



Youth participants offer recommendations to the East Asia and the Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Congress III
Bangkok, Thailand
14 to 19 August 2008

A two-day preparatory Children's Forum was organized on 15-16 August, 2008 in Bangkok, Thailand to prepare children and adolescents for their participation at the East Asia and the Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. During the two day Children's Preparatory Forum, 17 children and youth from Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia reviewed the program and plans for World Congress III and prepared for their participation at the EAP Regional Consultation. A child protection briefing session was held on the evening of 14th August, where designated child protection focal persons shared the importance of understanding and adhering to agreed-upon child protection guidelines to promote and practice safe and meaningful participation of children and adolescents to these meetings.

The Children's Forum provided an opportunity for children to share their experiences, good practices and models of successful children and adolescent-led interventions against sexual exploitation in the region. Participants also discussed and prepared their recommendations on priority issues for the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) Regional Consultation on sexual exploitation, in the areas of prostitution of children and its relation to gender dynamics, child trafficking for sexual purposes and its inter-linkages with migration, child sex tourism and its relation with corporations and industry and sexual exploitation of children through information, communication technology (ICT).

The East Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory meeting was held on 18-19 August 2008, in Bangkok Thailand and the child participants were integrated into the EAP Regional meeting to work alongside adult participants. They had their own allocated slot at the opening and the closing sessions and child representatives also participated as expert panelists in the Partnership Panel, where they shared successful examples of partnership among children and adults to fight sexual exploitation. During the Thematic Sessions, children representatives gave brief presentations to share their recommendations on each of the thematic issues, which were then forwarded on to the drafting committee for their inclusion in the final outcome document from the EAP Regional Consultation.

The objectives of the meeting was to highlight and examine issues on commercial sexual exploitation of children that are specific to this region, examine what works in different parts of the region and identify time-bound goals for addressing commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).

The children and young people's outcomes and recommendations from the regional meetings are as follows:

Child Sex Tourism (CST)

Prevention

- Participation of communities, victims and people at risk in national processes to combat CST through regular meetings at national and provincial levels on causes of CST, intervention, reporting systems and enforcement of laws.
- The community should watch/monitor tourists at the national level including at entry points and the community level and raise awareness of all incoming tourists on the issue of CST.

Recovery and Reintegration

- Reporting and protection systems are set up or strengthened to prevent as well as deal with cases and punish offenders at the local level.
- Police capacity should be strengthened to receive accurate information, investigate tourist's background and link offenders to the wider network.

Child Pornography

Prevention

- Organize campaigns and trainings aimed at awareness-raising on the issue of child pornography on the internet, videos, DVDs and real pictures of children or cartoons showing child pornography; targeted at parents, children, teachers and governments.

Recovery and Reintegration

- Child-friendly systems should be set up where victims of pornography can report cases of abuse without being afraid of government authorities. Reporting structures already exist within some NGOs, but child pornography is not reported much.
- Children who have been victimized should not hide their abuse or feel isolated, and should not be treated as criminals. They should have access to counseling and recovery programs as well as correction programs on bringing about behavior change for young offenders.
- Peer to peer programs should be set up in order to raise awareness and prevent exploitation related to child pornography in schools and communities.

Protection

- Develop laws where it does not exist, and where there are laws, they must be enforced fully and strict punishments against offenders should be upheld by the government.
- Government should put systems in place to control and manage different media (print, electronic, internet and cell phones) that use and show pornography including regulating cyber cafes.

Child Prostitution

Prevention

- Governments must ensure that all children have access to compulsory and free education and that CSEC is included in the school curriculum.
- Governments, parents, communities and children should understand, respect and fulfill child rights, including the right to protection from CSEC.
- Child protection networks ensuring safety of children should exist in all communities.

Recovery and Reintegration

- Governments must provide vocational training programs and reintegration programs so that children receive adequate care and recovery services that help child victims and families.

Protection

- Policymakers should ensure that laws protect both boys and girls from child prostitution and these laws are enforced without corruption.
- There should be an EAP unified law/policy on CSEC and an agency to oversee that policies are being implemented. Governments should ensure that national and regional laws are being implemented and monitored at the local level.
- Governments should recognize and encourage child participation. Children's representatives should be involved in the formulation of laws, reporting and monitoring of international treaties and laws (e.g. CRC and its Optional Protocol on CSEC) and participate in all meetings at different levels related to CSEC.

Child Trafficking

Prevention

- Governments should provide vocational training and small microcredit programs for at-risk parents and children so as to eliminate poverty.
- Governments should provide free education (formal and non formal) for all children, especially for poor children so as to support children to access information and become aware of CSEC.

Reintegration

- Governments should have integrated programs for their safe rehabilitation (shelter homes that provide children's services that cater to both their physical and mental needs such as counseling, medical services, vocational training, etc.) and reintegration (community awareness and acceptance).
- There should be no discrimination for children infected with HIV/AIDS. Children should not be isolated in schools and the community and should be given free treatment. Children with HIV/AIDS must be considered the same as everyone else and they should not be separated from their parents.

Protection

- Governments should ensure that the laws are enforced to protect both boys and girls against trafficking for sexual purposes and also raise awareness on laws at different levels.
- Governments should promote child participation at different levels in policy/programs, monitoring and campaigns related to CSEC.