

Mary Vigil:

Welcome everyone. And thank you for joining us today on World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. To start us off is our video greeting from USAID acting administrator John Barsa.

John Barsa:

I'm John Barsa acting administrator of the USAID for international development. Today's World Day Against Trafficking, a day to reaffirm our commitment to stop human trafficking, protect the victims and prosecute those who exploit people for profit. We also honor the survivors, those who have experienced abuse on an unimaginable scale and are courageously rebuilding their lives. Human trafficking exists in the shadows, but it's the second largest criminal industry on earth. Where more than 25 million people are enslaved. The vast majority of the victims are women and girls.

John Barsa:

These crimes are a global human rights challenge that preys on the most vulnerable, erodes the rule of law and corrupt commerce. Since 2001 USAID has committed about \$300 million to fight this insidious threat. This money has helped protect survivors in 71 countries, and it's provided shelters, trauma healing, education, and job training. Thus far, we've reached more than 30,000 people at risk for being trafficked. And we don't work alone.

John Barsa:

USAID has brought together a broad array of partners to fight the fight, including host governments, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, and most importantly survivors. We're ready to do more. By the end of this year, USAID will launch a revised human trafficking policy that will strengthen our work even more and fully integrate this effort across the agency. This matters because our work often focuses on low income countries, stopping human trafficking in these developing nations is critical for advancing their stability and ability to be self-reliant.

John Barsa:

Free and open democracies cannot flourish from basic human rights are oppressed. Human trafficking is a sadly pervasive and heinous crime, and it attacks the core of human dignity. This is why the United States has made the global fight against human trafficking a priority. I invite all USAID staff to join us in the challenge to end these horrible crimes. Thank you.

Mary Vigil:

Thank you acting administrator. This year's theme of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons honors all of you in our audience, committed to the cause. Working on the front lines to end human trafficking. You represent the USAID field missions, our implementing partners, Washington AID, or can or agency partners at the Department of State, Department of Labor, Government Accountability Office, and other government colleagues. And of course it would be remiss of me to forget to honor the resilience of survivors who inspire us to join the fight with them.

Mary Vigil:

Now, I would like to take the time to recognize our USAID leadership for being here, Tim Meisburger, director of the Center for Democracy Human Rights and Governance and Trey Hicks, the assistant

administrator of the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, and acting associate administrator. Mr. Hicks will be joining us at the end of the hour.

Mary Vigil:

We also have with us two members of the US Public Private Partnership Advisory Council to End Human Trafficking. Thank you. Diana Mau, co founder and president of the NOMI Network and Jennifer Jensen, founder and executive director of the Global Family Chair Network for joining us today. Last, but certainly not least we have with us to kick off today's conversation, US ambassador at large for trafficking in persons, ambassador John Richmond.

John Richmond:

Today is World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. And I am delighted to join USAID for this celebration. And it is a celebration of the resiliency of survivors, as well as the many people who worked tirelessly to stop traffickers, protect victims, and prevent this crime by dismantling the systems that make it easier for traffickers to operate. As the world responds to COVID-19, the importance of USAID is program design work, and the partners who implement the counter trafficking programs have been brought into sharp focus. Now more than ever, we need to build on the good work of the last 20 years.

John Richmond:

And to this end, the US government's programming and the anti-trafficking space is becoming more focused. We've listened to partners, academics, program officers, policy makers, and survivor leaders about what's working and what needs to improve. And there are three principles that will guide our work in the coming years.

John Richmond:

The first is impact over activities. We want to measure more than just our activities, what we're doing. We want to measure whether those activities are having an impact on trafficking itself. It's not enough that programs perform as designed, to be successful they must make a positive difference in the lives of actual victims or in holding traffickers accountable. We're coordinating with USAID on a whole of government approach around data driven results and having the most impact on trafficking survivors and the traffickers themselves.

John Richmond:

The second principle is targeted on trafficking. Our anti-trafficking programming must be targeted on trafficking itself and not mirror vulnerability reduction. We know that traffickers target the vulnerable because traffickers believe that vulnerable people are easier to coerce and control, yet while generalized vulnerability reduction and poverty alleviation efforts are noble. Even if they perform well beyond expectations, they're unlikely to interfere with the trafficker's business model or the prevalence of trafficking. Because traffickers don't need everyone to be vulnerable. They only need to target a few people to commit their crime. So successful prevention programming efforts should take direct aim at how traffickers actually operate and care for actual victims. Not at risk communities.

John Richmond:

The third principle is that we want to guide and not replace. Successful anti-trafficking programming should include interventions that assist governments in expanding their capacity. We do not want our partners doing the work for governments or instead of governments. We want them to empower

governments to build their capacity. We want to serve as a guide and not a replacement for government action. And that's part of the journey to self-reliance. If we follow these three principles in our design and implementation, we will find greater success and more people will be ushered into freedom. Please stay connected with the state department's trafficking and persons office. We want to learn from your experiences and we want to be available to you. None of us can do this alone, and I'm glad we're in it together.

Mary Vigil:

Thank you, ambassador Richmond. And thank you to our staff for being here today. We appreciate ambassador Richmond's remarks, and I want to highlight some of his key points for us to reflect on in our suite of work. One was impact over activities. The positive difference that our programming makes in the lives of victims or in holding traffickers accountable. Two is targeted on trafficking itself, reducing prevalence and not just vulnerability reduction. And three guiding governments and not replacing them.

