



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

POST-REGM REPORT

REGIONAL EXPERT GROUP MEETING (REGM)

FOSTERING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
SECTOR TO COUNTER TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN ASIA-PACIFIC

24–25 march 2021 | online



With the support of:



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BACKGROUND

On 24–25 March 2021, the UNODC Civil Society Unit (CSU) and the Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section (HTMSS) with support from the Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (ROSEAP) in Bangkok and the Regional office for South Asia in New Dehli held an online Regional Expert Group Meeting (REGM) on “Fostering Cooperation between the Public and Private Sector to Counter Trafficking in Persons in Asia-Pacific”. The REGM involved over 60 participating experts from the Asia-Pacific region. Participants came from a range of organisations, which included governments, private sector companies, non-governmental organisations, and academic institutions, all with a vested interest in addressing human trafficking through stronger partnerships.

The purpose of the REGM was to facilitate focused, constructive, solution-oriented and critical discussions related to preventing and combating trafficking in persons through public-private partnerships (PPPs). Participants analysed the current challenges posed by trafficking to the private sector; exchanged good practices on how to better engage on human trafficking prevention and shared experiences on innovative approaches to addressing human trafficking at the country and/or regional level. This allowed for an opportunity to exchange on how to strengthen the engagement of the private sector in order to effectively support Member States’ implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC).

This REGM was part of a series of regional consultations forming part of the broader UNODC project “**Public-Private Partnerships: Fostering Engagement with the Private Sector on the Implementation of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its Trafficking in Persons Protocol**” (“PPP Project”). Insights and recommendations will inform UNODC’s Compendium of best practices on successful PPPs, which is currently under development and will be launched in late 2021.





REGM CONCLUSIONS

- * Multi-stakeholder collaboration is crucial to improving stakeholders' capacity to effectively prevent and counter trafficking in persons.
- * The REGM has allowed experts from a whole host of backgrounds and areas of expertise within Asia-Pacific to come together with the underlying passion for and goal to try to effectively address human trafficking. This was reflected in both the plenary sessions and in the breakout group sessions.
- * Many promising experiences and lessons learned have been shared. Everyone's knowledge base around what works and what doesn't in PPPs to address human trafficking has also been enhanced as a result of the REGM.
- * Two key points that came from the REGM include the instrumental role of technology in addressing human trafficking, as well as the fact that private companies and governments need to enhance collaboration with civil society.
- * It was clear that harnessing the potential of technology, financial intelligence and coordination within the supply chain was needed as part of an effective anti-trafficking strategy and to form part of PPPs.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UNODC

- * Facilitate a coordinated approach to PPP in the region to ensure that existing efforts in there are more effective and impactful.
- * Facilitate enhanced cooperation and trust-building between the private sector, NGO communities and governments and convene dialogues between multi-stakeholder groups.
- * Establish a clear share-point between governmental, private sector and civil society actors to improve information exchange and to assist in the prevention and countering of trafficking in persons.
- * Find solutions that addresses private sector data privacy concerns when balancing between protecting victims of trafficking on the one hand and consumer privacy on the other.



A FEW KEY MESSAGES



Sabine BAUN
Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

“PPPs are very important to increase international and intersectional collaboration with regard to human trafficking.”



Rebecca MILLER
UNODC

“Enabling the conditions for the fair and ethical recruitment of migrants can help to ensure that their rights are safeguarded. A comprehensive and collective effort including governments, business leaders and civil society organisations is required in tackling trafficking in persons.”



Serena GRANT
Walk Free

“Neither business nor government alone can fight human trafficking.”



Chevaan DANIEL
Capital Maharaja Group

“The Regional Expert Group meeting was a great opportunity to share a reality of human trafficking that can raise its ugly head in ways we haven’t experienced before, as a result of the pandemic, in developing nations like Sri Lanka. Talking about this challenge with experts from around the world is a vital step towards supporting the communities impacted.”



Roy SOEMIRAT
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Indonesia

“Multistakeholder collaboration is vital to combat human trafficking and it is time for businesses to push beyond CSR and towards a more meaningful contribution.”

THE REGM PROCEEDINGS



DAY ONE

The day started with some esteemed speakers providing opening remarks to commence the REGM.

Billy Batware of the Civil Society Unit at UNODC began by thanking the Government of Germany for its support for the PPP Project.

