

ECPAT International

Summary on the East Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents 18-19 August 2008, Bangkok, Thailand

Background

In preparation for the East Asia and Pacific region towards the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, which will be held on 25-28 November 2008 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the Inter-Agency Group (ECPAT, UNICEF and UNESCAP) convened key stakeholders from the region in order to discuss the preparations needed for the region to input to the Congress. In the first planning meeting¹ it was agreed that the organisation of a Regional Consultation prior to the World Congress would help bring specific issues related to the East Asia and Pacific region into the World Congress III. The East Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting was therefore organised by the Inter-Agency Group on 18-19 August 2008, at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, in collaboration with and with contributions from relevant stakeholder agencies: Asian Development Bank; Asia Partnership for Human Development (Caritas Asia); AusAid; Caritas Australia; International Child Support (ICS); ILO; NZ Aid; Plan International; Save the Children; World Vision; and UNIFEM.

The East Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting aimed to provide regional stakeholders with an opportunity to:

- Examine new challenges and dimensions of commercial sexual exploitation of children and set more targeted strategies and measures to address CSEC, building on current progress;
- Examine what works in different parts of the region, including good practices and identify channels to facilitate better exchange of experiences;
- Open channels and secure greater regional/international cooperation on key issues related to CSEC (including cross-border issues) and also inter-regional cooperation;
- Catalyze a systemic and multi-sectoral approach to guarantee children's and adolescents' right to be protected from sexual exploitation; and
- Identify time-bound goals on combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children, in particular with regard to the key regional issues: 1) child prostitution and its relation to gender dynamics; 2) child trafficking for sexual purposes and its inter-linkages with migration; 3) sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism and associations with corporations and industry; and 4) sexual exploitation of children through ICT.

Processes leading to the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) Regional Preparatory Meeting:

The active participation and valuable contributions from partner agencies to the planning process for the Regional Preparatory Meeting were evident throughout the planning meetings convened regularly by the Inter-Agency Group in the lead up to the EAP Preparatory Meeting. Six thematic working groups were formed according to the key regional thematic issues which were led by identified partner agencies as follows:

Child Prostitution

1. Demand, gender and construction of sexuality (UNIFEM, ESCAP)

¹ Representatives from the following organisations participated in the first planning meeting held on 18 April 2008 in Bangkok: Asia Partnership for Human Development (Caritas Asia), Plan International, Save the Children Sweden, Save the Children UK, World Vision, ILO, UNIFEM, UNESCAP, UNICEF EAPRO and ECPAT International.

2. Linkages between violence in the home and sexual exploitation of children (UNICEF, World Vision)

Child trafficking for sexual purposes

3. Identification and return of child victims of trafficking (World Vision, UNICEF)
4. Prevention and safe migration (ILO, ECPAT)

Sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism

5. Strengthening initiatives by government and the tourism sector (ECPAT, World Vision)

New technologies and child abuse imagery

6. Sexual exploitation of children through ICT (ECPAT, World Vision)

The partner agencies attended the working groups in large numbers as well as the regular meetings of the thematic working groups prior to the Regional Meeting, which were organised in order to develop the workshop outlines and its guiding questions for the discussion in the six concurrent thematic workshops with an aim to identify targets and recommendations.

The EAP Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Congress III

Representatives from Governments, NGOs from over twenty countries in the region and children (who participated in the East Asia and Pacific Children's Forum for the World Congress III prior to the Regional Preparatory Meeting) participated in the EAP Regional Preparatory Meeting.

The Opening Session was carried out by: Mr. Shigeru Mochida, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNESCAP; H.E. Mr. Anusorn Wongwan, Minister for Social Development and Human Security, Royal Thai Government; and Ms. Yanghee Lee, Chairperson, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Opening Session was followed by a presentation of the Regional Overview on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children by Amihan Abueva, Chairperson of the Board of ECPAT International, and a session on Young People's Participation that was presented by the Children's Forum participants.

Experts in their relevant field gave presentations on the four regional thematic themes on CSEC before participants including children grouped themselves into the concurrent thematic workshops of their choices. The targets and recommendations from each thematic workshop, which also included specific recommendations from the Children's Forum, were developed and shared with the drafting committee.

A drafting committee comprised of representatives from Governments and NGOs with relevant technical expertise on the issues was formed. The members volunteered and/or were selected by the Inter-Agency Group. The drafting committee reviewed the targets and recommendations of each thematic workshop and identified some of the cross-cutting targets and recommendations. The proposed cross-cutting targets and recommendations from the Children's Forum were also added.

Following the Partnership Panel Discussion, which was presented by representatives from Governments, the private sector, NGOs and youth representatives from the Children's Forum, the drafting committee presented the proposed cross-cutting targets and recommendations in the plenary for inputs from the participants. The participants discussed and gave inputs to these recommendations, which will be included in the Final Meeting Report. The three member agencies of the Inter-Agency Group are currently working on the Regional Preparatory Meeting Report, which will form the contribution from the East Asia Pacific region to the World Congress III in November 2008. The report will be made available on ECPAT International's dedicated World Congress III website when completed (<http://www.ecpat.net/WorldCongressIII/regional.php>).