Mary Vigil:

So throughout this presentation, I encourage all of you, my colleagues to have this in the back of your mind and reflect on it from time to time and see how we at USAID can play a role in these three priority areas that ambassador Richmond mentioned. And with that four agenda, we will have two main questions that our panelists will respond to. Take time for audience questions and end with announcements.

Mary Vigil:

The two main questions are about the effects of COVID-19 on trafficking and what have we learned from this experience. And a discussion after each one. We encourage our audience to take time now, if you haven't already to introduce yourselves in the chat box with your full name, organization and to input into the chat box, any comments or questions related to the theme, and to continue to feed us your comments during our discussion. We have note takers and chatbox monitors that are keeping track of your input. If you experience any technical issues, we have our hardworking producers, Basty and Ashera who are here to support participants with that platform.

Mary Vigil:

Please also note that this session is being recorded and will be posted on social media. Now it is my pleasure to finally introduce you to our guest panelists. Our first guest panelist is Kristin Dadey. She assume the post of chief of mission for the International Organization for Migration in the Philippines and February of 2018. She has worked with IOM for over 16 years, designing and implementing strategies to manage migration and emergency post-crisis and development context.

Mary Vigil:

Kristin began working with IOM in Indonesia then worked with IOM missions in the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Republic of Georgia, where she focused on programs to combat human trafficking and modern slavery. Prior to her appointment in the Philippines, she served as a senior program manager, Cambodia, where she worked with the government and the private sector to build skills development programs for migrant workers, as well as she strengthened labor standards to reduce exploitative practices.

Mary Vigil:

Our second presenter is Krista Hayden Sharpe. She serves as IJM's regional president of Asia Pacific. Christa and her regional team support five IJM field offices in the Philippines, Cambodia and Thailand, as they combat [inaudible 00:15:11] sexual exploitation of children in the Philippines, child sexual assault and citizens' rights in Thailand. And the trafficking of men and women into forced labor in the Thai fishing industry. Also marriage in China and domestic work in Malaysia.

Mary Vigil:

Got a pretty huge portfolio. Krista also leads our advancement growth and strategy in the region. IJM currently has regional investment offices in Australia, Singapore, South Korea, and Hong Kong. Christa brings rich experiences, IJM's Cambodia, former director of aftercare as field office director in Cambodia, as well as vice president of programs in Southeast Asia.

Mary Vigil:

Next we've got Boonthida Parnnui or Kam as private sector engagement specialist. She's the USAID Thailand Counter Trafficking and person, POC. She's a business and human rights professional with combined experience and sustainable business development and international development. Kam joined resonance in 2018 as the private sector engagement specialist for the USAID Thailand Counter Trafficking in persons project, through her role Kam leads the efforts to identify and develop sustainable, impactful private sector partnerships in Thailand to reduce the prevalence of trafficking in persons and enhance sustainable sourcing and crime free supply chain. Her role is to assess design foster and manage implementation of private sector partnerships, that have the potential to become models for industry change and achieve an amplified impact in Thailand.

Mary Vigil:

And her former role as sustainability and climate change consultant with TWC Consulting Thailand, Kam has advised senior level of business executives at some of Thailand's leading companies on strategies and capacity to improve the labor and human rights compliance and performances. And last but not least, we have Supavadee Chotikajan or Pink. She recently joined Mars Petcare in January of 2020, in the role of global sustainability manager, human rights and Marine biodiversity. At Mars Petcare, Pink is leading the role in developing and deploying the human rights action plan to guide efforts to protect and promote human rights in Thai fish supply chain.

Mary Vigil:

She previously worked in different capacities within the UN system. Most recently with the ILO chip and shore rights project, UNICEF and UNDP. She also has foreign policy development experience. Having worked at the time ministry of foreign affairs and for the European union delegation to Thailand. Thank you to our panelists for joining us today. I also see that the audience participants are introducing themselves and providing some great comments. Thank you for that.

Mary Vigil:

All right. Let's get our conversation started. Our four panelists will each have two minutes to present their perspective on each question. Our first question is what does C tip look like on the ground and the COVID-19 setting, Kristin Europe first.

Kristin:

Morning, everyone. And thank you for inviting IOM, the UN's migration agency to be on this panel. I'm really honored to be on a panel. It's such a great group of impressive women. Really quickly because I have two minutes. How has it impacted? It's impacted it significantly. It's made the situation quite, it's made it worse. We know that COVID-19 through surveys that we've done with USAID and Central America and through our USAID funded IOM X project and Asia, we know that it has increased migrants vulnerability to trafficking. There has been significant growing rates of unemployment. We are facing the largest recession of our lifetime.

Kristin:

There have been monumental restrictions on cross border movement, which is increasing our vulnerability to taking riskier forms of migration. And we know that a billion kids are out of school. So that has also increased significantly the vulnerability to children and exploitation. And then I would say that the second impact is on the victims and survivors themselves. There has been a significant reduction of services in some cases, access to services have been completely cut off, and this is very concerning. Government's priorities have of course shifted to the health crisis that is upon them and the economic crisis that they're facing. So it's really concerning. I hope I did that in two minutes.

Mary Vigil:

Thank you, Kristin. And up next is Christa.

