

Trafficking Fact Sheet The COMMIT Process and UNICEF's Work in Myanmar

The COMMIT Process

COMMIT – the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking – is an inter-governmental process that started in 2003 between China, Cambodia, Thailand, Lao PDR, Viet Nam and Myanmar to combat human trafficking.

COMMIT addresses *all forms* of human trafficking, and focuses on a range of trafficking-related issues, including criminal justice, repatriation, victim support, channels for safe and legal migration and exploitative labor practices.

On 29 October 2004, senior officials from the six countries that comprise the Greater Mekong Sub-Region signed a memorandum of understanding that sets forth a framework for concrete action on this issue. It is the world's first comprehensive regional trafficking agreement.

Trafficking – the Global Context

UNICEF-supported global studies indicate that some 1.2 million children around the globe are trafficked every year.

Trafficked children face a range of potentially exploitative conditions, including prostitution, forced marriage, domestic service, exploitative labor, and begging.

Many factors contribute to this problem, including poverty, economic disparities, unemployment, gender bias, a lack of educational opportunities, a lack of access to information, inadequate legislation, poor law enforcement, conflict, family problems, and the breakdown of traditional extended family support mechanisms.

Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region

It is estimated that one-third of all trafficking in women and children takes place within and from East Asia.

Approximately one in three of those involved in prostitution in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region are between 12 and 17 years of age.

UNICEF's Role

Across the globe, UNICEF works to build a protective environment for children that not only shields them from the horrors of trafficking, but allows them to grow up safely and with dignity. This is done through support for prevention, education, economic development, legislation and law enforcement, recovery and reintegration activities.

In the Greater Mekong Sub-Region UNICEF supports a range of actions to help combat child trafficking. This includes supporting community action for prevention and reintegration, working to strengthen legal protections, providing technical assistance to improve psychosocial support services, data collection and monitoring, and advocating for greater action on the issue.

UNICEF's Work to Fight Trafficking in Myanmar

In Myanmar, UNICEF is working with many partners to prevent child trafficking and rehabilitate trafficked persons through support of the following activities:

Situation Assessments to improve understanding of the trafficking situation. UNICEF supports regular assessments of trafficking in the following project areas: Thabaung (Ayeyarwaddy Division), Thanbyuzayat (Mon State), Myawaddy (Karen State), Pyigyitagon (Mandalay Division), and Kyimyindine (Yangon Division).

Awareness Raising, Technical Assistance and Capacity Building to strengthen prevention efforts. UNICEF supports various activities that help community groups and officials learn about the risks of trafficking and means of prevention, including the production and dissemination of information materials (e.g., videos, booklets, etc.) on trafficking, the training of police officers, other officials and community partners on trafficking, and workshops on trafficking prevention for teachers, PTA members, caregivers and local community groups. UNICEF also supports repatriation and reintegration workshops for officials, and as a member of the UN Inter-Agency Project on Trafficking supports the COMMIT process in Myanmar.

Prevention and Support activities to protect children from this threat and to rehabilitate trafficked victims. UNICEF supports vocational training, education and recreational opportunities for at-risk youth to diminish the causal risk factors giving rise to trafficking, and provides support to facilitate the safe return and reintegration of trafficked victims.

* UNICEF's support of trafficking prevention and rehabilitation activities in Myanmar is made possible with funding provided by the Government of Japan.