

**TRAFFICKING IN
WOMEN AND GIRLS:
PREVENTION**

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Organising Committee members, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen!

First of all, I would like to express my deepest and sincerest thanks to the Organising Committee, for giving me an opportunity to be here to present my experience-based paper on "Trafficking in Women and Girls Prevention" in the International Women's Conference on 'Expanding our Horizons, Understanding the Complexities of Violence Against Women.'

This gesture does show a strong commitment and a real concrete action of the organising committee and participants in sharing complexities of violence against women and reflection on responses to challenge the violence.

Therefore, it is a great honour for me to be here and get to know and exchange experiences with the outstanding students and friends gathered here today.

My presentation will be mainly focusing: 1) a brief introduction to Cambodia and overall situation of trafficking in women and children in Cambodia and in the region; 2) responses to combat trafficking issue, obstacles and lessons learned; and 3) recommendation.

I. Brief Introduction to Cambodia and Situation of Trafficking in Cambodia and in the Region

Cambodia has a population of 11.4 million according to the National Census figures, 1998. The majority of the people are farmers and Buddhism is the dominant religion. Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranked 156 out of 174 countries. 36 % of the population lives under the poverty line according to UNDP's report in 1998.

Cambodia was famous as a great empire during the 8th-13th centuries, evidenced by temples and scripts scattered throughout the country. Especially, the Angkor Wat temples are considered one of the world's most famous heritages. Some of you might have visited them already. The remaining architecture, arts, irrigation systems and histories clearly reveal a great leadership and civilisation of Cambodia. Leadership is not a new concept to Cambodia. Those Cambodians knew how to make plans, organise people to implement the plan, lead, coordinate and control their projects.

Unfortunately, conflicts among the royal family members battling for control of the throne, and invasion by neighbouring countries after the most famous king Jayavaraman VII's death, meant Cambodia fell into war until the French colonised in 1863. They controlled the country for almost 100 years.

In 1954, Cambodia achieved independence from France under the leadership of King Norodom Sihanouk. However, Lon Nol, who established the Khmer Republic, overthrew him in military coup in 1970. In 1975, Pol Pot seized power and affected a "reign of terror" all over the country. From 1975-1979, around one third of the entire population – harmless intellectuals, former government officials, skilled workers and even children – were killed. Public institutions, schools, galleries, theatres, and temples were all destroyed. This was the greatest destruction of Cambodian civilisation.

In 1979, Cambodian forces under Heng Samrin, together with Vietnamese troops, toppled the Khmer Rouge. A power struggle ensued between Heng Samrin's government and the Coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea composed of Pol Pot's Army, the Sihanouk group and Son Sann's group, a derivation from Lon Nol's group. Cambodia was ruled by a

government installed by the Vietnamese for the next decade, with policies based on socialist models of control, but with ongoing friction between the four Cambodian groups.

As a result of the Paris Peace Accord of 1992, which brought the four factions together, the United Nations intervened. General elections were held in May 1993, which led to the formation of Cambodia's current government and the restoration of Sihanouk as King. Approximately 360,000 refugees returned to Cambodia at that time, but came back to landlessness and poverty. However, the Khmer Rouge did not participate in the elections and small scale fighting continued until 1999.

The continued fighting worsened poverty. Land mines buried during the war rendered vast tracts of lands unavailable for rice cultivation. Rural people went to find jobs in the urban centres where they were vulnerable to illegal recruiters and traffickers.

As Cambodia made firm steps toward peace and unification, a new kind of destruction took place, beginning in 1992, the same year that UNTAC forces arrived in Cambodia. This year marked the rise in the incidence of human trafficking. Over the last decade, trafficking of Cambodian women and children to Thailand, and of Chinese, Vietnamese and East European women and girls into and through Cambodia has increased dramatically.

Situation of Trafficking and Prostitution

Trafficking in human beings is one of the most sinister problems that the world community has to face in the new millennium. Fed by a global system that allows millions of people to live in abject poverty, trafficking cheapens human life until it is reduced to a saleable commodity. The buying and selling of human beings in Cambodia is an increasing problem that demands answers and assistance from every level of society.