Sabine Baun, the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, emphasised the current economic and social crisis influence the increase in human trafficking and labour exploitation and the urgent need to work together. She also discussed Germany's strong legal framework, including its new and ground-breaking Supply Chain Act, which will be adopted later in the year.

Rebecca Miller, UNODC ROSEAP, moderated the discussion with Day One's key speakers and highlighted the *Bali Process Government and Business Forum* as an excellent example of a PPP.

Celia Hevesi, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Government, reiterated the significance of the *Bali Process* and advanced the three pillars framework: *Acknowledge, Act, Advance*.

Roy Soemirat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, highlighted that migrants were more at risk for human trafficking, especially women and girl, which is a crucial issue to address in Indonesia at the moment. He discussed the PPPs that his Ministry are currently involved in, including with the Grab Company and collaborations with large telecommunication companies.

Serena Grant emphasised the need to make sure the right people are at the table in order to discuss human trafficking issues. There were also challenges relating to creating PPPs in the context of Covid-19.

Finally, **Chevaan Daniel** provided insight into the Sri Lankan context and how PPPs need to focus on reintegration of victims and providing long term employment opportunities.

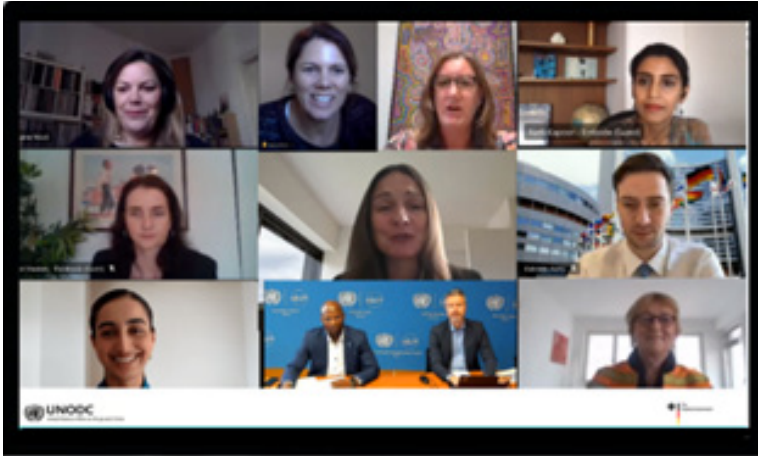
Following the first panel session, **Billy Batware**, UNODC then presented the concept and methodology of the REGM, as well as the broader PPP Project, which would focus on PPPs as they relate to countering trafficking from within three areas: the supply chain, financial and technology sectors. He informed participants of what they should expect during the forthcoming breakout sessions, including their own contributions to the following key questions:

- i. What are the main challenges in creating PPPs to address trafficking in persons in the supply chain, financial institutions and the technology sector?
- ii. What do you believe are current best practices around PPPs to prevent and counter trafficking in persons? If you are able to, please try to draw on concrete and real-life examples of such PPPs from within your own area of work.
- iii. Based on the challenges and best practices, what lessons and recommendations are you able to make to ensure effective PPPs to prevent and counter trafficking in persons?
- iv. What role do you believe international organizations (such as UNODC) and civil society should have as far as PPPs to prevent and counter trafficking in persons are concerned?

Participants were allocated to one of three breakout groups, each focusing on either the supply chain, the technology sector or financial institutions. The aim of the breakout sessions was to allow participants to dig deeper into how we implement PPPs to address human trafficking in a coordinated, sustainable and innovative manner. The sessions provided each participant an opportunity to discuss their own experience of PPPs, including on lessons learnt.



BREAKOUT GROUP 1 — SUPPLY CHAIN



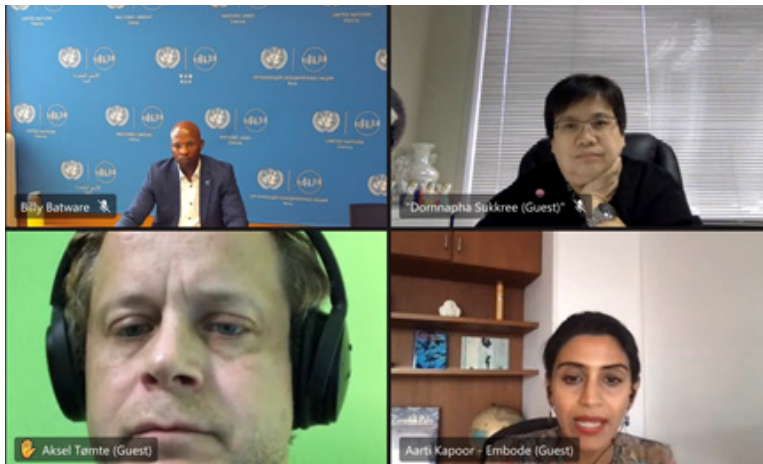
KEY POINTS:

