

KEY ISSUES OF WOMEN PRISONERS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THAI PRISONS



Nathee Chitsawang
Thailand Institute of Justice

Current Issues of Women Prisoners in Thailand

- Prison Overcrowding
- Shortage of Staff
- Characteristics of Thai Women Prisoners
- Treatment Programmes



Prison Overcrowding

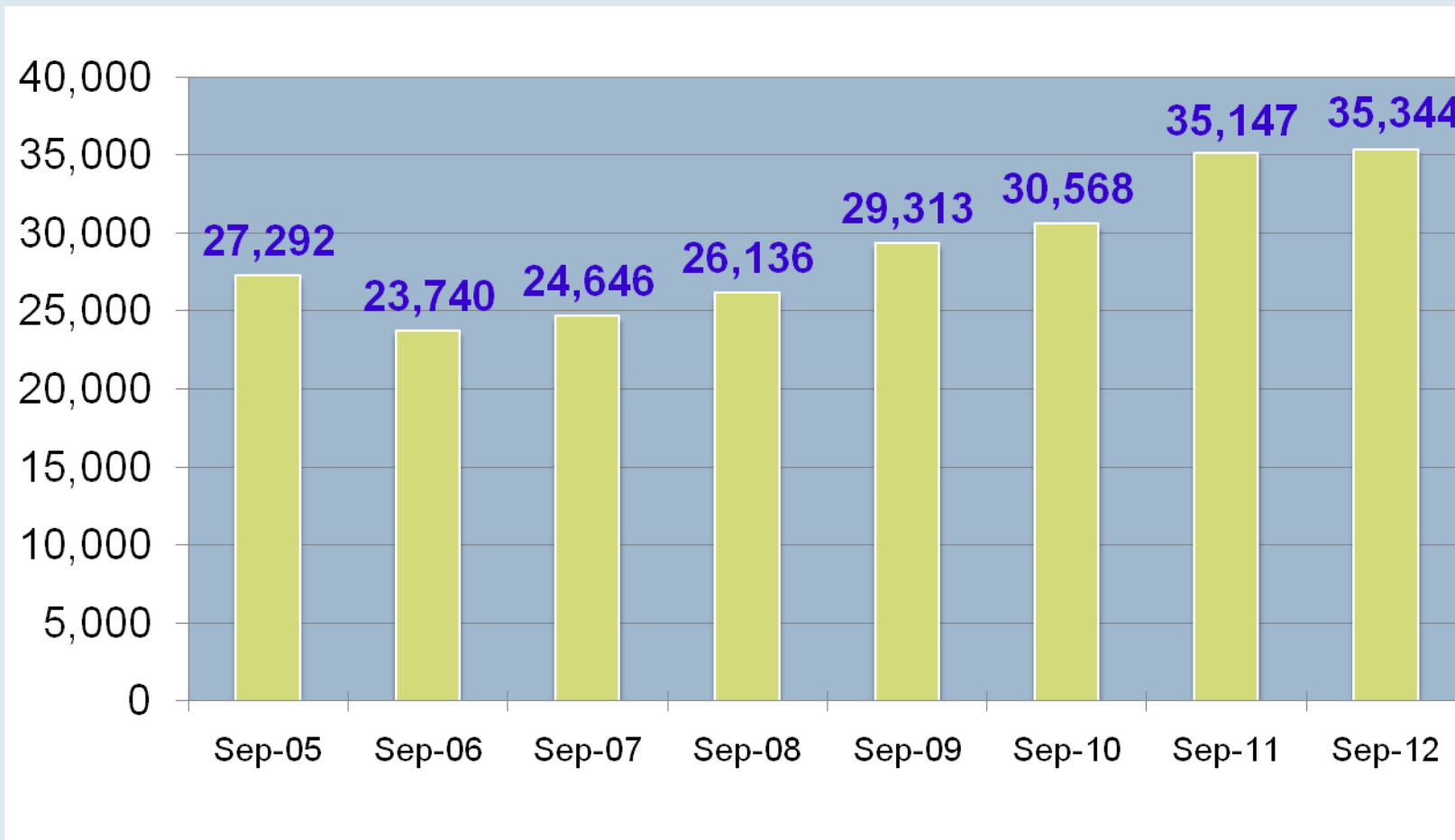
List of the Countries Having the Highest Percentage of Female Prisoners, 2011

