

## "Transborder Migration in the GMS" meeting held at MI

*It is one among a series of six meetings to be conducted over the next two years.*

Khon Kaen - Mekong Institute (MI)'s First Regional Policy Formulation Meeting on "Transborder Migration in the Greater Mekong Subregion" was organised from February 6th to the 8th 2006 at the MI Facility.

This meeting on "Transborder Migration in GMS" was one among a series of six meetings to be conducted over the course of two years under the program "Regional Policy Formulation Meeting Series," supported by The Rockefeller Foundation.

There are an increasing number of socio-economic problems, which have not yet been sufficiently addressed by coordinated regional policies. The objective of this series is to stimulate and accelerate regional policy formulation on such neglected issues.

This meeting brought together 40 participants including senior policy executives from the six GMS countries, development partners, and experts, to discuss issues, share opinions, and exchange ideas. The aim was to create a rich, interactive learning environment for senior policy executives from GMS countries. The need for regional and bilateral policies that ensure the safety and welfare of migrants was assessed. Policies that would improve the management of the migration process within the GMS were examined.

During the first and second day, presentations and the exchange of information from both governmental and non-governmental organizations, along with the MI's research team, offered learning opportunities. The need for appropriate regional policy formulations was understood.

On the second day, the senior policy executives from the GMS countries were given an opportunity to discuss, negotiate, and exchange opinions among one another. Divided into three working groups, each group discussed potential solutions and future courses of action that would effectively address the negative impacts associated with migration. Participating experts joined in the discussion and also shared ideas.

Among the working groups, the focus was on three main issues, which included: family-related concerns, particularly with their family in their countries of origin; the promotion of regular migration, which could be accomplished by the cooperation of recruitment agencies in disseminating information through regular/ legal

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## Council Meeting in Vietnam



*The Mekong Institute (MI) Council members recently attended the meeting hosted by Hue University, Vietnam. Shown in the photo are the MI Council Chairman H.E. Mr. Tej Bunnag, seated 2nd from right, Council members and MI staff after a successful meeting held on December 3, 2005.*

## Networking with other organisations will benefit GMS

*Such ways include allowing information exchanges, creating a pool of resource persons*

MI Networking with various local and/or regional institutes and organisations working on GMS activities can benefit the GMS in many ways, said Mekong Institute (MI) Academic Director, Dr Ramon Sevilla.

Such ways include allowing information exchanges, creating a pool of resource persons, and/or expanding learning programs, Dr. Sevilla went on to state at MI Steering Committee meeting held in Vietnam late last year. In 2005, the MI associated with more than 12 institutes and networks in the region. The following is a summary of activities the MI conducted with those institutes and networks:

- **GMS Business Forum** - The MI has been a member of this sub-regional enterprising network since 2001. The MI regularly attends the GMS Business Forum's annual meeting and seminars to learn about GMS private sector development and business activities, which help the MI to better understand its direction in working with the private sector in the region. This Forum was used to support a training course - 'Attracting Foreign Investment to the GMS' - at the MI in 2003 and may do so again next year.

- **Center of Mekong Pluralism, KKU; Institute of Mekong Regional Tourism, KKU; GMS Program Faculty of Liberal Art, Ubon Ratchathani University; Mae Fah Luang University** - exchanged GMS research information through training course presenters and guest speakers over the year.

- **GMS Program, Kasetsart University** - started informal cooperation on research and social development for some GMS countries.

- **Rajabhat Loei University** - signed a Memorandum of Understanding on academic cooperation. The starting activities included: 1) developing an international curriculum for a Doctor of Philosophy Program in Regional Development Strategy; and 2) exchanging and sharing academic information and research documents.

- **KENAN Institute Asia (KIASIA)** - partnered with in developing training course curriculums and/or research and development projects, which were proposed to international donors for funding. The development of SME cluster training courses for the GMS, to be funded by France, UNIDO, has been ongoing between the MI and KIASIA.

