

Thailand's Efforts in the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons

1. Overview of the Situation of Human Trafficking in 2008

Thailand as a country of origin, transit, and destination has consistently been proactive in preventing and suppressing the problem of human trafficking. In 2008, Thailand opened a new chapter on combating trafficking in persons by passing a comprehensive law on trafficking in persons, “The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act B.E. 2551 (2008)” which came into force on 5 June 2008. The law provides a broader definition on human trafficking, covers the whole dimension of human trafficking, and imposes heavier penalties to persons involved with human trafficking. The Government has also designated June 5th of each year as the “Trafficking in Persons Prevention Day**”, marking the day in which the anti-trafficking law was put into force.**

Over the past year, Thailand has made genuine efforts in campaigning and raising awareness on trafficking in persons to the public at large. In addition, the government has put much effort on capacity building to the relevant public and private agencies especially with social workers and law enforcement officers throughout the country. The multidisciplinary team comprising of social workers, police officers, the Ministry of Labor officials, and non-governmental organizations was set up to work closely together to identify and screen victims as well as offer assistance. For example on March 10, 2008 the multidisciplinary team helped 74 Burmese migrants working in the Anoma Factory in the Samutsakorn province.

Furthermore, regional and international cooperation has continuously been strengthened. Firstly, additional MOUs among the agencies concerned have been signed. And secondly, additional MOUs with other countries have also been agreed, with the latest MOU signed with Vietnam. Bilateral cooperation between law enforcement officers has been further enhanced this year; for instance, the trainings of Thai and Malay police officers on trafficking cases and the cooperation between Thai and the British police force, leading to the arrest of suspects involved in the trafficking-related cases. According to the records compiled in 2008 by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), 520 foreign trafficked victims have received protection, assistance, and shelter by the MSDHS.

2. Mechanisms

2.1 The National Committees

According to the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, two national committees were established as follows:

1) **The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Committee (ATP Committee)** is chaired by the Prime Minister. Members of the ATP Committee consists of the Deputy Prime Minister as vice chairman, the Minister of Defense, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Tourism and Sports, Minister of Social Development and Human Security,

Minister of Interior, Minister of Justice, Minister of Labor, four experts in the fields of prevention, suppression, rehabilitation, and international cooperation on the issues of trafficking in persons appointed by the Prime Minister and the Permanent Secretary for Social Development and Human Security as secretary of the Committee. The Committee will provide recommendations and advices, as well as evaluate and monitor legislations and follow up on actions taken regarding trafficking in persons cases. The ATP Committee held its first meeting on 23 February 2009 and has approved 3 new regulations on the suppression and prevention of human trafficking namely; Regulations on the Registration of Prevention and Suppression Non-Governmental Organizations, Regulations on the Anti-Trafficking Fund's Financial Management and Regulations on the Anti-Trafficking Fund's Management and Financial Report. The ATP Committee has set up three subcommittees: 1) **A subcommittee on Human Trafficking Data Collection and Classification** chaired by the Thai Royal Police, 2) **A subcommittee on an Assistance Program for Workers in the Fishery Industry** chaired by the Immigration Office, and 3) **A subcommittee on Monitoring the National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan** chaired by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

2) **Coordinating and Monitoring Anti-Trafficking in Persons Performance Committee (CMP Committee)** is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. The committee is responsible for preparing the operational and coordination plans of the agencies concerned and monitoring its performances; preparing and monitoring the implementation of plans and guidelines regarding the capacity building for personnel responsible for prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons; and preparing and monitoring the implementation plans under the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act. The committee aims to achieve the highest efficiency of law enforcement and in line with the law on anti-money laundering, the law on the national counter corruption and any other related laws, including international obligations.

2.2 The Operational Center on Human Trafficking

The National Operation Center on Prevention and Suppression on Human Trafficking is the operation center under the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and the main focal point on trafficking in Thailand under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. This center works together with **75 other provincial operation centers on Anti-Trafficking in Persons** throughout the country. In 2008, the National Operation Center cooperated with these provincial operation centers to raise public awareness through the various campaigns as well as capacity building of social workers and law enforcement officers throughout the country in regards to the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act via the various training courses.

For fiscal year 2008, the Royal Thai Government has allocated a budget of more than 25 million baht to these centers.