	Country	Percentage of Female Inmates (%)
1.	Maldives	21.6
2.	Hongkong - China	20.0
3.	Bahrain	18.5
4.	Andorra	16.4
5.	Macau - China	14.8
6.	Qatar	14.7
7.	Thailand	14.6

Source: Walmsley, R. (2011) World Female Imprisonment List (2nd Edition), International Centre for Prison Studies (ICPS)

Prison Overcrowding

Number of Female Prison Population (including remandees), 2005 - 2012



Source: The Centre of Prisoner Statistics, Planning Division, Department of Corrections

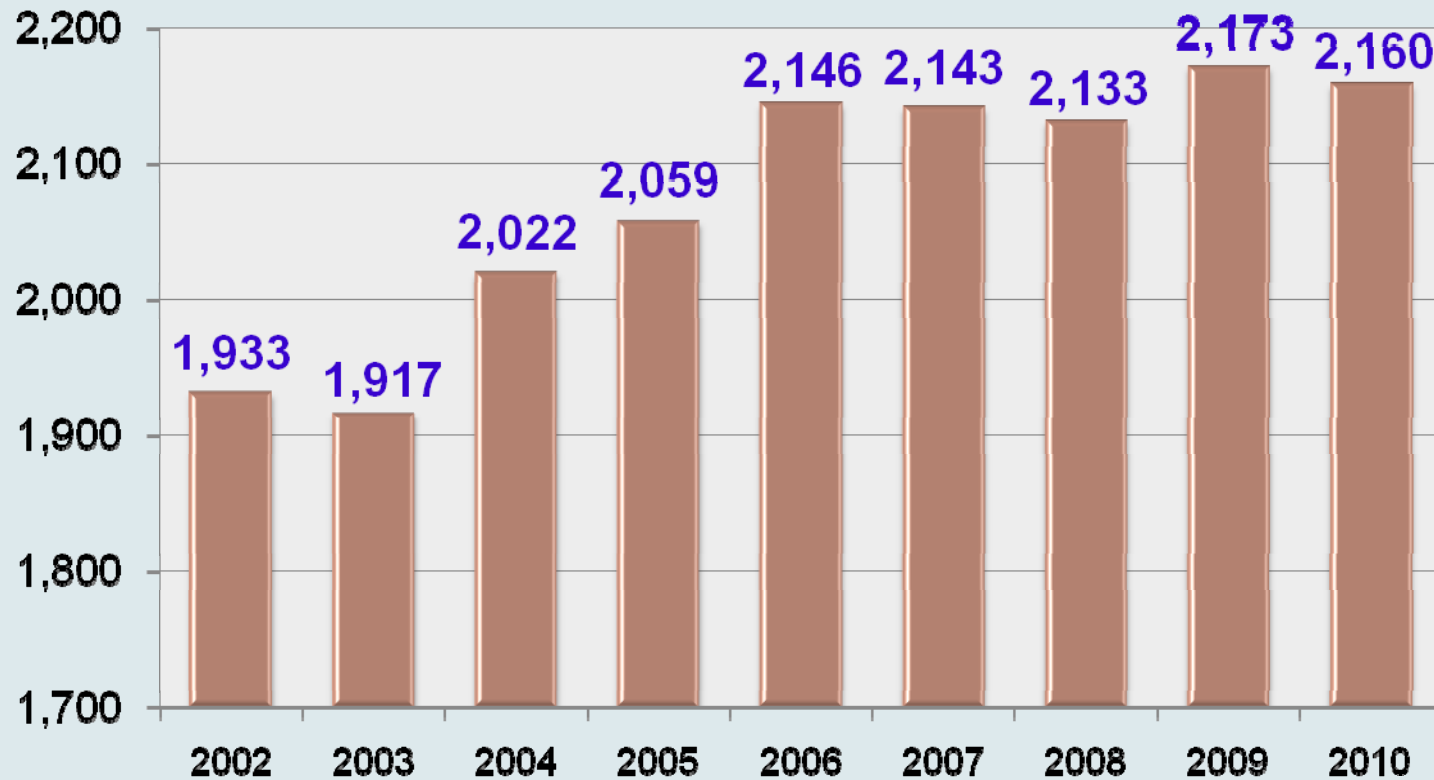
Prison Overcrowding

- ❑ Increasing number of drug-related offenders
- ❑ Only 8 women correctional institutions & 21 women prisoner units
- ❑ Lack of alternative-to-imprisonment measures