- **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** - planned to collaborate with the MI on developing and supporting courses on local economic development. The ILO has also expressed its willingness to support MI with advice and discussions regarding the design and implementation of its program of executive policy-making seminars planned next year at the MI.

- **Greater Mekong Sub-region Tertiary Education Consortium (GMSTEC)** - MI is an associate member of this consortium, which has regular members from universities in the GMS, New Zealand, and Australia. The GMSTEC offers services in research project writing and submission for funds, recruiting or exchanging

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## Changes in MI administration



After serving the institute as the Director for two years, Dr Anake Topark-ngarm decided on December 31, 2005 to leave the Mekong Institute (MI) stating personal reasons.



Subsequently, MI Administration Manager, Mr Aphai Prakorbpol, acted as Director until January 31, 2006, thereafter leaving to fulfill the position of vice president at Bundit Borihan Thurakit College.



Presently, MI Academic Director Dr Ramon Sevilla acts as director.



Ms Thanaporn Chaisriha, often referred to as Jeay by close friends and MI staff, has resigned (as of March 2006) from the MI to take a more challenging position.

Jeay served the Institute as Program Administrator for three years, before deciding to take a position at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Bangkok.

Jeay joined the MI in 2003 as a course Administrative Officer working with the Academic Team, and was subsequently appointed the Mekong Institute Alumni Network Coordinator before deciding to leave.

## Networking with other organisations will benefit GMS

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research personnel and other human resources within its network. The MI has been invited to join GMSTEC's meetings and activities and found them to be useful in future MI research programs.

- **Greater Mekong Sub-region Academic and Research Network (GMSARN)** – is another GMS universities' network coordinated by AIT. As an affiliated member, the MI has been invited to attend most GMSARN meetings and activities. The last was a joint meeting between the GMSARN Board and Council of Advisors held in Cambodia in June of this year. The network's current activity is developing a research proposal for SME development policies in the GMS in which the MI, through the Academic Director, has suggested sharing expertise as an advisory service for the revision of the proposal. SME development policies may become another attractive MI learning program in the near future.

- **Phnom Penh Plan program (PPP)** – MI and PPP have shared responsibilities in working on human resource development in the GMS region. As an MI development partner, PPP has regularly conducted some of its training courses at the MI and will assist the MI in research programs and training needs analysis in 2006.

- **Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University** – one of a number of possible MI partners in the near future. From discussing with Professor Masaya Shiraiishi, the Waseda University representative, the MI may form a partnership with this institute to conduct a series of workshops for graduate students from Japan and

GMS countries. The first workshop may be in early March of next year at the MI.

- **SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA)** – has exchanged official visits with the MI in the year 2005. With the same mandates, the two institutes are planning to collaborate in organising learning programs and conducting HRD research. A Memorandum of Understanding between SEARCA and the MI will be signed in December of this year. The first possible academic collaboration will be organising a 'Bridging Program' for Bachelor's degree students from CLMV countries at Khon Kaen University and the Mekong Institute.

## VIETNAM FORECAST TO HAVE ASEAN'S 2006 HIGHEST ECONOMIC GROWTH

**PARIS, Jan 10 (VNA)** – Radio Station France International quoted economic experts in forecasting Viet Nam would have the highest economic growth rate among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries this year.

Although ASEAN nations have faced many challenges, including soaring oil prices, increasing interest rates, and especially bird flu, preparations are being made for high economic growth this year, the broadcast said, adding that Viet Nam is a rising star in ASEAN, in comparison with other member economies.

A Mekong Economic Organisation expert was quoted saying that Viet Nam is likely to catch up with richer ASEAN nations.

The expert went on to say that Viet Nam's economy has a comparatively stable macroeconomic cycle and its economic growth rate is forecast at 8 percent this year.



## Regional Training Program on Human Trafficking piloted at the Mekong Institute



*[extracted from a presentation delivered by Dr. Susu Thatun, UNIAP Program Manager]*

The first pilot training program on human trafficking was successfully undertaken from October 10–21, 2005 at the Mekong Institute in Khon Kaen, Northeastern Thailand.