3. Preventive and Protection Measures

In 2008, the Royal Thai Government through close collaboration with various relevant organizations have launched several campaigns through the use of the mass media such as radio, television, publications and electronic media to raise the public awareness especially on the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and to call for public cooperation in fighting against human trafficking. The objective of these campaigns is to increase respect for human rights, particularly children's and women's rights, awareness about gender equality, and knowledge about human trafficking and gender-related laws.

3.1 Capacity Building

Throughout the year 2008, **an increasing number of capacity building activities** has been conducted in the form of workshops, seminars, and training programs for executives and the multidisciplinary teams of practitioners that consist of police officers, immigration officers, public prosecutors, judges, social workers, psychologists, physicians, military officers, and staff members from non-government and local administrative organizations. Likewise, the MSDHS held ten capacity-building workshops focusing on the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act B.E. 2551 (2008) and victim screening guidelines for more than 5,000 officials and multidisciplinary team members throughout the country. These programs were aimed at improving the understanding and skills of these officers and to inculcate appropriate attitudes and norms in the treatment of victims, particularly female and child victims.

In 2008, the Office of the Attorney General held trainings on "The Effective Prosecution of Trafficking in Persons" to more than 550 public prosecutors. The Office of the Attorney General also invited Ms. Monica Brickett, Intermittent Legal Advisor, Embassy of the United States of America, Bangkok, Thailand to lecture at the said training and joined the Children Juveniles and Women Division of the Crime Suppression Division, Royal Thai Police, to formulate a handbook on prosecuting cases on trafficking in persons, which covers all elements of human trafficking.

The Royal Thai Police included subjects on human trafficking in several training curriculums for police officers and is in the process of including the subjects on human trafficking in the Royal Thai Police Academy.

The Children Juveniles and Women Division of the Crime Suppression Division, Royal Thai Police and the Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons also held capacity building trainings for 34 police officers.

The Department of Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) held activities in conjunction with Khon Kaen University and the communities throughout the country for Thais planning to work aboard in order to prevent them from becoming human trafficking victims. Workshops on preventive measures and assistance for human trafficking victims were held for officers and volunteers at the Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates. The Department of Consular Affairs has also worked with the Anti-Trafficking Coordination Unit (TRAFCORD), a non-governmental organization

combating trafficking issues in northern Thailand, on programs to help prevent trafficking in persons.

The Department of Consular Affairs, (MFA) held continuous trainings workshops with guidelines on how to prevent and assist human trafficking victims for officers at more than 15 Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates in countries where Thai people fall prey to human trafficking the most. Accordingly, the Department of Consular Affairs also provided trainings to the multidisciplinary teams in Indonesia in assisting the human trafficking victims, especially the boat workers.

In February 2009, the members of the Joint Thai-US Committee, International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA), Bangkok, Thailand have approved a course specifically on Trafficking in Persons in ILEA's 2009 curriculum.

For the first time in the history of Thailand, the Royal Police Cadet Academy has accepted 70 female police cadets. The move to recruit female police cadets stemmed from the need of the police to handle cases related to children, women, and trafficking in persons.

3.2 Database/Information Sharing

Thailand also promotes information exchange by setting up **a national database system on human trafficking**. The database will help in monitoring trends, facilitating information exchange, guiding the development of policies and procedures, and coordinating appropriate support services for victims at the national and international level. At present, the Thai government is conducting a study to improve existing databases to develop a better template on human trafficking cases.

The Transnational Crime Coordination Center (TCCC) under the Thailand Transnational Crime Coordination Network, Royal Thai Police has coordinated with relevant agencies to combat transnational crime since 1995. The Australian Government supported the Case Management and Intelligence System (CMIS) and held trainings on CMIS to the officers of TCCC. The 11 priorities of transnational crime that the TCCC will focus on comprises of 1) terrorism 2) identity fraud 3) arms smuggling 4) people smuggling or illegal labor 5) money laundering 6) drugs trafficking 7) human trafficking or pedophiles 8) economic or cyber crimes 9) domestic violent crimes or referrals 10) international violent crimes or referrals, and 11) other related transnational crimes.

