

Government of Nepal



## Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare

Singhdurbar, Kathmandu

Phone M 4241728, 4241819  
4241868, 424155

Fax : 4241516

Email M mail@mowcsw.gov.np

Website : www.mowcsw.gov.np

Ref No

**Attention Editors:..... Immediate Release.... Immediate Release.... Immediate Release.....**

### **South Asia Consultation for the World Congress III Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, Kathmandu, 27-29 August 2008.**

KATMANDU 29 AUG- The 3-day South Asia Consultation for the World Congress III Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents held in Kathmandu ended today with proposals for action to be fed into the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 25-28 November 2008.

Over 150 participants from the Governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, including 15 young people, and representatives from UN agencies and non-governmental organizations took part in the consultation.

Dr. Babu Ram Bhattarai, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Finance said "the South Asia Forum Against Violence against Children is a successful mechanism for promoting partnership between the Governments, UN Agencies and I/NGOs in the South Asia Region in order to eliminate violence against children."

The regional preparatory consultation brought South Asian countries together to identify areas in which they can forge collective action to tackle the proliferation, and new forms, of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents throughout South Asia.

The high numbers of children trapped in prostitution, pornography and trafficking, including those subjected to sexual exploitation in armed conflict, emergencies and natural disasters, or in the wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic were some of the issues addressed at the regional meeting.

Following two days of intensive and participatory discussion on *Forms of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Legal Framework, Accountability and Law Enforcement at National and Regional Levels, Holistic Integrated Inter-Sectoral Policies, Strategies and Goals for Regional and International Cooperation*, ideas for action were generated and will be further reviewed at country levels.

Within these thematic areas, it was particularly noted that child survivors of sexual exploitation must never be treated as criminals, and therefore laws amended accordingly. Direct reporting and assistance mechanisms for children (such as help lines, ombudsman, etc) should be established to facilitate the provision of information and response. Stakeholders at the meeting also agreed that there was a need to reinforce regional and international cooperation within the frameworks of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and South Asia Forum (SAF) to enable and facilitate closer border actions.

These regional experiences and ideas will ensure the South Asia context and issues are reflected on a wider, global level at World Congress III deliberations and outcomes later this year.

While there are many root causes behind sexual exploitation of children and adolescents,

Government of Nepal



**Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare**

Singhdurbar, Kathmandu

Phone **M** 4241728, 4241819  
4241868, 424155

Fax : 4241516

Email **M** mail@mowcsw.gov.np

Website : www.mowcsw.gov.np

Ref No

the vulnerability of children to forms of sexual abuse and exploitation increases among families living on the social and economic margins of society, said Carmen Madrinan, Executive Director of ECPAT International.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children continues to be one of the most widespread and pervasive violations of children's rights in South Asia, affecting millions of children. Large numbers of children are trafficked within and across countries in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka for sexual exploitation and labour markets.

Children on the move, or with limited or no parental care, such as children living and working on the streets in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, are particularly vulnerable. Other children are prostituted into brothels, dance bars and massage parlors, as well as rented accommodation, according to participants at the meeting.

Sexual exploitation is a crime that affects both girls and boys. While the majority of sexual crimes against children in the region and worldwide are committed against girls, recent studies show that boys are also susceptible to sexual abuse and exploitation to a much larger degree than previously recognized. The average age of sexual exploitation of boys is between 12 and 13 years.

One of the greatest challenges since the previous World Congress (Yokohama 2001) is, however, the growth of the internet. There is an emerging concern that children are being exposed to harmful viewing of pornographic material and violent images, hate mail, as well as sexual crimes committed against children in the production of child pornography for distribution on the internet and mobile phone s.

"If we can globalize an economy, globalize crime and globalize terror, we must work to globalize compassion", said Mr Bhuwan Ribhu, of Bachepan Bachao Andolan (a children's organization), at a session on corporate responsibility and partnership in combating sexual abuse of children and adolescents.

**For further information, please contact:**

Mr. Mahendra Prasad Shrestha, Joint Secretary MoWCSW, Mobile: 9841 44 77 92

Caroline Liou, Information and Communications Officer, ECPAT International, Mobile +66 847297528

[Carolinel@ecpat.net](mailto:Carolinel@ecpat.net)