This Pilot training program is the very first project under the COMMIT (Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Human Trafficking) Sub–regional Plan of Action. Before this project was formally identified under the COMMIT framework, informal recognition of the need for a comprehensive curriculum or regional training program was identified by organizations working on human trafficking. This included government agencies as well as NGOs who faced various challenges in being tasked with the responsibilities to address trafficking while often having insufficient exposure to the issue. Some of the identified needs included:

- the need to have a training program which led onto establishing mutual understanding of the issue of trafficking across all sectors and across all countries in the GMS;
- the need to have some form of standardized in–house training programs on trafficking; and
- the need to have a training program which not only informed participants' knowledge about trafficking but also endowed in them analytical skills that enables them to critically reflect existing initiatives as well as assumptions underlying these initiatives.

### The Process:

Throughout 2004, a group of interested practitioners met regularly outside working hours to brainstorm and discuss the development of what was, in those days, referred to as the 'Trafficking 101' course. It was from these meetings that a draft curriculum framework was developed. The draft framework was circulated among member agencies of this working group for comments and suggestions. Taking all feedback into consideration, the team of practitioners continued to refine the framework. With financial support from ADB, a curriculum expert was hired to translate these technical inputs into learning modules. A curriculum retreat was organized in early June 2005 at the Mekong Institute, which was identified as the best regional institute to host the regional training.

The pilot training program was the result of an intensive consultative process and in many ways, this training curriculum embodies the tangible outcome of successful inter–agency collaborative efforts. Member agencies and individuals went beyond mere duty and responsibility to provide inputs to this intensively time–consuming exercise.

### The Program:

The training program, first and foremost, targets mid–level government officials, who have primary responsibility in combating trafficking. One important criterion for selection was that participants are currently responsible for and or will be responsible in dealing with the issue upon their return from the training. Since the training is delivered in English, participants also must have some knowledge in English language skills. Opportunities for training in national languages are now being considered, as those with responsibility to deal with trafficking may not also have English language skills.

The training was initially targeted for ten days, and included 4–5 participants from key sectors in each GMS country. At the pilot training, there were officials from Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Immigration, Police, Social Welfare,



### Structure and Content:

The curriculum comprises six modules which build on each other but may also with minor adaptation, be taken out and run independently. The various modules are:

1. An Introduction to Trafficking
2. Responses to Trafficking
3. Prevention
4. Prosecution/ Criminal Justice Responses (CJR)
5. Protection
6. Policy and Cooperation

The first two modules establish the context, and Module 2 in particular begins to analytically and constructively look at existing interventions and the assumptions behind these interventions. Modules 3–6 examine the concepts behind and the significance of various stages in the trafficking intervention beginning with Prevention, to the CJRs to Protection to Policy and Cooperation. Exercises range from lectures and presentations, video presentations to small group discussions both within country groups and mixed country groups, to role plays. A variety of learning techniques are used to maximize the participants learning exposure.

### Feedback and Revisions:

Participants are asked each day to provide their feedback on each of the Modules, on the content, the mode of delivery and on the facilitators themselves. The Mekong Institute facilities provide them with the opportunity to do that in the privacy of their



**Research News****Formation of MIRAC gets underway**

The Mekong Institute (MI) has established a Mekong Institute Research Advisory Committee (MIRAC) to initiate research activities in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and with capacity building of the MI in making its learning programs effective and justifiable. MIRAC consists of a total of 11 members and representatives: 6 GMS country representatives, 3 international advisors, the Academic Director of the MI and a Research Manager of the MI.

The initial role of the MIRAC is networking, as well as identifying and highlighting valuable GMS-related research. The long-term intention is to expand and deepen involvement in research activities in order to strengthen the MI's capability to contribute to the development of GMS cooperation and integrated initiatives. The MIRAC will facilitate proposal writing, execute research activities, assure consistency with GMS priorities for research, and assist in the publication and presentation of research results through the Review of Development and Cooperation (RDC) journal, as well as other publications and forums.

