



PRESS RELEASE

MEKONG GOVERNMENTS REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TO FIGHT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Beijing - Ministerial representatives from Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam signed a joint declaration today that reaffirms their commitment to eradicating all forms of human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS). They further pledged the continuation of multilateral cooperation in realizing the goal of a trafficking-free region.

The joint declaration was signed as part of the Second Inter-Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT).

"Today, three years after we signed the COMMIT Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), we have gathered here again in Beijing to review the achievements of the 1st Sub-regional Plan of Action (SPA)," stated Chinese Minister of Public Security, Meng Jiangzhu, "All of these achievements have had a profound impact on strengthening cooperation and promoting the COMMIT Process"

Prior to the signing of the joint declaration, the six governments met to review achievements of the COMMIT Process over the last three years. Senior officials developed and endorsed a follow-up action plan, the 2nd COMMIT SPA, which focuses on policy-making and capacity-building in the areas of law enforcement and criminal justice, prevention, protection, and recovery and reintegration of victims of trafficking. They also discussed the importance of sharing experiences and best practices from COMMIT with other fora and regions in the future

"In the COMMIT Process, we have a rare and important example" said Khalid Malik, the United Nations Resident Coordinator of the People's Republic of China, "of a cross-border Government-led process delivering results according to international standards."

Human trafficking is recognized as a serious and high priority issue in the GMS. Since the signing of the historic COMMIT MOU, by the ministers of the six countries in October 2004, the member governments have actively built on their national anti-trafficking efforts and strengths to form a network of cooperation to stop traffickers and prosecute them, protect victims of

trafficking and assist them to return safely home, and work to prevent others from sharing the same fate.

The meeting in Beijing was seen as an important step forward that demonstrates how the GMS governments are turning their joint political commitments made at the highest level in the COMMIT MOU, into concrete action. Over thirty senior government officials and six ministerial representatives joined the meeting to chart the course of cooperation on combating human trafficking in the Mekong region for the next decade and beyond.

The secretariat for the COMMIT process is the UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the GMS (UNIAP). The COMMIT initiative since its inception has been funded by the Government of Norway, SEARCH (a CIDA-supported project), the Government of the Netherlands, ADB, AusAID, NZAID, SIDA, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, Save the Children UK, World Vision International, International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Organization for Migration (IOM).

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