership from each of the six member states and UN-ACT as the COMMIT Secretariat, along with counter-trafficking partners from across the region including youth, civil society, UN partners, embassies, donors, the private sector, and ASEAN which led one of the sessions on COMMIT-ASEAN collaboration. The wide range of stakeholders and partners engaging and feeding into the discussions in the SOM12 and COMMIT Taskforce underscores COMMIT's accountability to its stakeholders and increased transparency.

On the SOM12 agenda were COMMIT sustainability and capacity development; victim identification and referral mechanisms, labour migration/fair recruitment; engagement with youth and civil society; cooperation with ASEAN and the private sector; M&E progress in the implementation of SPA IV; and 2018 priorities and work planning.

The COMMIT members were able to successfully negotiate and come to an agreement on the following decisions:

- The COMMIT governments agreed to use the ILO's General Principles and Operational Guidelines on Fair Recruitment as a reference for the development of bilateral agreements on human trafficking between member states. These are based on international standards and best practices to protect migrant workers from trafficking and it was an important step to have the governments deliberate, negotiate and agree on how it should be implemented. This was in line with the regional priority of COMMIT in 2017, which aimed to address the nexus between labour migration and human trafficking, especially at the recruitment stage. A workshop on these Principles and Guidelines was held with stakeholders from COMMIT countries in September 2017 and the outcome fed into the SOM12. ILO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) also supported this effort. Representatives of governments, employers, workers and civil society from all GMS countries jointly developed a preamble for the Principles and Guidelines highlighting protection of migrant workers' rights, international best practices, and a gender-sensitive approach.
- The COMMIT governments finalized and adopted the terms of reference for a COMMIT Chair and agreed that China will serve as the first-ever COMMIT Chair for 2018. This position has now been established and will rotate annually between the countries to facilitate greater government ownership and responsibility over

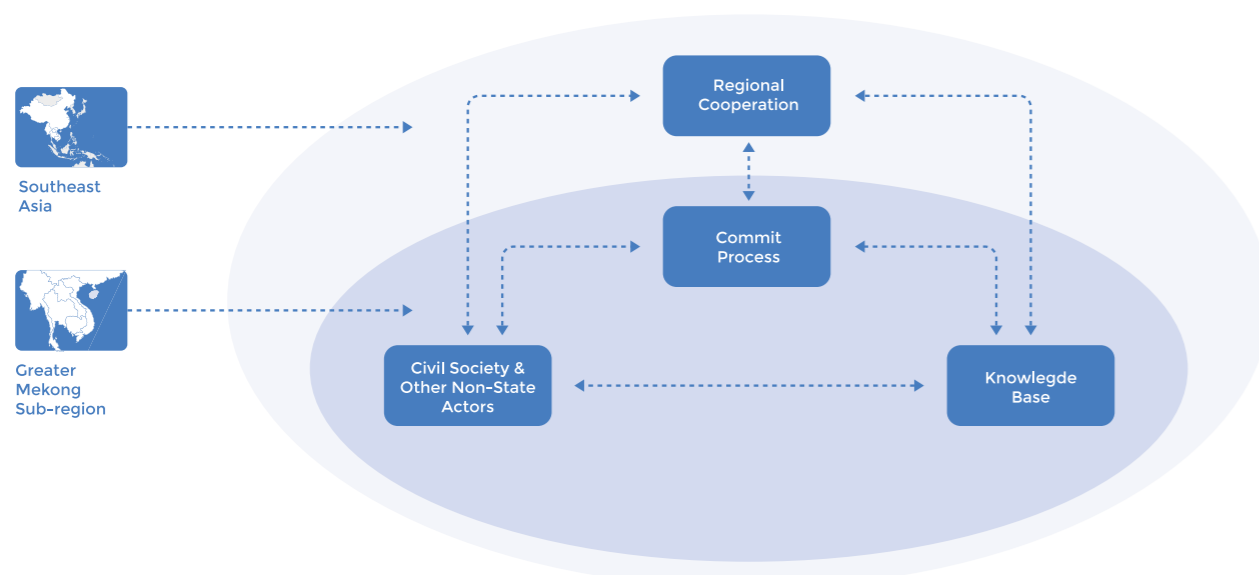


Figure 4. UN-ACT Strategic Framework



Representatives of COMMIT governments, national and international observers gathered for SOM12 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

COMMIT. The Chair will notably be in charge of hosting the high-level COMMIT meetings, including SOM13 at which COMMIT will report back on its achievements and results to stakeholders.

Activity Result 1.2: Sufficient technical and functional capacities developed by governments

UN-ACT continued to support the COMMIT governments in following up with COMMIT capacity development strategies and national capacity development plans. In 2017, the governments took on more secretariat functions themselves as part of the strategy to have the COMMIT governments eventually assume the secretariat role. This includes organizing COMMIT Taskforce training workshops and regional COMMIT Taskforce meetings, mobilising financial resources, providing administrative support to COMMIT Taskforce meetings including preparation, documentation, reporting and financial contributions. All governments have increased their participation and engagement with the COMMIT Process such as by developing and providing active feedback on draft COMMIT documents and they will be able to take on further functions in 2018 and beyond. The establishment of the annual COMMIT Chair reflects the increased technical and functional capacities that governments are now taking on.

In 2017, UN-ACT provided M&E and RBM trainings to Myanmar high level and operational officers (training for Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam took place the previous year). With increased M&E capacities, this



(Above) Opening ceremony of SOM12, with H.E. Kyaw Swe, Minister of Home Affairs, Myanmar
(Below) Presentation of COMMIT progress in implementing SPA IV, in front of national and international observers at SOM12

enabled COMMIT countries to monitor and review their own effectiveness of the implementation of the SPA IV. The COMMIT governments also identified capacity development in COMMIT countries, including on M&E, as a priority for 2018.

A selection of important results in 2017:

- COMMIT governments increased capacities to combat human trafficking based on systematic collection and tracking of data. Five out of six COMMIT countries successfully developed their standardised M&E frameworks and reported back their progress with indicators and targets at the SOM12.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation of Cambodia carried out missions to five provinces in Cambodia to monitor the implementation of minimum standards of residential care for victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. The government officials have started to apply the endorsed M&E tool, developed with the support of UN-ACT to monitor the minimum standards of residential care. Based on the findings, the government officials followed up with shelter staff to improve residential care services so that they meet minimum standards.
- The Myanmar Central Body for the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons established its first National M&E Group in 2017. Its mandate is to monitor the implementation of the 5-year Myanmar National Plan of Action (2017-2021). UN-ACT organized an RBM training workshop for the National M&E Group in July 2017, during which UN-ACT provided advice to the National M&E Group on developing their national results-based M&E framework for building a strong evidence base around human trafficking and for assessing the wide, diverse range of interventions being implemented to address the issue. Further, UN-ACT supported the National M&E Group to link its national M&E framework with the SPA IV's results-based M&E framework. Myanmar is the first country to link national and regional action plans through a results-based framework. This significant step forward is in line with the recommendation in the COMMIT capacity development strategy which aims to ensure consistency in addressing trafficking nationally and regionally.
- Just as the Government of Lao PDR did in 2016, the Government of Myanmar provided all technical, logistical, administrative and financial support in organizing and hosting the SOM12, allowing UN-ACT to assume mainly a technical and coordinating role.
- The COMMIT governments have been able to increase their technical abilities related to private sector collaboration on anti-trafficking efforts. The private sector engaged with the COMMIT governments in the session on 'Private sector engagement in counter-trafficking' at the SOM12, during which COMMIT governments shared results of their engagement with the private sector. Thailand reported on the

establishment of the first fishermen live action centre to provide assistance to sea fearers and fishermen. Viet Nam highlighted its engagement with recruitment agencies in responding to migrant workers' needs. China mentioned its labour monitoring department which communicates with the private sector on labour issues and noted the collaboration between the government and Alibaba, China's biggest online commerce company, which provides support for a police tracking system for cases of missing or trafficked children through a web-based platform called "Tuan Yuan" (reunion). The Government of China also partnered with Baidu, a Chinese multinational technology company, to create a nation-wide public alert network accessible by social media users. Finally, Cambodia explained its work with trade unions and Lao PDR underscored its collaboration with 23 recruitment agencies as well as the ASEAN Corporate Social Responsibility network.

Activity Result 1.3: Effective implementation of SPA IV

UN-ACT continued its support for the implementation of the SPA IV for the four areas of prevention, prosecution, policy and protection. Bilateral cooperation between COMMIT countries in particular, remained a key priority under the SPA IV in 2017, with UN-ACT ensuring that the voices of civil society and trafficked persons were represented and considered in the cooperation.

Key results by COMMIT countries implemented under SPA IV in 2017:

- Cambodia and China developed a bilateral cooperation agreement and joint action plan in 2017. The two parties agreed to cooperate on the following areas:
 - 1) Establish a hotline between the two countries, with focal persons and contact details, for effective information exchange.
 - 2) Set up taskforces by both countries to implement the agreement and joint activities.
 - 3) Carry out a joint special sting operation against human traffickers from April to August 2017.
 - 4) Carry out special preventive measures to strengthen education and awareness on human trafficking, particularly on forced marriage, by both countries annually, particularly in hotspot areas.
 - 5) Conduct discussions and disseminate communications on legal procedures and necessary documents for transnational marriage registration and other legal affairs.
 - 6) Carry out regular bilateral meetings, with the second meeting planned for the first quarter of 2018.



2017 Results at a Glance

1,817 Victims Referred and Supported Through National and Transnational Mechanism
Cambodia: 773
China: 8
Myanmar: 25
Thailand: 234
Lao PDR: 30
Viet Nam: 517

7 Improvements to Anti-Trafficking Polices in the GMS

Civil society (CS) plays a key role in influencing trafficking interventions at the policy level and these improvements to policies were developed following advocacy from CS.

Cambodia (5): drafted law of surrogacy; law on migrant smuggling; mid-review of National Plan of Action (NPA-2014-2018) against TIP; Joint Plan of Action (PoA) on TIP between Cambodia and China; recommendations on the Minimum Standards on Residential Care for Victims of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation.

