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**Joining forces to better tackle smuggling of migrants
: Future directions**

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Dear Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng,

HE Chou Bun Eng, HE Lapresse

Excellencies Patrice Cousineau, Political and economic counselor at the Canadian Embassy, Quinn Tran, first counselor at the Australian Embassy / DIAC

Dear distinguished representatives of the Royal Government and the Cambodian National Police,

Dear honourable guests,

Dear ladies and gentlemen,



[Introduction]

UNODC would like to sincerely thank the Royal Government of Cambodia to have initiated this event ‘Joining forces to better tackle smuggling of migrants: future directions’. For several years now, the RGC has been committed to tackling the issue of smuggling of migrants with the support of Australia and Canada. It is an immense privilege for UNODC to be part of these efforts and today we would like to share specific outcomes from these recent initiatives. The smuggling of migrants is a major concern for the region.

[SOM being a serious crime]

Irregular migrants are motivated by the same few reasons:

- to seek better economic opportunities,
- to escape poverty,
- to reunite with their families or
- to flee internal conflict or persecution.

The difficulty in accessing legal channels for migration often encourages migrants to rely on the services of smugglers to reach their destination. As law enforcement is increasingly improving detecting smuggling methods, smugglers are taking more and more risks: e.g. migrants are being transported in overloaded trucks with no



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ventilation or overloaded boats not suitable for navigation, they often spend hours if not days without eating or drinking, sitting or standing in the same position. Often smuggled migrants do not reach their final destination.

Those illegal migrants moved without any protection of the law, become very vulnerable to exploitation or trafficking by brokers, agents, and employers. Very often, they do not speak the language of the country of arrival, they do not have any relatives, they do not have any ID documents, they have no place to go and they owe money to the smugglers. Some of the smuggled migrants including from Cambodia end up exploited in brothels, in fishing boats or as housemaids. Smuggling of migrants is not a crime without victims.

It is an issue that not only affects the country of origin, but also impacts on the country of transit and of destination. Transit countries need to review their policy and legislation on refugees and asylum seekers and find temporary solutions. Destination countries need to establish a system to receive illegal migrants and/or to repatriate them. Some countries have long-standing refugee resettlement programmes - these systems are complicated, time-consuming, and expensive. The smuggling of migrant is a serious crime with heavy consequences.



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[Cambodia on SOM]

UNODC estimates that around 55,000 people from Cambodia are smuggled each year to Thailand. Working illegally in Thailand they become vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and potentially human trafficking

There is a lack of reliable and consistent data on migrants entering into the country and this is an impediment for the responsible authorities to develop evidence-based policies to address in a comprehensive manner the smuggling of migrants.

The RGC is aware of these challenges and has been developing elements of responses for many years. Cambodia has passed legislation in 2008 on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation and has been working on a specific Law on Smuggling of Migrants with the technical support of Australia. It has been one of the first countries joining the Bali process that started in 2002 and that brings together participants to work on practical measures to help combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking, and one of the few countries participating in the Pilot Phase of the associated Voluntary Reporting (on line) System . At a national level, the issue of smuggling of migrant benefits from the creation of the National Committee to Lead the Suppression of Human Trafficking, Smuggling, Labor, and Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children, chaired by his Excellency Sar Kheng



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and whose secretariat is under the responsibility of HE Chou Bun Eng. Cambodia is also the first countries to sign agreements of the respective regional projects on smuggling of migrant supported by UNODC.

[UN's response]

UNODC efforts to support human security in Cambodia are structured around two main programmatic pillars:

Health and development (HIV prevention Care and Treatment for Prisoners and Drug Users)

Rule of Law covering Criminal Justice (notably Child Sexual Tourism), Governance (Anti Corruption and support to the national UNCAC review; Anti Money Laundering), Counter Terrorism, and Trafficking and transitional Organized Crime. Part of the latter are our efforts related to Smuggling of Migrants

Regarding Smuggling of Migrants, UNODC's mandate is to promote global adherence to promote the protocol against the smuggling of migrants supplementing the UN convention against transnational organized crime. In this respect the UNODC focus is to assist member states to strengthen their criminal justice response.



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In Cambodia three initiative on Smuggling of Migrants are supported by UNODC the **CAU project**: Coordination and Analysis Unit, developing a regional database named Voluntary Reporting System to gather reliable information the smuggling of migrants. Cambodia was part of the pilot phase. In echo to the Bali process, the CAU project's main objective is to determine the trends of the issue of smuggling of migrants from, through and to Cambodia to develop more effective counter-migrant smuggling policies.

the **PATROL project**: Partnership Against Transnational-crime through Regional Organized Law-enforcement that has established 7 BLOs at the Cambodian border over the past 3 years and plan to create 5 new this year. The project has also provided equipment to BLOs officers: car, motorbikes, computers, and other specialized equipments. The objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement authorities' capacity at the borders.

the **PIU project**: Port Intelligence Unit that has established an intelligence unit with 20 officers from 4 different departments of the CNP to enhance regional coordination and cooperation to tackle smuggling of migrants by sea.

The cross cutting element in the UNODC response is the strengthening of the capacity of law enforcement notably through the training of law enforcement officers: so far hundreds of Cambodia officers have seen their skills and



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knowledge consolidated on police techniques of investigation and operational and strategic analysis. Our experts from the Regional Office in Bangkok will provide you more details on those 3 projects shortly. It takes a network to defeat a network.

[Other partners]

Solid elements of response to the issue of smuggling of migrants are being built. For instance, IOM supports the initiative: the Document Examination Centre in Bangkok. Another example is the work with the repatriation and reintegration of the victims undertaken by ILO and Winrock. We could list a number of initiatives lead by many organizations and countries present in this room today. The point is we know that “It takes a network to defeat a network” and we should continue gathering strength to support Cambodia’s effort

[Conclusion]

Changes will take time and request even more efforts. In this room, right here right now: we have the political will, we have the funds, we have the expertise and the capacity. If not now then when if not us then who?

Dear Excellencies,

Dear partners, colleagues and friends,

Let’s join forces to better tackle smuggling of migrants.



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Thank you.

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