



Child Trafficking in the Philippines Unstoppable – Dept. of Social Welfare and Development

Manila, Philippines - Child trafficking is still unstoppable in the Philippines, and the National Capital Region tops the list for trafficked person by place of origin, according to the National Recovery and Reintegration Database of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

In a media forum organized by the anti-child trafficking crusaders piloted by the Philippine Against Child Trafficking (PACT), the group addressed the vulnerable victims of human trafficking in the country, which statistically showed that children, especially girls, are most vulnerable victims of trafficking.

Last year, the DSWD assisted 632 victims of trafficking in persons, illegal recruitment, prostitution, pedophilia, pornography and child labor. From here 188 are male minors, 408 were female minors and 36 were women.

The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) estimated around 60,000 to 100,000 children in the Philippines have been victimized by prostitution rings. It reported further that a four million children were trafficked into slavery and an undetermined number of children were forced into exploitive labor operations.

The Unicef noted that child trafficking in the Philippines is the highest incidence of child prostitution in a tourist area.

Gemma Gabuya, chief of the DSWD's Social Technology Bureau, said the national government in a bid to address the problem had formed the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) in 2003 in partnership with civil society organizations and other stakeholders of PACT.

The IACAT's initiative was to come up with a reliable database system that would help Philippine law enforcement intercept child trafficking in the country's exit and entry points and assist prosecution in bringing the criminals to justice.

PACT is a network of child rights advocates committed to help build a community that protects children against trafficking.

However, despite these efforts, trafficking of persons, particularly children, persists, according to PACT. Thus, the group secretariat urges the IACAT to work on the improvement of their response against child trafficking.

PACT chairperson Marcelina Carpizo vowed to coordinate with NGOs, the IACAT, civil society and the DSWD to be able to polish better the actions and programs to reduce, if not eliminate cases of trafficking on persons.

ref.: <http://www.gracegeneralsantos.org/?p=2164>

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