The first meeting of the MIRAC is scheduled for April 6-8, 2006 at the MI, Khon Kaen, Thailand. In the meeting country representative members and international advisors will be introduced. The roles, responsibilities, functions, and procedures of MIRAC will be defined. A preliminary research agenda and a plan for obtaining proposals for collaborative research on regional topics will be designed. Also, a plan to effectively deliver the results of the GMS research, which will relate to regional development and cooperation, to GMS leaders, policy and decision makers, as well as the private sector will be devised.

Basically, the MIRAC will be playing the role of coordinator and facilitator for policy research programs in the GMS. The MIRAC will also provide guidelines and suggestions for the research activities to be done by the MI; provide an indicative research agenda, which will develop and extend over time; and make final decisions for selecting research proposals for submission for funding. The MIRAC will select and prioritize the proposals, based on relevancy and a GMS-focus, and will publish and use such research as a reference for GMS policy makers. Research may potentially lead to another level with another partner and new potentials for future funding. Research should fit the overall research agenda set by MIRAC.

The research department of the MI will be responsible for disseminating information; calling for proposals; collecting feedback from peer group reviewers; submitting short-listed proposals to the MIRAC for a final decision; organizing MIRAC meetings and other research forums; following up on research progress and conceptual notes; and taking the lead in writing proposals for potential donors, in coordination with country representatives.

**Review of Development and Cooperation (RDC)**

The Review of Development and Cooperation (RDC) is a journal published once a year by the MI and independently supported by an international editorial board. RDC has published papers in the field of growth and development initiated by the development assistance and cooperation of academics, policy makers, planners and researchers. Although the focus is on the GMS, contributions from similar groupings that seek to promote closer economic ties and development (with transborder implications), along with subregional economic cooperation in facilitating sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty are also welcomed. Contributions will cover the range of applied empirical research methods, utilize primary and/or secondary data, and analyze policy with a critical view towards development issues. Topics may include agriculture and development, the environment and development, cross-border health issues (including HIV/AIDS), labor management (at the regional level), public sector and policy reform, millennium development goals, poverty

reduction, private sector development, social reform, regional infrastructure/economic development (including SMEs) and managing donor assistance for sustainability.

The principal criteria for publication are originality, rigor, relevance and quality. Book reviews will be published occasionally. All submissions are subject to a peer review process by at least two people. The editors are Christopher Gan of Lincoln University, New Zealand, and Minsoo Lee of American University of Sharjah, UAE. The associate editors are Ramon C. Sevilla of MI, Thailand and Michael McAleer of University of Western Australia.

**For the brochure of the Journal, refer to the following link:**

<http://www.mekonginstitute.org/html/images/pdf/RDC/rdc2.pdf>

**For the Call for Papers, refer to the following link:**

<http://www.mekonginstitute.org/html/images/pdf/RDC/rdc.pdf>

**List of MIRAC Members****A. Country Representatives**

1. Prof. Zhu Zhenming, Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences, Yunnan Province, China
2. Dr. Yaowalak Apichatvullop, Khon Kaen University, Thailand
3. Mr. Samnang Chea, Economic Researcher, Economic Institute of Cambodia
4. Dr. Bounpong Keorodom, National University of Laos, Lao PDR
5. Dr. Bui Quang Tuan, Institute of World Economics and Politics, Vietnam
6. Prof. U Myat Thein, Yangon, Myanmar

**B. International Advisors**

1. Dr. Masaya Shiraishi, Waseda University, Japan
2. Dr. Christopher Gan, Lincoln University, New Zealand
3. Dr. Guy Faure, Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asia (IRASEC), Bangkok

**C. Mekong Institute Staff**

1. Dr. Ramon C. Sevilla, Academic Director
2. Mr. Bhoj Raj Khanal, Research Manager

## NEWS PHOTOS

## MIF Committee Meeting



H.E. Mr Tej Bunnag, seated fourth from left, Advisor to the Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary and as the Mekong Institute Foundation (MIF) Committee Chairman presided over the opening ceremony of MIF Committee Meeting, which took place at the institute's conference room on December 23, 2005.