Thailand (1): Royal Ordinance Concerning the Management of Foreign Workers' Employment B.E. 2560 (2017). UN-ACT, in collaboration with Winrock International, organized a stakeholder consultation to provide initial responses and recommendations for this policy. The policy underwent a first revision and is currently under the second revision. Following UN-ACT advocacy, the UN Country Team (including UN-ACT) under the UN Resident Coordinator's leadership met with the Minister of Labour on this policy to convey a coordinated UN response emphasizing human rights-based policy making.

Vietnam (1): UN-ACT and civil society have been involved in the review and revision of the Penal Code in Viet Nam since 2015. The revised Penal Code, which includes trafficking articles, was approved by the National Assembly in June 2017 for the implementation to strengthen the criminal justice response in Viet Nam.

Figure 3. UN-ACT Results at a glance table 2017



COMMIT representatives reviewing their progress in implementing SPA IV at SOM 12, with national and international observers

- Cambodia launched its “National Guidelines on Victim Identification and Referral for Appropriate Service Provision” in early 2016 and conducted subsequent training courses on these guidelines for relevant government officials and staff from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in 2017. As a result, a national referral mechanism was established and 664 victims of trafficking were repatriated from abroad in 2017. In addition, the government incorporated a trafficking in persons curriculum into the National Police Academy and worked to integrate the curriculum into the Royal Academy for Judicial Professionals; conducted a bilateral meeting with China and endorsed the joint Plan of Action; held a bilateral meeting with Thailand to discuss case management and prepare the development of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for victim identification and repatriation; and conducted preparations for a meeting with Malaysia in 2018 to finalise the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on trafficking in persons.
- China enacted a new judicial interpretation on trafficking in women and children to better protect victims of trafficking. Government officials prosecuted perpetrators, including traffickers and marriage brokers of forced marriages. It also engaged a transnational organized crime advisor (since January 2017) to ensure collaboration in trafficking cases and cross-border irregular migration issues. Of note was the launch of Phase Three of the innovative web platform “Tuan Yuan” as noted above. Over 20 mobile applications were developed for complaint mechanisms for cases of missing children. As of 31 October 2017, the Tuan Yuan platform achieved a 96% success rate, which

recovered 2,169 missing children, 44 of whom were trafficking victims.

- Lao PDR adopted the National Plan of Action on Anti-Trafficking in Persons (2017-2020) and allocated national resources for its implementation. It also strengthened bilateral cooperation with China, Thailand, and Viet Nam on combatting human trafficking cases and protecting women and children. The government collaborated with IOM to develop victim identification guidelines based on the Bali Process and the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). Lao also conducted anti-trafficking awareness raising activities via radio and other media channels. It disseminated information, education and communication materials and initiated an awareness campaign on preventing trafficking, which included a drama competition for youth. The government produced guidelines on prosecution of human trafficking cases (translated into English and Laotian) and conducted trainings on these guidelines for police, law enforcement officers, and prosecution agencies. Finally, Lao PDR repatriated 99 victims of trafficking from Thailand in accordance with international standards and procedures.
- Myanmar developed a victim identification form for Anti-Trafficking Taskforce officials (ATTFs) based on international standards and COMMIT guidelines and provided training to ATTFs on the use of the victim identification form. The government has been developing a national referral mechanism and SOP on the return, reintegration, and rehabilitation of trafficked victims. It is also in the process of developing cooperation guidelines between ATTFs

and the Union Attorney General’s Office. Moreover, Myanmar developed an information sheet on available legal services and on the rights of victims during legal proceedings. This has been disseminated to victims of trafficking, victim support agencies and information centres. Finally, the government conducted trainings for social workers on case management to better provide services to victims of trafficking who returned to their home.

- Thailand revised its SOP on protection services provided to victims by Multi-Disciplinary Teams (made up of professionals from diverse disciplines, including those from government and CSOs), and identified and supported over 234 victims in 2017. The government provided voluntary occupational skills training and employment opportunities to victims with support of private businesses. It also developed the capacities of labour inspectors in combatting trafficking in the workplace. In addition, Thailand registered and trained 251 interpreters, so that they can support communication between trafficked persons from Myanmar, Lao PDR, Viet Nam, Cambodia and Thai officials. The government continued to develop bilateral and multilateral cooperation within and outside the GMS and established post-arrival and reintegration centres, as well as provincial assistance centres for migrant workers under the Ministry of Labour. Thailand provided awareness trainings on human trafficking to provincial children and youth councils throughout Thailand and organized a series of government and civil society forums to discuss joint efforts in addressing human trafficking.
- Viet Nam revised the Penal Code, with amendments on the trafficking in persons-related section to align it with the UNTOC, and revised the law on children particularly on the right to be protected from exploitation. The government is implementing joint communication campaigns on anti-human trafficking along the borders between Viet Nam, Cambodia, China, and Lao PDR. It also collaborated with Interpol on trafficking cases (230 cases and 310 traffickers were investigated in 2017). Viet Nam developed a national referral mechanism for trafficked victims and conducted a national survey on the situation of trafficked victims. The government is assessing victim support centres and ensuring proper victim support standards. It also organized the Viet Nam - Lao PDR - Cambodia “friendship bus” for awareness raising on preventing human trafficking. In 2017, more than 600 victims of trafficking were identified and rescued, and all of the identified victims received initial support.

Output 2: COMMIT countries increase their cooperation with other countries and regional actors to effectively counter human trafficking

Activity Result 2.1: Joint anti-trafficking efforts of COMMIT countries with key destination countries elsewhere increased

Malaysia remains a major destination country for human trafficking from the GMS countries. Cambodia and Thailand made significant progress in developing bilateral cooperation with Malaysia. There are ongoing discussions between Cambodia-Malaysia and Thailand-Malaysia to formalise their cooperation by 2018. Meanwhile, UN-ACT discussed COMMIT and its work with counter-trafficking stakeholders in Malaysia at the conference ‘Walk the Talk - Stop Trafficking Women and Girls’ in Kuala Lumpur and further engaged with government officials on the cooperation between COMMIT countries and Malaysia as well as the implementation of the ASEAN-COMMIT victim identification indicators that were adopted in Malaysia in 2015.

At the country level, Myanmar held a discussion with India to develop an MoU to combat trafficking in persons and Lao PDR engaged with non-COMMIT countries through the Bali Process. UN-ACT, in partnership with UNODC and the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, co-hosted a workshop on the ‘UN Global Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons’ in preparation for Thailand’s engagement at the UN Global Plan of Action meeting with other countries at the global level. In May 2017, UN-ACT also facilitated a visit of the Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence Against Children to discuss anti-trafficking efforts and share experiences with the Thai Government on how the counter-trafficking community can draw upon the system of a national rapporteur on human trafficking to more effectively address exploitative practices. In addition, UN-ACT supported further engagement between Viet Nam and the United Kingdom to combat human trafficking and modern slavery, and co-hosted with the United Kingdom a conference in Viet Nam addressing trafficking in persons between the two countries.

At the regional level, UN-ACT engaged with a number of countries outside the GMS through various fora to share experiences of the COMMIT model and discuss areas of collaboration with COMMIT. This includes:

- The Asian Women’s Parliamentarian Caucus in Singapore with Members of Parliament from India,

Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste

- The ASEAN Community and People Mobility: Impacts, Challenges & Prospects conference in Japan
- The Enhancing Human Security of Victims of Trafficking in Women in the Asia-Pacific Region conference and the 'Seoul Debates: Lessons Learnt on Addressing Gender-Based Violence: From Korea and Around the World' in South Korea
- Responses to Transnational Organized Crime for the Peace and Order Council of the City of Makati in the Philippines.

Activity Results 2.2: Institutionalised engagement between COMMIT and ASEAN

UN-ACT continued to support the COMMIT governments to establish standardised victim identification and referral mechanisms at national levels, including the implementation of the ASEAN-COMMIT victim identification indicators. Assessments for victim identification were initiated in some ASEAN and COMMIT countries in 2017. Additionally, UN-ACT engaged COMMIT and ASEAN at the SOM12 to work together on the protection and promotion of migrant workers' rights and prevention of human trafficking through fair recruitment.

The national COMMIT Taskforces have increasingly liaised with the relevant ASEAN focal points at the country level and have included them in the national COMMIT Taskforce meetings. In Cambodia, UN-ACT provided technical inputs on the draft Regional Guidelines and Procedures to Address the Needs of Victims of Trafficking of the ASEAN Commission on The Promotion and Protection of The Rights of Women and Children, as well as the draft Resolution on Promotion of the Health of Female Migrant Workers of the ASEAN Parliamentary Assembly. In Thailand, the COMMIT-ASEAN indicators of human trafficking were introduced and discussed as tools and standards for labour inspectors to draw upon in their work.

ASEAN representatives also participated in the SOM12. The Philippines, as the Chair of ASEAN in 2017, shared the country's innovative measures to combat trafficking in persons and illegal recruitment. The ASEAN Chair representative discussed with COMMIT governments and agreed on further collaboration.

Activity Result 2.3: Coordination and cooperation among relevant regional actors for anti-trafficking increased

UN-ACT organized three regional network meetings in 2017, which brought together civil society, UN and

academic stakeholders from across Southeast and East Asia to present and discuss developments in the field of migration and human trafficking. The meetings provided inclusive opportunities for anti-trafficking organizations to connect on a regular basis and explore opportunities for collaboration. The themes of the events were private sector engagement in anti-human trafficking, regional and global work on mixed migration, and the model of a national rapporteur on trafficking in persons.

There have been continued efforts to coordinate amongst UN agencies with active participation of UN-ACT, which led to concrete deliverables on addressing human trafficking/migration issues. UN agencies have notably coordinated through the UN Technical Working Group on Sustainable Societies, which includes migration/human trafficking issues, the UNDP Technical Working Group on Migration and Displacement, which internally coordinates UNDP's work with other stakeholders including other UN partners, and the UN Development Group Asia Pacific Human Rights Network. In addition, UN-ACT co-chairs the South East Asia Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons with UN partners, which meets regularly, and provided technical support to the 'ILO TRIANGLE II/IOM PROMISE Baseline Survey and Access to Justice for Migrant Workers' Study.

