

Promises renewed and reinforced
Colombo, Sri Lanka, 29 September – 1 October 2004

We, the Heads of Delegation of eight governments of South Asia including Afghanistan, have come together in Colombo to review progress in fulfilling the promises we made to children when we adopted the *South Asia strategy against commercial sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children* at the regional consultation preparing the 2nd World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Yokohama, Japan, in December 2001.

As we have exchanged experiences over this three-day meeting, we have learned that much has been done in keeping the promises, but that some remain unmet and that our work must continue with vigour until the scourges of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, including trafficking, are eliminated from our region.

We therefore:

1. Reiterate our commitment to fulfilling the promises made through the Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action of 1996, the Yokohama Global Commitment of 2001, and in the *South Asia strategy 2001*, and reiterate the over-arching role of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
2. Realize that challenges remain and that, while in no way diminishing the importance of all elements of the commitments made, we need to pursue these in a time-bound manner, focusing on the imperative to:

Reinforce protection measures, in particular through the continuing development and implementation of time-bound National Plans of Action (NPAs) covering sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking, including workplans and allocated responsibilities, and ensure that they are adequately funded in a timely manner;

- Recognize the need for adequate national and regional budget provisions to fund mechanisms and actions designed to combat sexual abuse and exploitation of children, including trafficking, to support victims of such violations, to ensure widespread child participation, and to facilitate national and regional cooperation and networking on these issues;
- Recognize the necessity of having comprehensive, disaggregated and compatible database of abused, exploited and trafficked children, as well as children at risk, to establish national indicators and trends, taking into consideration at all times the necessity of ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of records and access on a need-to-know basis;
- Recognize the need to establish and implement minimum standards for individualized psycho-social support and case management of abused and exploited children, including those rescued from trafficking;

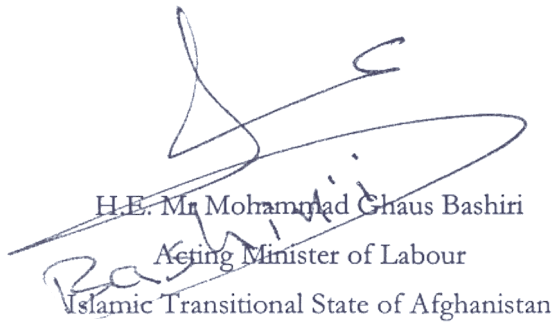
Recognize the importance of undertaking quality research and analysis to improve our understanding of the nature and scope of demand that underpins the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, including trafficking, with a view to developing targeted programmes to reduce such demand; furthermore, recognizing that demand exists both domestically and in the countries to which children are trafficked, eliminate home-grown demand for child sex and also cooperate bilaterally, multilaterally and through SAARC to

identify and prosecute those involved in creating demand and those involved in supplying children to meet it, through enforceable administrative and legal measures;

- In active cooperation with children's organizations, civil society organizations, NGOs, media, regional bodies, the corporate sector, UN, multilateral and development partners, develop time-bound indicators of impact and effectiveness so that programming is efficient, effective, good practices can be identified and shared, and successful initiatives can be scaled up, replicated and adapted to our specific country needs. Such periodic review should include monitoring of implementation of the NPA to assess the results, identify challenges and move forward guided by lessons learned;
- Recognize the need to develop and use a joint monitoring tool to specifically document actions taken in fulfilment of commitments made under the Stockholm Agenda for Action, Yokohama Global Commitment, South Asia Strategy and this pledge, in particular to identify outstanding gaps and challenges and ways of meeting these;


Keep at the top of our agenda the importance of involving children and young people in our deliberations, processes and actions, recognizing that they have the right to be involved in all programmes related to them, and that their insight into the expectations, needs and potential of children are unparalleled.

Finally, therefore, resolved to continue to uphold the rights of our children to be free from sexual exploitation and abuse, we renew our call for zero tolerance of these violations in our region and affix our signatures below:



H.E. Mr. Mohammad Chaus Bashiri
Acting Minister of Labour
Islamic Transitional State of Afghanistan

Khurshid Zahan Haque
H.E. Ms Khurshid Zahan Haque
Minister, Ministry of Women and Children
Affairs
People's Republic of Bangladesh

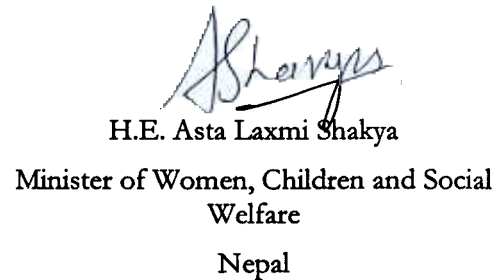


H.E. Dr. Jigmi Singay
Minister of Health
Royal Government of Bhutan

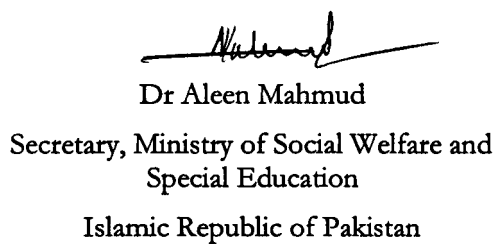
Ms Reva Nayyar
Secretary, Department of Women and Child
Development
Republic of India



Hon. Ms. Zahiya Zareer
Minister of Gender, Family Development and
Social Security
Republic of Maldives



H.E. Asta Laxmi Shakya
Minister of Women, Children and Social
Welfare
Nepal



Dr. Aleen Mahmud
Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare and
Special Education
Islamic Republic of Pakistan



H.E. Sumedha G. Jayasen
Minister of Women's Empowerment and
Social Welfare
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

(Unanimously adopted.)

COLOMBO, 1 October 2004