

United Nations Global Programme  
against Trafficking in Human Beings

*Coalitions against Trafficking in Human Beings  
in the Philippines - Phase 1*

**Trafficking in Human Beings from the Philippines:  
A Survey of Government Experts  
and Law Enforcement Case Files**

Executive Summary

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## Overview

The economic condition of the country, which started to decline during the 1970s, and the scarcity of employment opportunities forced Filipinos to seek overseas job opportunities. Filipinos responded to the increasing demands for skilled construction workers, engineers, nurses, care-givers, domestic helpers and entertainers in the Middle East, East Asian countries, Europe and the United States.

Currently, the Philippines is one of largest migrant countries in the world. A percentage of this large migrant population comprises illegal migrants. Some of these are victims of human trafficking. In spite of the existence of legal channels for overseas employment in the Philippines, intermediaries who offer their services for the expeditious but illegal alternatives continue to exist, and this contributes to the problem of trafficking. Victims are subject to contract violations regarding pay and working conditions, are deceived about the nature of work they will have to undertake after arrival in the destination country, are forced into sexual contact with customers, and subjected to various forms of coercion, manipulation, physical and sexual assaults.

In order to shed more light on the phenomenon of trafficking and the criminal groups involved therein, this study was contracted by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, and was conducted within the framework of the project *Coalitions Against Trafficking in the Philippines - Phase 1*. The focus of the research was to determine certain aspects of trafficking in Filipinos to include modes of recruitment, transportation, use of fraudulent documents, deception and exploitation, routes, corruption and collusion and the involvement of organised criminal groups.

## Methodology and sample

NAPOLCOM researchers conducted interviews with government officials from different departments and studied case files on trafficking in human beings. The interviewers, where possible, utilised the Criminal Justice Expert survey provided by UNICRI. In some cases the instrument proved to be too detailed, however interviewees were able to provide answers in a more informal fashion. In total, 14 Government experts were interviewed from the following agencies: Bureau of Immigration (3), Department of Justice (3), National Bureau of Investigation (2), Philippines Center on Transnational Crime (1), Philippines National Police (4), Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (1). While not all interviewees represented criminal justice agencies, they did have some knowledge or expertise in the areas of trafficking or illegal recruitment, organised smuggling, organised criminal groups or exploitation of overseas Filipino workers.

With respect to the case files, NAPOLCOM was able to review 31 case files involving trafficking incidents. Twenty-six of these were obtained from the Philippines Center on Transnational Crime, while the other 5 were obtained from the National Bureau of Investigation.

## Summary of Findings

### Victims

Information obtained from Government case files indicates that of the 123 victims, only three were male. The majority of the female victims are young. The majority fall into the 23 to 27 year age bracket, followed very closely by those aged 18 - 22. The majority of the 31 cases involved victims trafficked to Korea (17 cases) followed by Malaysia (8 cases). With respect to the number of victims, Korea yielded a total of 87 victims. Malaysia trailed with 18 victims. Victims came from all over the regions, but notable numbers of victims came from the National Capital Region, Region 3 and Region 4. While the majority of the victims are from Metro Manila, the victims from outlying provinces of the metropolis (very accessible by public transport) also account for a significant number.

This victim profile is confirmed by information shared by the 14 Government experts. Estimates provided by experts reveal that the majority of trafficked victims are adult females, followed by minor females. Recruitment may have been through legal or illegal agencies and most victims are “willing travellers”. Most come from Metro Manila particularly in Valenzuela, Quezon City, Muntinlupa and Manila. The closest provinces to the metropolis follow, particularly residents of Laguna, Rizal, Pampanga, Cavite and Batangas. Experts also confirmed that there are a notable number of victims from Cebu, Zamboanga and Davao. This may be attributed to the victims’ access to travel-related enterprises which are present in the said regions.

### Offenders

As in many other criminal activities, there is very limited information on offenders involved in the trafficking of persons. Oftentimes victims refuse to give information about them for fear of reprisal. Some victims do not file complaints because they feel their chances of working abroad again will be jeopardised.

While Filipinos are actively involved in the recruitment of persons from the Philippines, it should be noted that almost all cases involved foreigners, or counterparts of Filipino syndicates in the country of destination. The majority are natives of the countries of destination, although other foreign nationals were also involved. Most are owners of night clubs, or karaoke bars where the girls are eventually deployed.

### Organised Criminal Activities

Organised crime groups operate in the Philippines in both smuggling and trafficking of foreign and local nationals.

