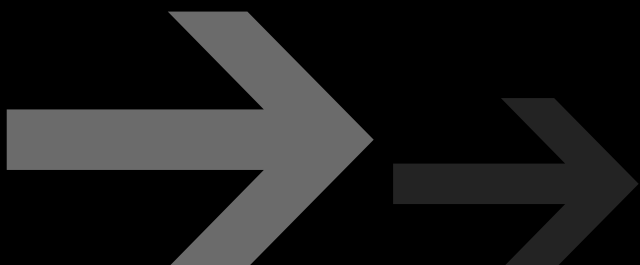


***Understanding the linkages
between child sex tourism and other forms of
commercial sexual exploitation of children
in East Asia and the Pacific***

SEPTEMBER 2008



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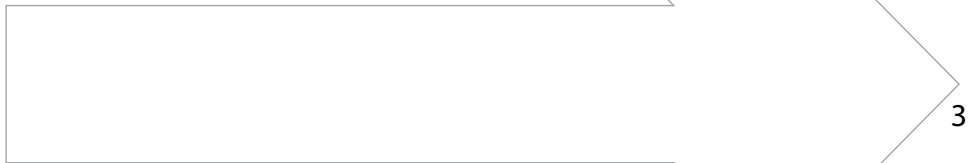
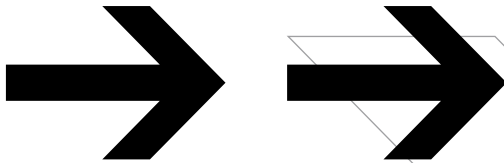
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Introduction

The tourism sector has played an important role in the economic development and growth of many countries in East Asia and the Pacific. The economic growth of tourist destination areas, however, does not always contribute to improving the quality of life of ALL children in the re.g.ion. It is undeniable that in some cases the tourism sector has become an area where sexual exploitation of children has become a tragic feature. Children found in tourism areas, for example, children employed in entertainment establishments, children living or working on the street – are being approached by ill-intentioned persons. Children are also trafficked to tourism areas for sexual purposes.

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Studies on Tourism and Child Prostitution were first conducted in the late 1990s in selected tourist destination countries in South and Southeast Asia. The findings confirmed the ne.g.ative impacts of tourism on children, and this led to a campaign against Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism in 1990, based in Bangkok. The campaign was very effective in raising the awareness of society about the situation of children being sexually exploited in tourism. The campaign also led to the establishment of a global network to End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT). Since its establishment, ECPAT has worked collaboratively with government agencies, the private sector, civil society and community-based organisations in over 70 countries around the world to protect the rights of children to be free from commercial sexual exploitation, including in the tourism industry.

This paper gives examples of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in tourism and how it is facilitated by rapid changes in the socio-economic status of people in East Asia and the Pacific and in the development of communication and information technologies in the re.g.ion. It also illustrates key initiatives in East Asia and the Pacific to address the issues and identify the gaps in child protection and recommends specific actions that are urgently needed to tackle the problem.

The development of tourism: the gains and losses

Countries in East and Southeast Asia have long been among the most popular world tourist destinations. Despite the effects of terrorism, avian flu, oil prices and natural disasters, according to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) the arrival of international tourists in ASEAN countries in 2006 showed a 9 per cent increase since 2005. Furthermore, the increase in the regional growth rate of international tourist arrivals in Asia and the Pacific was ranked second (+10%) in global terms in 2007¹. The development of infrastructure to support such tourism growth and the general economic development of tourist destinations has been coordinated both at national level and through regional agreements and projects. Networks of national and international roads and train lines and low-cost airlines enable people to travel more easily, cheaply and faster than ever before. Different types of accommodation, entertainment (e.g. restaurants, karaoke bars, shops, party events and package tours) and other facilities are also blossoming to serve a wide variety of visitors as well as newly affluent residents. The tourism industry has also greatly benefited from the development of information and communication technologies (ICT). Online ticket bookings and payments can be made at the click of a button, 24 hours a day, and contact can be made with like-minded people to arrange activities of common interest. In short, the successful performance of the regional tourism industry has greatly contributed to the rapid expansion of the economies of many countries in the East Asia and the Pacific region.

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However, the economic growth arising from tourism has not always been translated into better opportunities for children. Indeed, there is strong evidence that the protection of children from commercial sexual exploitation has been inadequately addressed within the structure and development processes of the tourism industry. It is a fact that children have increasingly been sexually exploited by ill-intentioned local and foreign tourists, as well as migrants and temporary workers who make use of the facilities developed for tourism to obtain access to children.