There were two breakout groups focused on how PPPs could help to prevent and counter trafficking from within the supply chain. One of the group sessions began with a short presentation from **Dornnapha Sukkree** from MAST Human and her organisation's experiences of PPPs on this topic. Other participants responded and contributed to the discussion. Overall, the key points from both groups included:

- * The role of the media is important in raising awareness, as the case with reporting on the fishing sector in Thailand
- * Creating trust between different actors is difficult, but there is a need to find common ground in order to create effective PPPs.
- * One best practice case from Thailand showed that raising awareness of worker rights was crucial in tackling human trafficking and can be done collaboratively by the media, government and CSOs.
- * Private sector engagement needs to be included in the legislative development process. Collaborations between different governments has also found to be useful.
- * The consultative mechanism during the drafting of *Australia's Modern Slavery Act* was very helpful to the outcome.
- * Moving forward, the voices of migrant workers will be important to integrate into PPPs.
- * PPPs need to focus on the survivors of trafficking as well including private sector employment.

- * The role of UNODC was seen to be important where UNODC has the power to convene specific sectors and countries on specific issues and bring different stakeholders together. UNODC could also provide some centralized guidance.

BREAKOUT GROUP 2 — TECHNOLOGY



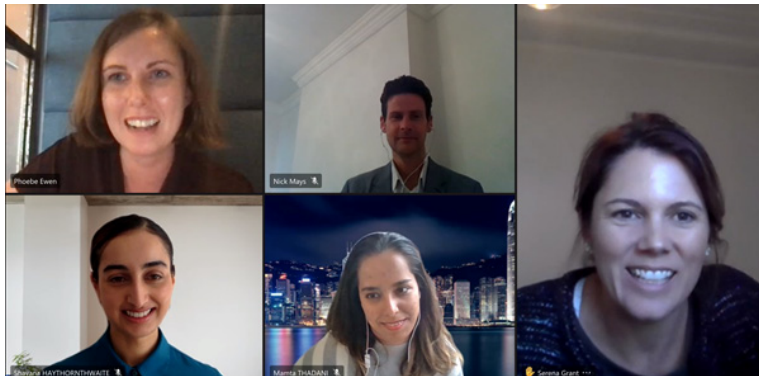
KEY POINTS:

This session brought together participants from the technology sector to discuss how technology-based PPPs could help to prevent and counter TIP and what the challenges were in doing so. **Nichole Maassen** from Microsoft and **Mi Yung Park** from A21 presented their PPP work. Other key issues from the session included:

- * Collaboration for all stakeholders is essential in successfully combatting trafficking in persons
- * PPPs involving public awareness campaigns can help to educate the general public
- * Interventions should include victim identification and protection.
- * Technology can be part of the problem as well as the solution. On the latter, there are a number of effective technological PPP-based solutions, including Microsoft's automated due diligence platform providing a risk-based analysis of active partners and suppliers (indicating corruption, HR, HR violations).
- * Other tech initiatives include PhotoDNA, which identifies and removes child abuse material using biometrics and the use of computer and technology analytics on trafficking in person patterns.

- * There needs to be more survivor empowerment efforts.
- * There are funding challenges for NPOs.
- * Due to the constantly evolving nature of human trafficking, policymakers need to collaborate with technology experts as they sometimes miss this technical expertise and can therefore lead to bad policy.
- * There is a need for governments to access comprehensive, disaggregated data to better inform policy.
- * There is a need for governments to work collectively and openness to collaborate with CSOs.
- * Further encouragement of governments to work with businesses in the technology sector is needed.
- * UNODC can play a facilitating role between governments and businesses.
- * Bridging trust and fostering PPP is very much needed.

BREAKOUT GROUP 3 — FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS



KEY POINTS:

This session focused on PPP best practice and lessons learnt from within the financial sector. **Nick Mays** of Western Union, as well as **Mamta Thadani** and **Sarah Boyton** of HSBC, spoke about PPPs in the context of their financial institutions.