During 2000, the Philippine National Police were able to act on 57 cases of irregularities on departing passengers, and 19 cases of arriving passengers. The files and reports submitted for the last two years (2000-2001), indicate that there were 22 cases of attempts to smuggle in foreign nationals or use the Philippines as a transit point for other countries.

Based on information from experts, more frequently, Filipinos are trafficked and forced to work for the benefit of organised crime groups in Korea and Japan. Other destination countries to which Filipinos are smuggled and trafficked are Hong Kong, Singapore, Middle

East countries, Malaysia, Brunei, Kuwait, Italy, USA, Taiwan, Jordan and countries within Europe. Experts did not, however, distinguish in this list between destination countries for trafficked persons, and those for smuggled persons.

As for cases of trafficking of Filipinos to foreign countries, the most common scheme is recruitment for job placement.

#### *Manufacture and Sale of Fake or Fraudulent Documents*

The manufacture and availability of high quality fake travel documents have contributed immensely to the growth of the business of trafficking and smuggling. Syndicates produce and sell fraudulent travel documents such as passports, visas, immigration stamps and other identification documents, including alien residency cards, alien registration forms, re-entry permits.

According to government experts, travellers can secure fake visas to the USA, Italy, Schengen Visas from syndicates in the Philippines. Syndicates can also provide fake passports from the Philippines, the U.S., Italy, Japan, Taiwan, Chamorro, Jordan and other Middle Eastern countries.

#### **Recruitment Practices and Modes of Trafficking**

Trafficking in human beings usually involve illicit practices such as recruitment by *mala fide* recruitment agencies, abduction/kidnapping,<sup>1</sup> and leaving the country through the “Southern Backdoor” with no legitimate documentation. Trafficking practices may, however, be initiated through licensed recruitment agencies serving as fronts for sex trafficking. In such instances, all travel papers are processed legally but clients are usually deceived regarding the kind of work in which they will be involved once having arrived in the destination country.

Despite legitimate channels, many prospective foreign workers choose to bypass these. It is believed that stringent government requirements and difficult and time-consuming procedures have discouraged job seekers from seeking legal channels and have led them to turn to illegal means which are largely viewed as quicker and less cumbersome.

Government experts in the Philippines have identified several methods and strategies which facilitate exit from the Philippines and entry into the destination countries. Some are legal means of exit and entry into the destination country (such as the use of legitimate tourist visas) while other means are illicit (the use of fraudulent documents). These include:

- Illegal recruitment, promise of non-existing jobs or jobs differing from those promised
- Airport escorting scheme (where airport personnel ‘escort’ individuals without proper documentation through Immigration check points)
- Pre-arranged passage (Immigration officials ignore fraudulent documents or lack of proper documentation and allow persons to pass through Immigration check points)
- Transit travel (nationality switch or conversion, whereby individuals switch nationalities to one for which a visa is not required for the destination country)
- Photo-substitution and look-alike (passport tampering)

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<sup>1</sup> Kidnapping / abduction was not encountered in Government case files in this study.

- Matchmaking for marriage (a spouse visa provides an individual with the possibility to remain legally for, often, an undisclosed period of time in the destination country)
- Adoption
- Foreign training / internships
- Religious pilgrimages / movements
- Family tours (where individuals pose as family members to secure visas)
- Cultural exchange / promotion

The last 3 methods are often utilised to bring groups of people out of the Philippines and into the destination country on legitimate visas. Upon entry, smuggled persons disappear and trafficked persons are forced into exploitative situations.

### Costs and Debts

Criminal Justice experts revealed that generally, cost for recruitment and / or travel services are dependent upon two variables: distance from the Philippines and the level of development within a country. Costs to developed countries are higher than services to developing ones. Cost also vary according to distance as payment for travel / job placement in Europe is much higher than that in Asian countries. The highest cost is observed in obtaining services to the USA and Canada which averages 250,000 Philippines Pesos (PhP) or approximately US\$ 5000<sup>2</sup> but ranged from PhP 200,000 (\$4000) to PhP 400,000 (\$8000). This is followed by travels to Australia and Italy (ranging from PhP 100,000 (\$2000) to 250,000 (\$5000). Oftentimes this amount includes procurement of fraudulent travel documents, passport and entry visas.