Christa:

Kristin. That was impressive. Thank you so much USAID for hosting this really important event for us to start collaboratively, sharing lessons learned and common challenges that we're all facing post COVID. But also looking at the areas of hope and progress. And thank you, Kristin, for giving us that global overview of what I've seen in over 100 nations. Yes, for international justice mission, for those of you new to us, we are a global organization that's helping governments lower the prevalence of human trafficking and other forms of violence through strengthening the state's ability to provide this consistent, survivor centered law enforcement and criminal accountability at the local level, but then also building this collaborative trauma informed system of victim identification protection and care.

Christa:

And so far everyone has outlined so well, the increased vulnerabilities and devastating challenges that the vulnerable are facing around the world. And so I won't go too much into that, but our IJM teams are also seeing similar struggles, increased reports of violence, online sexual exploitation, violence within the home. And of course the massive vulnerabilities to migrants around the world. And so, at any time, of course, pre-COVID, but now in the wake of this pandemic, we believe even more than investing in governments, local justice system response supported by this traumas formed network of care is going to be an indispensable driver for trafficking prevention and prevalence reduction going forward.

Christa:

Because of course we need to ensure that protection can be provided to individuals at scale, because there are millions and millions of vulnerable people that we all know are needing this level of protection and systemic support around them. And of course, we also know the authority mandated and capable to do this at scale is governments primarily implemented through justice and social service systems at the local level. But of course, just as individual people and groups are now experiencing overwhelming setbacks post-COVID, we're also seeing, our government partners experience the same. And I'm sure

you're seeing that as well, which is threatening their ability to provide protection to even more individuals at scale in these difficult times.

Christa:

And of course, we also know that when justice and social service systems are grounded to a halt at the local level, then traffickers and abusers know that it's open season again, and opportunistic criminals are primarily deterred and prevented through a system of rule of law, a functioning government that protects its people at the local level. And so to give some examples of some of the harmful effects of COVID that we're seeing on government's ability to protect some of these barriers that they're facing, or that local protective officials are also on lockdown or redirected with just a small core that are engaged in protection right now.

Christa:

There are already minuscule budgets are being reduced and redirected to other efforts. Courts are being dramatically slowed because they are not able to process as many cases in person, a criminal investigation and victim identification therefore are slowing dramatically. And even, as we know, most protective systems in low income nations are still operating primarily on paper or in person, and they don't have the capability to quickly transition to digital functionality. And of course we're seeing NGO capacity building trainings and supporting collaboration and supportive governments is decreasing as well in this current environment.

Christa:

And so in response, our global program teams have been focused both on individual support to vulnerable people, but we're also helping justice and social service officials at this local level, as well as national government commitment to support that increase their ability to operate in lockdown, try to innovate around some of these challenges to show that rule of law still exists, to build public trust in local authorities and an increased criminal deterrence, to build that deterrence against opportunistic traffickers. But we'll talk about more of this in the second question. Thank you.

Mary Vigil:

Thank you, Christa. Up next is Kam.

Kam:

Good morning, everyone. And also good evening everyone who joins from different time zones. Thank you very much and I'm glad to be able to join this session and thank you for the overview of the overall situations of the COVID-19 setting that has impacted on the vulnerability of the populations. For me, the USAID, Thailand city project, we work directly with the seafood agriculture and constructions sectors in Thailand. And so I will give an overview of how the vulnerable groups have been impacted on the ground level to give you an idea of how it's like right now on the ground.

Kam:

So, through our project, we engage a lot with like the so owner's, fishermen, farmers and workers. And since the beginning of the year is COVID-19 has hit Thailand. One of the key impact that we see significant loss of jobs for workers, this is due to... if you can imagine the lockdown, the travel restrictions and the border closure, all the hotels are closed, all the markets are closed anywhere that has potential to be crowded are closed. So the price of the seafood producers and agricultural producers

stopped. So owners, farmers cannot maintain their profit margins. And so that impacted in how workers lose their job. And most of them are migrant workers. What follows is how migrants worker got stuck in between their sending countries and Thailand.

Kam:

Some of them lost their job, but they cannot travel back to their countries. And some of them try to get into Thailand to find works because the situation of COVID-19 in their country is also very bad and they need to earn some money, in order to help their family, but they cannot come in because of the travel restrictions. And in Thailand in particular, what makes it worse is that according to the labor law, if my brand loses their job, they need to find a new one within 15 days or else they would lose their legalities or work permit to be in the country. That put them into the spot or the situations that they are most vulnerable to being, lead astray by the recruitment agency or the traffickers to find jobs because they are desperate to find new jobs.

Kam:

However, the situation has got better and the government has recognized this loophole and are trying to help the migrants with these situations. However, the impact still remains as new workers can not come in through the MOU process. Therefore, the result is that what is looking like right now is that more and more migrant workers will be trying to come in through the irregular Dano, which is the hot spot for the traffickers. I'll pause there. Thank you.

Mary Vigil:

And then next I'll welcome Pink from Mars Petcare.

Pink:

Thank you, Kam and Mary for the introductions. And thank you very much for inviting Mars Petcare to be part of this panel. Mars represents around 50 brands and we are very much inspired to make it while making a better world for pets, but we're also equally committed to eliminating trafficking and forced labor in our supply chains. Just to maybe build a little bit on the discussion already raised by the impact of COVID by other panelists, Mars also recognizes the increased risks and vulnerabilities on the migrant communities here in Thailand. We work primarily with our tier one suppliers, which are seafood processing factories, to monitor the impact of their production capacity and also on worker livelihoods.

