

# Transnational organized crime value in SE Asia exceeds USD100-B per year - UN

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## ABSTRACT

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## FULL TEXT

BANGKOK, April 26 (PNA/Bernama) -- The value of transnational organized crime in Southeast Asia is conservatively estimated to exceed USD100 billion per year, according to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Its Regional Representative in the Southeast Asia and the Pacific Jeremy Douglas said that the enormous figure nearly doubled the gross domestic product (GDP) of Myanmar, eight times the GDP of Cambodia and 13 times the GDP of Laos.

Illicit money flows increasingly posed a significant threat to sustainable economic development worldwide, with detrimental effects, he said in his remarks at the Second Regional Conference on Enhancing Cooperation on Border Management in ASEAN here, Monday.

He pointed out that this included the fuelling of corruption of public officials and the diverting of valuable resources away from essential services as well as the distortion of markets to the detriments of individuals and businesses that played by the rules.

"In Asia this poses a particular challenge," Douglas said.

The two-days conference, which were attended by officers from ASEAN member states, including Malaysia, was opened by Thailand's Deputy Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ministry Vitavas Srivihok.

According to Douglas, already the drug-related crimes in East Asia and the Pacific, were confirmed to generate a value exceeding USD31 billion per year and it was growing.

"At the same time trade in counterfeit goods and fraudulent medicines - some very dangerous medicines - amount to the equally stunning annual value of USD30 billion per year," he said.

He pointed out that the transnational crime of smuggling and trafficking of people in the Mekong sub-region, amounted to a modest value of over USD2 billion per year, but the human damage was far beyond reasonable measurement.

He explained that controlling the illegal flows of goods, people and money has increasingly become a challenge that governments could not address alone.

Douglas said that for some countries, these crimes posed a threat to national stability and the security of population while in other countries, it had impacted their economic development or the health of citizens.

Douglas said that it was beyond any doubt that every country in Asia was negatively affected by transnational organized crime in one way or another. (PNA/Bernama)

JMC/ssc

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