



# JOINING FORCES TO FIGHT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN ASEAN

Roughly 1.6 million people are trafficked within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) each year, yet only about 3,000 of these qualify for treatment and repatriation. The United States supports the efforts of ASEAN Member States to implement the ASEAN Convention on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP).

An industry that generates over \$150 billion a year worldwide, human trafficking continues to thrive despite increased awareness and well-articulated policies. The Asia and the Pacific region had the highest number of victims across all forms of modern slavery, according to the Walk Free Foundation's 2018 Global Slavery Index, with 73 percent of victims of forced sexual exploitation. Identification and treatment of victim-survivors remains a significant challenge. Inadequate or non-existent reintegration programs can keep victims in a cycle of re-trafficking and stifle their chances for normal, healthy futures.

## **ASEAN-USAID PARTNERSHIP FOR REGIONAL OPTIMIZATION WITHIN THE POLITICAL-SECURITY AND SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITIES (PROSPECT)**

Through PROSPECT, the United States Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of State support ASEAN implementation of the ACTIP, which lays the legal foundation for combating human trafficking in the region. PROSPECT builds on a solid foundation of multi-sectoral relationships

and efforts from its predecessor project, ASEAN-U.S. PROGRESS, to support ASEAN in ensuring victim-survivors receive the protection and support needed for short- and long-term recovery and reintegration.

### **LAUNCHING AND OPERATIONALIZING REGIONAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF TIP**

Under the PROGRESS project, the U.S. Government supported the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children to develop *Regional Guidelines and Procedures to Address the Needs of Trafficking in Persons*, which was endorsed in March 2018 and launched under PROSPECT in April 2019. To help operationalize these guidelines and procedures, PROSPECT continues to work with regional and international experts to develop model training modules and tools, providing resources for practitioners at the national level.

### **STRENGTHENING CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION AND IMPROVING COORDINATION AMONG REGIONAL COUNTER-TRAFFICKING EFFORTS**

By working closely with other regional actors, such as USAID's Asia Countering TIP project, the International Organization for Migration, and the ASEAN-Australia Counter-Trafficking project, among others, PROSPECT facilitates strategic consultations and provides resources and support for enhancing cross-border cooperation to strengthen regional counter-trafficking efforts. PROSPECT also works to ensure that regional counter-trafficking initiatives are linked with ASEAN as an institution where practicable and appropriate for accumulative rather than duplicative impact.

### **CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY**

USAID PROSPECT supports ongoing efforts to counter forced labor in the fishing industry, such as those already underway by the International Labour Organization and Plan International. The project will spearhead comprehensive regional research on human trafficking in the fishing industry as a contributor to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Strengthened ASEAN Member State capacity to provide consistent and dependable treatment to victim-survivors of TIP through the development and delivery of practitioner tools and training modules at both regional and national levels
- Stronger cross-border institutional mechanisms developed to promote collaboration between ASEAN Member States on counter-trafficking efforts
- A comprehensive research study drafted on the regional scale, providing new insight into the contributing factors and economic implications of human trafficking in the fishing industry, as a contributor to IUU fishing, to guide policy and program development regionally.
- Stronger coordination and collaboration between counter-trafficking efforts in the region

### **CONTACT**

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