Country	Estimates of Cost Paid by Victims to Smugglers/Traffickers			
	Lowest		Highest	
	PhP	US \$	PhP	US \$
USA	200,000	4000	400,000	8000
Canada	200,000	4000	400,000	8000
Australia	100,000	2000	250,000	5000
Italy	100,000	2000	250,000	5000
Europe	100,000	2000	300,000	6000
Japan	50,000	1000	150,000	3000
Taiwan	80,000	1600	150,000	3000
Saipan	30,000	600	75,000	1500
Middle East	30,000	600	30,000	600
Korea	20,000	400	100,000	2000
Jordan	2,000	40	100,000	2000
South Korea	2,000	40	10,000	200
Malaysia	1,000	20	8,000	160

<sup>2</sup> The Philippines Peso (PhP) fluctuates against the US \$. The rate of 50 PhP to 1 US\$, approximate values during the time the research was being conducted, is being used here.

## **Routes**

The various organised criminal syndicates involved in the smuggling and trafficking of Filipinos overseas utilise air and sea routes in transporting their victims. These are frequently changed from time to time to further mislead immigration authorities and render investigations on these illegal activities difficult to pursue.

### *Means of transportation*

According to government experts, about 71% of smuggled persons are transported by air, through regular commercial flights and 29% by sea, via big sea vessels, pump boats, speed boats and fishing boats. The same means are also observed when transporting trafficked individuals whereby 70% use air and 30% use the sea routes to exit the Philippines.

### *Ports of Exit*

Government experts enumerated the exit ports used by traffickers. The most frequently used is the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. This is followed by those using the Zamboanga ports who travel by sea to Malaysia (as a transit or destination country). The Mactan International Airport (Cebu) came in third.

Based on reports of the Philippines National Police (PNP) and Philippines Centre on Transnational Crime (PCTC), the following ports are used in smuggling and trafficking of both Filipinos and foreigners:

- Ilocos Sur (Salomague Island)
- Zambo del Sur (Zambo Port, Bauin Point)
- Davao del Sur (Davao Gulf, Digos Point, Panabo Port)
- Misamis Oriental (Port of Aplaya, Jasaan)
- Bicol (Pio Duran, Albay)
- Dagupan City

### *Transit and Destination Countries*

The following information is being provided for trafficked as well as smuggled persons. When travel is by sea, Malaysia, the closest country geographically to the Philippines, is the most accessible and serves as a destination country as well as the ideal transit point from the Philippines to other countries. According to government experts, Bangkok, Thailand; Hong Kong; and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia are most commonly used for transit purposes. Other transit countries cited are Singapore Morocco and Eastern European countries. Several also included Jakarta, Indonesia; France; Casablanca, Morocco; Mexico and China.

The top destination countries are USA, Japan, South Korea, European countries - in particular Italy - Jordan, Taiwan and Malaysia.

### *Patterns of Smuggling and Trafficking Routes*

Except for those travelling to Korea, there are no specific patterns of routes observed in case files. Those travelling to Korea, often pass through Bangkok or Hong Kong before going to Korea.

Individuals travelling without documentation tend to migrate through the “Southern Backdoor” (exiting the Philippines via the southern islands) using the unguarded sea borders to Malaysia. They themselves employ the services of human smugglers who smuggle them out of the country. These people exit the country via small boats and may then transfer to a larger sea vessel. Upon arrival they find jobs and later use it as a jump off point to travel further to the U.S., Canada or Italy. In transit countries it is possible that these migrants acquire false travel documents.

### *Dangerous Situations*

According to experts, the most common dangerous situation trafficking victims are exposed to during transit is the risk of violence and the risk of being arrested. This applies to persons travelling both by boat and plane. This is followed by the risk of starvation, dehydration and drowning, in the case of long trips by boat.

### **Deception**

Almost all victims in the government case files made use of the services of a recruiter, placement agency, or a travel agency. All clients of these agencies agreed to the terms provided by the recruiter/employer while in the Philippines and left the country voluntarily. However, upon entering the destination country, the majority were deceived with respect to the actual work they ended up doing (as opposed to what they had been promised) as well as the conditions of their work and living environment.

Most of the time the victims were recruited to work as "entertainers" but ended up being sexually exploited and forced to work as strippers, night-club/or karaoke hostesses and prostitutes. The women reported to government officials that they did not consent to physical and sexual contacts and other forms of violence committed against their persons by employers or customers but were forced by circumstances into submission.

Further, the majority of victims trafficked to Korea revealed that their employers in the destination country did not adhere to the salary that had been agreed upon prior to their departure from the Philippines.

### **Exploitation**

Victims were subjected to varied degrees and forms of exploitation during all phases from recruitment in the Philippines to employment in the destination country. Exploitation is more severe once persons reach the destination country, but in some cases does occur prior to departure and during the transport phase.

