



**Children's Forum Recommendations Summary for the South Asia Forum Regional Preparatory Consultation for the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents**  
24-27 August 2008  
Kathmandu, Nepal

The South Asia Forum (SAF) regional preparatory consultation for the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents was convened at the Ministerial level by the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare of the Government of Nepal on behalf of the South Asia Forum (a regional Ministerial-level coordinating body of eight South Asia countries) in partnership with the South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Women and Children (SACG), which is currently chaired by ECPAT International. The South Asia Regional Consultation had over 150 participants comprising of high-level government officials from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, UN Agencies, NGOs, experts and children and young people.

The Regional Consultation focused on the development of a common understanding on the concepts, challenges and progress in addressing SAF/SACG priority issues (such as child marriage, child trafficking and physical and psychological punishment) and their linkages to sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. A collective formulation of the goals and targets identified will be forwarded to the World Congress III against sexual exploitation of children with the endorsement of the SAARC governments and the SAARC Secretariat. (For the final draft of the recommendations from the SAF Regional Consultation, currently being approved by participating countries, [click here](http://www.ecpat.net/WorldCongressIII/PDF/RegionalMTGs/Final_draft_Recommendations.pdf) or visit [http://www.ecpat.net/WorldCongressIII/PDF/RegionalMTGs/Final\\_draft\\_Recommendations.pdf](http://www.ecpat.net/WorldCongressIII/PDF/RegionalMTGs/Final_draft_Recommendations.pdf))

Prior to the SAF Regional Consultation, a two-day Children's Forum was organized for 18 children (15 girls and 3 boys), 14-18 years of age, from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. The main objectives of the children's participation was to provide an opportunity for children and young people to discuss the nature and scope of sexual exploitation in the region and to share models of effective children's participation to address these issues. The children's forum also identified gaps and formulated recommendations, which were presented to participating governments at the Regional Preparatory Consultation. In addition, at the SAF Regional Consultation, children and adolescents gave presentations at the opening and closing sessions, participated as experts in panels and also shared their recommendations in each of the thematic areas of the Regional Consultation. The children's recommendations from the SAF Regional Consultation are as follows:

**Cross-Cutting Recommendations**

- People working with and for children should be aware of and trained in child rights issues and child-friendly behaviors.
- Child participation should be integrated in all policies and programmes, and budgetary allocations should be ensured by governments and international agencies to secure sustainability.

**Theme 1: Recommendations from Children on Forms of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and its New Dimensions**

- Governments should enact laws against child pornography, child sex tourism and child marriage, ensure their effective implementation and include children and youth in raising awareness on these issues.

- Governments should incorporate information on CSEC into academic curricula, including providing free education and educational materials, as well as support child- and youth-led peer support programmes in schools.
- Governments should conduct research on CSEC to collect data on the number of children involved and other relevant information, involving children where appropriate. Follow-up actions should be taken by governments based on the research findings.
- Government should work in partnership with non-governmental organizations to provide comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration programs, with the involvement of children and youth.
- The quality of care at existing rehabilitation homes/centers should be improved and new homes/centers should be established where they do not exist.
- Children and youth should participate in committees supervising care and protection services.

### **Theme 2: Recommendations from Children on Legal Framework, Accountability and Law Enforcement Relating to Sexual Exploitation**

- Governments should enact laws against child pornography, child sex tourism and child marriage, ensure their effective implementation and include children and youth in raising awareness on these issues.
- Legislation should include strict punishment for traffickers.
- Governments should enact policies and interventions to encourage families to accept rescued children, as well as provide incentives for families to ensure that children remain with their families.
  - Governments should encourage local communities to form vigilance committees in all villages.
- Governments should support youth advocacy groups and consult children and youth in all matters that affect them, including formulating legal frameworks for prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration.
  - Child pornography and obscenity should be prohibited from television, movies and all forms of media.
- The quality of care at existing rehabilitation homes/centres should be improved and new homes/centres should be established where they do not exist.
- Children and youth should participate in committees supervising care and protection services.
- Government should mobilize media to ensure birth and marriage registration so that children can be protected from early and forced marriages and from trafficking.

### **Theme 3: Recommendations from Children on Strategies and Goals for Regional and International Cooperation**

- The media should be informed and educated on the importance of depicting positive stories of survivors.
- Governments should work with local communities and children to increase anti-trafficking vigilance activities in border areas.
- Children and youth, including survivors, should work with police at border check points to identify traffickers.
- SAARC Governments should work in partnership with non-governmental organizations to provide comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration programs, with the involvement of children and youth.
- SAARC Governments should encourage media to produce information, education and communication materials based on success stories of CSEC survivors in order to enable and encourage survivors to regain their self confidence, reintegrate into societies and raise public awareness on the issue.