

**REMARKS OF H.E. VONGTHEP ARTHAKAIVALVATEE, DEPUTY
SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR
ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY FOR THE**

**LAUNCH OF THE REGIONAL REVIEW ON LAWS, POLICIES AND
PRACTICES WITHIN ASEAN RELATING TO THE IDENTIFICATION,
MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING,
ESPECIALLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

28 September 2016, Jakarta, Indonesia

Excellency Ambassador Dr. Sujatmiko, Deputy for the Protection of Women and Children, Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia,

Excellencies Ambassadors of Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, and Viet Nam to ASEAN, as well as senior officials from the Permanent Missions of ASEAN Member States,

Excellency Francisco Fontan Pardo, EU Ambassador to ASEAN,

Excellency Nina Hachigian, U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN,

Excellencies Ambassadors of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Republic of Korea to ASEAN, as well as senior officials from the Missions of Dialogue Partners to ASEAN,

Madame Lily Purba, Chair of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, and Representative of Indonesia to ACWC for Women's Rights,

Dr. Dinna Wisnu, Representative of Indonesia to the ASEAN Inter-Governmental Commission on Human Rights,

Distinguished Senior Officials from SOMTC, AICHR, SOMSWD, ACW and ACMW,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends and colleagues,

Good morning.

I am deeply honored to be with you today for this momentous occasion, as we launch this pioneering work of the ACWC. The Regional Review on Trafficking in Persons in ASEAN could not have come at a more opportune time as ASEAN, and the world, is in search of the best prescription to deal with this transboundary scourge. It is in this light that I commend ACWC for the completion of this Regional Review on laws, policies and practices within ASEAN relating to the identification, management and treatment of victims of trafficking, especially women and children. I note that this Regional Review was developed in consultation with AICHR, Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), and Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD).

Let me express my profound gratitude to the Government of United States of America and the European Union for the support through the US-ASEAN PROGRESS and READI facilities that made this initiative possible. Your consistent resolve to work with ASEAN on this issue continues to deepen our partnership. Allow me to express my appreciation specifically to Dr. Anne Gallagher as the lead consultant and Dr. Apiradee Thienthong for your invaluable technical support.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The formal launch of ASEAN Community in 2015 has ushered our region into a new era – the era of greater political stability, integrated economy, and enhanced relations among our peoples and communities. ASEAN has accelerated efforts toward leveraging regional cooperation among the member states to make meaningful changes in people’s lives. However, the changing regional and global landscape has given rise to new and emerging threats and challenges. With greater mobility of people comes greater exposure to risks and vulnerabilities. Poverty, rising inequality, and human rights abuses exacerbate the vulnerabilities of people to trafficking, especially women and children.

The report of International Organization for Migration entitled “Combating Trafficking in South-East Asia” stated that it has been conservatively estimated that at least 200,000 to 225,000 women and children from South East Asia are trafficked annually, which represents nearly one-third of the global trafficking trade.

The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which covers 155 countries states that the most

common form of human trafficking (79%) is sexual exploitation. The victims of sexual exploitation are predominantly women and girls. Worldwide, almost 20% of all trafficking victims are children. According to ILO, worldwide, almost 21 million people are victims of forced labour, 11.4 million women and girls, and 9.5 million men and boys.

Responding to those challenges, the ASEAN Leaders signed the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children or ACTIP, in November 2015. As an expression of high-level political commitment, the Convention seeks to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and to ensure just and effective punishment of traffickers. More importantly, the ACTIP provides for the protection and assistance to victims of trafficking in persons, while fully respecting their human rights, and promoting cooperation among the ASEAN Member States and partners. I congratulate Cambodia, Singapore and Thailand for having ratified the Convention, and look forward to working with other ASEAN Member States on the ratification process.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This groundbreaking publication developed by the ACWC is both timely and relevant. As it enumerates national legal frameworks on trafficking in persons vis-à-vis regional and international instruments, ASEAN Member States and relevant stakeholders are enabled to reflect on good practices and gaps that need to be addressed. Also, you can see in each chapter key recommendations on the major aspects of trafficking in persons, with a specific focus on women and children.

In particular, the Regional Review on Trafficking in Persons underscores the victim-centred approach in the development of national laws and policies. It highlights the effective identification of victims as critical step in safeguarding the rights of the victims, ensuring the timely delivery of life-saving assistance, and bringing the offenders to justice. The Regional Review emphasises that trafficking is not only about criminalising the act of trafficking but also approaching it from a human rights perspective. Here I would like to emphasise the importance of mainstreaming gender sensitivity and child friendliness into the criminal justice procedure when it comes to women and child witnesses and victims. The Regional Review also points to the need to generate more data on the occurrence of trafficking in the region, as data helps better inform legislations and policies to fully combatting the occurrence of trafficking in the region.

I wish to highlight that this publication not only contemplates trafficking as a crime and a violation of human rights. It has placed equal premium on the need to enhance and strengthen policies on prevention and protection. For in the end, the law and policies that we seek to improve would impact the lives of those who are most vulnerable to trafficking.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Prosecution and punishment of perpetrators must be accompanied equally with prevention and protection of victims. But there is another “P” which I would like to throw in the mix – and that is “Partnership.” With the launch of Regional Review on Trafficking in Persons, I look forward to the enhanced synergy between ACWC, AICHR, SOMTC, SOMSWD, ACW, ACMW and other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, civil society organisations, and stakeholders. Undoubtedly, the fight against trafficking cannot be done single handedly by one nation or one organisation alone, highlighting the importance of cross-pillar, cross-sectoral coordination.

Let me end by saying that the launch of the Regional Review on Trafficking in Persons is just the start of our journey toward improving the lives and rights of victims of trafficking, women, men, boys and girls. For us to truly realise the vision of ASEAN Community, and to ensure that no one is left behind in building our community, we need to work together to make ASEAN felt, relevant, and real to the peoples of ASEAN.

Thank you very much.