### *Prior to Departure*

Prior to departure, the women, in particular those seeking employment as entertainers and waitresses, are often subjected to physical screening. Some managers/promoters ask victims to undress.

Those travelling abroad as entertainers are required to undergo rigorous training in singing and dancing. For pre-departure training and practices, women recruits are usually housed in a common shelter and are instructed not to maintain contact with anyone. Some are even asked to attend private parties pre-arranged with the managers/promoters/agencies.

### *During Transport*

Three male recruits promised work in Korea were arrested upon arrival for being in possession of fake Korean entry visas and 50 grams of the drug “shabu”. The package of shabu was supposedly a gift (“pasalubong”) given by their recruiter to their Korean employer. The recruiter told them that the package contained local sweets.

### *Destination Country*

It is not unusual that a trafficked victim is unaware of being transported illegally. Often believing that they will be travelling with legitimate documents, persons are handed fraudulent documents or are given legitimate documents with only a tourist visa (rather than a legitimate work visa) only at the airport. They may be accompanied during the flight or trip by boat by someone from the agency or club where they will later be employed. Upon arrival in the destination country, they are met and housed by their managers. It is here that exploitative practices occur ranging from seizure of documents to physical and sexual violence.

While in the country of destination, almost all victims complained that their employer confiscated all their travel documents and passports. If victims wanted to obtain their travel documents, a certain amount had to be paid. Several girls working in bars in Korea disclosed that employers asked them to raise about \$1500 to \$3000 to get out of the contract.

Two victims complained that they were raped by the club owner before being employed as prostitutes in his club. Another victim who was supposed to work as a waitress in Malaysia was eventually sold to a Malaysian man and was expected to do domestic work as well as to have intercourse with her employer. She was forced to stay with him for eighteen months.

### *Entertainers in Korea*

Several women entertainers in Korea narrated they were kept in houses which were either locked or guarded. They complained of lack of food. When sick, they were not provided with necessary medication and sometimes were asked to work.

Women employed in bars were forced to adhere to the “club system”. They were required to keep their “drinks quota”. If customers hired them to keep them company while in the club, they were supposed to order 15 shots of whisky per night. If they did not earn enough, certain punishments were meted out: they would have to clean the entire club, they were provided with little or no food, or were locked up in their quarters. This was in addition to the verbal,



physical and sexual abuse perpetrated against them. If quotas were not met, there were also deductions from their salary.

### **Reports of government collusion/corruption**

As in any other country, there are reports that certain government officials fall prey to bribes and collude with syndicates. According to government experts, there are reports that smuggling and trafficking syndicates pay off vulnerable consular officers of the different embassies for the issuance of genuine entry visas. Syndicates also pay off vulnerable immigration, customs and police officers to facilitate victims' departure from their country of origin and entry into the country of destination. Other officers who might be susceptible to such corruption are airport personnel, airline personnel, coast guards, officers of the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency (POEA), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and police and immigration officers assigned at the ports of exits / entry.

Because of accusations of government collusion and based upon their own investigations, the Bureau of Immigration instituted a number of measures in the airports. These included prohibiting immigration officers from carrying beepers and cellular phones while at work, removing the numbers in immigration processing lanes and regularly rotating officers at counter assignments so as to prevent corrupt practices.

Likewise, the Philippine National Police (PNP) leadership issued its Letter of Instruction dubbed "PITAGAN" which seeks to accomplish the mission of conducting aggressive special operations to rid the police organisation of extortion, bribery, graft and corruption and other similar illegal activities committed by the PNP personnel.

### **Assessment and Conclusion**

The empirical data provided by the case files, government statistics and reports, and the subjective views shared by government experts have led to the following observations:

Certain victim typologies were derived from the study. Information and education campaigns should therefore be focused on the identified target groups, in particular, young women between the ages of 15 and 30. Campaigns should also be centred in areas like Metro Manila and other regions with a high prevalence of recruitment and trafficked victims.

Although almost all victims were willing travellers, most were deceived by their facilitators on the nature of the job and conditions relevant to employment. The Government should ensure that its overseas workers are properly informed of conditions pertinent to their deployment. The current Government Information Education Program for workers should be evaluated and assessed. More focus should be geared towards ensuring that prior to departure, workers know their rights.

Some travel patterns have been identified. Such information may be useful in preparing bilateral agreements between the Philippines and transit and destination countries. The Philippine Government should initiate talks with Malaysia on the utilisation of the Southern Backdoor route to Sandakan and Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. Additionally, as the largest number of complaints of trafficking and exploitation were from women who went to South

Korea, this points to the need for the Philippines Government to review labour policy agreements with the Government of South Korea.

