

## **SPEECH**

### **Remarks by USAID/Cambodia Mission Director Erin Soto, Stakeholders' Meeting on the Counter Trafficking in Persons Project (CTIP) with the Government of Cambodia**

Ministry of Interior  
December 12, 2006

Yours Excellency Sar Kheng Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior;  
Your Excellencies; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

Trafficking in persons is a serious threat to development in Cambodia. Trafficking affects more than the individual trafficked person – it ruins the lives of victims, families, communities and society. Victims and perpetrators are in constant motion, spanning the nation of Cambodia, and crossing the borders to and from neighboring countries. Cambodian girls and boys, women and men are sold for sexual and labor exploitation.

Since 2003, USAID has provided approximately \$5 million to support counter-trafficking programs. USAID has worked with the Royal Government of Cambodia and expert organizations – including International Organization for Migration (IOM), The Asia Foundation (TAF) and International Justice Mission (IJM).

With that \$5 million, USAID is proud to share the following achievements:

- Over 275,000 people from 18 provinces have been directly exposed to the information campaign and awareness of the problems has been raised.
- International Justice Mission trained 180 police officers of the Anti-Trafficking, Juvenile Protection Department, assisted in rescuing 129 victims, and advised in court cases resulting in 36 convictions.
- Cambodian Defenders Project trained 100 police staff of the Anti-Trafficking, Juvenile Protection Department on investigative training skills.
- The USAID-supported trafficking program assisted 1,481 at-risk women and victims of trafficking, provided reintegration support to 1,288, reintegrated 121 persons back into the community.
- Provided scholarships to 152 at-risk women and victims.
- Helped 202 at-risk women and victims to obtain employment.
- Established 24 community networks in the provinces.
- Over 500 teachers have been trained to educate their students and public about the consequences of sex trafficking and child sexual exploitation.

- Ten youth clubs were formed to educate children about the negative consequences of trafficking and child sexual exploitation.
- Over 5,850 community members and migrant workers participated in courses and public forums on trafficking, child protection and safe migration.
- Thirty-five cases of human trafficking have been referred to court proceedings by NGO partners resulting in 7 convictions.
- Legal representation was provided to victims in 130 cases of domestic violence and rape.
- Scholarships were provided to 180 at-risk girls in secondary schools, and a Career Resource Center was established which has served 68 female victims and at-risk persons.

While significant progress has been achieved in Cambodia in anti-trafficking, key challenges remain in achieving more effective and sustainable anti-trafficking programs. The question remains where and how do we use the limited resources that USAID has to offer the Royal Government of Cambodia?

I would like to share with you the questions I ask our staff and question I think about.

- Are we doing enough to treat the root causes of this illicit industry?
- Is our strategy fully informed by an analysis of the economic interests of the actors involved in this illicit business?
- Are we addressing the drivers of this illicit business?
- Does the average Cambodian view trafficking as their problem?
- Is the media seized with the issue?
- Are public officials at all levels of government taking a public position on the issue?

In preparation for today's meeting, USAID along with The Asia Foundation have met with almost all the ministries involved with this issue. Each has expressed priorities and needs. Not surprisingly, the needs outweigh the resources. There will not be enough USAID funds to do everything you want. The good news is that every ministry brings resources to the effort – whether in its staff or presence throughout the country, or expertise or Ministry resources. When there is a will there is a way. Together, you will have to determine what each ministry can offer and where to use the limited resources at your disposal.

- Do we continue to raise more awareness?
- Do we develop a database?
- Do we focus greater attention on law enforcements?

- Should we continue to help rehabilitate victims?
- Where and how do we intervene to prevent trafficking – how do we know we prevented?
- Should we work on borders?
- Should we work through ASEAN?
- How do we ensure sustainability?

In an evolution from the past, USAID has increased collaboration and support of the Cambodia Government's efforts to combat trafficking. We have noted with interest recent initiatives such as the "one task force" approach to address all counter-trafficking initiatives in the country. This kind of intra government coordination is essential to tackling the trafficking issue and ultimate success.

The Government needs to reach consensus on what is the best use of limited funds. Where should we invest the funds to have the biggest impact on trafficking. Whatever the Royal Government of Cambodia decides, we must be able to show and measure impact.

USAID can offer expertise and advice but it is the government that must lead the effort.

I am encouraged by the cooperation and collaboration – and the leadership – demonstrated by organizing this meeting today. I wish you strength and wisdom as you approach the difficult task of setting priorities and weighing the cost and benefits of various potential investments to address the debilitating problem of trafficking of people.