For instance, according to a study conducted in 2001,² frontier towns in China's Yunnan and Guanxi Provinces have greatly benefited from the re-establishment of cross-border trade between China and Vietnam since 1989. However, such towns attract not only business people and migrant workers from the two countries but also large numbers of male domestic tourists and tourists from neighbouring

¹ World Tourism Organization. *World Tourism Exceeds Expectations in 2007 – Arrivals Grow from 800 Million to 900 Million in Two Years*. Press release, 28 January 2008. Accessed on 10 July 2008 from : http://www.unwto.org/media/news/en/press_det.php?id=1665

² Davidson, Julia O'C. *Children in the Sex Trade in China*. Save the Children Sweden. Stockholm. 2001.

countries who visit in order to engage the services of prostitutes and/or gamble. The study suggested that Vietnamese women engaged in prostitution looking for customers at Trade Centres were aged between 15 and 40 years, with the majority being in their 20s. Furthermore, a *Regional Report on Child Sexual Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Pacific* (Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) launched in 2006³ indicated that prostitution of children (in exchange for money and/or in-kind compensation, e.g. taxi rides to school, clothes etc) occurs in locations that generally include hotels, nightclubs, bars and brothels and industrial sites as well as large resource and infrastructure projects and mining sites and ports where fishing and naval vessels are docked⁴. Various news reports⁵ also suggest that children are sexually exploited by local and foreign professionals employed in educational institutes and in the tourism industry (e.g. diving instructors). News reports⁶ also show that children are advertised on the Internet for sexual services, with the arrangements for this activity often made online between procurers and customers before the customers arrive at the tourist location.

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It is thus clear that, while tourism brings prosperity to countries in East Asia and the Pacific and their people, a large number of local and foreign tourists have abused the facilities and services available in the tourism industry and related businesses to prey on vulnerable children and exploit them sexually.

It should also be noted that whilst the majority of tourists and visiting/migrant workers who engage in sexual activities with children fall into the category of 'situational abusers',⁷ (as they do not initially have a particular sexual preference for children but take the opportunity to sexually abuse children as it arises), a foreign resident in a destination country who engages in sexual exploitation of children can also be classified as a child sex tourist because 'the intent of the travel involves a change of socio-economic, cultural and political environments, which reduces the individual's usual external inhibitors and in this way facilitates the sexual exploitation of children'.⁸

³ UNICEF Pacific. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in the Pacific: A Regional Report*. UNICEF, UNESCAP and ECPAT. p.14, 2006. (unpublished)

⁴ UNICEF Pacific. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in the Pacific: A Regional Report*. UNICEF, UNESCAP and ECPAT. p.14, 2006. (unpublished)

⁵ Bangkok Post (English newspaper), **CRIME: BOY MOLESTED IN KRABI: Police to expel Aust Paedophile**, Wednesday 16 August 2006, p.4, Section 1 'Home'

⁶ Bangkok Post (English newspaper), **PAEDOPHILE TEACHER NABBED: JAKARTA**, Wednesday 9 August 2006, p.8, Section 1 'In Brief – International'

⁷ The Nation Smartlife, Agency France-Press, Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA TO INVESTIGATE TEACHER WHO PUNISHES PUPILS WITH PORN, Monday 8 May 2006, p.4

⁸ ECPAT International. *Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Philippines*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2006, p.11

⁹ ECPAT International. *Combating Child Sex Tourism: Questions & Answers*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2008. p. 12.

¹⁰ ECPAT International. *Combating Child Sex Tourism: Questions & Answers*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2008. p. 17.

How child sex tourism is linked with other forms of sexual exploitation of children