Smuggling and trafficking in human beings, as a crime, is very loosely defined and sometimes misunderstood by law enforcers. Even the method of categorising cases relating to smuggling and trafficking in human beings in law enforcement agencies is poorly organised making statistics on the subject inaccurate. This is in part due to the fact that there is still no specific law addressing smuggling and trafficking in the country.<sup>3</sup> However, at the moment, the Philippines has already signed the U.N. Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol on Trafficking of Persons supplementing the U.N. Convention and should therefore ensure that the universally accepted definition of smuggling and trafficking will be widely disseminated to its front line officers and be the basis for accurately recording statistics pertaining to the problem.

The four law enforcement agencies in the Philippines have their own format of receiving complaints of trafficked victims making comparative analysis of cases difficult. The case files contain a variety of information which is often not comparable. Since the Philippines Centre on Transnational Crime (PCTC) has the mandate of establishing and maintaining a trafficking database (per Executive Order 216), it is recommended that the standardised format now being developed and adopted by the Philippines Centre on Transnational Crime (PCTC) be used by the Philippines National Police (PNP), the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), the Bureau of Immigration (BI) and all other agencies involved in the campaign against smuggling and trafficking.

Aside from the official complaints filed in police offices, the trafficking case file database currently being developed by PCTC include complaints and/or testimonies of victims from consular offices/ embassies, letter to relatives, and newspaper reports. It is therefore recommended, that a similar complaint format be adopted by agencies receiving/entertaining complaints of this nature (such as consular offices, embassies of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the POEA).

Since victim complaints focus on the abuses and exploitation in the destination country, very little information is contained in case files on the involvement of organised crime groups, manner of travel, cost, etc. A standard interview format should be developed to include this information and it must be made available to law enforcement agencies.

Based on law enforcement statistics there have been a numbers of arrests of individuals involved in smuggling in persons and the use of fraudulent documentation. Most of the arrests were made after officers zealously scrutinised travel documents. However, even the immigration chief admitted that more trafficking incidences may be foiled if officers are equipped with high technology machines to aid them in detecting fraudulent documentation. There is also a need for an automated inter-agency security file checking.

Only a fraction of cases are filed in court. If filed, suspects are charged with other related crimes (illegal recruitment, illegal entry, violation of passport laws, etc.) as there is no specific anti-trafficking law. Adding to this problem, the level of co-operation between law enforcement officers and prosecutors is quite low, resulting in dismissal of cases. Resources

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<sup>3</sup> While at the time of the study there was no anti-trafficking law in the Philippines, numerous offenses related to trafficking are punished in the penal code with heavy fines and prison terms.

for the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases related to trafficking in human beings will have to be increased in order to develop effective investigation strategies.

Based on the case files, most of those who report to the Philippines Embassies and Consulates abroad request repatriation services. However, understandably, financial constraints hinder the immediate delivery of this kind of assistance to all those who need it. A little less than a hundred testimonies or complaints were filed in the ‘South Korea’ folder. Even if all these cases were forwarded and referred to the DFA and proper law enforcement agencies, not all cases will be acted upon simply because of logistical problems.

It is clear that there is an increasing need for co-ordination by the different Government agencies involved in the national coalition to fight against trafficking, just as there is the constant need to strengthen inter-agency co-ordination for a national coalition. The functions performed by offices within each agency and by the different agencies must be clearly defined not so much to avoid an overlap of functions which may be necessary but to increase accountability and ensure that each aspect of the trafficking problem is addressed effectively. The overlap of functions must also be viewed in the context of strengthening the process of inter-agency co-operation and not as a duplication of efforts and resources. Duplication is brought about by a weakness in co-ordination and not an overlap of functions among offices within an agency, and among agencies. It is vital that the different government agencies continue to cooperate closely with each other to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to combat trafficking effectively. This comprehensive and integrated approach should focus on prevention, protection and assistance to trafficking victims, and prosecution and enforcement against traffickers.