## Signing Ceremony



Mekong Institute Foundation (MIF) Committee Chairman H. E. Mr Tej Bunnag, standing third from left, is seen shaking hands with Khon Kaen University (KKU) president Assoc Prof Sumon Sakolchai, after jointly signing an academic agreement and cooperation form at a ceremony held recently at the MIF Committee Meeting.

## Graduation Ceremony



Dr Ramon Sevilla, seated third from right, MI Academic Director, presided over the Graduation Ceremony of the learning course "Project Management for Poverty Interventions," which was organized by the Mekong Institute from January 9 – February 3, 2006.

## Opening Ceremony



Some of the 22 participants from 14 countries worldwide are seen attending the opening day of the learning course on "Project Evaluation," which was jointly organized by Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) and Mekong Institute (MI) from January 16 – 27, 2006.

## Opening Ceremony



Mr Aphai Prakobphol, standing in front, Acting Director of Mekong Institute (MI), is seen delivering his opening address on opening day of the learning course "Project Management for Poverty Interventions". The official opening ceremony for the course – presided over by Acting Director Aphai on January 10, 2006 at MI – was attended by 11 representatives from GMS countries.

## Closing Ceremony



H.E. Mr Tej Bunnag, seated center, Advisor to the Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary, MI Council Chairman and as the Mekong Institute Foundation (MIF) Committee Chairman, presided over the Graduation Ceremony of the learning course "Leadership for Competitive Enterprises" on December 23, 2005.

## GMS news

### Thailand and GMS neighbours agree to team up on regional tourism promotion

**BANGKOK, Jan 6 (TNA)** – Thailand and other five member countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) have agreed to jointly boost regional tourism.

The GMS members, including Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, southern China and Thailand, have agreed to join forces with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to work out a strategy on sustainable development of tourism for the 2006–2015 period, according to a news report of Vietnam News Agency (VNA) disseminated to TNA recently.

The strategy includes 29 projects focusing on poverty reduction and sustainable environmental development to help the region's culture, environment, and tourism industry flourish.

The projects also involve investment in regional transport links, namely the East–West Economic Corridor (EWEC), a bus route along the EWEC and a road through many sites of scenic interest in Hanoi, Vinh, Cau Treo of Vietnam, as well as Pakse and Vientiane of Laos.

A Japanese-built bridge linking Champassak in Laos with the northeastern Mukdahan Province in Thailand, scheduled to be completed by the end of this year, is also included.

The bridge will help tourists shorten their travel time from Champassak to Siem Reap in Cambodia and Ho Chi Minh City in southern Vietnam.

Many tourist firms in the region have begun to plan a potentially popular three-nation tour, in which tourists will have breakfast in Thailand, lunch in Laos, and dinner and bathing at dusk on Da Nang Beach in Viet Nam.

It is projected that the GMS region will attract 52 million tourists by 2015, bringing in a total of US\$52 billion in tourism-related revenue.

### "Transborder Migration in the GMS" meeting held at MI

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Closing ceremony for meeting on 'Transborder Migration in the GMS' held on February 8 at Mekong Institute

channels to migrant workers; and the issue of migration and development, including how to achieve economic and human development so that illegal migration flows are reduced.

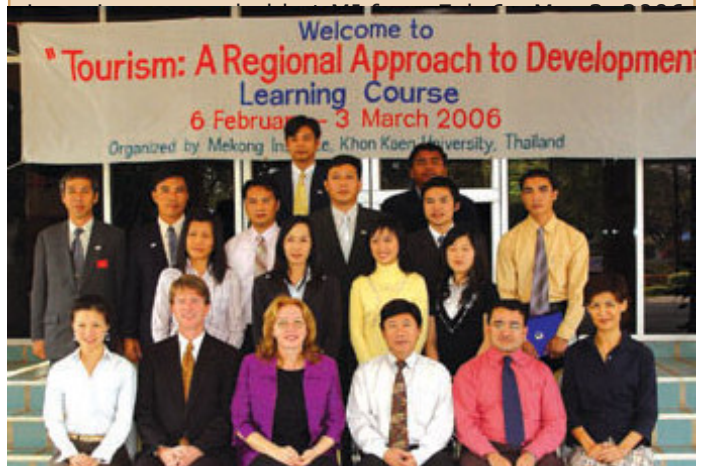
This meeting was successfully concluded on February 8th 2006. On the last day, the three senior policy executives from the six GMS

countries, acting as representatives from the three working groups, presented suggested actions to the problems, which their groups had previously discussed and agreed upon.

