



“In Solidarity with the Children of SAARC”

3rd Technical Consultation

Eliminating Harmful Practices Affecting Children in South Asia

Dates: 25-27 September 2013

Hosted by the Royal Government of Bhutan

Organized by the SAEIVAC Regional Secretariat

Supported by the South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG),
the SAARC Development Fund (SDF),

In Collaboration with the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children (SRSG-VaC)

3rd TC RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The 3rd SAEIVAC Technical Consultation (TC) on the theme of ‘Eliminating Harmful Practices Affecting Children in South Asia based on Tradition, Religion, Culture and Superstition’ was convened in Thimphu Bhutan from the 25-27th of September 2013.

The Key Objectives are to:

1. Review measures taken and concrete results achieved by Member States in addressing harmful practices;
2. Promote learning through exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices;
3. Strengthen children’s participation in their own protection and in relevant decisions affecting them; and,
4. Formulate recommendations to strengthen the commitment and accountability of South Asian Governments and relevant actors to end harmful practices.

Key Outputs include:

1. Regional recommendations on addressing harmful practices informed by national action plans and country-specific experiences;
2. Outcome document generated outlining additional harmful practices, gaps and actions / efforts / approaches required to address these practices in order to further strengthen key stakeholder’s commitment and responsibility in ending violence against children;
3. Learning, knowledge sharing and documentation from South Asia context contributed towards strengthening global efforts and progress on combating violence against children.

The Consultation was preceded by a one and half days Preparatory Meeting of the Child Governing Board Members and Observers.

Around 105 delegates attended the Consultation, which includes SAIEVAC Governing Board Members, Child GB and Observers, Coordinators, NACG Representatives and Representatives from the SAARC Secretariat, SDF, SAARCLAW, SACG, UNSRSG VaC.

The TC after deliberating extensively on the different agenda items tabled for its consideration, which included technical discussion papers, Children's Report as well as reports on the thematic areas from the 8 Member States recommends that:

1. Recognizing the urgent need to address harmful practices that affect children, calls for increased commitment of all the key stakeholders including the political machinery of the SAARC Member States to reinforce effective implementation strategies of policies and plans;
2. The SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat (SRS) review the country presentations made and identify key challenges and proposed recommendations so as to ensure adequate follow up;
3. Appropriate and innovative approaches be adopted to strengthen national mechanisms which includes the NACGs to reinforce their capacity to institute service provision in relation to prevention, protection, response and recovery;
4. The on-going research work being undertaken by the SRS on Corporal Punishment take into consideration the information presented by the Member States in their country reports to update the existing information used by SRS for different materials/publications;
5. Documentation of regional positive caring practices for children which can build on/contribute towards addressing harmful practices and social norms including inter-generational dimensions be taken up as a priority in collaboration with the SACG and NACG agencies;
6. The review and reform of legislation pertaining to harmful practices as well as overall VaC needs to be addressed through dedicated efforts and urgently;
7. Taking note of the ongoing efforts in strengthening child participation in all SAIEVAC activities, and taking due consideration of the outcome of the Preparatory Meeting of the Child Governing Board Members and Observers, the SRS work towards the institutionalization of the National and Regional Child Participation Forums;
8. Taking note of the ongoing efforts to refine the Regional Action Plan for Ending Child Marriage endorsed in the Regional Girl Child Review Meeting held in December 2012, the recommendations from the Technical Discussion paper and the country reports be reviewed and appropriately incorporated in the RAP;

9. There is an urgent need to improve/generate information and evidence on VaC and harmful practices and create a repository of such materials and information/data to support Member States/service providers;
10. Based on issues of the rights of children with disability reflected in all the presentations, the SRS in partnership with interested agencies of the SACG to explore the possibility of structuring the theme of the next SAIEVAC Consultation on 'Rights and Responses for Children with Disabilities';
11. To further reinforce the movement for children globally, and noting the encouraging initiatives in other regions such as the Council of Baltic Sea States, the SRS with support of the UNSRSG/SACG explore appropriate institutional linkages/collaboration with other similar Regional entities; and
12. The SRS take forward the current draft of the 'Desk Review of the Faith-based Initiatives' by circulating to the Member States for any inputs/feedback and finalizing it after incorporating the comments so received.

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