Pink:

But luckily for most of the workers in the seafood processing, they're not impacted by loss of income. Because, in some cases, the production size actually has gone up because of the increased demand of canned tuna. And we also work closely with our tier one suppliers to share some of our best practices and measures are put in place in our own factories for them for COVID prevention. As for the sea fisheries workers, one of our concern is many of the workers are not covered by social security, so they don't have access to a lot of the government relief measures. There's also a couple with a fear of a lot of the migrant workers of getting tested due to fear of discrimination if they're found just tested positive.

Pink:

Another concern is of social distancing actually for workers on vessels and even in their accommodation, while in theory sounds good, but in practice very difficult to implement. And in some cases we see that the vessel owners practice social distancing by limiting workers from actually coming on land. So they

basically stuck on the vessel for the time being. One thing that Kam already highlighted, was very much our concerns with the kind of the stall on new workers coming in. Because now there's going to be additional pressure put on the existing labor shortage for the fisheries, which currently around 50,000 workers are in shortage. So this would eventually in the long term would have consequences on Dave and ethical recruitment or workers that come in for, in search of economic opportunities.

Pink:

So they would come naturally illegally across the border. And it is one area that you would need to closely monitor as when the border's reopen hopefully in the near future. Great. Thank you.

Mary Vigil:

Thank you Pink. Thank you everyone. Thank you to all the presenters for all your examples and insights. And we will now open the floor for questions. Please use the question, answer, feature located to the right in the dark gray vertical toolbar to provide your questions or comments for the panelists.

Mary Vigil:

And while we wait for those two, I would like to direct a question to Kam, really appreciated your responses and your comments and wondering how can business and particular buyer companies help workers down to the lowest tier of their supply chain during this time? And are there activities that respond to the urgent needs of workers like giving out supplies? Are there also longer term strategies that business and development organizations can take support the welfare workers? Just given the lessons right from COVID-19 and the new normal in this post COVID-19 world. I through a lot of questions at you, but feel free to pick whichever one.

Kam:

Sure. Thank you. I can share on the first one on how can business in particular like local buyers company help to increase ensure human rights of workers down through the supply chains to the lowest tier of food. Our project works a lot in partnership this private sector, and we see a lot of models that work, which is, when global buyers recognize that there are some risks areas in their supply chains now work with their suppliers, either in their countries or in the other countries, to educate them and share with them the understanding of why it is important to ensure that valuable practices in this [inaudible 00:32:35] is important.

Kam:

And these can be through a training's regular checkup or by having procurement criteria that covers, points on good labor protection practices and requiring those small holders suppliers to comply to those points. Another model that I have seen. I have worked with a lot of businesses that they do a lot is they seek out external partners and for initiatives that their companies cannot do alone, sometime with the third party, like civil societies or development agencies that have the expertise in the social issues and human rights issues, so that they can form activities and implement it in their supply chains to solve particular problems that they find.

Kam:

For example, some might find that, okay, workers in the sugarcane farms in descending countries, that they source from are susceptible to which to be in forced labor. They might work with the third party to identify some kind of technologies or platforms or grievance mechanism to put into their supply chains



in order to help those workers to be out of that rags of being trafficked. And I think on the role of private victim, Pink from Mars Petcare might have some other examples that Mars Petcare is doing that can share from the seafood industry perspective as well.

Pink:

Sure. Just to build on, if I may, Mary, just to build on the point that Kam already made, for Mars Petcare, I think, we recognize the fact that we can't do this alone. And I think our principle is to be work collaborative with other partners, especially the NGO partners who have the eyes and ears on the ground. So we do have programs in place for a COVID, workers sport fund for COVID that, that's exactly the idea as you point out in terms of giving really funds emergency supplies. But I think what's more important that we want to see is basically how to help build community and work with resilience in the longterm.

Pink:

We also work with all of the NGO partners to be strengthening and build awareness for these workers in the longterm, in terms of how to address when there's a pandemic, not just beyond how to wash your hands properly, but this talks a lot longer in the term where how to financial planning or issues about how can they access their rights when they have problems. There's just something that we rely a lot with our partnership with NGO partners, also with Winrock as well to be the front lines for us to engagement on this, temporarily, at the higher level on the tier one suppliers, we do have programs for the next generation of advanced program, that's tries to set stronger internal management systems in place so that workers are protected in throughout our supply chain. Thank you.

Mary Vigil:

Thank you. Thank you, pink. And thank you Kam for this comments. And I'm going to take this time also again, to encourage everyone in the audience. If you have any questions for our panel for the first segment, please feel free to use the question, answer chat box feature, to input that. And I would like to turn this next question over to Kristin from IOM. I'm wondering, how can communities, NGOs and governments ensure reintegration of returning migrants and mitigate the risk of trafficking due to the loss of income and remittances that we're seeing right now during the COVID-19?