The groups unanimously agreed that the region should formulate coordinated regional and bilateral policies on the respective migration issues, and effectively communicate such policies, so that, ultimately, problems are addressed. Subsequently, those present took part in discussions. Then, Dr. Ramon C. Sevilla, the Acting Director and Academic Director of the MI, delivered a closing speech, and the meeting came to a close.

Though the meeting was successful in opening up discussion about an important issue, it has yet to be seen whether the meeting will translate into concrete, tangible outcomes. MI's Project Team is currently assessing the impact of the meeting with participants from GMS countries regarding regional policy formulation. The second meeting, which will employ the same objective, will be held in mid-July 2006. It will deal specifically with the social impact of GMS economic corridors.

### 'Tourism: A Regional Approach to Development'



Closing ceremony of 'Tourism' course held on March 3 at Mekong Institute

Twelve senior, middle and/or manager level participants from the public and private sector within the six GMS countries (Cambodia, China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam) recently attended the learning course entitled 'Tourism: A Regional Approach to Development'. Due to the diversity, richness, and multitude of tourist attractions within the GMS, the Mekong Institute regarded this as an essential course.

Top tourist destinations have contributed to the growth of the subregion's tourist industry. However, this rapid growth is not sustainable given the effects such growth has posed on overburdened host communities, infrastructures, and the environment.

Such issues demand foreign exchange. Moreover, regional and global crises have dramatically affected tourist markets. SARs, bird flu, terrorism, and natural disasters have created serious threats to the industry.

Fortunately, regional economic cooperation and sectoral development strategies present opportunities. Such dynamics have created a dire need for personnel within the private and public sector with the skills to ensure sustainable and equitable development. Hence, this course targeted senior to middle level officials or managers in national tourism offices, related ministries, and the public/private tourist organisations.

The course aimed to promote the exchange of knowledge and necessary skills to enhance local communities and environments, while promoting regional growth.

The program explored core concepts in sustainable tourism, the community tourist industry, people-centered development, planning, and marketing.

Covered were four major topics: Sustainable tourism and Pro-Poor Development, Community Based Tourism, Regional Tourism Marketing and Promotion, and Regional Tourism Planning and Management.

The course provided a professional learning environment regarding the development of regional tourism. Major tourism issues and challenges of the GMS countries were addressed in order to promote effective cooperation and an efficient tourism partnership framework.

Ultimately, the course aimed to develop the capacity of the GMS public, private and civil society sector officials to ensure sustainable, regional tourism industry.



## MI activities in pictures



MI Acting Director Aphai Prakobpol, seated second from right, is seen introducing and briefing MI background and activities to a visiting group of officials from the Department of Skill Development on January 11, 2006 at the MI's conference room.



A welcome party was organised by Mekong Institute (MI) for the two groups of participants from the six GMS countries and worldwide, attending the learning courses on "Project Management for Poverty Interventions" and "Project Evaluation" at MI on January 17, 2006.



November 7: Dr Richard Skinner, far left, President and Vice-Chancellor of Royal Roads University, Canada, was accompanied by H.E. Denis Comeau, 2nd from left, the Canadian Ambassador to Thailand, Mr Robert Skene, far right, Chancellor of Royal Roads University and their delegation called in on the MI in Khon Kaen.



On December 8, a group of Lao delegates from the Science, Technology and Environment Agency (STEA) visited the Mekong Institute (MI) in Khon Kaen. The group was led by Mr. Sakhone Chaleunevong, Vice President of STEA, far left.