Trafficking in Cambodia and the South East Asia region is based around the movement of people into lowly paid and socially undesirable jobs, predominantly in the sex industry, but also in construction, domestic service, begging rings, and as mail order brides. In 1999-2000, the Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC) exposed a trafficking ring that uses marriage certificate issued in Cambodia to bring women to Taiwan. Taiwanese came

to get married in Cambodia, use their marriage to bring women back to Taiwan, and then sell them into prostitution.

A: Prostitution

Hundreds of thousands of women and children are currently being trafficked from rural areas and neighbouring countries (particularly Vietnam) to Cambodia cities such as Phnom Penh, Poi Pet and Seim Reap for prostitution. The Cambodian Commission on Human Rights and Reception of Complaints of the National Assembly estimates that there are over 14,000 women and children working as prostitutes in brothels, bars, massage shops, private rented accommodation and hotels in Phnom Penh alone. Recent figures from the Ministry of Planning indicate that there are between 60,000 and 80,000 prostitutes throughout Cambodia.

Human Rights Vigilance of Cambodia conducted an appraisal of the situation, which determined that 35% of prostitutes are under 18 years of age and 40% are Vietnamese. The Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre's 2000-2001 statistics from its Phnom Penh office show that 24% of its clients are under 18 years old and 57% were forced into prostitution. Of those, 47%% were deceived through the offer of a high-paying job; 10% were sold by parents, relatives or friends, 0.6% were abducted; and 42% went into prostitution based on poverty.

Prostitution was banned in Cambodia from 1975 to 1992. It was punishable by the death penalty during the Khmer Rough regime. But it has recently been undergoing a boom time is often traced back to the arrival of 22,000 UNTAC soldiers in 1992. Prostitution is now a normal part of urban life, fuelled by both local and foreign demand, and its prevalence has led to the abuse and mistreatment of many thousands of women and girls. UNTAC soldiers are believed to have started the market for younger and younger girls, a trend which is continuing and results in the trafficking and exploitation of very young girls.

A recent (November 2001) executive order from the Prime Minister that closed all karaoke bars, discothèques and nightclubs all over Cambodia will also exacerbate the problem of trafficking. More than 3,500 establishments were effected by the order, which leaves many thousands of girls and women suddenly unemployed. Many NGOs expect to see increased numbers of women and girls working in street prostitution as they are forced out of

karaoke bars. This leaves them in a dangerous and vulnerable position, as they have no control over where the client may take them. Gang rape will increase as anecdotal evidence suggests that clients are taking prostitutes back to hotels and then gang raping them. There are few options available for these young women, many of whom come from rural areas and whose families depend on their incomes to survive.

B. Working Conditions

Trafficked women and children in prostitution remain unprotected from all forms of violations of their basic rights. They may be imprisoned, beaten, denied food and medical assistance, and physically forced to serve clients. They are often forced to work extremely long hours, even when sick, and can be forced to serve large numbers of clients. Many brothels are owned or supported by armed men which makes attempted escapes dangerous, and also make intervention from police and authorities difficult. Some customers refuse to use condoms, which leads directly to the spread of STDs and HIV, and potentially leads to the perpetuation of unsafe abortions. According to a report from the National Committee Against HIV/AIDS, 180,000 Cambodians are currently living with HIV/AIDS. Trafficked foreign women are even more vulnerable due to lack of knowledge in language and culture of the countries where they have been transported.

The brothel owner takes most of the income generated by the girls. Often girls are kept in bonded labour – forced to pay back "debts" they have incurred (for travel, food, and accommodation) by serving clients. Other families will be convinced to sell their land in order to finance a trip to Thailand for that high paying job. When they return, after being deported, they have nothing to return too, and add to the large numbers of landless people.

C. Causes of Trafficking

There are many reasons for the growth in trafficking:

1. **Outright poverty:** Poverty creates situations where people will do anything to survive. Severe flooding in Cambodia during 2000 and 2001 caused widespread labor migration, displacement of families and increased levels of poverty, which undoubtedly had an effect on trafficking levels. Traffickers are very successful in their recruitment during pre-

harvest periods when farmers are short of money and are waiting for the rice to grow.