UN-ACT continued to coordinate with regional partners through providing extensive technical support and strategic inputs to partners' initiatives, including inputs to the Justice Centre Hong Kong (JCHK) for a research project on vulnerable migrants in Hong Kong and the boundaries between refugee and human trafficking experiences. This project drew upon a data set of interviews that JCHK conducted with asylum seekers when there was no established United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or government-led refugee status determination process in Hong Kong. Additionally, UN-ACT provided technical support to the Labour Migration Forum (as a platform for NGO stakeholders to coordinate, share updates, voice their concerns, and discuss issues related to labour migration and human trafficking), IOM's Direct Assistance Handbook, and Japan International Cooperation Agency's Reintegration Handbook. Finally, UN-ACT provided technical support and advice to regional NGOs in the organization of youth debates on the impact of begging and street children.

UN-ACT continued to be involved in the Bali Process and provided support to several events this year, including consultations to develop a facilitator's guide for "Comprehensive Approaches for Addressing Irregular Movements of People by Sea", and to establish a Regional Strategic Roadmap to strengthen counter-



Supporting Survivors of Trafficking

Min was a 20 year old man living in Kawthaung, in the south of Myanmar with his wife and mother. He worked as a labourer in a palm oil plantation earning less than 100 USD per month. One day, he met a stranger in a teashop who promised him a job in a Thai factory, where he would earn over 400 USD per month. Min agreed instantly and followed the stranger to Ranong, Thailand. Once there, however, Min was locked up and violently forced to board a fishing boat.

Min spent over half a year at sea, forced to work very long hours for no salary. He was physically and psychologically abused by the crew and the captain himself, who regularly beat him, called him abusive words and threatened to harm his family if he tried to escape.

One day, the Indonesian Police intercepted the boat while it was illegally fishing in Indonesian waters and instructed them to go back to Ranong. When the vessel arrived at its destination, Min managed to escape and return to Myanmar where he approached the Anti-Trafficking Task Force for help. Thanks to his active involvement in the criminal justice process, his broker was arrested and sentenced to jail, yet Min never received any compensation. He was reunited with his family and found a job in a palm oil plantation. Fortunately, Min did receive some support from NGOs, which helped him in renovating his house and opening a small grocery shop.

Min was delighted when he received an invitation to participate in the Survivors Gathering Event organized in June 2017 by World Vision Myanmar under the guidance of the Central Body for Suppression of Trafficking in Persons (CBTIP). Min was excited about meeting other survivors and overcoming their trafficking experiences together. The workshop gave him an opportunity to express his feelings

and share his desire to support organizations working on combatting human trafficking. He reported having learnt useful information which he will share with his friends and relatives to help them be less vulnerable to human trafficking. Min and the other participants also discussed and developed recommendations for the improvement of assistance and services provided to trafficked victims.

UN-ACT is a member of the Myanmar Human Trafficking Working Group and played an active role at the Survivor Gathering Workshop held in Nay Pyi Taw. UN-ACT provided technical support to the preparation of the event, stage performances and recommendations of the survivors.



Survivors practising song performances on stage

*Pseudonyms are used to protect identities of individuals affected.

trafficking responses among members.

UN-ACT also engaged with regional actors beyond the GMS. In March, the project was invited to engage with stakeholders on combatting human trafficking at several regional events. This included the Corporate Affairs Forum Conference, which was organized by Public Affairs Asia in Singapore to engage the private sector in counter-trafficking efforts, and the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians for Population and Development organized in Bangkok to share COMMIT experiences and provide insights into regional cooperation in counter-trafficking for parliamentarians from Asia and the Pacific.

UN-ACT conducted a series of webinars via Freedom Collaborative, an online community platform that unites anti-human trafficking stakeholders from the region and around the world. A first webinar on 'Irregular migration, Refugees, and Victims of Trafficking: The Complexities of Mixed Migration in Counter-Trafficking in Persons' was held in March, followed by a second on 'Mixed Migration in Southeast and East Asia: Strengthening the Evidence Base for More Informed Policy and Programming' in

June, and a third on '(Trans-)National Referral Mechanisms in CTIP: Models, Challenges and Approaches', jointly with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Further, UN-ACT conducted capacity development interventions for a wide range of regional stakeholders, including for GMS officials on labour migration in partnership with the Mekong Institute, and supported the development of the Global Compact on Migration at both national and regional levels.

Output 3: Policy makers, academia, non-state actors and the public have increased access to evidence-based research and knowledge on human trafficking

Activity Result 3.1: Evidence-base for anti-trafficking interventions enhanced and accessible

UN-ACT published 'Supporting the Reintegration of Trafficked Persons: A Guidebook for the Greater Mekong Sub-region' in April 2017 in partnership with Nexus Institute and World Vision. The Guidebook is for

practitioners from both government and non-government organizations, to address weaknesses in the current frameworks of victim assistance and reintegration in the GMS. It highlights positive examples of reintegration of trafficked persons as well as challenges that many victims may face as they seek to move on from having been exploited. It also offers guidance to practitioners – through checklists and recommendations – on how to improve reintegration programming and policies.

The guidebook is based on the findings from the regional study 'After Trafficking: Experiences and Challenges in the (Re)Integration of Trafficked Persons in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region', which was commissioned by the COMMIT governments and published in 2013 by NEXUS Institute and the United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP), now UN-ACT. This study was based on in-depth interviews with hundreds of victims of trafficking throughout the GMS and identified many good practices and lessons directly from trafficking victims in the region.

In addition to these research reports, UN-ACT provided technical support to the following research reports in 2017:

- A research paper from the Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization, titled 'Broker versus Social Networks in Adverse Working Conditions: Cross-Sectional Evidence from Cambodian Migrants in Thailand'.
- UNODC and the Thailand Institute of Justice's report, 'Trafficking in Persons from Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar to Thailand'.
- Liberty Asia's 'Thailand Legal Gap Analysis'.
- UNESCO's research and policy briefs on 'Internal Migration in Southeast Asia' which will be published in 2018.
- UNESCO's field research on internal migrants' social inclusion and access to public services in Cambodia, which will be published in 2018.
- Winrock and Samaritan's Purse's research study entitled 'Victim Identification Survey among the Returned Cambodian Migrants', which will be published in 2018.

Further, UN-ACT's in-house research titled 'Recruitment practices and employment conditions experienced by regular migrant workers from Lao PDR going to Thailand' and a study on recruitment practices and employment conditions of urban refugees in Bangkok are currently being finalised and will be published in 2018.

Activity Result 3.2: Strategic dissemination and advocacy on research findings to influence policy and programming strengthened

Following the launch of 'The Guidebook – Supporting the Reintegration of Trafficked Persons: A Guidebook for the Greater Mekong Sub-Region' in April 2017, UN-ACT translated the Guidebook into the main languages of the countries covered by the project, namely Cambodian, Laotian, Myanmar, Thai and Vietnamese. The Guidebook has been disseminated to relevant organizations and institutions in the region to support their on-going assistance work for victims of trafficking.

UN-ACT and Mahidol University organized an International Seminar on Mixed Migration in Bangkok on 21-22 June. This event increased access to research and knowledge, and contributed to developing the evidence base on human trafficking and mixed migration for policy makers, programme implementers, and the public. Registration was immediately oversubscribed and 30 presenters, including leading academics and practitioners from NGOs/CSOs, UN and governments discussed their papers on various dimensions of mixed migration, such as migration flows and patterns, national/international policies, and human trafficking. A few thousand people also joined the seminar via livestream and the online video of the event has been watched by over 40,000 viewers since. The presented papers are under consideration for publication in a 2018 issue on mixed migration of the prestigious Anti-Trafficking Review (with UN-ACT as guest editor), a peer-reviewed academic journal housed under the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women. The seminar created an open dialogue around the latest research and evidence base and facilitated new partnerships across stakeholders for joint interventions.

The Cambodian Government and civil society continued to refer to UN-ACT's research on 'Human Trafficking Vulnerabilities: A Study on Forced Marriage between Cambodia and China' to develop and implement their

awareness interventions in local communities. Similarly, in China, the research informed training workshops for service providers and law enforcement officials in Guangzhou and Jiangxi. It was also discussed during the official shelter visit of the Chinese delegates in Cambodia.

In Thailand, UN-ACT provided technical inputs to Chulalongkorn University and the Royal Police Academy in developing a research tool and questionnaire on the effectiveness of law enforcement in the field of human trafficking which will contribute towards influencing policy and programming in the country.

In Viet Nam, UN-ACT drew upon the report 'Supporting the Reintegration of Trafficked Persons: A Guidebook for the Greater Mekong Sub-Region' to inform and strengthen a wide range of support services to victims of trafficking. This includes SOPs on investigations of human trafficking cases under Border Guard's mandates, SOPs on national referral and reintegration of victims of trafficking, a directory of support services to victims of trafficking, as well as trainings for law enforcement and

judicial officers on victim's rights during the prosecution process.