Kristin:

Well, the Philippines is a perfect example of that where 10% of the economy is dependent on remittances. And we have had unprecedented number of return of overseas Filipino workers. I mean, in the first few months, we've seen over 100,000 returns, stranded in the ports of entry. And I have to say the government is doing an incredible job of providing assistance testing and onward transportation with USAID actually in the Philippines, we're also providing humanitarian assistance, supporting the government to just address the basic humanitarian needs for reintegration would be critical, because they're coming home to no jobs to slow down in the economy. We haven't even begun to see the worst effects of COVID. It is coming and the next year.

Kristin:

But I think the key will be to address those communities that are extremely vulnerable. We can do that through analyzing the data, data is key, being where the vulnerable community, working with communities, private sector is key as well, ensuring that the private sector still continues to promote decent work and ethical recruitment of these workers. We want to see no fees charged to workers as

they find and retool themselves for other avenues. But we're happy to be really, reintegration will be key to working on the long term effects of COVID.

Mary Vigil:

Thank you for that, Kristin. And I'd also like to... was there someone else that wanted to comment on that? Okay, Kristin, I think you need to put it on mute. Thank you. All right. Thank you for that, Kristin. Also I'm wondering for the panelists to this question about, as we're looking at the situation, the pandemic of COVID-19 and looking at how this really changes the way that we implement our field work. And so I'm wondering how have you changed the way you do your field work, given the travel restrictions and also given the COVID-19 situation in general, the infectious transmittable component of COVID-19. So I am very curious to know how you all have shifted the way that you do your work? And so maybe Christa, if you could just start with that.

Christa:

It's a good question. And we'll talk a little bit about this again in the second half of this session, but yeah, it was very daunting at the start of lockdown and overwhelming to our teams because our model is built on a collaborative mentorship based relationship with government officials, with leaders and police and social services and courts. And so much of protection is provided in person to direct victims of abuse and then to survivors empowered through care. And so, the initial part was daunting, but it actually has been amazing to us to find how much can be moved forward and innovated through those challenges. And so much of our work has moved to phone-based consultation. And so police and social services can still engage in person, even through lockdown, they have the mandate or freedom by government to do that in many cases.

Christa:

And so providing them with PPE, with the confidence to innovate and provide care, losing recording mechanisms to online and digital, which often were in person before, we're testing with governments, how to move trial processes online, providing phones and ways for communication for survivors who are at risk of re-victimization. So we've been providing them with financial support and mechanisms for communication. And then mobilizing local community leaders to keep an eye on their community and to report and to increase reporting. So whether that's survivor leader groups, community faith groups, others in community that are in touch with their own network to be able to keep an eye on our people safe, how can we report where there's risk? How can we care for one another and provide people with the PP they need to actually engage when we have to engage in person. Yeah, a lot of struggle, but a lot of innovations coming out of this that I think will provide some good foundations going forward.

Mary Vigil:

Thank you, Christa. Yeah, very important. I know that with USAID, we also are having to change the way that we also work and engage with our partners, but also our own colleagues in the field. And part of what we shifted is our focus on virtual just like this. So, a lot of our efforts that we would have liked to have done in the past in terms of actually going out into the field, doing trainings one-on-one or just visiting sites, has really shifted at this time. And again, it's just been more virtually, we've also really made some proactive efforts to have more conference calls with folks, and just try to be more, very customer service oriented and right as much as field support with our expanded team as much as possible.

Mary Vigil:

But we also rely heavily on all of you, our implementing partners who are out there in the field engaging one-on-one face to face. And so it's really interesting to hear that you all have shifted your practice as well. And I think that provides us a really good segue into our next theme. And first again, thank you all to our panelists for all your responses, for our first question. And also to the audience for some of your comments and questions, we'll now move into our second theme of the impact of COVID-19 on trafficking. Panelists, could you please comment on what has worked well in the field to reduce trafficking? Please feel free to comment on any best practices or models and any lessons learned. Again, you each have two minutes, Kristin, you're up again first.

Kristin:

Great. Thanks. I'll use the example of our program that's funded by USAID in Ukraine. It's a good example. We've been collaborating with USAID government and geo partners and focusing on children that are at increased risk for online exploitation as the result of COVID. So we've established this cooperation with the cyber crime department of the national police to improve the skills of the police officers. And I think in this time of COVID, it's really important that we've designed and worked on the online courses, and they deliver the training. So I think that's a really good example.

Kristin:

This is already online exploitation, but we've used the online medium to carry out capacity building. That's one good example. And then the second example I would use as the example with our USAID funded program in Azerbaijan, where we're actually working with survivors of trafficking, who address the shortage of PPE supplies and they're putting together, they're making PPE, they're making face masks to protect themselves and the host community. So those are two really fabulous examples in this time of COVID that I would encourage others to look at over.

Mary Vigil:

Great, thanks Kristin, at Christa you're up next?

Christa:

Yeah, thanks. I just mentioned part of, I think all of our work here is making sure we're providing individual support services to those most vulnerable individuals in our communities. And we have this network of thousands of survivors that are at various stages of strength or vulnerability, and just making sure that they are not at risk for re-exploitation. But I wanted to give an example of survivor leadership in this effort. About five years ago, we helped survivors start the release bonded labor association in India, which is now a nationwide multiple groups of survivors, caring for and advocating for and protecting in their own communities. And so now of course, they're equipped with PPE and these survivor leaders have been boldly working with local government officials on community based COVID education, but also on identifying and reporting forced labor and abuse that's happening.

