

## **KEY INITIATIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Prevention**

#### *Proactive Enforcement and Detection of Cases*

1. The Taskforce stepped up proactive enforcement against TIP cases by intensifying audits on possible shell companies seeking to hire foreign workers (FWs). Joint efforts between Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and Singapore Police Force (SPF) were conducted to investigate suspected TIP cases.
2. The Taskforce thoroughly investigated all potential TIP cases reported, including referrals from civil society organisations (CSOs) and members of the public. Even if follow-on investigations established that not all elements of TIP were fully made out for some of these cases, individuals or companies were taken to task if investigations revealed that they had committed other violations of our laws.

#### *Strengthen Competency within the Taskforce*

3. One of the major areas of focus for the Taskforce in 2012 was enhancing internal enforcement capabilities. This includes developing and implementing standard procedures within and across enforcement agencies to identify and manage TIP related cases and also working with foreign enforcement agencies to share information on TIP and investigate into potential cases.

#### *Safeguards put in place to protect Migrant Workers*

4. Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs) Rest Day policy was implemented on 1 January 2013. This will reduce the likelihood of social isolation and increase opportunities for distressed FDWs to seek help. MOM also interviews randomly-selected FDWs working for the first time in Singapore during their initial months of employment and maintains a dedicated helpline for distressed FDWs.

## *Raise Awareness Among Vulnerable Groups and Key Stakeholders*

5. The Taskforce continued to spend considerable effort to raise awareness of TIP as we believe that public awareness of TIP is an essential precursor to victim identification and care. Some of the key work done in 2012:

### a) Raising Public Awareness

- Active publicity through TV programmes such as Crimewatch and main broadsheets like The Straits Times.
- The TIP Taskforce also funded the Photography Exhibition "Bought & Sold Voices of Human Trafficking" organised by EmancipAsia Ltd, which was held in July 2012.  
The TIP Taskforce launched an S\$80,000 TIP Public Awareness Grant in February 2013. The grant will support public education efforts on TIP by interested individuals or organisations.

### b) Education of Migrant Workers:

- A new pre-employment regulatory condition was introduced in November 2012 to explicitly require employers to ensure that the entire IPA letter in the worker's native language<sup>1</sup> is sent to the worker prior to departure from his/her home country;
- Pilot pre-departure briefings were conducted for FWs in China, India and Bangladesh.
- In 2012 a new Settling-in Programme (SIP) was introduced for FDWs to help first-time FDWs cope better with living and working in Singapore and foster better working relationships with their employers; and
- Other outreach efforts to educate FWs about their employment rights and avenues for assistance. Such efforts included, *inter alia*, a guidebook for Work Permit holders, roadshows, posters, newsletters and flyers.

### c) Education of Employers and Employment Agencies:

- Regular Circulars to employers, reminding them of their obligations to the FWs they hire. Employers were reminded to comply with our laws regarding FW's well-being, i.e. compliance with Employment Act (EA), the EFMA and the Work Injury Compensation Act (WICA); and

---

<sup>1</sup> The IPA is available in five different languages Bengali, English, Hindi, Mandarin and Tamil.

- Employment Agency Bulletin for Employment Agencies which communicate key changes to the employment agency framework and feature best practices which employment agencies can adopt. In 2012 MOM published 9 such bulletins.

### *Enhance Understanding of the International TIP Situation*

6. The Taskforce continued to work to better understand the international TIP situation. This included study trips to Taiwan, Indonesia, and Thailand, as well as consultations with various partners who have a keen interest in combating trafficking, including CSOs, Embassies and academia.

## **Prosecution**

### *Review of Legislations*

7. Singapore is in the process of enacting an Organised Crime Act which would target organised crime groups and organised crime activities. Singapore is also reviewing existing laws and studying the possibility of enacting new legislation specific to TIP.

8. MOM also revised the Employment Agencies Act (EAA) which took effect in April 2011; as well as the EFMA which was implemented in November 2012:

- The employment agencies regulatory framework was enhanced to tighten enforcement against errant and unlicensed employment agencies. The new EAA was amended to introduce new offences, increase enforcement options and enhance the penalties for existing offences.
- The amended EFMA and its subsidiary legislation include new offences with tougher penalties that partly address potential labour TIP offences.

### *Investigations and Prosecutions*

9. The Joint Operations Directorate (JOD), a centralised unit within MOM was set up to be the main contact point to assist in the identification, delegation and coordination of investigations of all potential TIP cases identified and raised

to MOM. This has strengthened inter-agency coordination and helped to speed up the investigative process of potential TIP cases.

10. The Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) also formed a dedicated unit to handle TIP cases. This team will continue to work closely with MOM and SPF to ensure thorough and speedy investigation of cases and prosecution of offenders.

## **Protection**

### *Identification and Treatment of TIP Victims*

11. The treatment of TIP victims has been standardised to ensure that victims, when identified, are not automatically deported. They would also be provided with a range of supporting services, depending on their needs and circumstances. This includes the issuance of special pass to legitimise their stay in Singapore and allowing them to seek temporary employment during the investigation period. FDWs whose cases have been closed are also given opportunities to stay in Singapore to secure new employment.

### *Support Services and Assistance*

12. The Taskforce helps CSOs and other entities which run shelters and services for TIP victims with funding and provides funding for ad-hoc refurbishment projects and training for officers. For instance, the Taskforce had worked with the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union, the Migrant Workers' Centre (MWC) and the International Lutheran Seamen's Mission (ILSM) in March 2012, to put up posters and signages at Jurong Fishery Port (JFP) to inform distressed fishermen of possible avenues for assistance. Recognising the need to offer better protection and rehabilitation to the TIP victims, the TIP Taskforce also worked closely with the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) to expand the funding structure for accommodation and rehabilitation programmes for TIP victims who choose to stay on as prosecution witnesses.

## **Partnerships**

13. The Taskforce continued to actively engage various stakeholders, including CSOs, Embassies and academia, to hear their views and develop a more effective and sustainable strategy to combat TIP.

### *Local Partnerships*

- In Jan 2013, the Taskforce engaged CSOs and key stakeholders to seek their views on TIP related issues and continued to be committed in holding regular sessions with them.
- In Feb 2013, the Taskforce also briefed students from the Singapore Management University (SMU) for them to learn more about TIP.

14. The Taskforce also works with partners in foreign Embassies/Representative Offices based in Singapore to uncover suspected TIP cases.

### *Regional and International Partnerships*

15. Singapore recognises the need for close partnerships with regional and international partners. In 2012, Singapore continued working with partners from United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Group of Friends (GoF) United Against Human Trafficking in New York and Geneva, ASEAN Heads of Specialist Units (HSU) on Trafficking and ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SOMTC) Working Group on TIP. The Taskforce also participated in a roundtable discussion on “Managing Cross-Border Movement of People: Promoting Capacity and Response for Irregular Migration” organised by the Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies, RSIS, Singapore.