

Report from the First CPP Thailand Consultation on the Strengthening of Law Enforcement and Protective Mechanisms Supporting Child Sexual Exploitation

October 16, 2009

Purpose of Consultation

“The purpose of our meeting today is to explore how CPP can support ongoing Thai law enforcement and child protection initiatives and explore the role of technology – both negatively and positively – in child protection and sexual exploitation... We want to learn from you to become better educated about what is happening in Thailand to see how CPP can play a role in Thailand.”

Dr. Philip Cook, Executive Director – IICRD

This preliminary planning event held in the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) was the first of a series of meetings planned for the purpose of bringing key actors and decision and policy makers together to strategize on ways that CPP can support broader initiatives aimed at combating the sexual exploitation of children in the context of Thai child protection legal reform, policy-making and program development. The central focus was on the issue of ICT enabled child sexual exploitation and the roles, both positive and negative, that technology can have in the protection of children.

CPP Objectives

- Law enforcement, governments and supporting public bodies are better able to address ICT enabled child sexual exploitation
- Female and male children and their communities have access to responsive legal and other protections that prevent and address ICT enabled child sexual exploitation
- A coordinated systems approach is used by multiple sector partners to prevent and address ICT enabled child sexual exploitation from a child rights perspective

Summary of key points

A focus on child abuse and pedophilia rather than trafficking is necessary for CPP

- Trafficking has recently become a central focus for donors and agencies and currently several hundred organizations are working on the issue of trafficking. Thailand has been working on the issues of pedophilia and sexual abuse for over 13 years and it was reiterated that attention is still needed on these issues and the focus of CPP should remain on ICT enabled child sexual exploitation.

Current Office of the Attorney General (OAG) focus on cybercrime and child rights protection

- The expanded mandate of the OAG now looks at the protection of child rights and the new Attorney General is interested in the benefits of working in partnership to further the realization of children’s rights.
- The OAG is currently working with Korea to better equip personnel to address these issues.

Change in Mandate for the Royal Thai Police (RTP), Children and Women's Division

- Recently the Children and Women's Division underwent a shift in their mandate and are now focused on trafficking. The reorganization of the division was decided upon by the Board of Police and although those working within the division would like to maintain their focus on women and children, it is unclear at present what responsibilities the mandate change will bring to the division.

Positive Developments

Youth Law Enforcement network established

- In Pattaya, Thailand, the Attorney General is working to establish a network of local students connected to prosecutors and law enforcement to help combat crimes involving children as victims and perpetrators. The intention of this network is for these young people serve as peer educators in their communities and to function as a liaison between their communities and prosecutors and law enforcement.

"We want children in community to feel that they can connect directly with the police and AG."

State Participant

Private Sector Interest

- Certiport, a Thai based company focused on computer literacy is looking at developing a 4th curriculum component focused on child self-protection and the internet.

Challenges Identified

- High importance placed on trafficking is overshadowing other issues of equal importance
- Statistics about the issue in Thailand are still unreliable
- High staff turnover within the RTP has proven challenging for training and follow-up

Looking Forward

An additional unit exists within the RTP that currently deals with technology and cybercrimes. In light of the reorganization of the Children and Women's Division, their mandate should be further explored for possible partnership possibilities.

A suggestion was put forth that the OAG might consider evaluating how technology is playing a role in child rights and protection and possible methods for consistent documentation of cases.

Further meetings are scheduled for mid December to build on the momentum of this meeting. CPP hopes to continue to work in partnership with the OAG and Government officials and other key stakeholders to guide and shape CPP in Thailand. Meetings in December will further explore the reality and scope of ICT enabled child sexual exploitation and child protection for law enforcement, government and supporting public bodies.