4. Prosecution (Laws and Law Enforcement)

4.1 Laws

The Government has put in place several laws to incriminate human-trafficking activities and offences;

- **The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2008**
- **the Labor Protection Act 2008**

- the Child Protection Act 2003
- the Anti-Money Laundering Act 1999
- the Penal Code Amendment Act 1997
- the Criminal Procedure Amendment Act 1997
- the Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act 1996
- the Amendments to the Securities and Exchange Act 1992
- the Immigration Act 1979

These legislations allow for the imposition of severe penalties to individuals who are guilty of charges relating to prostitution, exploitative labor, forced begging and other inhumane acts.

Highlights of The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, 2008

(enforced as of June 5, 2008)

- a broad definition of “exploitation” to cover sexual exploitation, production and distribution of pornography, other forms of sexual exploitation, slavery, forced begging, forced labor, trade in organs, or other similar forms of exploitation regardless of consent being given or not. It also seeks to protect everyone on an equal basis, not only women and children.

- Heavier penalties to be imposed on all offenders involved with human trafficking activities.

- Victims may claim compensation from the offenders for any damages caused by human trafficking.

- Victims will be provided with shelter and other necessities including physical, psycho-social, legal, educational, and healthcare assistance.

- Section 6 states that whoever engages in any of the following acts 1) procuring, buying, selling, bringing in or sending, detaining or confining, harboring or receiving any person, by means of threat or the use of force, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, or giving money or benefits to receive the consent of that person and having control over that person to exploit that person under his or her control or 2) procuring, buying, selling, bringing in or sending, detaining or confining, harboring, or receiving a child is guilty of trafficking in persons.

- Section 11 states that whoever commits an offence mentioned in Section 6 outside the Kingdom shall be liable for the punishment stipulated in this Act in the Kingdom.

- Section 13 states that whoever in the capacity as a member of the House of Representatives, member of the Senate, governmental officers, employee of a public agency or board member of any organization under the Constitution, commits an offence under this Act shall be liable to twice the punishment stipulated for such offence.

- Section 14 states all offences under this Act shall be predicate offences under the Anti-Money Laundering Act, B.E. 2542 (1999).

- The Act also stipulates that an Anti-Trafficking in Persons Fund be established to support the suppression and prevention of human trafficking as well as welfare protection for the trafficked victims. The Fund will be drawn from the annual budgets of the government as well as funds from inter-governmental and international organizations, including donations from the private sector and confiscated assets of the trafficking offenders.

4.2 MOUs at the National Level

In 2008, Thailand has initiated 3 more domestic Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) related to human trafficking to facilitate the coordination and implementation among different agencies in accordance with relevant legislation and policies as follows:

- (1) MOU on Guidelines and Practices for Agencies Concerned with Cases of Trafficking in Persons in the Nine Lower Central Provinces B.E. 2551 (2008),
- (2) MOU on Guidelines and Practices for Agencies Concerned with Cases of Trafficking in Persons in the Eight Upper Central Provinces B.E. 2551 (2008),
- (3) Operational Guideline on the Prevention, Suppression, Assistance and Protection of Trafficked Persons for Labor Purposes, signed on 30 April 2008.

The MOUs provide a set of clear guidelines on operational coordination and actions among agencies to assist both Thai and foreign victims, from fact-finding, witness examination and protection, prosecution, rehabilitation to repatriation and reintegration. The other domestic MOUs are as follows:

- (1) MOU on the Common Guidelines and Practices for Government Agencies Concerned with Cases of Trafficking in Women and Children (2nd Issue) B.E. 2546 (2003),
- (2) MOU on the Procedural Cooperation between Government and Non-Government Agencies Working with Cases of Trafficking in Women and Children B.E. 2546 (2003),
- (3) MOU on the Operational Guidelines for Non-Governmental Agencies Concerned with Cases of Trafficking in Women and Children B.E. 2546 (2003),
- (4) MOU on Common Guidelines and Practices for Agencies Concerned with Cases of Trafficking in Women and Children in the Eight Eastern Provinces B.E. 2549 (2006),
- (5) MOU on Common Guidelines and Practices for Agencies Concerned with Cases of Trafficking in Women and Children in the Nineteen Northeastern Provinces B.E. 2549 (2006),
- (6) MOU on Guidelines and Practices for Agencies Concerned with Cases of Trafficking in Women and Children in the Six Southwestern Provinces B.E. 2550 (2007),
- (7) MOU on Guidelines and Practices for Agencies Concerned with Cases of Trafficking in Women and Children in the Eight Southeastern Provinces B.E. 2550 (2007), and
- (8) MOU on Common Guidelines and Practices for Agencies Concerned with Cases of Trafficking in Women and Children in the Seventeen Northern Provinces B.E. 2550 (2007).