At Wat Phrathart Kham Kaen, one of the most respected temples in Khon Kaen province, is the visiting group of ten participants from the six GMS countries recently taking part in the learning course "Leadership for Competitive Enterprises," organised by the Mekong Institute.



A farewell party was organised on March 24, 2006 by MI staff for Program Manager Mr Graham Harper, and Program Administrator Miss Thanaporn Chairsiha, who left MI to take more challenging positions. When MI staff leave the institute, such a farewell party is a must.

## Regional Training Program on Human Trafficking piloted at the Mekong Institute

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own rooms online on the intranet. The results were then compiled and shared among all, prior to the start of the next Module. Taking their feedback as well as through reviewing all of the learning units in each of the module, revisions were made to the curriculum.

### Here are a few quotes from participants to give you a sense of how the pilot training went:

One participant noted that she had been to so many conferences, workshops and training and that she herself have been involved as a trainer but after this course, she felt that her whole understanding and her assumptions had been challenged and that she now needs to rethink her own understanding and the strategies of her organization. To use her own words, "I feel that I am now standing on my head and not on my feet"

**Another commented:** *"I have been to no fewer than 10 trainings on trafficking of which 4 were at the regional level...I normally have to find excuses to go out because I was bored... Here, I haven't even needed to have a cigarette...it has been so interesting."*

### Way forward:

Following the success of the pilot training, the training was held from December 11-19, 2005. This time the training was shortened to eight days, and the feedback was equally as positive.

UNIAP are already receiving a lot of inquiries especially from NGOs but also from their UN partners for participation to the training. They are also receiving various requests and suggestions to replicate the training program at the country level and also to perhaps adjust the length of the program to cater to some senior level personnel. UNIAP are giving all these suggestions good consideration.



There are now four training programs to be run next year at the Mekong Institute. The CIDA-supported SEARCH Project, who made the time to observe the pilot training has pledged to fund all the four training sessions for 2006. In addition to this generous support, SEARCH is also providing UNIAP with further technical input especially in terms of child-friendly approaches when dealing with child victims of trafficking.

Great appreciation must be expressed to the following people for their assistance to the training program: To Lance Bonneau from IOM for his input to Module 5 on Protection and for delivering the training; to Anne Gallagher and Willem Pretorius for their input to Module 4 and their delivery of the trainings; to Matt Friedman and Phil Robertson on their input to Module 3, and to Phil Marshall to delivering it; to Phil Marshall for his input to Module 6 and for its delivery; and to Susu Thatun who provided input to Module 1 and 2 and delivered it at the trainings.

Other people whose contribution to this important exercise needs to be acknowledged are Elaine Pearson, ILO/IPEC Consultant; Oren Ginzburg, UNIAP Special Projects Coordinator; Melissa Stewart, UNIAP Regional Info & Communications Officer; Kieran Best, UNIAP China Information Assistant; Melissa Petros, UNIAP consultant, Noel Matthews, the Curriculum Development consultant, and Graham Harper from the Mekong Institute.

## GMS NEWS in BRIEF

### Asian Development Bank gives Mekong protection grant

**Manila (dpa)** – The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$25.57-million grant for the protection of the environment in the Mekong subregion, one of the fastest growth areas in Asia, a bank statement said recently.

The Manila-based ADB said the grant would support a program that will assess the environmental impacts of development and investment in the subregion, including hydropower, roads and tourism projects.

The bank said the Mekong subregion, which includes Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand and Vietnam, is facing increasing environmental management challenges "as a direct result of development that could undermine the functioning of its ecosystems".

"We are seeing a trend where the demands for products – whether forestry, fisheries, agriculture, industrialization, energy or nature-based tourism – is increasing, yet the natural resources to meet these demands are depleting," said Javed Hussain Mir, ADB natural resources specialist.

"Current responses, such as the establishment of protected areas, on their own cannot stem ecosystem decline as these areas tend to be small and fragmented," he added.

The ADB said the grant would also help establish at least five biodiversity corridors at pilot sites, as well as prepare a development and investment plan for 2009-2015.