Shortage of Female Prison Staff

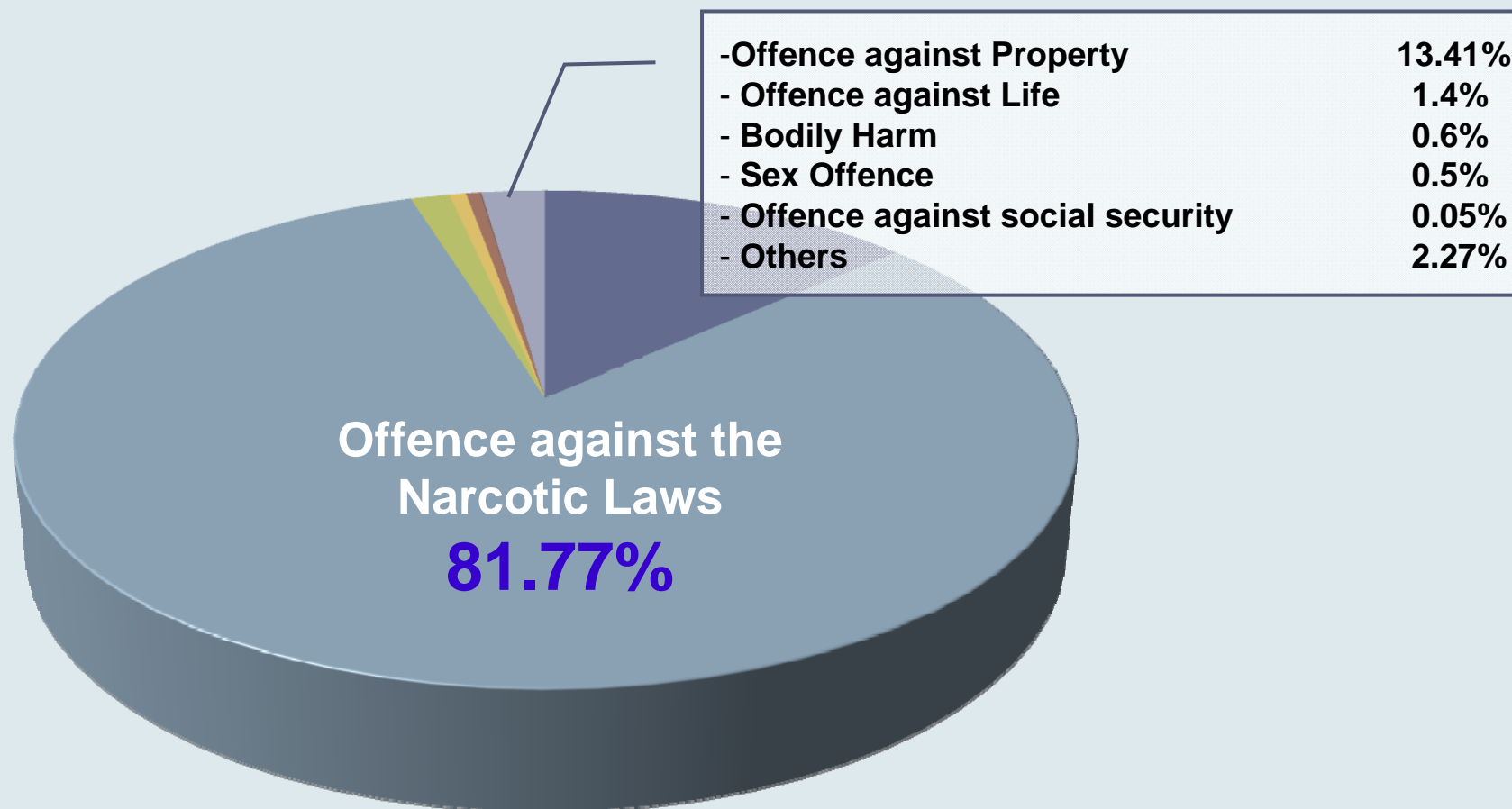
Number of Female Officers at Thai Department of Corrections, 2002 - 2010