Child sex tourism and the prostitution of children

Large numbers of children and young people in many countries in the region are forced to leave school or are unable to continue their education to higher levels because they need to look for employment to provide economic support to their families and/or themselves. This situation is further exacerbated for children who find themselves living in an environment where factors push them into leaving their homes, e.g. because of domestic violence, abuse or negligence at home. A UNICEF report on violence against children published in 2006⁹ indicates that children who experience domestic violence are at great risk of being sexually exploited. Children who run away from home and live on the street in order to escape an abusive home environment have to fend for themselves for survival. They are also easily approached by ill-intentioned persons who take advantage of their vulnerable situation and use them for exploitative purposes. Some disadvantaged children are employed in low-skilled jobs at tourist-related businesses. Such employment includes work as waiters/waitresses and dancers in entertainment settings and restaurants, kitchen staff, or masseuses in massage parlours. Often, these children find themselves working long hours and without adequate supervision to ensure their safety and well being. Low wages, working environments that are not child friendly, and pressures to provide economic support to their families or themselves for survival put these young people at a very high risk of being approached by child sex tourists or being lured by procurers into prostitution. A report by the National Commission on Youth, South Korea, presented at an international symposium in December 2005¹⁰ suggests that many [runaway] children are employed in adult entertainment establishments and are subsequently sexually exploited.

Today, peer pressure and consumerism can also play a key role in facilitating the process of engaging children in sexually exploitative activities. Anecdotal evidence suggests that, with the persuasion of their college peers, college girls

⁹ UNICEF. Regional Assessment on Violence against Children in East Asia and the Pacific Region. UNICEF. Thailand. 2005.

¹⁰ ECPAT International. Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: South Korea. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2006.

in northern Thailand travel to southern tourist areas during college vacations to engage in sexual activities in exchange for money¹¹ – not only to pay for their college fees but also to buy expensive goods, clothes, mobile phones etc. They engage in such exploitative activities without having full understanding of the serious consequences for their future.

It is clear that child sex tourism fosters child prostitution in general. Once lured into prostitution in tourist areas, children also become a commodity for locals who seek children for sex.

It is important to note that not only girls but also boys are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation while working in such environments. For example, according to *Salweennews Magazine* (2005),¹² a large numbers of boys from Myanmar escape the political turmoil in their country to seek employment and better lives in Thailand. Many boys enter employment initially in Thailand on farms and construction sites but, because of the low wages and poor treatment received from their employers, soon move into working as waiters in bars, and from there may end up engaging in prostitution.¹³ Similar situations exist in a number of tourism destinations within the region.¹⁴

Tourism and economic growth are also bringing into disarray traditional practices intended to provide children with some degree of protection. ‘Bride price’, a traditional practice in Pacific Island countries that takes the form of “an exchange between families and historically was central to building strong and binding relationships between families and ensuring the well-being of the bride”,¹⁵ has in some cases been distorted and used to facilitate a form of CSEC. Some children are forced to marry foreign logging workers in exchange for money, gifts, houses and cars.¹⁶ This constitutes child prostitution, which is defined as the purchase of sex from children in exchange for money or in-kind compensation.

¹¹ ECPAT International, *Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Thailand*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2006.

¹² Salween News Network. *Salweenpost*, 26, 1 October – 15 November 2005. Accessed from: www.salweennews.org,

¹³ - Salween News Network. *Salweenpost*, 26, 1 October – 15 November 2005. Accessed from: www.salweennews.org,

- BBC News, *Thailand Thailand's child trafficking industry*, by Thembi Mutch,

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/6277176.stm. Last Updated: Saturday, 7 July 2007, 11:24 GMT 12:24 UK. Accessed on 10 October 2007

¹⁴ UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (UNIAP) and World Vision, *Sex, Sun and Heritage: Tourism Threats and Opportunities in South East Asia*, A report on best “practices” on tourism and trafficking for UNIAP and World Vision by Heather A. Peters, Ph.D., 2007, p.22

¹⁵ UNICEF Pacific. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in the Pacific: A Regional Report*. UNICEF, UNESCAP and ECPAT. p.16, 2006. (unpublished)

Child sex tourism and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes

The UN Protocol to *Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*¹⁷ defines trafficking as all acts involved in the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children within or across borders for the purpose of exploitation. It does not need to involve the use of threat, force, other forms of coercion or abuse of power in the case of trafficking of a child. Importantly, the *Protocol* states that the consent of the child is considered to be irrelevant. This is because a child requires special protection from actions that carry consequences not fully known or understood and to which she/he therefore cannot consent. Offenders will often use coercion, deception and violence to control and manipulate the child for exploitation, leading a child or young person into a situation of abuse while claiming that she/he has entered it with knowledge and consent.¹⁸