2. **Privatisation, liberalisation and opening of the borders:** Cambodia shares borders with Vietnam and Thailand (and Laos). Under communist rule, the borders were closed. The democratic transition saw the opening up of borders between Thailand and Vietnam. Trade increased substantially and predictably, trafficking for sexual purposes across borders has also increased. So very easily are Vietnamese trafficked into and through Cambodia and Cambodians trafficked into Thailand. Border areas, such as Poipet town on the border with Thailand are now major trafficking points.
3. **Sex tourism:** There has been a significant rise in sex tourism after 1993, when relative stability returned to the country and Cambodia once again became part of the tourist circuit. Now, the tourism industry is booming with more than 400,000 visitors in 2000. However, child protection workers are worried that a number of these tourists are child sex offenders. More than 70% of children surveyed near Angkor Wat and nearby villages in Siem Reap province said that tourists approached them for sex. There are also existing Internet web sites that advertise cheap and easy ways to have sex with children in Cambodia. Cambodia is unfortunately developing a reputation as a sex tourism destination, and this fuels the trafficking industry – meeting the demands of "the market".
4. **Lack of education and information of villagers:** Ignorant of trafficking, rural folks often fall prey to sex syndicates and recruiters promising big money for their children to work in the cities or other countries. High levels of illiteracy in rural areas further increase the risks for young girls and their families to be deceived by traffickers.
5. **Weakening of community and family solidarity:** There is a weakening of the community spirit and breakdown of families due to the experiences of war, especially the displacement of so many people. Before the Khmer Rouge, Cambodian people lived very settled lives, marrying within close circles and not migrating around the country. The Khmer Rouge regime displaced every person in every city and town, and many in the countryside, forcing them to move to isolated areas to work in collectives. The effect of the break up of family structures that this caused continues

today. It makes it easier for traffickers to convince families to let their children travel to far away places.

6. **Violence within the community and the family:** Another result of war is the acceptance and tolerance of violence as a method of dealing with conflict. This is evident in wider society (mob killings) and within the family, where one in four women has been a victim of domestic violence (Ministry of Planning, 2001). After such a brutal history, much of Cambodia is de-sensitised to violence, accepting it as a normal part of life. This impacts the lives of many children who flee violent homes and fall into the hands of traffickers.
7. **Armed brothel owners and guards:** Some brothels are either owned by “people in uniform” or protected by them. Policemen can get 250 baht from each brothel every month to ensure that business runs smoothly. Temptation is great for military and police personnel because they receive a salary of only US\$ 20/month. People carrying arms protect other brothels. This makes intervention more difficult and dangerous.
8. **Poor law enforcement and police inadequacy:** Cambodian police are poorly equipped and poorly paid. Some have become police officers with no training, transferring from the army at the end of the war. Many lack skills and knowledge of the law, which can make them ineffectual in dealing with the difficult issues in trafficking such as cross border problems and underage victims.
9. **Corruption of judicial system:** According to a CWCC survey, only 30% of cases are resolved in Court. Corruption is endemic throughout the court system, and with Judges' salaries also about \$20/month, it is almost expected that a successful legal case is the result of a bribe.
10. **Globalisation:** Globalisation has contributed some negative outcomes in Cambodia. The increasing use of the Internet enables paedophiles and sex tourists to gather information and communicate together to exploit young boys and girls. Pornography production for publication on the Internet is also taking place in Cambodia. Globalisation is also leading to the increasing gap between rich countries and poor countries. It increases the desperation of people in the latter group to migrate and become part of the former group. In terms of trafficking, this makes the poor vulnerable to those who tell them of the fortunes to be made in other places.

11. **Gender and culture:** It is considered acceptable in Cambodian society for men to have sex with prostitutes, which fuels the trafficking business. 87% of young Cambodian men have sex with prostitutes. Men want to sleep with children rather than women, not only because of the perception that children have no HIV/AIDS problem, but also more because of the belief that a man who sleeps with a young girl will become rejuvenated.

D. Trafficking Routes

Trafficking geographical patterns are from rural areas to cities or coastal areas and from poorer countries to richer countries. Thousands of Cambodian women and children are trafficked to Thailand to work as prostitutes, beggars, night street vendors, construction workers, domestic workers, or port carriers. Other destination countries include Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Vietnamese, Chinese and some Eastern European women and girls are trafficked into Cambodia, to meet the demand in the sex industry there, or through Cambodia to third countries. [7 Eastern European girls arrested in 2001; 207 Chinese girls rescued in 2002.]