Christa:

And so this is a really powerful model for collaborative, scalable protection at the local level, for people who see what's happening better often than most of us, of course, and even some government officials, but in our second focus area, as I mentioned, we're working with government partners at the local level to help them innovate ways to overcome challenge they're facing. And then with national governments

to scale this across states or across us cities or vulnerable areas, and hopefully build these foundations so that they can provide more protection at scale going forward.

Christa:

And so one of the most nationwide responses we've seen in one of the strictest lockdown environments has been with online sexual exploitation in the Philippines, and the government was very committed to combating this crime pre-COVID. But of course, there's this perfect storm now of both demand and lockdown of children in homes with their abusers, but also that digitally facilitated crime online investigations can still move forward. And so, police are partners to us. We've been working on this digital investigation and case building, identifying children. And police have now been provided with full PPE. And over three months of lockdown have conducted 16 investigations, rescued 60 child victims and arrested 11 traffickers.

Christa:

And that is about the pace that they would have been at pre-COVID, of the courts are testing online mechanisms for trials and have convicted three traffickers in the last month, and safe placements between the aftercare communities and government social services were developed in lockdown. And so these online mechanisms and collaborative casework are really promising practice for how other governments can still move law enforcement and protection and survivor care forward. We've also seen really great examples in India, where state leaders are putting out calls to district level officials to remind them to file reports of forced labor under lockdown, that call that went out in [inaudible 00:46:59] state resulted in 800 cases being lodged, which may not have been lodged without government leaders setting out that mandate.

Christa:

We also have been working with government officials to do scans of forced labor facilities. And these scans at Chennai resulted in 400 victims, almost 400 victims being rescued from a break, who were being abused and held there, but it also resulted in the government identifying over almost 7,000 migrant workers who were being held in facilities, not necessarily to forced labor, but not being facilitated to go home. The government provided buses and police escorts for them to get back to home community. And while of course there's so much that is a small drop in the bucket of the millions of migrants that need that level of support.

Christa:

This is just one example of positive government action that builds positive social pressure for other governments to respond, increases expectation and demand from other workers for the same treatment and things that we can use to build on going forward. Some other areas of practice progress we're seeing or good practice are again, moving reporting mechanisms to online and digital. So we're helping governments build those mechanisms, a joint advocacy for governments to continue to fund community policing and social services and not remove those budgets from those units. And then post-COVID. We've seen incredible benefit from having a data fusion center that builds digital profiles of criminal activity and helps train police on how to do this. And so we've been able to move forward High-impact set cases in the Philippines, forced labor slavery cases in anti phishing, and then child slavery cases in Lake Volta in Ghana with police, even during lockdown because of this digital capability.

Christa:

And then of course, the power of media to act as a partner, not only in raising awareness about the risks, but also of the proactive, positive law enforcement and government protection efforts as a deterrent for opportunistic traffickers and abusers. And we've seen this work so far in Ghana, in the Philippines and India and Guatemala, and so really good examples out there. I think it's so positive and helpful for us to share those with each other so we can start to replicate and scale those. And we really do think in the wake of this destructive pandemic more than ever, that investing in government justice and social service efforts at the local level to create this rule of law environment supported by a trauma informed network of victim identification and survivor support is going to be vital to prevention and prevalence reduction going forward. Thanks.

Mary Vigil:

Thanks. Great. Thank you so much for that Christa, very insightful, very interesting. And for our next person Kam.

Kam:

Hi, for the example of the models we have worked on, on the grounds, I can eat two or three examples. I think one of the first thing I want to mention is that the key to helping with these problems for our project is first to reach to the vulnerable group on the ground. And the second thing is the consistent stakeholder engagement with either the workers themselves, the employers, local government and also the civil societies. So one of the first example I want to share is, part of our pilot in the partnership with Mars Petcare. So as Khun Pink have mentioned, we have worked in the South end province of Thailand, and we have identified one of the local NGO who have worked in the area for several years and have relationships and [inaudible 00:50:37] to the workers, to the fishermen, vessel owners, employers, local government, and with them, we have established the fishermen center. And this center can provide support service for the fishermen in that area.

Kam:

The support provided include legal consultations and coordination with local government that can help workers navigate their fair working conditions, fair working contracts, and also help play out access to state support for COVID-19. They also help with interpretations and under legal cases or legal disputes or any disputes that workers might have with the employers during in many situations during the COVID-19. Workers can just walk in and then talk to the fishermen center staff, and they will get direct and support from the center. In parallel to that, we have another existing activities under the partnership with Mars Petcare. This one is initially we focused on, building a channel for grievance mechanism, for workers for fisherman on the boats, which was seen as a part with the highest risks where they go out at sea for several days, without any signal, without any ways to seek for help.

Kam:

And so we are working on the connectivity at sea pilot is a tool which will enable real-time communications from anywhere out at sea, in an affordable price. And during the COVID-19 times, the test run is being started right now. And we think that this can be leveraged as the communication channels for not only seeking for help or reporting the forced labor case, but can be for emergency in terms of like, occupational health and safety or health issue or pandemic that might come up in the future as well. And the last activities that the project is doing on the side that I want to mention briefly is a Line group.