While trying to escape from poverty, and in their search for a better life, many children become victims of human trafficking. Many countries in Southeast Asia are the origin, transit and destination of human trafficking, including trafficking of children for sexual purposes. Numerous children are trafficked locally as well as across borders for prostitution to popular tourist areas, thus serving the demand from locals and foreigners. According to a recent study conducted by the Research Institute at Mahidol University, Thailand, children from ethnic minorities are trafficked from their highland homes to Bangkok and Pattaya to provide sex services to regular 'clients'.¹⁹ In Indonesia, in recent years, the tourist islands of Bali and Batam have gained reputations as child sex tourism locations, and have become major destinations for trafficked girls and women.²⁰ Children in the Philippines are trafficked internally upon false promises of jobs in restaurants, only to end up working in bars and video/karaoke bars that cater to tourists, being drugged and forced to provide sex services for foreign and local customers.²¹ In Papua New Guinea, children and women are trafficked from rural areas to Port Moresby and forced to provide sex services for foreigners.²²

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¹⁶ UNICEF Pacific. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in the Pacific: A Regional Report*. UNICEF, UNESCAP and ECPAT. p.16, 2006. (unpublished)

¹⁷ G.A. res.55/25, annex II, 55 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No.49) at 60, U.N.doc. A/45/49 (Vol.I), 2001, came into effect in December 2003

¹⁸ ECPAT International. *Upholding the Right of Children to Live Free from Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Interventions and Recommendations*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2007. p. 48.

¹⁹ ECPAT International. *Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Thailand*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2007.

²⁰ ECPAT International. *Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Indonesia*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2006.

²¹ ECPAT International. *Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Philippines*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2006.

²² UNICEF Pacific. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in the Pacific: A Regional Report*. UNICEF, UNESCAP and ECPAT. p.15, 2006. (unpublished)

Child sex tourism and child pornography

The Internet has unfortunately played a key role in facilitating the expansion of child sex tourism networks and their activities as it enables child sex tourists to make direct contact with their peers to exchange information on child sex tourism locations and with vulnerable children across the globe. Some abusers make arrangements to have sexual contact with children even while still in their home countries.²³ As is evident, the misuse of ICT has enabled the organisation of child sex tours to become quicker and easier through the use of online facilities. As mentioned earlier, the development of ICT has not only facilitated the growth of the tourism industry but has also strengthened networks of child sex abusers – mainly preferential child sex abusers and paedophiles.

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Internet facilities that have been used to facilitate the growth of the tourism industry have also been fully exploited by child pornography networks. There are an increasing number of examples showing the growing link between child sex tourism and child pornography. One of the main reasons for this relationship is the fact that the law in the sex exploiters' countries is often strict in relation to child sexual abuse and child pornography, while legislation and its enforcement may be much looser in certain developing countries that are also tourist destinations. As an example, a news report²⁴ reported the arrest of a Japanese man who allegedly ran a website in Cambodia featuring pictures of naked minors and announcing child sex tours available for Japanese tourists. Abusers are able to view and select the children of their choice and make the necessary arrangements with procurers before their arrival in the destination country. In Thailand, for example, a news report²⁵ showed that children and women were being recruited by a male foreigner and a local Thai woman in Pattaya (a popular sexual tourism area in the country) to perform sex services in front of a camera which was then broadcast in 'real time' online over the Internet upon instant payment by viewers across the globe.

As observed in certain tourist destinations, in order to conduct such practices abusers try to avoid being found out by hotel housekeepers. It has been discovered that, as a result, child sex tourists are increasingly opting to use long-

²³ ECPAT International. *Combating Child Sex Tourism: Questions & Answers*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2008. p. 6.

²⁴ <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20030906a8.html>, 6 September 2003, Man held over naked minor photos: YOKOHAMA (Kyodo) Police arrested a man earlier this week for allegedly posting naked photos of minors on a Web site in Cambodia that was linked to child prostitution tours he ran for Japanese, the police said Friday, accessed in July 2008

²⁵ Daily News (one of national Thai newspapers), Issue No.20,649, Wednesday 26 April 2006, p. 1 and p.13

²⁶ ECPAT International. *Combating Child Sex Tourism: Questions & Answers*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2008. p. 17.

term residential accommodation in which to conduct their activities (although hotels and guesthouses are still the main venues where sexual exploitation of children in tourism areas occurs).²⁶

Good practices in protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation in tourism

ECPAT International has been working for many years to engage the relevant actors from the private sector to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation in the tourism industry by means of a number of initiatives.