## **General Recommendations**

### **On Information and Data Sharing**

- Improve information sharing between government agencies at the local and national levels;
- Support the establishment of the PCTC trafficking database by adopting the standardised forms developed for the purpose. The database must include incidence rates, trafficking patterns in countries of origin, transit, and destination, information on victim and offender as well as being able to monitor progress of cases from filing, prosecution and sentencing;
- Promote exchange of information, best practices, and lessons learned among countries;
- Develop anti-trafficking information materials for dissemination to specific target groups including information on where to seek assistance prior to the worker’s departure from the Philippines, in the destination country and upon repatriation;
- Develop information materials for front-line officers such as policemen, immigration officers, investigators, diplomatic and consular missions in concerned countries;
- Consider the importance of appointing focal persons in each agency;

## **Co-operation with international organisations, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, civil society and media**

- Promote co-operation and partnership among governments, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and civil society in the prevention, protection, prosecution, repatriation and reintegration aspects of trafficking in persons;
- Generate greater public awareness on trafficking in women and children;
- Provide comprehensive and immediate assistance for trafficked persons;
- Promote regional co-operation among countries, build networks for anti-trafficking campaigns.

### **Prevention**

#### *Education / Training*

- Promote education (formal, informal and non-formal)/ vocational training/ scholarship programs for women and children to minimise their susceptibility to being trafficked;
- Strengthen programs for training of law enforcement agents, social workers and related personnel;
- Encourage a gender and child sensitive perspective in the training of law enforcement agents, prosecutors, lawyers and community leaders, among others.

#### *Economic Dimension*

- Encourage government to study and examine the relationship between economic development and trafficking in persons;
- Encourage greater national and regional co-operation for broad-based skills training and economic opportunities for women and youth who are at risk of being trafficked.

#### *Legislative Framework*

- Lobby for the passage of the Anti-Trafficking Bill in Congress and strongly advocate the need to adopt, as appropriate, additional legislative and other measures to prevent trafficking including the promotion of security and integrity of travel documents;
- Provide or strengthen, where necessary, training for law enforcement, immigration, consular and other relevant partners to combat trafficking, in co-operation with appropriate national, sub-regional, regional and international organisations and non-governmental bodies.

### **Protection**

#### *Human Rights/Enabling Legal Environment*

- Encourage witnesses to report and file complaints by providing them with special support designed to protect their safety and to reduce official procedures and their traumatising effects;
- Promote efforts to ensure that national laws/regulations provide sufficient and substantial information and assistance and adequate protection of the human rights of trafficked persons including in the repatriation process;
- Endeavour to forge bilateral, sub-regional, regional and international agreements against trafficking including areas on mutual legal assistance and cross-border co-operation.

### *Safety and Assistance of Trafficked Persons*

- Provide, as appropriate, shelter and economic, psychological, medical and legal assistance for trafficked persons;
- Provide physical safety for trafficked persons and appropriate consideration to humanitarian and compassionate factors;
- Establish hotlines/complaint lines and establish relationships with NGOs in order to increase reporting and identify trafficking situations.

### **Prosecution**

- Strongly advocate for the criminalisation of trafficking in persons, taking into account the grave nature of the offence;
- Examine the need for and adopt, as appropriate, laws and other legal measures to impose penalties on all aspects of trafficking, including the seizure and confiscation of gains obtained by criminal organisations.

### **Regional and International Cooperation**

- Support regional organisations and institutions in their efforts to combat trafficking in persons, particularly in women and children;
- Encourage cooperation at the national, sub-regional and regional levels among law enforcement and immigration authorities, as well as social and health workers of countries concerned through systematic exchange of investigative information leading to arrest and prosecution of traffickers;
- Promote national, sub-regional and regional training of relevant officials including police, judges, prosecutors, customs, immigration, border guards, as well as consular authorities.
- Endeavour to adopt suitable national, sub-regional and regional measures and forge agreements, as may be necessary, to prevent, detect and investigate trafficking across boundaries and to strengthen border controls;
- Promote co-operation and partnership of governments and non-governmental organisations, the private sector and civil society.

### **Repatriation and Reintegration**

- Establish bilateral, multilateral, sub-regional or regional agreements related to the repatriation process aimed at humanitarian assistance of trafficked persons;
- Facilitate and accept without unreasonable delay, including the expeditious issuance of travel documents, the safe, orderly and dignified return trafficked persons;
- Ensure the safe and effective reintegration of trafficked persons;
- Endeavour to provide adequate programs for the reintegration of trafficked persons into their respective families and communities, including medical, legal and economic assistance;
- Ensure that legislative frameworks provide trafficked persons access to adequate procedures of redress.

### **Follow Up and Progress Review**

- Maintain the Philippine Government Inter-Agency Executive Committee (IAEC) to follow up action and periodically assess the progress of implementation of the Philippines National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking;
- Stress the significance of sub-regional, regional and international collective efforts.