Kam:

We have launched a Line group. Line is an application just like WhatsApp or Skype by real-time texting that is mainly used in South Southeast Asia. So it's called a Mayday Line Group. So this one consists of Burmese Laos and [inaudible 00:53:14] in the applications official Line account. And just sign in and add friends to this Line group, and it will provide the latest news and information on Corona virus, including details on symptoms, how people can protect themselves and also provide the latest news about the situation in Thailand concerning the policies and laws that will affect all migrants and help us there.

Mary Vigil:

Okay, great. Thank you, Kam from Resonance. And next is Pink from Mars Petcare.

Pink:

Yes. Thank you, Mary. Just maybe to build a little bit on what Kam's intervention already because it's to note that, Mars and USAID collaborations, as far as very much underneath the human rights action plan that we've been working for the past five years, this is considered like a flagship collaboration. And we find that this project it's sewing collaboration addresses a lot of the root causes of trafficking and forced labor on several fronts. First of all, I think what's important here. We want to be able to have worker voices is crucial to prevention of trafficking and forced labor. And even that comes out very strongly and we can see that as part of really post-COVID times, we're relying on a cheap and affordable technology to strengthen the voices of workers.

Pink:

In the past we've done similar connectivity, see technology, which has proven more expensive, but now technology has evolved. This is a very good example of how we can use technology to allow workers to speak up. And as part of this process, you want to make sure that it doesn't just stop as a piloting phase, but you want to be able to eventually scale up the piloting phase and bring it further to perhaps with a seafood taskforce that can elevate up to scale as an industry wide approach. And at the same time, we also see, we work as I mentioned trafficking, it can't be addressed by us alone, by the global buyers, but also has to be worked on at the local level through with partnerships that Green Rock has done with Dissect as well in terms of being at the front line, understanding what the workers problems are, addressing their concerns, day-to-day life and giving them access to services that they need.

Pink:

And at the same time was mentioned in the beginning already. The impact of COVID is going to have even more pressure on safe and ethical recruitment. And we also, at the same time testing a new approach, because we have to admit the MOU process is quite complex, very difficult to get fishery workers to come through the MOU process is quite costly. So we're trying to come up with a new model that would facilitate easier movement of fishery workers into this sector. And these are some of the things that we want to achieve out of this joint collaboration, I think and we'll address on trafficking and forced labor that we see in the Thai fishing sector. Yes. Thank you.

Mary Vigil:

Great. Thank you so much Pink and a thank you also to our panelists. Our panelist from IOM, we have Kristin, and then we have Christa from IJM and Kam from resonance and Pink from Mars Petcare. We'll now open the floor again for audience questions, audience, please use the same question and answer feature located to the right in the dark gray vertical toolbar to enter your questions for the panelists.

And while we wait for that, I have a question to our panelists. As we're talking about these innovative ways in which we can use technology and also looking at ways to effectively monitor and prevent trafficking, I'm wondering about your thoughts on how can businesses and NGOs go deeper to effectively monitor and prevent trafficking and forced labor?

Mary Vigil:

As we know, one of the points that investor Richmond made earlier was looking at how can prevention efforts more effectively disrupt traffickers business models. So with that in mind, how might collectively all of you are painless representing, the private sector faith-based, as well as NGOs, how do you see that you all can play a role in effectively disrupting the traffickers business models and any technology that you've already mentioned that you want to highlight that can play a role in that would be really appreciated. Thank you.

Kristin:

I'm happy to jump in on that one. I think that, we have a really good example as well, working with the private sector, private sector is critical and looking at their supply chain, one thing that we've been doing a lot more in the last year and we'll continue to do with US funding to the global fund to eliminate modern slavery is to focus on the ethical recruitment and recruitment fees, because we know that when we talk about forced trafficking, forced labor trafficking, we know that half the victims of forced labor are vulnerable because of the exorbitant amount of recruitment fees.

Kristin:

And of course we all promote a model of no recruitment fees. Nobody should have to pay for their job. Nobody should have to pay any fees. And now we'll see, I'm sure, more and more desperation for work, especially as the economy is really going to take a major hit. So we have been working with the private sector through our innovative program to develop online due diligence tools for suppliers and recruiters, to look at their recruitment methods and to ensure that fees are not being charged along the way. So I think private sector is critical in the COVID response. And as we are facing such an economic downturn, we really need to focus our efforts.

Kristin:

So I would just highlight our work that we're doing with the private sector on ethical recruitment and developing these due diligence recruitment tools for these suppliers, that can be rolled out and are already being rolled out in the Philippines and across Asia through our campaign, through our crest program, which is a private sector partnership with a lot of the recruitment agencies.

Mary Vigil:

Thank you for that, Kristin. And I'm wondering, does Mars Petcare, would you like to go next?

Pink:

Sure. Just on the engagement with private sector. I think that's very important. I actually have multiple hats. I used to work with the UN. I recently joined the private sector and I think one thing that is critical and that is the private sector being on other side now on the private sector is kind of, either ones who are implementing it on the ground. I think what's important for Mars that we are very committed to ensuring there's proper human rights due diligence in our process. I understand that we have direct leverage of course, on our tier one suppliers, we put in place very strong social compliance program

against the supplier code of conduct. And also we also link very closely to the standards set the STF, sorry, Seafood Task Force has put in place, but at the same time, we also ensure that there's transparency in our supply chain in terms of, are you able to trace where all our products are being processed from all the way from the vessel up to where it's being posted into a Chan or a pouch and this something that we continue to adhere with.

