



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release
Monday 09 July 2007
ROAP/07/27

The Mekong Women's Forum

Leading women from across the GMS unite to intensify action against human trafficking, discrimination and labour/sexual exploitation

Hanoi, Viet Nam: (ILO News) – Women activists from across the Greater Mekong Sub-region are gathering in Viet Nam this week (July 12-13) to intensify their efforts in combating human trafficking and the related discrimination, labour and sexual exploitation endured by thousands of young women across the sub-region.

Hosted by the Viet Nam Women's Union, and supported by the International Labour Organization, **The Mekong Women's Forum** will attract up to 100 participants and observers to the two-day event in Hanoi, 12-13 July, 2007.

The Forum will be opened by the Ms. Ha Thi Khiet, Preident of the Viet Nam Women's Union and Ms. Sachiko Yamamoto, the ILO's Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific. Dr Saisuree Chutikul, distinguished member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination of Women and a recognised expert on human trafficking in the GMS will keynote the forum.

The Forum, with its theme ***“Women's Solidarity & Empowerment in Action against Human Trafficking and Discrimination”*** will provide an opportunity for women's organizations from across the GMS to showcase the work they are already doing to prevent trafficking of women and children and help those who have already been victimized by the related sexual and labour exploitation that results.

From the establishment of migrant women's homes in China, to village savings-and-loan schemes in Lao PDR, awareness-raising in rural Viet Nam, to name but a few, these Women's Unions and organizations are arming young women with the information they need to avoid discrimination and the trafficking and migration-related exploitation. Some of these projects will be on display and interviews with key participants can be arranged upon request.

Among those attending the Mekong Women's Forum will be high-level representatives from Government – including senior officials involved in the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking in the GMS (COMMIT) – as well as delegates from Workers' and Employers' Organizations from five countries: Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam.

You or your representatives are cordially invited to attend the Mekong Women's Forum, beginning at 08:00 am, Thursday 12 July, at the Center for Women and Development (CWD), 20 Thuy Khue, Tay Ho, Hanoi, Viet Nam.

For further information, please contact:

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