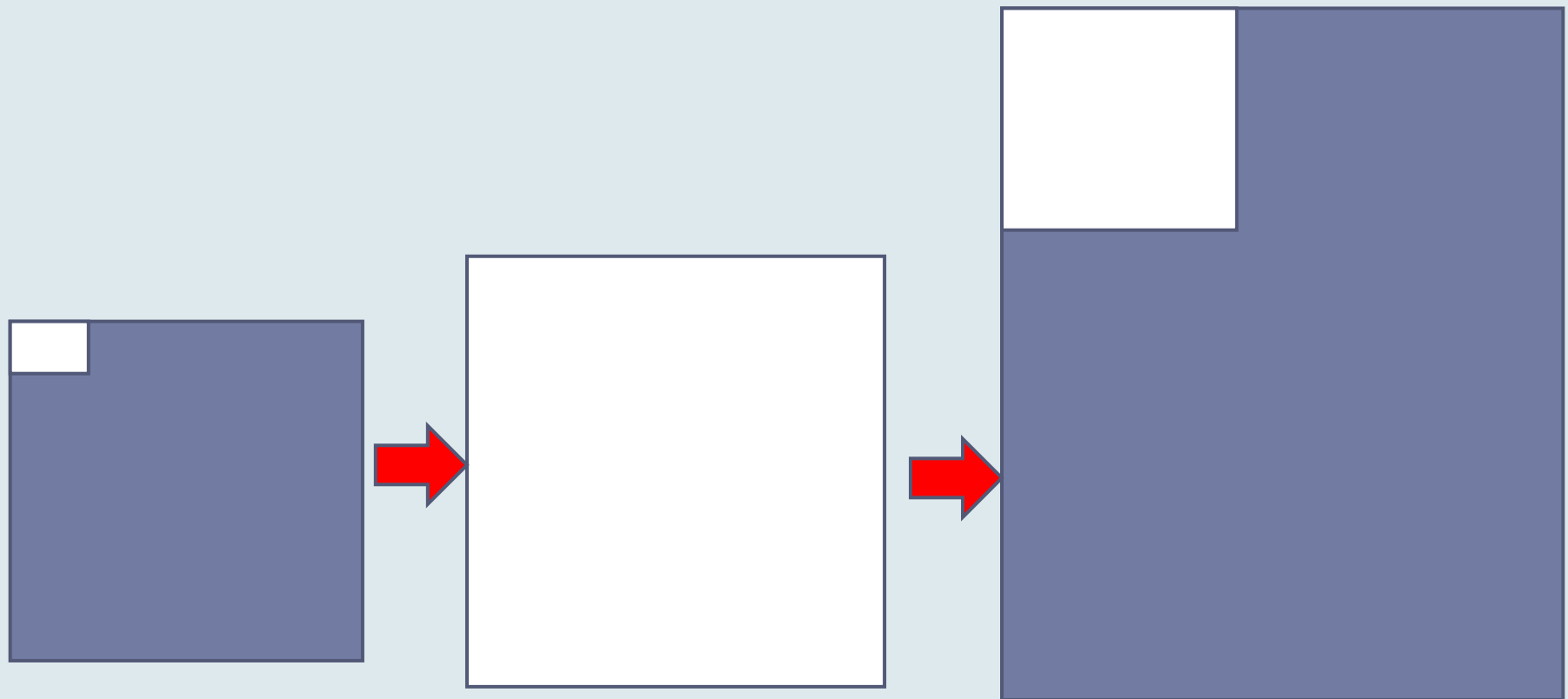
Source: Personnel Division, Department of Corrections

Characteristics of Thai Female Prisoners

Percentage of Female Convicted Inmates Classified by Offence (as of May 31, 2012)



Facilities



Alternative Measures to Prison

- Lack of alternative measures to prison
- Because.....