E. Trafficking Purposes

Cambodian children are trafficked within and outside of Cambodia for the following purposes: sex industry; begging; domestic work; fishing; slave labour; for processing seafood and fishery business; construction work in big cities; commercial and service sector like selling candies, fried fish and vegetables in the market or working in restaurants and gas stations; manufacturing sectors; plantation work and logging; odd jobs like preparation of fish for making fish balls, plucking chilli stems in the markets and as porters in the border areas,; shoe shining and car window washing.

F. Responses from the community

Trafficking is a local, national, regional and international issue. But it is a very difficult to resolve because it is an illegal and underground operation, and data is difficult to obtain. However, it is estimated that over one million women and children are trafficked around the world each year. Largely, they are trafficked from South East Asia. To combat trafficking, efforts must be

made at every level – from the local through to the international. And there have been successful programs to fight trafficking at each of those levels.

NATIONAL

Cambodia and Thailand have adopted specific laws for suppressing trafficking. Other countries in South East Asia are using existing national laws, such as the Law on Suppression of Prostitution or Immigration Law or Criminal Code to suppress trafficking. There are many problems with these laws, but they provide the beginnings of a legal framework to combat trafficking.

The other countries in South East Asia are drafting or debating the bill in the Congress or National Assemblies for combating trafficking issue.

Other countries, such as Japan and Australia, have created legislation to enable them to prosecute their own nationals who commit what would be crimes in Japan or Australia, even if they were not charged in the country where the crime took place. Such legislation is used to prosecute men charged with having sex with underage girls.

REGIONAL

In addition to the national laws, all SEA countries ratified the International Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in which Article 6, states that state parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women. All countries, except USA and one African country, ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); Article 35 obliges state to take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any forms.

Several South East Asia regional meetings have taken place to create and implement action plans across the region to fight trafficking, including data base development, information dissemination, media campaigns, prosecution, repatriation, and cooperation with government organisations. For instance, Philippines and US government co-organised an Asian Regional Initiative Against Trafficking in Women and Children in March 2000.

There are also other forms of regional cooperation, such as the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between Thailand and Cambodia. This agreement is designed to improve the systems of repatriation and reintegration of citizens between the two countries when they return or deport citizens. This is a very useful agreement as there are currently many problems with the processes for returning people who crossed borders illegally.

INTERNATIONAL

There are two main international coalitions, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) and Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW) that work on fighting trafficking. They share common goals such as elimination of trafficking, child prostitution, and providing protection for trafficked women. However, they have different perspectives on prostitution. CATW wants to abolish prostitution because they view prostitution as the manipulation of a woman as sex objects. GAATW advocates prostitution to be considered as a form of work, which is determined by the woman involved, and that there must be decriminalisation of prostitution so that states can legally protect these women from forced labour and exploitation by corrupt officials. Each group has developed their own definition of trafficking, and human rights standards for trafficked women and continue to advocate nationally and internationally for their concepts.

In 1993, the Assembly General of the United Nations appointed a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, working partly on trafficking issue.

The UN sponsored global conference to combat trafficking held in Tokyo in December 2001, was also an excellent example of the increased international cooperation that is now being coordinated.

II. Responses and obstacles

Having seen the seriousness of trafficking, the lack of services for survivors, and ignorance by communities, a few of my friends and I had a strong vision – that women and children deserve to live safely and peacefully with dignity and rights as all other human beings. Trafficking in women and children, under any and all circumstances, is not acceptable and deserves universal condemnation. It is cruel and inhuman and a violation of human rights.

Therefore, we started the initiative in late 1994. However, we were not successful in opening just a safe shelter for women and children who escaped from the brothels. This was because funding agencies refused to support such a small program trying to deal with such a huge issue. I still remember a discouraging afternoon, when a funding agency refused to support us. They asked us if we thought we could solve all women's and children's problems in Cambodia. He told us if we couldn't solve all the problems, he wouldn't fund our program. My friend who was with me became angry and attempted to say something but I interrupted her and replied that we were attempting to start something and hoped that communities would follow us. Then, we left his office after we politely thanked and said good-bye to him.