Pink:

And I think we have to work with, we can't do this alone. We recognize that. I think that's why I think part of our model is to create these kind of different collaborative models with NGO partners and also with other global buyers to try to really make a difference, like how to make the improvements in the industry. One thing I would like to perhaps emphasize that we would like to continue to push is stronger policy advocacy with the government as well. Because one thing that the private sector can do in terms of help with compliance, but we also need the strong regulatory and stronger law enforcement that needs to be coupled with it. And I think on that part, we need to rely on the collaboration of all parties. Bring us to that front.

Christa:

Yeah. I just want to echo Pink, I think. Yeah, that so right on. And I think the collaboration we see in the [inaudible 01:02:31] between Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, between all of us, between IOM, IJM, dozens of partners on the ground, corporations like Mars and the Walmart Foundation, the Seafood Taskforce and others. We rock as the implementing partner. There's so much a positive collaboration there. And I think we're really starting to see progress is this alignment between the labor sector, the justice sector and the social service or community-based response. Because what we often found is that positive labor kind of preventative mechanisms were being put in place or positive regulations, a criminal activity to undermining those and moving around those every time, because there was no accountability for them. And there wasn't alignment between justice and labor sector.

Christa:

So I think when we start to see corporations that advocate for and demand that level of alignment within governments, and then for those of us on the ground, working with governments and NGOs from IOM to us, to others, as we start to bring together that more holistic response, we really start to see progress. So an example of that was in Cambodia, where I am responsible for repatriating these hundreds of survivors identified throughout the region, corporations were advocating to government and government was trying to figure out how to put together that response. And so, what we did was work with the police to start to get involved in that collaborative effort of building criminal profiles of trafficking activity, based on these returnees testimonies and data. They were able to identify the majority of trafficking networks that were operating cross border.

Christa:

They obtained 18 convictions within a year and a half, which tore down a lot of these networks. And what that did was put out assigned to the legal kind of licensed recruiting agencies who are working on the backend with these community-based smaller trafficking networks, that they can no longer work with them anymore. And it started to build some support for that positive preventative kind of labor protection efforts. And then build the collaboration between source and destination country. So yeah, I think if we can bring this together, this labor sector justice and social service community-based effort



together, we will really start to see that prevention criminal deterrence support the positive efforts, so they can really thrive in worker and labor protection.

Mary Vigil:

[crosstalk 01:04:51] Please Kam.

Kam:

Yeah. On the final point, on the remaining part of the questions, because I see the mentioning of like technologies and how you make that solutions or change States. So it does not need to be new kind of technology, but any solutions that private sector or civil societies, development agency come up with and want to implement. I think one of the key lesson learned from the experience is that we need to gain buy-in from the stakeholders who are the one that will be using it as well, in order for it to be sustainable in the long run. After the project or the initiatives for examples, in the seafood supply chains as khun Pink has mentioned, sometimes the suppression is dynamic. It's not the same boat every time, every purchase order that we will sell to the same companies so that's why it needs to be the industry efforts.

Kam:

And it can be from top down, from the Seafood Taskforce, or it needs to be from the bottoms up as well. What I'm saying, for example, when we try to test run the new tools, we need to see applications with the fishermen, one of the key challenge is to gain buy-in from the vessel owners for them to have the incentive, to want to use it, and then continue to pay to use it afterwards, after the project. And we need to have consistent stakeholder engagement consultation. Talk to them, find the point where they also see value in using these tools, not only for workers voice, but also beneficial for their business as usual.

Kam:

And so they have incentive to continue to use it. I think these dimensions of finding these sweet spot where solutions for social issues can fit well within the business and economy dimension is also important to sustain how the problem can be solved and scaled in the long run. Thank you.

Mary Vigil:

Great. Thank you, Kan, for those insights. And thank you also to the panelists for all your responses to this very important question. And so, at this time also, I'd also like to thank also the audience, we've had a few questions that we won't be able to get to, but we will be following up with all of you in a few days, in which we will categorize some of the themes and questions and resources for all of you in an email. So with that, I'd also like to momentarily, our producer Basty will post a survey in the chat box and to please take a minute to fill that out and let us know what you liked about today's session and what you would like to hear more of. And I'd also particularly like to encourage all of the USAID staff in the field.

Mary Vigil:

If you have any particular type of input ideas or suggestions for us over at the USAID headquarters in Washington, that you would like to see more of, or that you need support around when it comes to counter trafficking in the field, I encourage you to please contact us with that information. And I'll explain a little bit more shortly about the best way to contact us. So please, everyone, if you could please view our USAID C-TIP Website, we have a lot of information on there, especially where our World

Day Against Trafficking and we have links to our survivor series, our survivor interview as well, blogs, tweets, US leadership videos, and also in a couple of weeks, look out for the agency notice for USAID staff, to provide us feedback on our revisions to the C-TIP policy. Also on the website, you will find our new C-TIP brochure and program map that you are seeing on the screen right now.

Mary Vigil:

And you can also access that also on the USAID C-TIP website, and the program map shows where we have programmed over the years and the amount of USAID investments into those programs. And so with that, again, I'd like to thank all of you for being here, our panelists, our leadership, our producers, the C-TIP team working behind the scenes. And again, thank you all for attending and participating in this event. As I said, we will follow up with you soon, have a wonderful rest of the day. Thank you.

Kristin:

Bye everyone.