

PRESS RELEASE

Children and Young People's Consultation for South Asia Regional MTR of Yokohama Global Commitment, 2001 27th – 28th September, 2004 in Colombo

We the twenty-four energetic, enthusiastic and committed young participants of the said consultation eagerly awaited for it to begin as it involved interaction of diverse cultures and traditions. The feeling of hesitance was dissolved during the course of the introductory session. In the meanwhile linkages of friendship, trust and cooperation were being built.

Although language was a barrier, the consultation consisted of activities designed to ensure the participation of all present, giving everyone a chance to constructively share experiences and ideas of combating Sexual Abuse, Exploitation, and Trafficking. We brought forward our points of view and raised our concerns in the form of creatively prepared presentations with innovative ideas to improve our achievements and combat our challenges and result in changing the current scenario in South Asia.

The two days ended with a sense of belonging in all of us and confidence to put forward ideas. We urge that our ideas, concerns and recommendations would certainly be listened and taken seriously.

The two day consultation resulted in formation of a Children's Statement (attached), which was applauded by the various dignitaries present. The document created by us emphasized on various aspects of Prevention, Protection, Recovery & Reintegration, Cooperation & Coordination and Participation.

We strongly felt an urgent need of having a national as well as regional Task Force of Children, which is formed by the children, for the children and to the children. We firmly resolve that if children and young people are given an opportunity to work as partners with the government in combating Sexual Abuse, Exploitation, and Trafficking, it would speed up the fight against Sexual Abuse, Exploitation, and Trafficking.

We feel that meetings such as this are extremely important for regional cooperation. We also feel that such meetings provide an opportunity for children and young people to brainstorm and come out with practical and constructive ideas for combating Sexual Abuse, Exploitation, and Trafficking. We urge UNICEF, Save the Children, other concerned agencies and our most importantly our governments to organize such consultations in the respective countries within the next year. We also thank UNICEF, Save the Children, other concerned agencies and our respective governments for granting us the opportunity to present our ideas.