The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism

The *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism* (the Code of Conduct) has been successfully implemented in many countries across the globe, including countries in the East Asia and the Pacific region. ECPAT International, ECPAT groups in all regions and tourism companies have been the active key mobilisers in the development and implementation of the Code at the national level. The Code of Conduct was initiated by Scandinavian tour operators, ECPAT Sweden and the UNWTO in 1989. By adopting the Code of Conduct, over the past 10 years several tourism-related businesses have included child protection in their corporate social responsibility policies. Currently, over 600 tourism-related companies are signatories to the Code. In order to ensure greater protection of children from commercial sexual exploitation, Code signatories must agree to:

- Establish an **ethical policy** regarding CSEC;
- **Train their personnel** in the countries of origin and travel destinations;
- **Introduce a clause in contracts** with suppliers, stating a common repudiation of CSEC;
- Provide **information to travellers** by means of catalogues, brochures, in-flight films, ticket slips, home pages, etc;
- Provide **information to local 'key persons'** at the [tourist] destination; and
- **Report annually** on the implementation of the Code.

²⁶ ECPAT International. Combating Child Sex Tourism: Questions & Answers. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2008. p. 17.

The Code initiative also seeks to engage small enterprises to join hands in protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation. Such small enterprises simply need to sign a Letter of Intent with the Code, stating which criteria/commitments they are willing and able to fulfil.

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The Code places great emphasis on the engagement of employees of the signatory companies at all levels, from management to shop-floor. Staff at all levels must be trained to identify CSEC and gain an understanding of their key roles in protecting children from sexual exploitation on their premises. After the initial trainings, a follow-up session to increase the protection of children is carried out to ensure that the ethical policy has been established and is being implemented by the staff. Experience has shown that the training and commitment of staff of the signatory companies has been effective in increasing the protection of children from sexual exploitation. For instance, housekeeping staff of a signatory Accor hotel in Indonesia recognised a situation of child sexual exploitation and reported it to the management. The child was rescued and referred to the relevant child protection services, and the offender was arrested. A stewardess on Air France, another major Code signatory, noticed a young girl on a flight and suspected that she might be a victim of trafficking. She asked for the girl's passport and it was ultimately proved that the girl was indeed a trafficking victim, who fortunately escaped abuse thanks to the stewardess's intervention.

The Code promotes sustainable and responsible tourism; it allows signatory companies to project a good image and also to be proactive in relation to the type of customers they want to attract.

The Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT)

A Ministerial Initiative – COMMIT²⁷ – against human trafficking in the six countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-Region has recognised the linkage between child sex tourism and trafficking of children for sexual purposes. One of its sub-regional action plans focuses on engaging the tourism sector in addressing human trafficking.

²⁷ The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of the *Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT)* to combat human trafficking was signed in October 2004 by the governments of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

As part of regional activities under COMMIT, in November 2007 the Government of Thailand (in a collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Human Security) also hosted the 'Greater Mekong Sub-Region Seminar on Protecting Children from Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Tourism'. At the end of the seminar, a *Letter of Intent*²⁸ was adopted by the participants to consolidate and reinforce collaboration among the six countries at the regional level by:

- working towards establishing a Regional Registry of Child Sex Offenders and ensuring appropriately managed data sharing,
- facilitating the development of regional mechanisms (such as tourism and hotel associations) that promote and monitor standards, guidelines and certification for the private sector (e.g. the Code of Conduct),
- creating one voice/brand/slogan for a regional child-safe campaign by airlines through media such as in-flight videos, magazines, information at airports and airline websites,
- collaborating with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector to endeavour to set up a regional hotline (that harmonises national hotlines) with one short number (e.g. 141) that is language and child sensitive, and
- ensuring that in each country a focal point from the National Tourism Organisation/Ministry of Tourism forms part of the COMMIT Task Force in order to prevent and fight against child sex tourism.

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The commitment to the *Letter of Intent* will hopefully lead to speedy follow-up action at country and regional level among the governments, NGOs and the private sector to address the issues of child sex tourism within their respective countries as well as through cross-border collaboration.

ASEAN countries combating child sex tourism

A campaign entitled 'Combating Child Sex Tourism in Southeast Asia' initiated and implemented by Child Wise (ECPAT Australia) has contributed to strengthening the regional collaboration of ASEAN tourism destination and source countries²⁹

²⁸ Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, Ministry of Social Welfare and Human Security, and Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking. *Report on the Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Seminar on Protecting Children from Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Tourism*. Bangkok, Thailand. 5-6 November 2007.

²⁹ ECPAT International. *Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Australia*. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2006. p.18.