Positioning UN-ACT as a key source of human trafficking information, UN-ACT's website, Facebook and Twitter remain important communication fora for anti-trafficking with updates, tools, useful information, and resources. UN-ACT also routinely publishes analyses and opinion pieces on the latest trends and developments in anti-trafficking on its website. Recent blogs include "Safe Migration in a World on the Move" and "The Importance of Narrative in Understanding Human Trafficking". Another blog was on "Sex Work and Human Trafficking: The Case for Agency and Empowerment", which provides conceptual reflections on the nexus between sex work and human trafficking, and discusses a series of vulnerability factors to human trafficking, introducing an empowerment approach on how to prevent and address exploitation in commercial sex. This is based on the understanding that forms of deception, coercion and exploitation are difficult to identify without the involvement of those affected, so that interventions allowing trafficking victims to come

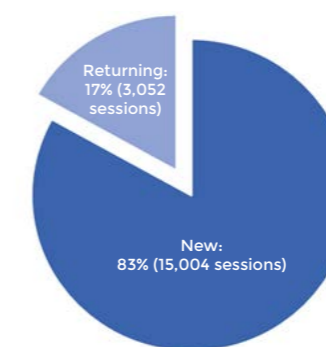


Figure 5 . New vs. returning visitors on UN-ACT website in 2017

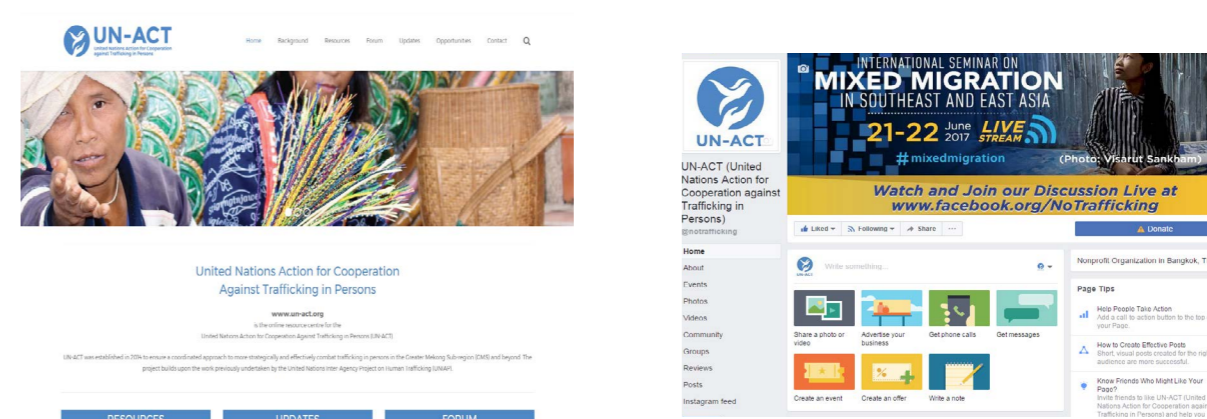


Figure 6. UN-ACT website and Facebook page

forward and raise concerns without fear of adverse repercussions are needed.

In addition, UN-ACT maintains a comprehensive resource centre related to human trafficking in the GMS on its website, including research, tools and guidelines, laws and agreements, and other publications. In 2017, the UN-ACT website had 7,296 returning sessions and 15,007 new sessions, with 40,771 page views made by a total of 15,188 users. UN-ACT China also has its own website, which had 376 new visitors and a total of 1,614 page views this year.

Output 4: Civil society and other non-governmental actors are able to contribute more effectively to anti-trafficking efforts

Activity Result 4.1: Increased engagement between government and civil society

UN-ACT continued to position itself as a key facilitator for government and civil society engagement on anti-trafficking efforts in the GMS, by drawing upon direct engagements that have been built and maintained between governments and CSOs during COMMIT Senior Official Meetings in the past years. In 2017, 22 local and international representatives from 14 CSOs engaged on anti-trafficking interventions at the SOM12. CSOs also continued to participate in national and regional COMMIT Taskforce meetings as well as other national meetings implemented under COMMIT.

The six COMMIT governments reported that 1,817 victims of trafficking were supported through COMMIT national and transnational referrals mechanisms in 2017. 813 were referred from CSOs to government agencies,

or vice versa, among whom 773 were referred in Cambodia, 4 in China, 30 in Lao PDR, and 6 in Thailand.

In 2017, UN-ACT Offices engaged their respective governments and civil society organizations as follows:

- In Cambodia, UN-ACT held an inter-agency meeting among key anti-trafficking NGO partners in February, to prepare for a bilateral meeting between Cambodia and China. The meeting discussed a Plan of Action and SOP, and collected inputs from NGOs to be tabled for discussions with the National Committee on Counter Trafficking. Another inter-agency meeting was also held in May with key NGO partners to discuss how a counselling service can be provided to Cambodian victims in China. The meeting also discussed the production of a brochure to promote Cambodian student networks among the Cambodian women in China. In addition, UN-ACT convened counter-trafficking stakeholder meetings (including with civil society partners) which aim to coordinate and share research findings and information on various activities and issues concerning human trafficking in Cambodia.

- In China, on the side lines of a Cambodia-China governmental bilateral meeting, UN-ACT discussed and agreed with visiting Cambodian CSOs on action points and initiatives to support the governments on their priorities to implement their plan of action for 2017. Concrete action points with UN-ACT were identified as follows with some of them immediately implemented:

- 1) Share government focal persons' name and contact details to facilitate inter-governmental communications.

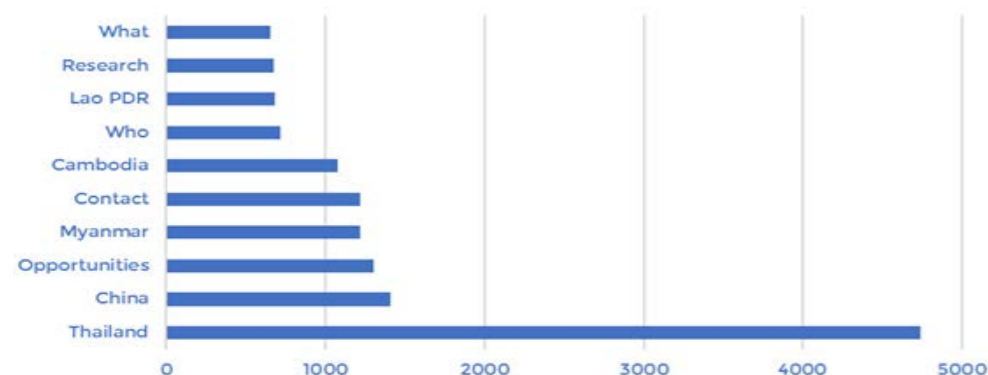


Figure 7. Pages most visited on the UN-ACT website in 2017 (excluding home page)

- 2) Share the marriage registration law and policy notice with explicit anti-trafficking tips included for Cambodian counterparts to translate into Khmer and disseminate among vulnerable populations and publicise in China's transnational marriage registration centres as part of prevention efforts pledged by the governments.

- 3) Compile a governmental and non-governmental protection and assistance resource flyer to be shared with service providers and volunteers, among others.

- 4) Cambodian CSOs to nominate and recommend a Khmer speaking counselling coordinator responsible for coordinating online counselling services to presumed victims staying in facilities.

- 5) Connect victims with Chinese service providers.

- In Viet Nam, UN-ACT held Counter Trafficking Network meetings co-chaired with IOM. The meetings provided a platform for anti-trafficking stakeholders, including civil society representatives, to update each other on their progress on anti-trafficking activities and collaborate on joint advocacy on government policies. On 30 July, (National Anti-Trafficking Day) network members agreed with the Ministry of Public Security and the government focal point on trafficking on the following areas of collaboration:

- 1) A joint public statement prepared by Counter Trafficking Network members to mark the National Day Against Human Trafficking, which was widely disseminated through social media.

- 2) Creation of an online space to share communications materials among the Network, which will inform support to national counter-trafficking efforts.

- 3) A mapping of counter trafficking agencies' work, which will inform further support to national authorities.

- 4) A workshop on victims of trafficking case data collection and management.

- In Myanmar, UN-ACT convened regular Human Trafficking Working Group Meetings, which included civil society stakeholders to collaborate and update each other on anti-trafficking activities, plans and priorities, as well as raise common issues that need to be jointly addressed with the national anti-trafficking units. In addition, UN-ACT supported a survivor gathering event organized by World Vision under the guidance of the government's Central Body for Suppression of Trafficking in Persons.

Activity Result 4.2: Civil society has increased and sustained capacity to support Victims of Trafficking

With support from UN-ACT, CSOs in the GMS countries increased their involvement in anti-trafficking efforts and enhanced their capacity to support victims of trafficking. Through direct assistance to CSOs, UN-ACT continued to provide financial and technical support to CSOs which supported 160 victims of trafficking in Cambodia and Lao PDR in 2017.

UN-ACT, in collaboration with the Government of Thailand's Department of Special Investigation, provided ongoing support to the Mekong Club and the United Nations University, together with local and international NGOs, to develop a mobile application for preliminary victim identification. The application aims at assisting frontline responders from both governmental and non-governmental organizations by responding to the problem of language barriers between frontline respondents and potential victims and provides a preliminary evaluation regarding if a person may possibly be a victim of trafficking. Multiple workshops, focus groups and a stakeholder consultation were organized this year to demonstrate, discuss and update all stakeholders on the use of this application. A pilot trial of the application will be launched in early 2018.

Activity Result 4.3: Increased engagement by the private sector

In 2017, UN-ACT sustained its engagement and collaboration with private sector partners. Key collaborative efforts are highlighted below:

- UN-ACT engaged with recruitment companies to prevent human trafficking through fair recruitment of migrant workers. The Association of Cambodia Recruitment Agencies, the Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation, the Employers Confederation of Thailand, the Viet Nam's SONA company were all involved in the development of Fair Recruitment Guidelines for the GMS.

- The Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry discussed and engaged on private sector collaboration in counter-trafficking with COMMIT governments at the SOM12.

- The Internet Science and Technology Corporation in Maanshan City continued to provide pro bono support to host the UN-ACT China website throughout 2017.

- UN-ACT provided support to Interwoven's vocational training project in Lao.

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

- UN-ACT and the Charoen Pokphand Group, a Thai conglomerate engaged on potential agricultural research and vulnerabilities to trafficking.
- The Mekong Club, which engages with the private sector, and UN-ACT collaborated on a victim identification mobile application in Thailand.
- The Thai Tuna Association engaged with anti trafficking stakeholders at the workshop on Global Plan of Action that UN-ACT co-hosted with the Thailand Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- UN-ACT supported to PricewaterhouseCoopers in training one of their private sector clients on trafficking in persons and business and human rights in Thailand.
- UN-ACT provided policy advice to recruitment associations companies and sub-contractors in Thailand.

Gender

Trafficking is a highly gendered phenomenon, affecting both men and women and requiring effective gender-responsive interventions. As such, gender sensitivity remains at the core of UN-ACT's interventions from the planning stage, to the implementation phase and reporting of project activities.