Characteristics of Thai Female Prisoners

Number of Female Inmates Convicted for Crimes against Narcotic Laws Classified by Type of Drugs (as of May 31, 2012)

Type of Drugs	Number of Female Convicted Inmates
Heroin	287
Cannabis	146
Opium	33
Methamphetamine	20,235
Inhalant	6
Morphine	0
Cocaine	188
Others	294
Total	21,189

Source: The Centre of Prisoner Statistics, Planning Division, Department of Corrections

Characteristics of Thai Female Prisoners

Number of Female Inmates Convicted for Crimes against Narcotic Laws Classified by Type of Drug Offence (as of May 31, 2012)

Type of Drug Offence	Number of Female Convicted Inmates
Category “Drug Use”:	
- Use	415
- Possession	2,047
- Both use and possession	2,208
Category “Selling”:	
- Selling	6,973
- Possession for selling	8,704
- Others	842
Total	21,189

Characteristics of Thai Female Prisoners

Number of Female Convicted Inmates Classified by Age (as of May 31, 2012)

Age	Number of Female Convicted Inmates
Less than 18 – 20 years	809
More than 20 – 30 years	10,094
More than 30 – 40 years	8,857
More than 40 – 50 years	4,763
More than 50 -60 years	1,067
More than 60 years	322
Total	25,912

Characteristics of Thai Female Prisoners

Number of Female Convicted Inmates Classified by Sentence (as of May 31, 2012)

Sentence/Length of prison sentence	Number of Female Convicted Inmates
Less than 3 months – 2 years	6,570
More than 2 – 5 years	9,280
More than 5 – 10 years	4,178
More than 10 – 15 years	1,583
More than 15 – 20 years	1,085
More than 20 -50 years	3,015
Life imprisonment	195
Death penalty	6
Total	25,912

Treatment Programmes

□ Education

➤ basic level, vocational education, degree level at Open University

□ Vocational Training

➤ Handicraft making, cooking, fashion design, Thai massage

□ Recreation and Mental Development

➤ Art, Sport, Music: Art for All project, prison choir, sport behind bars, female boxing

□ Changing and Improving Lives

➤ Kamlangjai Project and Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in prison



Highlight of Treatment Programmes



Highlight of Treatment Programmes





Kamlangjai Project

under the Royal Initiative of
HRH Princess Bajrakitiyabha

“Kamlangjai”... or “Inspire”
is a powerful word
that refers to good wishes and generosity
human beings should have for one another...

Excerpts from the statement of
HRH Princess Bajrakitiyabha
at the 17th session of the Commission on Crime
Prevention and Criminal Justice

To give considerable assistance and provide development opportunity to female prisoners while they are behind the prison walls and also those prepared to be released from prisons



- Enhancing Lives of Female Inmates: ELFI
- UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules)

Lessons Learned from Kamlangjai Project



1. Special Needs

‘They have special needs and basic necessities different from men’s...’



2. Non-violent Offenders

‘ They are both victims and offenders at the same time...’



3. In Need of Diversion

‘Some of them should not have been strictly imprisoned in prisons...’



4. Negative Attitudes

‘All offenders must be severely punished...’