During that afternoon, we did not have lunch but talked a lot about this discouragement and new approaches. Finally, we agreed to continue our efforts without keeping that incident in mind.

The Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC) was formally founded in Phnom Penh in March 1997 with initial funds from TDH Germany, followed by TDH-Netherlands. It aims to eliminate violence against women for the sake of equality, peace, development and happiness for all. The fund was small but it was an invaluable and optimistic historical step for the future of trafficked women and children and survivors of gender-based violence.

Currently, CWCC has three regional offices and 3 shelters with 53 full time-staff and almost 200 volunteers. In addition, CWCC has raised public and authorities awareness through media, publication, drama, legislation lobbying, and conferences to combat the issue.

At the beginning, CWCC had five staff and one office and was able to provide safe shelter and psychological counselling to 25 survivors a day, and a small monitoring team. Now, CWCC has grown to include the following extensive programs:

A. Monitoring and rescuing trafficked women and children

Staff receive information from community sources, police and authorities, or when women come to the office requesting help, or when we encounter women in communities suffering from violence.

As soon as information is received, we act immediately. If the case is an emergency and the victim needs to be rescued, we contact police, competent authorities or/and NGO partners to act as soon as possible. If the victims are injured, we send them to hospitals or clinics for treatment.

For example, when we receive information that women/ girls are confined in a room and forced to serve the sex trade, we investigate on our own. But if a rescue is needed, we contact police and prosecutors whom we have worked with before and trust, to raid the brothel, rescue victims and arrest the perpetrators for prosecution. We only use the authorities that we trust – we have had a bad experience in contacting local police, who were paid by the brothel owners, and informed him prior to the raid thus enabling him to escape before the police arrived.

B. Drop-In-Centre

CWCC also provides a drop-in centre, a centrally located place of first-contact for women who have been victims of violence, or where citizens and government officials can report cases of gender-based abuse and receive counselling and legal consultations. The drop-in centre is based in our office. Clients can stay there for few days before they have place to go or referred to our shelters or other organisation.

C. Court Advocate and Legal Assistance:

CWCC's lawyers provide legal assistance in order to inform women and girls of their rights and legal options; to make them aware of the costs and benefits of legal action; to help them with preparing complaints; to pressure the court for speedy and fair trials; to accompany clients to court; to represent them in the trial, to ensure verdicts benefiting victims are enforced; to share comments in reforming legislature; and to work with legal aid associations to create innovative remedies for victims.

Our work with the judiciary is also improving. A few courts have now become very helpful after five years of building trust and confidence with them through friends and personal contacts. Judges and prosecutors have begun treating women fairly and seriously by holding perpetrators accountable for the crimes they commit. CWCC advocates are no longer accused of interfering and disturbing court work as at the first start.

However, widespread and systematic corruption, lack of skills and gender sensitivity of the court, make women and children access justice slowly. In addition, CWCC does not have enough lawyers to represent all cases, (approximately 200 cases a year) due to the danger involved and the low pay. But we took up this challenge and were successful in convincing the two available legal aid organisations, which saw their role as only representing the accused, to represent victims who were trafficked women and children.

D. Confidential Shelter

The confidential crisis shelter provides women and their children with safe accommodation and support to foster self-esteem through living in a positive environment. Services include counselling, medical assistance, 24-hour security, clothing, toiletries, bedding, nutritional meals, social activities, daily exercise classes, access to vocational training programs, arts and drama activities, cooking, children's activities, group educational sessions, literacy training, hygiene and HIV/AIDS education, and follow-up services.

E. Vocational, Literacy, and Life Skill Training/Employment Assistance

Vocational training and job placement are very needed for women to be self-reliance or avoid returning to prostitution because most of them are illiterate and unskilled. CWCC's clients in the shelter receive vocational training such as sewing and silk weaving if they wish. Each year, CWCC provides vocational training for about 300 clients. CWCC networks with restaurants, factories, shops, and other workplaces to find appropriate employment for clients after the training so that they can support themselves.

When CWCC helps a client to find employment, we pay their first month of rent and food because they have nothing after they escaped from violence or brothels. The women usually receive a salary in the amount of between \$40 to \$120 a month, which is compared to the average salary of \$20 for a government official. CWCC also makes follow up visits to their workplaces and houses to continue supporting them emotionally until they are fully self-confident.