The project recognises the similarities and differences in the experiences of women, men and children affected by exploitation and aims to address their vulnerabilities and special needs through tailored, gender-responsive programme interventions and mechanisms. Understanding that trafficking survivors including women and girls have vital information has enabled UN-ACT to draw upon their experiences and develop more effective anti-human trafficking responses; be it through research, support for survivor workshops, engagement with policy-makers, development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms, or its support to the COMMIT Youth Forum to ensure that the voices of vulnerable people and those affected by human trafficking inform interventions.

By laying out the key elements of gender development perspectives in human trafficking, UN-ACT has supported COMMIT through the design and implementation of the SPA IV. These efforts have ensured that gender-sensitive coordinated actions are undertaken at both national and regional levels in source, transit and destination countries. UN-ACT also ensured that disaggregated and gender-sensitive indicators were used to monitor progress under SPA IV and encouraged the COMMIT governments to develop and use those indicators to monitor their national plans of action. This was the case for Myanmar's 5-year National Plan of Action (2017-2021). In addition, the COMMIT governments developed a common set of guidelines for victim identification and referral mechanisms that is gender-sensitive.

UN-ACT recognises that the dearth of data on trafficking continues to constitute an important barrier to effective, gender-informed responses. Driven by such concerns, UN-ACT has supported four CSOs: Cambodian Centre for the Protection of Children Right in Cambodia, Village Focus International in Lao PDR, Labour Rights Promotion Network in Thailand, and Viet Nam Judicial Support for the Poor in Viet Nam, to ensure gender-sensitive

interventions and, where possible, data disaggregation, particularly by sex, age and forms of exploitation.

Continued attention to the gender dimensions and drivers of human trafficking led UN-ACT to address patterns of forced marriages affecting the sub-region through a research on forced marriages between Cambodia and China. Many Cambodian women (as well as those from other countries in the GMS) are trafficked for forced marriages to China, coupled with sexual exploitation and forced labour. Limited employment and livelihood opportunities, as well as pressures to contribute to families' economic situations increase women and girls' vulnerabilities. UN-ACT seeks to address rehabilitation and reintegration for these women through considering women's particular needs and the broader societal context including by addressing systemic inequalities and discrimination affecting their opportunities. UN-ACT's research identified various opportunities for preventive and protective interventions, which informed the negotiations of a bilateral agreement on human trafficking between Cambodia and China. UN-ACT's advocacy around the research's recommendations has since also led to regulatory changes which consider women and girls' needs, including for example revisions to the system of interpretation in Chinese's marriage registration centres, where consent to a marriage is to be independently confirmed. In the past, limited language capabilities often resulted in brokers and their affiliates serving as interpreters threatening women to ensure their 'consent'.

Human rights

Human trafficking is a severe form of human rights abuse whereby people are deprived of control over their lives. A human rights-based approach requires that interventions are designed with the objective to strengthen and protect people's inherent rights, including through empowerment to claim such rights. UN-ACT's activities seek to ensure that victims are empowered to regain control over their lives, while strengthening duty bearers' capacities to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of vulnerable populations and trafficked persons.

In the GMS, it has been observed that interventions against human trafficking are widely dominated by law enforcement and security approaches, often with negative repercussions on human rights especially in

women-dominated, informal sectors. More structural, empowerment-oriented responses to exploitation is needed. UN-ACT's persistent advocacy and action for more coordinated and integrated counter-trafficking efforts over the years, including through collaboration with civil society, have contributed significantly to this effort.

With COMMIT endorsing and implementing an annual priority around strengthening recruitment and labour migration systems in and between its member states, 2017 saw an important development with regards to the advancement of human rights. The acknowledgment of the General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment that resulted from the SOM12 clearly highlights the extent to which an inter-governmental body between the GMS countries such as COMMIT can become a main vehicle towards bringing human-rights based responses within regional discussions, decisions and regulations.

Another example of UN-ACT's human rights advocacy work relates to its advocacy related to the migration policy in Thailand. As a key destination for migrant workers in the GMS and given its structural vulnerabilities to human trafficking for labour exploitation, Thailand's migrant labour policies are important in protecting workers. There were sudden changes to policies in June 2017, in the Royal Ordinance Concerning the Management of Foreign Workers' Employment B.E. 2560 (2017). Concerns were raised about specific human rights issues in the policies as well as about the lack of proper consultation with relevant stakeholders before the policy was implemented. Some aspects of the policy address the longer-term management of migrant workers in Thailand and these positive aspects are to be promoted, yet other aspects were seen as increasing vulnerability to corruption and trafficking. UN-ACT rapidly worked together with UN and civil society partners from June 2017 to advocate for migrant workers' rights in response to the policy changes and engaged the government on recommended revisions. UN-ACT, in collaboration with Winrock International, organized a stakeholder consultation attended by concerned CSOs and UN partners, during which UN-ACT agreed to contribute towards a coordinated human-rights based UN response and provide policy recommendations. The efforts, led by the UN Resident Coordinator, helped to ensure joint and coordinated advocacy on the main issues addressed by UN agencies.

As a result, there has been stronger engagement between the UN and the Thai Government on the issue of migrant workers/trafficking prevention at the policy level based on human rights approaches. UN-ACT will continue to work on human-rights based trafficking prevention and migration-related issues in Thailand in 2018 when the law is scheduled to take effect.

Migration and displacement (M&D) and root causes including environment/climate change

UN-ACT serves as the Asia-Pacific focal point for UNDP's global work on migration and displacement, which particularly focuses on addressing the root causes of M&D such as environmental drivers/climate change, governance challenges, exclusion and inequalities, insufficient development gains, protracted conflicts and violent extremism.

Through its role as the UNDP Asia-Pacific M&D focal point, UN-ACT has been instrumental in the key role that UNDP played for the September 2016 global UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants convened by the Secretary General and it has been supporting UNDP's efforts in the follow up to the Summit throughout 2017, which includes the Global Compact on Migration and Global Compact on Refugees.

In 2017, UN-ACT, together with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and other UN agencies, organized a roundtable for the regional meeting with Asia Pacific Member States on the Global Compact on Migration. One of the main areas for the roundtable UN-ACT organized focused on the environmental impact on migration. As the natural environment becomes more stressed, environmental changes like sea-level rise, deforestation and land degradation prompt migration. There are also the impacts on migration from more frequent droughts and tropical cyclones of greater magnitude.

UN-ACT has also been providing technical inputs into policy papers and strategies for UNDP's global work on M&D in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and advises UNDP managers and country offices on M&D. It has been helping to shape UNDP's global approach to M&D, including human trafficking and has been representing UNDP in high-level regional meetings related to M&D.

CONSTRAINTS IN IMPLEMENTATION: Improving UN-ACT Project Performance Through Learning and Reflections

UN-ACT faced budget constraints in 2017 as donor funding was confirmed for year end and 2018. The funding challenge particularly affected UN-ACT's ability to provide financial support to CSOs and to invest in developing stronger cooperation and engagement between COMMIT and other countries. Nevertheless, UN-ACT has been able to partially overcome budgetary constraints through joint implementation with other development partners, using more of its technical expertise and convening power and having COMMIT governments take more ownership and increasingly contribute more of their national budgets to fund counter-trafficking efforts.

ASEAN is a key counter-trafficking partner for COMMIT at the regional level and UN-ACT/COMMIT have engaged with ASEAN through various fora in 2017. However, there are challenges in collaborating effectively with ASEAN systematically, as recognised by many counter-trafficking partners. ASEAN addresses trafficking and trafficking-related issues through different ASEAN pillars and organs. The lead body responsible for the implementation of the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons is the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime but this department is focused primarily on the criminal justice response. UN-ACT supports COMMIT through a multi-disciplinary response, and therefore reaches out to the various ASEAN departments/bodies, including the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, the ASEAN Commission on Women and Children

on victim protection, and the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour. This issue still remains an ongoing challenge, yet UN-ACT will continue to strategise with partners and ASEAN on how best to engage and coordinate through the different ASEAN bodies.

Despite the increasing cooperation and development of trafficking knowledge, developing concrete mechanisms for collecting and trafficking data on trafficking faces many challenges for the anti-trafficking community, including disaggregated data. The dearth of data poses a challenge to developing effective interventions based on evidence. UN-ACT continues to address this issue through its studies and research, together with partners.

Victim identification and referral mechanisms have been a priority for COMMIT, yet challenges remain substantial and justice for victims continues to be limited. Fear among victims to disclose details of the case, or even identify themselves as victims, results in limited success during the prosecution and reintegration procedures, while the time taken to process cases and the potential for corruption undermine efforts. This highlights the importance of learning and developing support services in victim identification and referral mechanisms, in coordination with criminal justice responses. These are all areas that UN-ACT and COMMIT have focussed on in 2017 and will continue to do in partnership with other UN agencies, NGOs and other national and international anti-trafficking stakeholders.

THE WAY FORWARD

2018 will be an exciting year for COMMIT, with the first-ever annual COMMIT Chair, China, to take office and host COMMIT's high-level meetings. In 2018, COMMIT governments will continue to enhance its ownership of the COMMIT Process and take on more responsibility for various technical and functional capacities, including several secretariat functions that used to be undertaken by UN-ACT. In the meantime, UN-ACT will continue to work on increasing governments' capacity further by supporting governments to implement capacity development strategies and achieve COMMIT priorities in 2018. This includes bilateral cooperation between COMMIT countries as well as with non-COMMIT countries, victim identification and referral mechanisms, sustainable reintegration of trafficking survivors, prevention and awareness raising.

UN-ACT will also pursue efforts to bridge the data gap for trafficking in persons in the region by continuing to conduct in-house and joint research to increase the evidence base for policy making and interventions. An in-house research on the recruitment practices and employment conditions experienced by regular migrant workers from Lao PDR going to Thailand, as well as a study on recruitment practices and employment conditions of urban refugees in Bangkok will notably be

published in 2018. Their findings should be of significant help to develop and implement effective, evidence-based interventions.

