

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR
FOR THE “PREPARATION FORUM” AND
THE “WORLD CONGRESS III AGAINST
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS”
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
23rd-28th November, 2008**

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

BACKGROUND

All participants at the World Congress III must be committed to combating the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. ALL PARTICIPANTS must respect and support the rights of all children and adolescents to be free from exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect both physically and emotionally as spelt out in international instruments and standards to protect children and adolescents. Denial of these rights to children and adolescents can never be acceptable and subject to justification.

All participants also recognise that there is a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that children and adolescents are protected from exploitation, abuse, violence, and neglect from World Congress III delegates, support staff, and ancillary personnel, older youth, professional consultants, media representatives, volunteers, interns, and all others with whom there may be contact during the World Congress III both within and outside the venues both directly or indirectly.

All participants must ensure and protect children and adolescents from all forms of sexual exploitation within its network and invited organisations leading up to, during, and in the follow up processes of the World Congress III. Within or outside the domain of work, people associated with the World Congress III have a duty to demonstrate respect and confidentiality with all children and adolescents.

Children and adolescents can be potentially subjected to exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect in families, communities, institutions, organisations, private places, public places by various circumstances by variety of people, including delegates, support staff, and ancillary personnel people associated with the World Congress III. In order to address and protect children and adolescents from potential abuse and exploitation in the processes both leading up to and at the World Congress III itself this Child Protection Policy has been developed.

OBJECTIVES

This Policy is developed to ensure the highest standards of professional behaviour and personal practice to ensure no harm occurs in any situation to children and adolescents leading up to, during, and in follow up activities, both within and outside of the World Congress III.

SCOPE

World Congress III organizers must be prepared to ensure that the all delegates, support staff, and ancillary personnel participants act in accordance with all provisions of this policy, and do no harm to children and adolescents who may come into their contact within or outside their work.

This policy puts forward the commitment of all organizing agencies to protect children and adolescents through its programme interventions as well as through its organisational policy to protect the children and adolescents with whom it comes into contact related to preparation and events leading up to the World Congress III itself.

This Child Protection Policy is supported by clear guidelines on how it needs to be implemented by organizations participating and supporting children and adolescents before and during the World Congress III.

Specific procedures and checklists will be issued that will be more specific in spelling out actions that are required before, during, and after the World Congress III that will assure adherence to the fullest compliance with the child protection policy.

This Policy deals with the protection of children and adolescents as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children.

This Child Protection Policy aims to protect children and adolescents from any form of exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect by individuals, institutions or processes which directly or indirectly harms or facilitates to harm children and adolescents or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. This Child Protection Policy protects children and adolescents by preventing:

- hitting or otherwise physically assaulting or physically abusing children and/or adolescents
- developing sexual relationships with children and/or adolescents
- engaging in verbal aggression including threats
- robbery or destruction of personal property
- developing relationships with children and/or adolescents which could in any way be deemed exploitative and abusive
- acting in ways that may be abusive or may place a child and/or adolescent at risk of abuse
- employing children and adolescents
- any disclosure of confidential personal information about a child or adolescent
- putting children and adolescents in harmful or potentially harmful situations
- ensuring the right to confidentiality in the media
- exposure to pornographic materials in electronic or any other form

Protection from harmful information: Guidelines for adults (*Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 17e*)

Children and adolescents have the right to be protected from any information they do not need to know and for which they may not have the understanding and maturity to cope. This is especially true if the information deals with sexual matters. All adults at the World Congress have a duty to ensure that no child is harmed as a result of information from presentations and discussions whether in spoken, written or visual form or any other kind of communication.

This means:

- No shocking/offensive stories or case studies
- No shocking images
- No emotional personal testimony of abuse and exploitation
- No role play or drama depicting rape or other sexual or violent acts
- Sensitivity to other cultures
- No 'bad' (improper/offensive) language

All adults should be alert to such situations and are responsible for protecting all children and adolescents attending the WC III. Facilitators in particular must be prepared to stop discussions or presentations that are inappropriate and remind participants that;

- Child protection is mandatory
- Activities must remain within professional limits
- Time out may be necessary.

