

Their Voices, Their Views, Young People from the Greater Mekong Sub-region Speak Up on Human Trafficking

Mekong Youth Offer Suggestions – Call on Governments for Routine Consultation of Young People in Areas Vulnerable to Human Trafficking

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For immediate release:



Children and youth from across the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) today called upon their Governments to increase and institutionalize consultation of young people in the fight against human trafficking.

The children and youth from all six GMS countries also drafted a series of recommendations from their own perspectives on ways to improve anti-trafficking measures within countries and across borders. These ranged from increased protection of migrant children, better access to quality education, recognition of the right to a birth certificate for any child born within a GMS country, improved methods to support young victims and prevent them from further abuse and exploitation when they return to their homes, and organize more outreach and advocacy networks to help raise awareness about the dangers of trafficking – especially in schools and community-level.

The **Mekong Youth Forum on Human Trafficking** (MYF) brought together vulnerable young people from across the Greater Mekong Sub-region to Bangkok (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) for a week-long intensive consultation on finding ways to better prevent trafficking of children and youth within countries and across borders of the GMS. All of the young delegates have participated in similar national forums on trafficking in their own countries prior to their arrival in Bangkok.

“I am very excited because I am able to bring the voices from my friends in my home country to share in this regional forum – I won’t forget them and I want people to know about their views,” said one young delegate.

The 30 young people met today with officials from their Governments at a session hosted by the Royal Thai Government convened by the UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (UNIAP)

“Children have innocent minds and so when they work on an issue like this they are genuine – they don’t get up to any tricks,” said another young delegate. “So this is why I want adults to allow children to have more freedom to talk.”

Today's sub-regional draft recommendations will be finalized on Friday and shared with the Governments at a scheduled high-level meeting of GMS Governments in Beijing in December.

The MYF represents the second round of sub-regional consultations with young people about human trafficking in the GMS, with the first held in 2004.

The young people's participation in this Forum is jointly sponsored by the International Labour Organization's Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women, Save the Children UK and World Vision International in the countries in which they work. Also involved in the 2004 Forum, UNIAP has continued to be actively engaged with the youth forums at the national and sub-regional levels.

A Website will also carry information and the final recommendations of the Forum:
www.mekongyouthforum.com

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