UN-ACT will continue to support and build the capacity of youth through the COMMIT Youth Forum, a platform for youth representatives from the GMS to exchange their creative skills for effective trafficking awareness and prevention. UN-ACT also recognises that civil society plays an important role in combatting trafficking in persons. Through the COMMIT Process and UN-ACT's inter-agency working groups in the GMS countries, UN-ACT provides a platform for systematic civil society engagement and collaboration with governments. UN-ACT will also be supporting civil society and government partners in extending support services to trafficked persons, including through its COMMIT National Referral Mechanism Catalytic Initiative Project that will be implemented between 2018-2020. UN-ACT will also continue to collaborate with the private sector and bolster partnerships and collaboration with countries beyond COMMIT as well as regional mechanisms such as ASEAN in 2018 and beyond. Lastly, UN-ACT will work to identify new developments and trends in trafficking in persons as well as counter-trafficking strategies in order to enhance national capacities in collective responses.

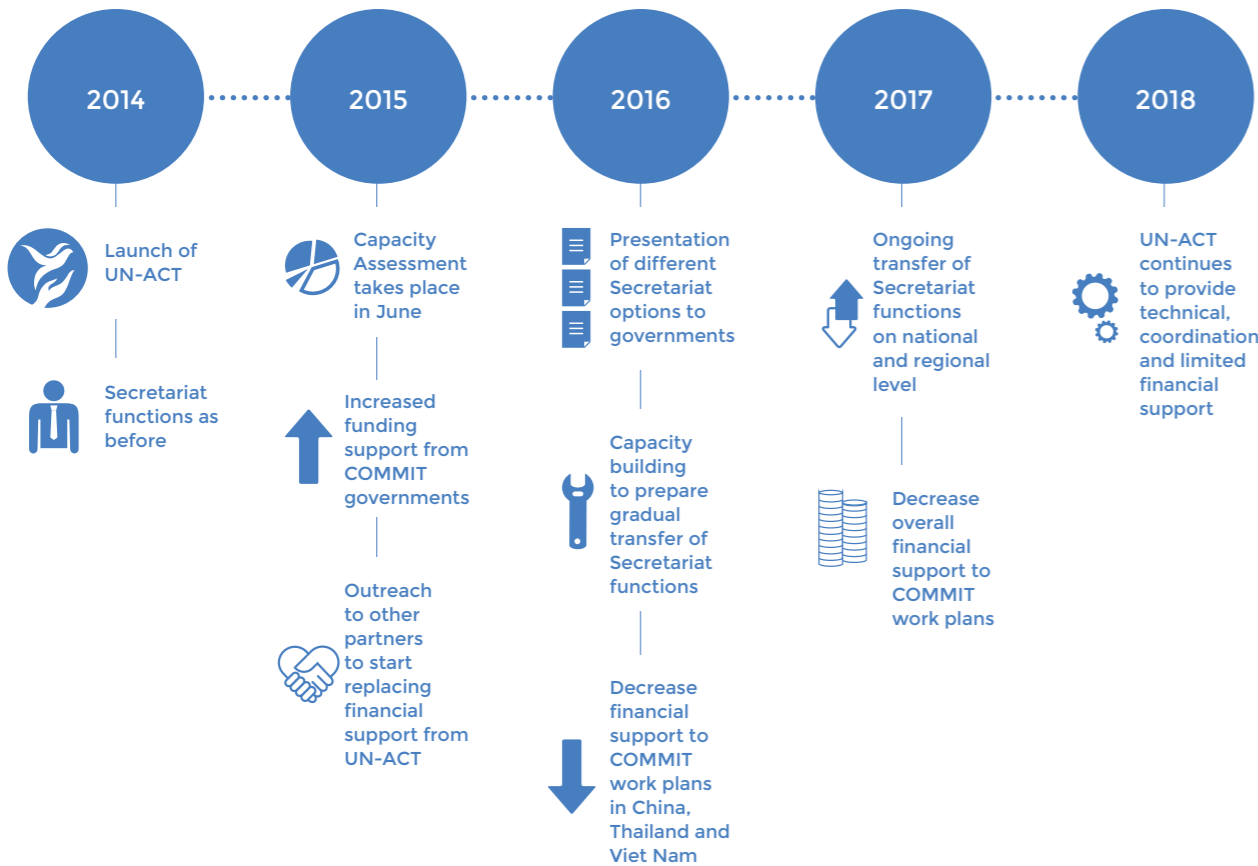


Figure 8. Sustainability plan for the COMMIT Secretariat

ANNEX 1 INDICATOR TABLE

Outcome: Key anti-trafficking stakeholders in the region are working in a more cooperative and mutually supportive manner to effectively combat trafficking in persons		China	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Thailand	Viet Nam	Regional	Progress Marker 2017	Achievements
Indicator 1: Number of victims referred and supported through national and transnational referral mechanisms (disaggregated by sex/gender) Baseline: 0 Progress Marker 2017: 4000 Result 2017: 1817 (CMB: 773, CHN: 8, LAO: 30, MMR:255, THA: 234, VNM: 517; disaggregated data on age and sex are available for CMB and LAO) 2018 Target: 15, 000	Activity result								
	Indicator 2: Number of changes in trafficking policies after advocacy from civil society Baseline: 0 Progress Marker 2017: 9 Result 2017: 7 (CMB: 5, THA: 1, VNM: 1) 2018 Target: 40								
Output 1: The COMMIT Process is strengthened to become sustainable and self-reliant									
1.1 COMMIT accountability and transparency enhanced	Indicators	0	1	1	1	1	N/A	5	As of 2017, five out of six countries are able to develop and/or sustain their national monitoring and evaluation frameworks, which support the COMMIT Process in undertaking an approach oriented to 'managing for results'. ¹
	Activity result	# of countries reporting back on agreed M&E framework							

1.2 Sufficient technical and functional capacities developed by government	# secretariat functions transferred to the governments (a,b,c,d,e,f,g) ²	0	5 partly (b, c, d, e, g)	5 partly (b,d,e,f,g)	4 fully (b, d, j, k) 2 partly (e,g)	7 partly (a, b, c, d,e,f,i)	1 fully (d) 5 partly (b,c,d,g,h)	1 fully (b) 4 partly (e,k,i,f)	N/A (Governments agreed to develop national Capacity Development plans based on review of Capacity Assessment)	8 fully, 25 partly	Fully: 6 Partly: 28 ³
1.3 Effective implementation of SPA IV	% of COMMIT work plan activities funded by government and mobilized by govt from other partners (per country)	0%	70%	92%	100%	11%	89%	28%	N/A	70%	65% ⁴
	% of COMMIT work plan activities implemented	0%	70%	84%	80%	70%	100%	76%	N/A	90%	80% ⁵
Output 2: COMMIT countries increase their cooperation with other countries and regional actors to effectively counter human trafficking											
2.1 Joint anti-trafficking efforts of COMMIT countries with key destination countries increased	# project activities/ interaction with non-COMMIT countries	0	1 (Malaysia)	0	1 (Bali Process Countries including non-COMMIT countries)	1 (India)	2 (the Netherlands and engagement at the UN Global Plan of Action meeting with other countries)	1 (UK)	6 (Asian Women's Parliamentarian Caucus, 2 workshops in South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines)	20	12 ⁶

2.2 Institutionalized engagement between COMMIT and ASEAN	# of joint collaborations between ASEAN and COMMIT	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	4	6 ⁷
2.3 Coordination and cooperation among relevant regional actors for anti-trafficking increased	# of joint activities between regional network	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	20	11	20 ⁸
Output 3: Policy makers, academia, non-state actors and the public have increased access to evidence-based research and knowledge on human trafficking											
3.1 Evidence-base for anti-trafficking intervention enhanced and accessible	# of research projects on TIP completed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	2 ⁹
3.2 Strategic dissemination and advocacy on research findings to influence policy and programming strengthened	# initiatives in follow up to research findings/ # of sessions of returning and new visitors on the website	0	1	4	0	0	2	2	6	18	15 ¹⁰
		0	N/A	Chinese UN-ACT website: 1,327 new visitors out of a total of 4743 visitors	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7,296 returning sessions (32.7%) 15,007 new sessions (67.3%)	4,500 returning: 6500 new	7,296 returning sessions (32.7%) 15,007 sessions (67.3%)

Output 4: Civil society and other non-governmental actors are able to contribute more effectively to anti-trafficking efforts											
	# CSOs participating in COMMIT meetings	15 CSOs, 20 reps	7 CSOs, 8 reps	0	0	0	4 CSOs, 4 reps	0	14 CSOs, 22 reps	90	40 organizations (54 representatives)
4.1 Increased engagement between government and civil society	# of referrals from government to CSOs/CSOs to government	773 (419 female; 354 male)	4	30 (24 female; 6 male)	0	6 (5 female; 1 male)	0	N/A	1,100	813	
4.2 Civil society has increased and sustained capacity to support VoT	# victims supported by NGOs with UN-ACT funding	63 (25 male; 38 female)	0	97 (20 female; 49 male; 18 girls; 10 boys)	0	0	0	N/A	160	409	
4.3 Increased engagement by private sector	# of collaborations with private sector partners	1	1	0	2	4	1	1	10	10 ¹¹	

ANNEX 1 INDICATOR TABLE NOTES 2017

1. UN-ACT has been supporting the governments in developing and linking their national M&E framework with the 4th Sub-Regional Plan of Action for COMMIT (SPA IV). This included M&E and Results-Based Management (RBM) trainings to the Myanmar government in 2017. At the Regional COMMIT Task Force Meeting in Myanmar, all governments provided COMMIT progress and implementation updates.

2. The letters refer to specific COMMIT secretariat functions as follows:

a. To provide support to the COMMIT Process to ensure that the process continues to be guided by international norms and standards;

b. To provide administrative, technical and substantive support to the COMMIT Process at the country and regional levels including assistance in the convening of technical roundtable discussions;

c. To organize annual Senior Officials Meeting and the Inter-Ministerial Meeting and urgent meetings requested by the Governments;

d. To document outcomes of meetings convened and decisions reached;

e. To prepare press releases and press advisories as required, disseminate information on COMMIT undertakings, and represent the information source for public inquiry on the COMMIT Process;

f. To raise funds to ensure timely implementation of the COMMIT Sub-regional Plan of Action and for its administration according to standards set by the UN;

g. To provide an annual progress report on the COMMIT SPA implementation status at the annual SOM meetings.