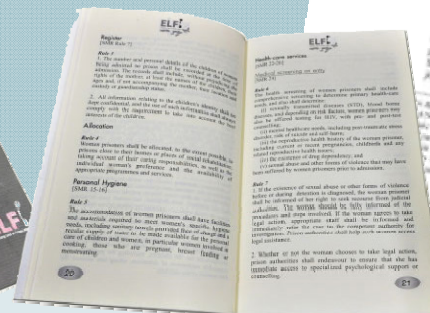
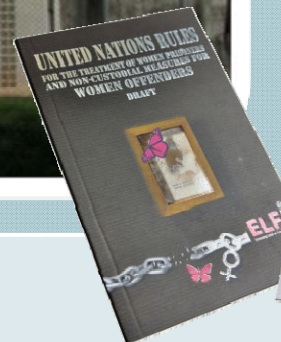
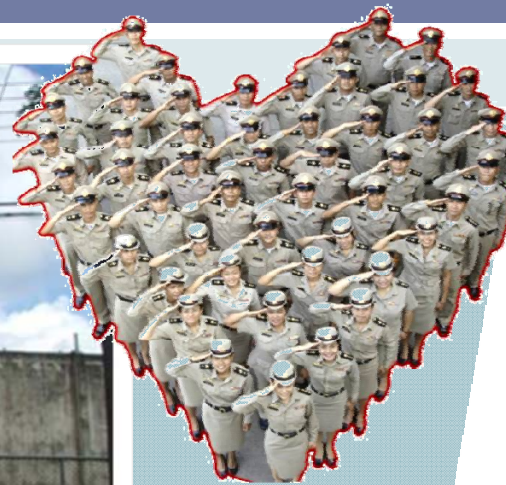
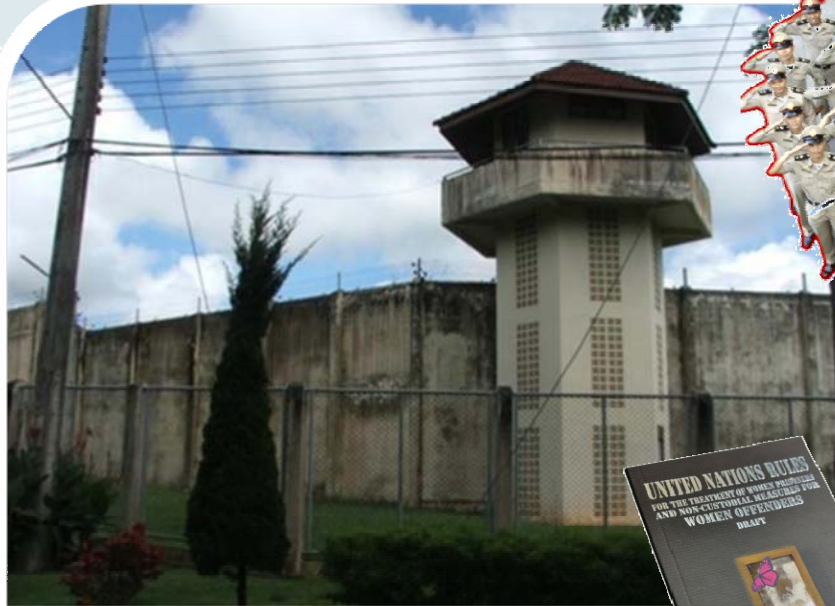
5. International Cooperation

‘Many countries have the same difficulties of the treatment of women prisoners...’

- **enhancing the standards in the treatment of women prisoners in all nations**



Implementation of the Bangkok Rules in Thai Prisons



Strategies: Macro & Micro Levels

□ Macro Level

- Temporary release measure during the court proceedings by using the Electronic Monitoring (EM) devices
- Home detention by using EM
- The suspension of sentence by placing the offenders on probation and using EM
- Parole & probation

□ Micro Level

- “Role Model” of prison: Ratchaburi Central Prison
- Role Model expansion to other prisons
- Training programme for prison staff
- Research and studies on the implementation of the Bangkok Rules

Factors Facilitating the Implementation

□ Prison Overcrowding



Factors Facilitating the Implementation

□ Actual Situation and Atmosphere in Prison

“Rule 28

Visits involving children shall take place in an environment that is conducive to a positive visiting experience, including with regard to staff attitudes, and shall allow open contact between mother and child. Visits involving extended contact with children should be encouraged, where possible.”



The custody-oriented ambience and strict regulation due to drugs and mobile phone smuggling prevention strategies

Factors Facilitating the Implementation

□ Number of Prison Officers and Support from Various Sectors

“Rule 13

Prison staff shall be made aware of times when women may feel particular distress, so as to be sensitive to their situation and ensure that the women are provided appropriate support.”



Factors Facilitating the Implementation

- Knowledge, understanding and the recognition of the importance of the Bangkok Rules



Factors Facilitating the Implementation

□ Motivation in Prison Officers



Thank You