Anyone (child or adult) who feels uncomfortable or needs a break from a presentation or discussion can leave. There will be a quiet place for reflection available at the meeting venue with a supportive counsellor if needed.

Our understanding of child abuse and exploitation includes, but is not limited to:

Child Pornography: Child pornography means any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or representation of the sexual parts of a child, the dominant characteristic of which is depiction for a sexual purpose. (*Source: Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.*)

It can include photographs, negatives, slides, magazines, books, drawings, movies, videotapes and computer disks or files. Generally speaking there are two categories of pornography: soft core which is not sexually explicit but involves naked and seductive images of children and hard core which relates to images of children engaged in sexual activity and use of children in the production of pornography is sexual exploitation. (*Source: ECPAT*)

Child Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse of children can be defined as contacts or interactions between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult (a stranger, sibling or person in a position of authority, such as a parent or caretaker) when the child is being used as an object of gratification for an older child's or adult's sexual needs. These contacts or interactions are carried out against the child using force, trickery, bribes, threats or pressure. Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or Emotional. (*Source: Definitions of Child Sexual Exploitation and Related Terms. NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2000*)

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Commercial sexual exploitation of children consists of practices that are demeaning, degrading and often life threatening to children. There are three primary and interrelated forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children: prostitution, pornography, and trafficking for sexual purposes. Other forms of sexual exploitation of children include child sex tourism, child marriages and forced marriages. (*Source: Questions and Answers about the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. ECPAT, Thailand, 2001*)

Discrimination: Biased or prejudiced in favour of, or against the children.

Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed in children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. (*Source: Lambeth College, September 2004*)

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet the child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's physical or cognitive development.

Physical Abuse: It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child who they are looking after. This is commonly described using terms such as 'fictitious illness by proxy' or 'Munchausen's syndrome by proxy'. (Source: Lambeth College, September 2004)

Sexual Abuse: It involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g., rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Violence: Physical, psychological (psychosocial), and sexual violence to children through abuse, neglect or exploitation, as acts of commission or omission in direct or indirect forms, that endanger or harm the child's dignity, physical, psychological, or social status, or development. (Source: The UN Secretary General's Study on Violence, 2005)

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Awareness

For effective implementation the Policy, it needs to be understood accurately by all. All organizations should brief their participants about this policy, and document that this briefing has taken place and is understood by attendees.

Prevention

As a preventative measure, children and adolescents rights to protection will be safeguarded at all times through appropriate management practices, which includes policies and procedures for recruitment of staff and the selection of all participants. Organizations should ensure proper consideration in assessing risk and its management which involves adequate supervision of children in the care of accompanying adults along with an appropriate guidelines regarding information technology (such as email, mobile phones, internet).

CODE OF CONDUCT

All participants of the World Congress III must be aware of the Code of Conduct that will be available at the World Congress III and explained in preparatory briefings.

Reporting

Clear steps and guidelines on reporting incidences violating the Ethical Code of Conduct will be established as well as actions to be taken.

Responding

All delegates, support staff, and ancillary personnel at the World Congress III will ensure that positive action is taken to support and protect children and adolescents where concerns arise. All participants must take seriously any concerns raised and will support children and adolescents, staff or adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns. All participants will act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent investigation. All responses will be guided by the principle of 'best interests of the child'.

Disciplinary Actions

Non-compliance with the above shall be taken seriously. This will involve a thorough investigation and referral of cases to the police and/or social services if national or international child rights laws have been violated.

Monitoring

All delegates, support staff, and ancillary personnel are responsible for ensuring that the actions of attendees conform to this policy in safeguarding children and adolescents and that they have methods of monitoring and evaluation to ensure this is taking place at all times.