4.3 Human Trafficking Prosecution Cases

In 2008, the Children Juveniles and Women Division of the Royal Thai Police prosecuted 46 human trafficking cases in the following categories:

Statistics on Interrogation (January – December 2008)

	Types of Crime	No. of Victims	No. of Alleged Offenders
1	Forced Prostitution	19	34
2	Sexual Exploitation	29	13
3	Forced Child Labor	34	8
	Total	82	55

Source: The Children Juveniles and Women Division of the Royal Thai Police as of December, 2008.

Statistics on Human Trafficking Criminal Arrests January – December 2008

	Month	No. of Persons
1	Jan.	743
2	Feb.	946
3.	Mar.	230
4	Apr.	264
5	May	274
6	Jun.	336
7	Jul.	221
8	Aug.	489
9	Sept.	280
10	Oct.	407
11	Nov.	131
12	Dec.	72
	Total	4,393

Source: The Children Juveniles and Women Division of the Royal Thai Police as of December, 2008.

In 2008, the Office of the Attorney General prosecuted 5 trafficking cases and extradited 1 related case. The Office of the Attorney General prosecuted 3 child sexual harassment cases and extradited 5 related cases.

As for the recent development of the labor trafficking 2006 Ranyapaew case, all victims were repatriated on a voluntary basis to Myanmar and the completion of evidence investigation with the Office of the Attorney General. The Ranyapaew factory has already closed down and is currently out of business due to social and economic pressure from their peers in the industry. The Office of the Attorney General is in the process of filing a criminal lawsuit in due course. Meanwhile, the labor case has been settled in November 2007, in which the Company has paid a total amount of 3,600,020 baht to all the victims.

In March, 2008, the multidisciplinary team helped 74 Burmese migrants working in the Anoma Factory in Samutsakorn province. All victims has been put in shelters provided by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The

Samutsakorn Provincial Attorney has filed charges on 1) detaining victims 2) child laboring 3) slavery laboring and 4) employing illegal migrants to the factory's owners on 10 September 2008. The Samutsakorn Provincial Attorney is currently investigating evidence on this matter before sending all files to court by April, 2009.

5. Repatriation and Reintegration

The Royal Thai Government has coordinated with many agencies, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and its embassies overseas to provide shelters and appropriate physical, psycho-social, legal, educational, and healthcare assistance to victims, including -

- ensuring the safe return of trafficked persons to their countries of origin,
- facilitating the successful recovery and social reintegration of trafficked persons with follow-up and monitoring programs to prevent them from being re-trafficked, and
- providing victims of human trafficking with vocational training programs to give them alternative means of livelihood.

Thailand has sought to develop effective procedures, both formal and informal, for safe and effective victim repatriation. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand and the Department of Social Welfare of Myanmar have worked closely together with regard to the 2006 Ranyapaew Factory Case and in November 2008, the migrants were returned home safely.

6. Regional and International Cooperation

- The Thai Government has been strengthening cooperation regarding human trafficking through bilateral and multilateral agreements with other countries in the Mekong Sub-region which are susceptible to human trafficking. Since 2003, Thailand has signed MOUs in the context of human trafficking with Cambodia (2003), Lao PDR (2005), International Organization for Migration (2007). On 24 March 2008, the Royal Thai Government has signed an MOU on Bilateral Cooperation to Prevent Trafficking in Children and Women and Assisting Victims of Trafficking with the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

- The MOU signed with Vietnam covers 5 main issues namely 1) situation analysis, 2) implementation of joint action plan, 3) cooperation in prevention, 4) cooperation in protection, return, and reintegration, and 5) cooperation in investigation and apprehension of perpetrators.