3. All governments are continuing to take over the secretariat functions for COMMIT and successfully established an annual COMMIT Chair to facilitate greater government ownership from 2018 and beyond.

4. Myanmar and Viet Nam saw low percentages. In Myanmar, changes in the anti-trafficking structure and overall government structure affected the government's budget in 2017. Similarly, in Viet Nam, the government departments which implement COMMIT activities were undergoing a restructuring process, which affected budgeting and implementation in 2017.

5. All countries made good progress on implementing their 2017 COMMIT work plans. As noted above, Myanmar and Viet Nam could have had a higher rate but the government departments were undergoing restructuring in 2017. Nevertheless, Myanmar was still able to successfully host a regional COMMIT Task Force and a Senior Officials Meeting, where all countries reported back on their COMMIT progress and implementation update.

6. (1) UN-ACT provided technical support to Cambodia in discussions with Malaysia to further progress on a bilateral agreement to combat trafficking between the two countries. (2) In Lao PDR, the government engaged with non-COMMIT countries through the Bali Process. (3) Myanmar held a discussion with India to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to combat trafficking in persons (TIP). (4) UN-ACT facilitated a visit of the Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence Against Children to share her experience with Thailand on the system of rapporteurs on human trafficking and how the counter-trafficking community can draw upon this to more effectively address exploitative practices. (5) UN-ACT, in partnership with UNODC and the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, co-hosted a workshop on the 'UN Global Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons' in preparation for Thailand's engagement at the UN Global Plan of Action meeting with other countries at the global level. (6) UN-ACT supported engagement between Vietnam and the UK to combat TIP and modern slavery, and co-hosted a conference addressing TIP between the two countries. (7) UN-ACT supported the Asian Women's Parliamentarian Caucus at a conference in Singapore, sharing experiences of the COMMIT model and discussing areas of collaboration with representatives from a number of countries in Asia. This included Members of Parliament from India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Timor and others. (8-9) UN-ACT provided capacity building trainings on 'Enhancing Human Security of Victims of Trafficking in Women in the Asia-Pacific Region and contributed to 'Seoul Debates: Lessons Learnt on Addressing Gender-Based Violence: From Korea and Around the World' in South Korea. (10) UN-ACT shared experiences of the COMMIT Process at the Conference on 'The ASEAN Community and People Mobility: Impacts, Challenges & Prospects' in Japan. (11) UN-ACT shared experiences of COMMIT with counter-trafficking stakeholders in Malaysia at the conference 'Walk the Talk - Stop Trafficking Women and Girls' in Kuala Lumpur. (12) UN-ACT provided a training

on 'Responses to Transnational Organized Crime for the Peace and Order Council of the City of Makati/Philippines.

7. The national COMMIT Task Forces increasingly liaised with the relevant ASEAN focal points (at the country level) who attended the national COMMIT Task Force meetings. In Cambodia, UN-ACT provided technical inputs on the draft ASEAN Commission on The Promotion and Protection of The Rights of Women and Children (ACWC)'s Regional Guidelines and Procedures to Address the Needs of TIP victims and the draft Resolution on Promotion of the Health of Female Migrant Workers of the ASEAN Parliamentarian Assembly. ASEAN representatives also participated in the COMMIT Senior Officials Meeting. In addition, at the Senior Officials Meeting, the Philippines (as the Chair of ASEAN in 2017), shared the country's innovative measures to combat trafficking in persons and illegal recruitment and discussed and agreed on continued collaboration with the COMMIT governments.

8. (1) Provided technical and coordination support on Liberty Asia's (which operates throughout SE Asia) Thailand Legal Gap Analysis. (2) Provided capacity building for Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) officials on labour migration supported by the Mekong Institute, an intergovernmental organization (IGO) founded by the six GMS member countries. (3) Provided support for the Labor Migration Forum as a platform for NGO stakeholders to share updates, voice their concerns, and to discuss issues related to labor migration and human trafficking. (4) Organized 3 Regional Network Meetings. (5-6) Reviewed IOM Direct Assistance Handbook and JICA's Reintegration Handbook. (7) Provided technical support for the Cambodian Government delegation attending JICA's Regional Reintegration Workshop. (8) Provided technical support and advice to NGOs in the organization of youth debates on the impacts of begging and street children. (9) Supported the Global Compact on Migration at the national and regional levels. (10) Contributed to the 2017 Corporate Affairs Forum Conference organized by Public Affairs Asia and engaged on human trafficking and the private sector. (11) Provided technical support to the 'ILO TRIANGLE II/ IOM PROMISE Baseline Survey and Access to Justice for Migrant Workers' Study. (12) Contributed to the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians for Population and Development, providing insights to regional cooperation to counter-trafficking. (13) Contributed to the Bali Process consultation to develop a facilitator's guide

for "Comprehensive Approaches for Addressing Irregular Movements of People by Sea". (14) Contributed to the consultation for the Bali Process' Regional Strategic Roadmap to strengthen counter-trafficking responses. (15) Held a webinar on TIP in collaboration with Freedom Collaborative and OSCE on (Trans-) National Referral Mechanisms. (16) Participated and provided technical inputs to the international conference to commemorate International Migrants' Day, under the theme "A Forced March into Uncertainty: Migration, Security and Justice". (17) Regularly co-chair the South East Asia Coordination Group Against TIP with UN partners which meets regularly. (18-20) Serve as an active member on the following regional working groups which have led to concrete deliverable on addressing TIP/migration issues: UN Technical Working Group on Sustainable Societies (includes migration/ TIP); UNDP Technical Working Group on Migration and Displacement; UN Development Group Asia Pacific Human Rights Network.

9. (1) Contribution to a research paper from the Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization titled 'Broker versus Social Networks in Adverse Working Conditions: Cross-Sectional Evidence from Cambodian Migrants in Thailand. (2) UNODC and the Thailand Institute of Justice's report on Trafficking in Persons from Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar to Thailand.

10. (1-6) Reintegration Guidebook providing a practical tool for service providers in the Greater Mekong Sub-region who support the reintegration of trafficking survivors. It was developed based on the research findings from 'After Trafficking: Experiences and Challenges in the (Re)integration of Trafficked Persons in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. The Guidebook was published in English and 5 GMS languages and were used as the basis for workshops and trainings. (7) The Government and civil society in Cambodia continued to use the information and recommendations from UN-ACT's research, 'Human Trafficking Vulnerabilities: A Study on Forced Marriage between Cambodia and China' for their awareness intervention at local communities. (8) Similarly, in China, these research findings informed the training workshop for service providers in Guangzhou (9) and during the shelter visit to Cambodia (10) as well as in police training workshop in Jiangxi in China. (11) In Thailand, UN-ACT provided technical inputs to Chulalongkorn University (ARCM) and Royal Police Academy in developing a research

tool and questionnaire on the effectiveness of law enforcement in Thailand. (12) In Viet Nam, UN-ACT used research recommendations to inform and strengthen a wide-range of service support to victims of trafficking (VoTs). This included Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on investigation of TIP cases under Border Guard's mandates, (13) SOPs on national referral and reintegration of VoTs (14), Directory of support services to VoTs (15), as well as trainings for law enforcement and judicial officers on victim's rights during prosecution process.

11. (1) Association of Cambodia Recruitment Agencies (ACRA) of Cambodia, (2) Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation, (3) Employers Confederation of Thailand, (4) Vietnam's SONA company were all involved in the development of Fair Recruitment Guidelines for the GMS countries. (5) Internet Science and Technology Corporation Maanshan City continued to provide pro bono support to host the UN-ACT China website throughout 2017. (6) Engagement with The Charoen Pokphand Group (CP), conglomerate in Thailand on potential agricultural research. (7) In Thailand, UN-ACT worked with the Mekong Club which engages with the private sector on a victim identification mobile application. (8) Engagement with the Thai Tuna Association at the workshop on Global Plan of Action that UN-ACT co-hosted with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. (8) Collaboration with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) to train one of their private sector clients on TIP, business and human rights. (9) In Thailand, UN-ACT provided policy advice to recruitment associations companies and sub-contractors. (10) Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry (UMFCCI) presented private sector engagement with COMMIT Governments at the COMMIT Senior Officials Meeting in Myanmar.

ANNEX 2 OVERVIEW OF EXPENDITURES IN 2016

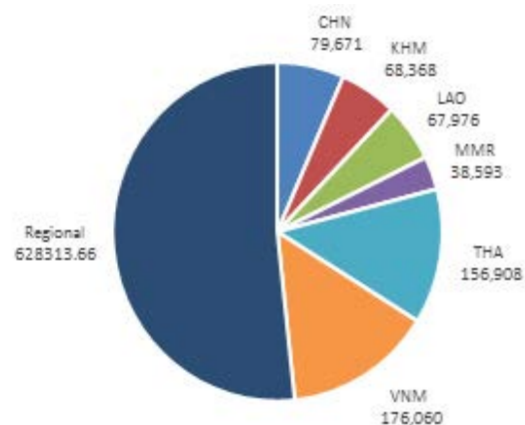


Figure 9. Division of Expenditure by Office

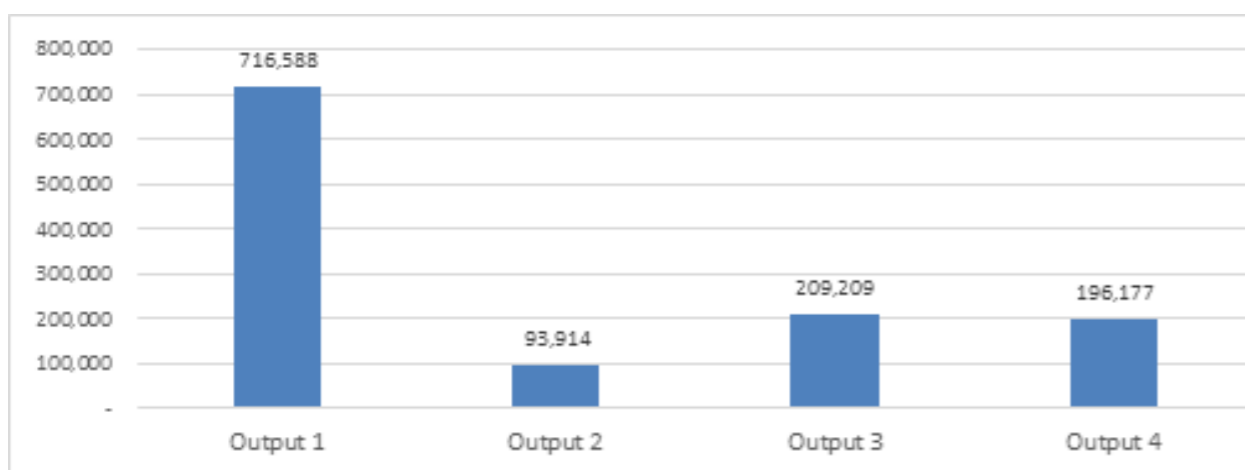


Figure 10. Expenditures by Output (with Operations)