Other key points included:

- * Asia-Pacific is unique and therefore PPP initiatives that might work in Australia or UK may face different challenges if you apply them in Hong Kong or India.
- * Law enforcement agencies can be very insular and there are problems of data sharing across borders and more specifically across Asia (such as legal limitations or general anxieties around openly sharing data within the region).
- * There is some fear by banks in opening their doors to NGOs. There is therefore a need for good education on what NGOs do and can do.
- * There are challenges in the creation of different typologies and red flags related to human trafficking and modern slavery within finance. For example, there is no golden bullet red flag. Human trafficking comes with a complex series of transactions and issues – funds are comingled into different crime types and therefore difficult to identify and engage these typologies. They often evolve depending on source country, transit country, destination countries.
- * There are challenges of engaging with law enforcement. It is important to have representation of law enforcement within financial PPPs.
- * There are challenges when it comes to defining human trafficking, modern slavery and defining the relationship that banks have with this crime. For example, it can be a very broad topic and full of jargon.
- * The UK's Joint Money Laundering Intelligence Taskforce (JMLIT) seen to be best practice.
- * Other best practice includes IBM's trafficking analysis hub.
- * The Bangladesh Expatriate Bank provides loans to migrant workers, overseen by UN providing entrepreneurs training, ensuring that migrant workers are supported in regard to finance
- * Getting the right people to the table is absolutely crucial.
- * The group also discussed the fact that as a collective we need to make sure to focus on the big emerging issues such as migrant workers becoming more vulnerable during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.
- * Culturally sensitive approaches are needed towards understanding around data sharing and specificities with regard to collaboration.
- * UNODC is crucial to the success of PPPs and bring stakeholders together with crucial data that can be fed into banks.

DAY TWO



Anders Frantzen, UNODC and **Shavana Haythornthwaite**, UNODC opened the second day of the REGM. They provided a recap of Day One and handed over to **Billy Batware** and **Gabriele Aiello** to moderate the presentation of breakout group discussions from Day One.

Following the presentations from rapporteurs, a panel of business and government speakers concluded the REGM. The panel was moderated by **Morgane Nicot**, Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section, UNODC. **Shri Muniraju**, Niti Aayog, Government of India, **Amber Hawkes**, Facebook and **Sergey Kapinos** from the UNODC Regional Office for South Asia provided the final remarks.

All in all, the REGM was an enormous success and participants expressed their desire to continue working with UNODC to sustain the fight against TIP and collaborate with each other further.





NEXT STEPS

- * The next REGM to foster cooperation between the public and private sector in Africa will be held in June 2021.
- * A Compendium of Promising Practices on PPPs to counter and prevent TIP is currently being compiled for launch and publication in late 2021.
- * Phase II of the new knowledge hub, named “WhatsOn”, will be developed in the coming months to enhance networking, coalition-building and to facilitate PPPs to address TIP. The *WhatsOn* platform serves as a knowledge hub for all relevant civil society, private sector and academic stakeholders working on issues related to countering transnational organised crime and corruption.

Phase I of the knowledge hub which is already in operation and can be accessed here will be launched during the 30th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in mid-2021. Phase I provides an easy-accessible overview of non-governmental stakeholders around the world as well as a repository of useful resources, facilitating regional and/or thematic networks as well as knowledge on organized crime.

Phase II of *WhatsOn*, which will be more interactive, and will facilitate further ways for NGOs, academia and private sector to network and learn from each other on all areas related to UNTOC and UNCAC.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the WhatsOn platform. At the top, it features the United Nations logo and the text 'United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime' on the left, and the UNODC logo and 'WhatsOn Fostering partnership against organized crime' on the right. Below this is a dark navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'About us', 'Contact us', and 'Tools and Guides'. The main content area includes a 'WhatsOn' logo and a brief description: 'WhatsOn is an online platform designed to bring together relevant stakeholders in the fight against transnational organised crime, including non-governmental organisations, academia and the private sector.' Below this is a 'Featured Human Story' section with a person icon and text: 'Because the human dimension of the fight against organised crime must be put in spotlight, you can find here a featured Human Story on the impact of the work of members of the WhatsOn.' The 'DATABASES' section is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'Multistakeholder Database' and describes a database of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics, and private sector entities, along with COP UNTOC Resolution 9/1. The right column is titled 'Knowledge Resource Database' and describes a database of relevant resources for stakeholders working against organized crime, including UNTOC, corruption, and cross-cutting issues.



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