F. Reintegration and repatriation program

The reintegration program aims to assist women who have been sexually trafficked or victims of violence and who wish to return home and reintegrate with their families and communities. We also provide training on sex-trafficking and related laws to the victims' parents, local authorities and communities. We encourage the villagers to be aware of deceivers who try to lure children into prostitution. They are typically deceived or abducted and taken from their home province or country of origin and brought to urban centres and sold to a brothel. After such traumatic experiences, the victims need assistance in returning to their place of origin.

If appropriate, the reintegration process begins almost immediately. For example, the client is asked if she wishes her family, friends or relatives to be informed about her whereabouts. If she does, CWCC begins contacting individuals in the particular province that can inform the client's family or friends of her whereabouts. Those individuals that are emotionally close to the client are encouraged to visit the client at CWCC's office (the shelter is confidential). CWCC has helped poor families with travel expenses so that they could visit with their daughter/relative.

When the woman is ready to return home or to her community, the family can come to accompany them from the shelter. If they do not have transportation, a reintegration staff or/and a police accompany her to her hometown. Our staff usually stays in the woman's village for three days to ensure that the woman is not facing any problems with discrimination. They also spend time with the family to facilitate the reintegration process, and to make sure that the woman has enough security.

In some cases the client does not want either her family or the community to know about what has happened to her. In those cases, the reintegration staff respects the client's wishes and assists her to maintain her privacy.

A follow-up visit is made after three months of reintegration to monitor living conditions and, if necessary, to continue providing assistance. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational and Youth Rehabilitation (MOSALVY) also agrees to follow up and continue to assist our clients in the communities.

If the client is a foreign woman/girl, CWCC provides translators and contacts with the woman's embassy through the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for repatriation.

G. Community organising to prevent and deter violence against women

The Community Organising program is designed to prevention and deters violence against women through popular education and intervention from community volunteers. It aims:

- To raise awareness and educate villagers on trafficking issues, the role of villagers in combating and preventing the issue, and prosecuting perpetrators.
- To educate and train the police in the same villages about the law, how to assist a victim with sensitivity, roles of police officers and how to work with community coalitions in combating and preventing issues;
- To train two selected members of each community in how to conduct popular education sessions to further organise and educate villages in the surrounding areas and to assist victims;
- To obtain statistics and uncover new cases of violence against women from both community coalitions and from CWCC's strengthened ties to the village police force. CWCC's monthly follow-up visits to each village play an important role in this process.

CWCC has trained and organised 136 villages to prevent and deter violence in their communities. These villages in turn can mobilise the nearby villages, monitoring VAW, contacting local police, arresting suspects, and assisting/referring the victims to available services. They contact CWCC only when the women or girls require legal representation. This is a big improvement from when the program started, when all victims were referred to CWCC, which resulted in over loading of our office and staff.

Since its founding, over 1,000 police officers and local authorities have been trained by CWCC on laws about VAW and crisis intervention. Police officers have now begun intervention by arresting the abusers and traffickers. Upon rescuing victims, they send them to our shelter, which is very unusual in Cambodia. There used to be a time when it took several weeks in order to rescue trafficked women or children from brothels, even when CWCC provided all the necessary information to the police with repeated visits. Most of victims were not assisted. But now, with the new partnership between the police and CWCC, officers are ready to help within few days. Last year, the

Ministry of Interior created an Office for Combating Child Trafficking, and this year, a telephone hot line for victims of sex trafficking.

To ensure the sustainable intervention by communities, CWCC's staff regularly visits the volunteers and continues to provide technical assistance to them. A monthly meeting of volunteers is also organised in the CWCC office to give an opportunity for them to share problems in their communities and techniques in coping the issues. On-going skills training, including facilitation, communication, monitoring, basic counselling, and training methodology are also being provided to them.

H. Campaign and Awareness raising through mass media, drama, posters, press statement, publication and seminars

Our awareness raising and advocacy efforts include press statements, publications, TV, Radio, and drama to advocate for victim's rights. CWCC coordinates its efforts with local and international human rights advocates and the government to educate and sensitise all members of the community, and to help create informed policies and programs for victims of trafficking.