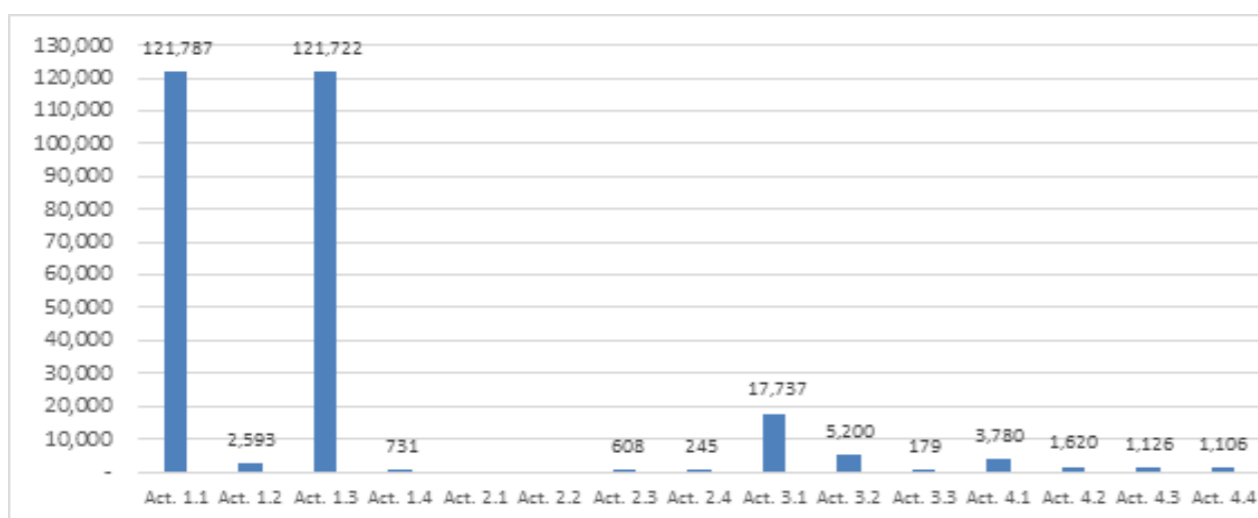


Figure 11. Expenditure per Activity Result (without Operations)²

² Note that even though some activities above have little or no expenditure, UN-ACT still implemented work in these areas through providing technical support, coordination and convening support, and joint implementation with partners which funded activities of mutual interest, all of which required little or no funds from UN-ACT.

ANNEX 3 UN-ACT RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

RISK EVALUATION:

It is possible that this risk will occur.

Insufficient donor funding can undermine UN-ACT's operational and programmatic capacity to effectively implement the planned activities or initiate substantive interventions.

ASSESSING CONSEQUENCE:

The project risks not being able to achieve the objectives set, if sufficient funding is not secured.

MITIGATION:

The project developed a fundraising strategy to help guide the project's ongoing efforts to liaise with potential traditional and new donors. In 2016, China became the first COMMIT country to make a financial contribution to the project and it has been funding UN-ACT annually ever since. UN-ACT continues to seek increased funding from China and is encouraging other COMMIT countries to also contribute. UN-ACT continues to actively fund raise and promote its achievements to existing and potential donors and aims to maintain a high public profile to ensure that donors are aware of UN-ACT's value and relevance in anti-trafficking. An independent mid-term evaluation was finalized in 2017 and reviewed the funding situation and analysed the fundraising reality and strategy. UN-ACT has been implementing the recommendations of the evaluation.

LACK OF POLITICAL WILL

RISK EVALUATION:

It is possible that the risk will occur.

COMMIT countries have demonstrated considerable political will to combat human trafficking. This has been evident in increased financial contributions to their national COMMIT activities and the development of victim identification guidelines and monitoring systems for counter-trafficking with measurable indicators and targets to monitor their progress under a COMMIT Sub-regional Plan of Action. Governments also showed commitment through their work on the Fair Recruitment Guidelines in 2017. However, there remains indirect risks from restrictive laws and policies being developed related to limiting the space for civil society organizations to work, among them organizations involved in anti-human trafficking efforts. Previously, there was little pressure on the governments to show

progress made against indicators and commitments related to trafficking. However, governments are now requested to demonstrate how they are combating human trafficking, through action and resources, and to report on this progress.

ASSESSING CONSEQUENCE:

Major consequence on the ability to achieve the intended results.

A lack of political will may limit the sustainability of the COMMIT Process after the end date of the UN-ACT project, and implementation of measures agreed to under the COMMIT SPA IV. Limited implementation could result in inadequate prevention, protection and prosecution efforts, with a negative impact on those vulnerable to or affected by human trafficking.

MITIGATION:

Building trust and developing stronger relationships with the relevant government counterparts will continue to be key for reinforcing political will. Continuous engagement and focusing discussions on the factors driving the need for better anti-trafficking efforts, not only moral and rights-based, but also political, economic and social, will be emphasised at all levels. UN-ACT also ensures the importance of research and the systematic collection of data on human trafficking and counter-trafficking responses by government agencies to demonstrate whether COMMIT countries are meeting commitments made in SPA IV or other COMMIT decisions. This will increase governments accountability and transparency, and will encourage them to effectively address counter-trafficking efforts.

INSUFFICIENT ENGAGEMENT WITH NON-COMMIT COUNTRIES

RISK EVALUATION:

It is possible that the risk will occur.

There has been formal and informal engagement with non-COMMIT countries and ASEAN bodies. However, limited financial resources hinders UN-ACT's efforts to engage more with ASEAN and non-COMMIT countries. In addition, engagement on anti-trafficking depends on the willingness of non-COMMIT governments to coordinate and partner with COMMIT governments through bilateral agreements and other efforts.

ASSESSING CONSEQUENCE:

Limited consequence on the ability to achieve the intended results.

COMMIT countries' informal and formal relations continue to be pursued with non-COMMIT countries including Malaysia and Indonesia, although more efforts could be made if more financial resources were available.

MITIGATION:

The risk will be reduced by working through different channels and with a range of potential partners/stakeholders in the target non-COMMIT countries. For example, UN-ACT may seek further cooperation and offer to provide support to Malaysia in counter-trafficking through UNDP Malaysia or other actors.

POLITICAL SENSITIVITY

RISK EVALUATION:

It is possible that the risk will occur.

Working with governments, civil society and other stakeholders to combat human trafficking is likely to continue to be politically sensitive, due to the various economic, political, social and reputational impacts of the problem. However, the project design has taken account of such concerns and focuses on collaboration and capacity development in the sector. The need to work across borders and across sectors is now well recognized and sets the foundation for overcoming sensitivities. Further, the COMMIT Process provides its member countries with a forum to address human trafficking across sectors and borders in a safe environment in which governments have developed a sense of mutual trust with fellow COMMIT members as well as with UN-ACT.

ASSESSING CONSEQUENCE:

Limited consequence on the ability to achieve the intended results.

The consequences may vary from initiative to initiative and will be contained within those initiatives should political sensitivities become heightened. Working closely with the COMMIT governments and other stakeholders provides channels for feedback at different stages and therefore limits consequences of politically sensitive actions. There is also a need to weigh different interests and relationships in strategizing initiatives, and pushing some boundaries may be necessary.

MITIGATION:

The project will take a collaborative approach to work with a wide range of stakeholders and prioritize its capacity building goals. Assessing the sensitivity of initiatives based on the experience and expertise of UN-ACT staff will help to guide interventions and reduce the potential risk.

LACK OF COMMITMENT BY PARTNERS TO PROJECT INITIATIVES

RISK EVALUATION:

It is possible that the risk will occur.

The project relies on partnerships for the success of project initiatives, and these are dependent on common goals and available resources. Where the project has limited resources for initiatives, the incentives for partners to join and remain committed to interventions may be reduced.

ASSESSING CONSEQUENCE:

Limited consequence on the ability to achieve the intended results.

The project continues to engage with both current and new partners. Due to the collaborative nature of the project and the synergies in different initiatives with different partners, this risk is likely to be minimized. Also, given the range of partnerships that the project has developed, any lack of engagement from any one partner will be balanced by engagement with others.

MITIGATION:

Careful and strategic selection of partnerships and developing a wide range of partners involved in different activities will mitigate this risk.

ETHICAL AND SECURITY CONCERNS

RISK EVALUATION:

It is unlikely that the risk will occur.

The project takes a rights-based approach to interventions and therefore seeks to implement initiatives with such considerations well planned for. The primary risk is that government and non-government partners may unintentionally cause ethical and security concerns in their work with victims of trafficking, in developing policies, or in their work with the media.

ASSESSING CONSEQUENCE:

Limited consequence on the ability to achieve the intended results.

Any infringements on ethical and security concerns may have significant consequences to the lives of trafficked and vulnerable persons as well as those directly communicating with them.

MITIGATION:

Mitigating measures will include security, ethical and risk assessments conducted on initiatives with implementing partners, and corresponding capacity building to reduce risks as an ongoing strategy.

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