- In accordance to the **MOU on Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT)** signed on 29 October 2004 to. To energize the process, on 14 December 2007, a joint ministerial declaration that reaffirms political commitment to eradicating all forms of human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region was signed by six countries namely; Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Member countries reviewed the outcomes from the first Sub-regional Plan of Action

(SPA) 2005-2007 and endorsed the second SPA 2008-2010, which focuses on seven areas; namely,

- 1) Training and Capacity Building
- 2) National Plans of Action
- 3) Multilateral and Bilateral Partnerships
- 4) Legal Frameworks, Law Enforcement, and Justice
- 5) Victim Identification, Protection, Recovery and Reintegration
- 6) Preventive Measures
- 7) Cooperation with the Tourism Sector

Member countries are committed to translate the SPA into their national working plans.

- From 14-16 December 2008, representatives from Savannakhet, Lao PDR and Mukdahan, Thailand held a meeting to discuss preventive measures on human trafficking along the Thai-Laotian borders in connection with MOU signed between both countries in 2005. From this meeting both countries adopted the Minutes of Meeting agreeing to collaborate on preventing human trafficking along the Thai – Laotian border areas.

- Thailand is in the process of initiating similar bilateral MOUs with Myanmar (under the negotiation process) and China, and reviewing the draft Standard of Procedures on Protection, Assistance, Repatriation and Reintegration of Victim of Trafficking in Persons with Japan.

-Thailand maintains cooperation with countries within the Bali Process Framework to combat against human trafficking. Thailand joined the Bali Process SOM held in Brisbane, Australia from 23-25 February 2009, Thailand supports the capacity of regional countries in their collective responses to the threats posed by these transnational crimes especially in human trafficking and human smuggling with focus on the boat people smuggling issue within the region. The results from this meeting will be reflected at the Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime – Bali Process in Bali, Indonesia to be held between 14-15 April 2009.

7. Labor Trafficking

The problem of human trafficking in Thailand is often associated with labor trafficking of illegal migrant workers and children. Thailand's labor protection laws are equally enforced to protect both legal domestic and migrant worker. With the influx of illegal migrant workers, especially from neighboring countries, Thailand has an agreement with Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Myanmar stating that registered migrant workers from these 3 countries are allowed to work, upon citizenship identification. Working permits issued to migrant workers are renewable on a yearly basis.

In 2008, the Ministry of Labor pressed criminal charges against a total of 735 workplace owners who have violated labor protection laws. Thailand maintains a lenient policy towards illegal migrant workers from these three neighboring countries (Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia) who constitute a large part of workforce in Thailand.

In 2008, the Labor Protection Act was enacted and came into force. The law covers both Thai and migrant (foreign) labors under working contracts. Special monitoring and supervisory measures are put in place to protect workers who are susceptible to fall victims to human trafficking, especially women and children. Labor protection policy measures and social security measures are now being extended to cover unregistered and informal workers.

The Labor Protection Act includes the protection of fishery labors with equal rights under the law. Recognizing the need to protect fishery labor at sea, the Ministry of Labor and the Royal Thai Navy appointed a naval officer as a labor inspector at sea. Accordingly, the Ministry of Labor held trainings on the labor protection law to navy officers at the coastline. The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives established the Outer Sea Fishery Committee with members from related-agencies. The Committee will proactively solve the problem of exploitation towards boat workers. This Committee will collaborate with other agencies to set up guidelines on related labor legislations on the treatment of boat workers. The Committee will train boat owners and will produce pamphlets in various languages for Thai and foreign migrant boat workers to increase awareness on their rights under the law.

Following the “The True Cost of Shrimp” report published by the Solidarity Center in April 2008, Thailand welcomed the visit of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Department of Homeland Security to 16 factories and small shrimp shedding factories in Bangkok, Samutprakarn, Samutsakorn, and Chachoengsao province in June 2008, along with representatives from the Thai government agencies and private sectors. During the visit, ICE observed the employment of children and migrant workers in the factories. ICE was satisfied with the visit and appreciated the transparency of the factory owners. Subsequently, The Thai Frozen Foods Association (TFFA), held activities to more than 300 factory owners and boat owners to prevent child and migrant workers from being exploited. TFFA are also monitoring the labor situation in small shrimp shedding factories to prevent any forms of exploitation on children and illegal migrant workers.

8. Sex Tourism in Thailand

The Royal Thai Police have been serious about prosecuting sex tourism offenders and have succeeded in arresting a number of offenders. Thailand has also prosecuted several pedophilia cases committed by foreigners in Thailand (CWD is compiling 2008 data).