(destination countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam; source countries: Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore) in combating child sex tourism. The campaign was designed to mobilise responsible travellers and local citizens to report suspected child sex tourism on dedicated hotline numbers, deter potential child sex offenders and create a culture of intolerance toward the sexual exploitation of children.³⁰

The campaign has successfully raised community awareness and action through a broad distribution of awareness-raising material displayed across the ASEAN region. Tourists and locals in destination countries learn how to detect suspicious cases and report them to national dedicated hotline numbers. The campaign was endorsed as 'International Best Practice' by the Government of the United States in its 2006 *Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report*.³¹

Recommendations and Conclusion

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Successful tourism cooperation among various countries has significantly contributed to the success of economic growth in the region. Recognising the role of tourism in contributing to reducing the development gaps in certain countries and the need to strengthen tourism cooperation in the region, the ASEAN Tourism Agreement was ratified and signed by the heads of government/state in 2002.³² The preservation and promotion of natural, cultural and historical heritage as well as the prevention of tourism-related abuse and exploitation of women and children are identified in the Agreement to ensure Quality Tourism among its Member States in ASEAN.³³

Political commitment to prevent the sexual exploitation of children is needed not only from the State Members of ASEAN but also from all governments in the East Asia and the Pacific Region. A State's commitment to the protection of children needs to be prioritised and translated to the operational level in the same way as its commitments to other areas of the *ASEAN Tourism Agreement*. In order to achieve the long-term vision of sustainable tourism, it is essential that, with strong

³⁰ Child Wise Tourism (ed.). *2007 ASEAN Child-sex tourism review: An Outcome of the Annual Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Taskforce to Combat the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism Destinations*. Child Wise Tourism. Melbourne. August 2007. p. 31.

³¹ <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65984.htm>, accessed July 2008

³² ASEAN Secretariat. *ASEAN Tourism Agreement*. Accessed on 16 July 2008 from: <http://www.aseansec.org/13157.htm>

³³ ASEAN Secretariat. *ASEAN Tourism Agreement*. Accessed on 16 July 2008 from: <http://www.aseansec.org/13157.htm>

collaboration between governments, the private sector and other stakeholders, those bearing the relevant responsibility play an active role in protecting children from all forms of sexual exploitation in the tourism sector.

Specific Recommendations:

- An Impact Assessment Study of initiatives that invest in infrastructure, services and facilities related to tourism needs to include an assessment of the risks and impacts of development in order to protect children from sexual exploitation. The results of such a study need to be made available to the public and communities that may be affected by these initiatives in order to invite solutions from wider stakeholders before implementing such initiatives.
- Governments and the private sector need to emphasise the Protection of Children from Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Tourism in their tourism strategies and policies. Furthermore, a Minimum Standard of Practices to protect children from sexual exploitation need to be established and implemented among all those involved in the tourism sector. Measures and monitoring mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of the Standard to protect children at all operational levels of tourism-related businesses need to be adopted and enforced. For example, the *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism*³⁴ a global tool that creates direct collaboration with the private sector, has been widely adopted and implemented by 600 signatory tour operator companies. In East Asia, for example, the Asia Accor hotel group has been a core partner in implementing the Code of Conduct both in Thailand (mainly hotels) and Japan (mainly tour operators). However, in the Pacific, tourism-related companies have not yet adopted the Code, despite indications that in many Pacific Island countries CSEC in tourism is growing.
- Stronger support and collaboration between tourist sending and receiving countries are needed in order to share information and monitor the movement of child sex abusers as a preventive measure to protect children. One good example is the *Letter of Intent of the Greater Mekong Sub-Region Seminar on Protecting Children from Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Tourism* as part of the COMMIT initiative. However, there is still a need for political commitment to translate this into adequate resources to carry the *Letter of Intent* to the implementation level, which has not yet materialised. A regional ministerial initiative such as that of the Greater Mekong Sub-Region countries could be replicated in the Pacific Islands.

³⁴ www.thecode.org

- An expansion of well coordinated educational campaigns to raise awareness of child sex tourism and encourage the involvement of the public to report suspicious cases to appropriate police units or agencies is urgently needed. The campaigns should also aim to tackle 'local demand' as well as 'demand from foreign visitors'. Such campaigns will require strong collaboration between government agencies, the private sector and local communities in the destination countries in order to engage local and foreign tourists as well as commitment in the sending countries to participate in protecting children everywhere.

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