

The 150th International Senior Seminar
**“Trafficking in Persons – Prevention, Prosecution, Victim Protection and Promotion
of International Cooperation”**

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1. Introduction

UNAFEI held the 150th International Senior Seminar on the topic “Trafficking in Persons – Prevention, Prosecution, Victim Protection and Promotion of International Cooperation” from 12 January to 9 February 2012, with seven participants from Japan and 14 participants from seven other countries (Bangladesh, El Salvador, Honduras, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, and Thailand). The Japanese and overseas participants come from various professional criminal justice backgrounds: police officers, public prosecutors, judges, legislators, and other professionals.

In this paper, I would like to describe the outline of the training course from the viewpoint of the Programming Officer.

2. Main Theme and the Objective of the Seminar

The purpose of trafficking in persons is exploitation. The type of exploitation varies: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, begging, criminal activity, removal of organs, etc. Traffickers employ heinous means to exploit their victims: restriction of movement, direct physical violence, and verbal and psychological abuse.

Many victims are exposed to multiple and chronic traumatizing events like these, sustaining injuries to their physical and mental health that are difficult to recover from.

The growing recognition that trafficking in persons is a global problem resulted in the adoption of the “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children,” supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Protocol entered into force on 25 December 2003, and its purposes are: (a) to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, paying particular attention to women and children; (b) to protect and assist the victims of such trafficking, with full respect for their human rights; and (c) to promote cooperation among States Parties in order to meet those objectives.

The objective of this Seminar was to offer participants an opportunity to share experiences, gain knowledge, and examine measures to prevent trafficking in persons, prosecute criminals, protect victims, and promote international cooperation. To achieve this purpose, the Seminar programme provided an opportunity to examine the current situations and problems existing in the respective countries. At the same time, it provided an opportunity to create a global network among criminal justice practitioners.

3. Summary and result of the Seminar

After individual presentations by all participants, three visiting experts from overseas, specialists in countermeasures against trafficking in persons and investigation of trafficking cases, and ad-hoc lecturers from Japan, offered us their knowledge and information on various advanced approaches in different countries, and the United Nations' activities aiming to implement the Protocol. The visiting experts and ad-hoc lecturers were:

- Mr. Wanchai Roujanavong
Director General
International Affairs Department, Office of the Attorney General of Thailand
- Mr. Martin Fowke
Officer-in-Charge
Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Unit, Division for Treaty Affairs
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- Ms. Karima Maloney
Deputy Chief
Criminal Section, Civil Rights Division, United States Department of Justice
- Mr. William Barriga
Chief of Mission
Special Liaison Mission in Tokyo
International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Then, participants had a series of group discussions based on the lectures and other new information learned, as well as their own knowledge and experience. They drafted group reports, and had a plenary session in which they discussed their reports with each other.

As a practitioner in Japan, I understood that trafficking in persons is a heinous crime. I had also read and learned about the situation of trafficking from my own studies.

However, during the seminar, several tragic cases were addressed by participants' and experts' presentations, and I realized that my understanding of the subject was superficial. I heard of cases where a dozen victims were found in a tiny hut; where victims were raped by traffickers; where an injured victim was denied medical treatment and left in agonizing pain for several days so that the case would not be noticed by authorities; and cases where dozens of victims were murdered because they refused to obey the orders of their traffickers. I realized the true impact of this dreadful crime on its innocent victims, who are forced to leave their homes, work at unfamiliar places without any help, and suffer unreasonable violence. I also recognized the necessity of considering and implementing measures against trafficking in persons.

In fact, most countries are considered to be origin countries, destination countries, transit countries, or all of the above. In this respect, trafficking in persons really is a global challenge.

The participants held serious, active discussions and produced final reports demonstrating their understanding of the gravity of trafficking and the importance of examining countermeasures thereto. I sincerely admired their efforts and was glad to learn that officers and legal practitioners across the world are doing their utmost to eradicate trafficking.

Due to limited space, I cannot give all the details of the reports here. I will summarize that the participants pointed out the necessities of concrete protective measures for victims, cooperation among domestic agencies, and international cooperation. Because it is important to gain victims' testimony to prosecute trafficking cases, assistance for witnesses is crucial. To provide assistance which victims really need, cooperation is needed not only among criminal justice agencies, but also between criminal justice agencies and welfare, health and education agencies. Also, states fighting against international crime have to seek international cooperation. The seminar allowed the participants to discuss and share these ideas.

4. Conclusion

Some of participants' countries are at an early legislative stage in fighting trafficking in persons. But one participant said the seminar deepened his knowledge of trafficking and the problems associated with this crime. He said that new legislation was under consideration in his country and that he would like to report what he learned from the seminar to his boss. Another participant reported to us after her return home that she has

held several events to disseminate the knowledge gained at UNAFEI and her own experience to domestic agencies. I will be delighted if the seminar proves useful and helpful in improving the criminal justice systems in their respective countries.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the related organizations and individuals that have assisted us in organizing this seminar's programme.

For your information, the lectures made by the visiting experts, results of the group discussions, and individual presentations made by some participants, all mentioned in this note, will be included in our Resource Material Series, to be published by UNAFEI in due course. This publication will also be uploaded onto UNAFEI's website. If you are interested in any of the above, please refer to the publication or the website.