8.1 Child Sex Tourism

Section 52 of the Anti-Trafficking Act states that whoever commits an offence of trafficking in persons against a child whose ages 15-18 years shall face a penalty of 6-12 years imprisonment and a fine from 120,000 – 240,000 baht. Any offences of trafficking in persons against a child ages below 15 years shall face a penalty of 8-15 years imprisonment and a fine from 160,000 – 300,000 baht.

In November, 2008 the Children Juveniles and Women Division of the Crime Suppression Division along with the United Kingdom Child Exploitation and Online Protection Center worked together to arrest four foreign offenders charged on child sexual harassment.

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports has continued to campaign and raise awareness on child sex tourism in the hotel industries. In addition, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports held trainings to hotel employees on related legislation and penalties on cases related to child sex tourism.

9. Human Trafficking Victims Assistance

In 2008, the Department of Social Development and Welfare, MSDHS provided assistances to 520 foreign trafficked victims as follows:

Statistics of Foreign Trafficked Victims Assisted by the Department of Social Development and Welfare		
No.	Countries	Jan – Dec 2008
1	Cambodia	45
2	Myanmar	252
3	Lao PDR	214
4	Vietnam	3
5	Unidentified Nationality	6
Total		520

Source: Statistics from the Bureau of Anti-Trafficking in Women and Children, Department of Social Development and Welfare, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Thailand, December 2008.

In 2008, the Department of Social Development and Welfare, MSDHS provided assistances to 158 Thai trafficked victims in the following countries:

Statistics of Thai Trafficked Victims Overseas Assisted by the Department of Social Development and Welfare		
No.	Countries	Jan – Dec 2008
1	Spain	2
2	Turkey	1
3	Libya	56
4	United States of America	1
5	Vietnam	1
6	Taiwan	1
7	Brunei Darussalam	2
8	Australia	2
9	Malaysia	3
10	Bahrain	46
11	South Africa	29
12	Japan	7
13	Sri Lanka	13
14	Singapore	1

15	United Kingdom	3
16	Hong Kong	1
Total		158

Source: Statistics from the Bureau of Anti-Trafficking in Women and Children, Department of Social Development and Welfare, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Thailand, December 2008.

In 2008, the Department of Consular Affairs has provided overseas assistances to 409 Thai victims of human trafficking in the following countries:

Statistics of Thai Victims of Human Trafficking Assisted by the Department of Consular Affairs Fiscal Year 2008													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Singapore		1											1
Malaysia		6	35	30								3	74
Bahrain	3	50	21	19	7	68	107	6	1	23		17	322
Hong Kong						1							1
Japan									1	3	4		8
South Africa										3			3
Total	3	57	56	49	7	69	107	6	2	29	4	20	409

Source: Statistics from the Protection of Thai Nationals Abroad Division, Department of Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, December, 2008

Capacity Building on Assisting Victims

In 2008, after enforcing the law on trafficking in persons, the National Operation Center on Prevention and Suppression on Human Trafficking appointed a sub-committee to consider the scope and elements of identifying a trafficked person. As a result, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the Immigration Office held workshops for immigration officers throughout the country with special focus on officers in border areas providing the guidelines on the scope and elements of identifying and screening victims of trafficking in persons to prevent influx of victims from neighboring countries.

The government through the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security also supports vocational training, job placement programs, capital acquisition and lending, and the setting up of income-generating groups at the local level to prevent the disadvantaged groups from falling victims to human trafficking. Governmental support services are also provided on an equal basis to victims in such areas as healthcare, formal and informal education, and scholarships.

Future Outlook

Anti-trafficking in persons will remain Thailand's top priority agenda. With the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act fully enforced, trafficking prosecution, prevention, and suppression will become even more concrete. The multidisciplinary team comprising both public and private sectors including NGOs will continue to work closely together to protect and assist trafficked victims. As the problem is large in scope and scale, to address this matter even more effectively and efficiently, Thailand will continue to increase human and financial resources in this regard.

As human trafficking is of transnational nature, Thailand will continue to work closely with our neighbours and the international community to address this serious problem. Thailand as the current Chair of ASEAN also attaches highest importance to the establishment of an ASEAN Human Rights Body and the Commission on the Protection of Migrant Workers which will serve to protect the rights and enhance the well being of ASEAN citizens, including migrant workers, regardless of their nationalities.

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