For instance, CWCC has published illustrated short stories on trafficking for distribution to the public during national celebration ceremonies. 13 spots on trafficking have been produced and nationally broadcasted through TV and radio. The television station charged us a very low price with the endorsement letter from the Ministry of Women's and Veteran's Affairs and MOSALVY. CWCC co-ordinated with University of Fine Arts and UNESCO in presenting a drama to the public. We also organised workshops and seminars for lawmakers, judges, prosecutor and the other members of civil society to sensitise them to the issue. We lobbied political parties to put the issue in their platform of action before national electoral campaign.

After several years of great effort in approaching newspapers, TV, and radio to work with us, we are now actively and successfully working together in disseminating information to the public and policy and lawmakers. Now, the media and newspapers come to us for information, rather than CWCC staff approaching them like it was in the beginning. It is common to see CWCC's work reported in the media and newspaper in Cambodia.

I. Legislation Lobbying

CWCC has involved in drafting many laws and state policies, including, drafting a revision of the Law on combating Trafficking, Memorandum of Understanding for Assisting Victim of Trafficking between Thailand and Cambodia, Law on Domestic Violence, Criminal Law and Procedure, Marriage and Family Law, etc,

J. Networking and Cooperation

We would not be able to carry out the important work we do without assistance from the communities. CWCC networks with appropriate agencies to supply the necessary services to eradicate trafficking. CWCC has networked with over 150 local and international organisations and government agencies to set up a referral system widen the social service network and develop training programs to build the capacity of service providers and women's rights monitors and educators. Perhaps most importantly, CWCC's community networking allows us to provide our clients with health care, legal assistance, vocational training and transportation.

CWCC has networked with regional and international organisations in sharing experiences, building staff capacity, assisting survivors in repatriation and prosecution of traffickers and its syndicates.

K. Staff capacity building

To ensure sustainability, CWCC is committed to building the capacity of its staff and staff of other local organisations with similar mandates. Through capacity building projects, CWCC aims to provide quality services to our clients and to build a stronger social services network.

Obstacles in Combating Trafficking

In carrying out activities, CWCC encounters various obstacles such as threats from perpetrators, lack of participation from law enforcement officials, corruption, and a lack of forensic reports for trials, which leads to unfair trials, and the release of perpetrators. In addition, although the woman or girl may have won the case, it is very difficult to enforce the verdict. The court, as well as the police/authorities, always complain that they have no money/ means to

carry out their activities. If a client has no money to pay for police, they seldom attempt to enforce a verdict.

Another difficulty is the long delays in legal process. Some cases take years to come to court, which makes our clients afraid and destroys their commitment to solving the case through the legal system.

Overstaying in the shelter, where the maximum stay is six months, is also a challenge. Some clients stay for longer when their case is pending, or they feel unsafe to return home. Clients are also eager to learn skills as fast as possible so they can have jobs for support their families. But vocational training often requires a much longer time than they had expected.

Another challenge is the time taken for repatriating women and girls back to their own country. Often the Embassy does not want the women and girls, whom they consider as bad persons, to return to the country. Women and girls of ethnic minority groups have also been denied permission to return home.

Recent closures of many garment factories (due to the reduction in the yearly quota of garments permitted to be exported to the US) has made employment even more difficult to find for our clients, even those with excellent sewing skills.

III. Conclusion

To conclude, trafficking in women and children is an international problem, which violates human rights and need to be eliminated. It can only be stopped with a global coordination from every sector-governments, business organisations, NGOs and religious bodies through clear political will that needs to be directed at strategies that include training of law enforcement officials and the judiciary, a comprehensive and long-term research into the problem, improved dissemination of information, joint interventions and referrals, strengthening of the social net, establishing rural development program to alleviate poverty, health education, and both local and international campaigns against the sexual exploitation of women and children.

However, even this is not enough. As is all forms of violence against women, sexual exploitation is a manifestation of the unequal distribution of power

between men and women. Globally and locally, solutions to the problem must take into consideration the relationship between sexual inequality and violence. Governments and communities must strive to provide women with equal access to education, healthcare, food, shelter, political and social participation and employment opportunities. Together, we must work to achieve these goals and the recognition that women's rights are human rights.

I wish you all the very best of luck for your lives and your careers.