

Report of the 4th Meeting of the South Asian Forum for Ending Violence against Children (SAF)

21-22 January, 2010
Kathmandu, Nepal



SAF South Asia Forum for Ending
Violence against Children



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare

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The SAF Consultation meeting was funded by UNICEF and partly by Save the Children

SUMMARY

The South Asian Forum for Ending Violence Against Children (SAF) held its 4th Coordinators meeting in Kathmandu from the 21-22 of January 2010. The main objectives for the meeting were to consolidate SAF, the SAF Secretariat and the role of SACG and develop a 'Commitment for Action' to end violence against children and address the urgent issues of early marriage, child protection, child trafficking and child sexual exploitation. The meeting also hoped to review and endorse a strategic approach towards linking SAF with the larger role of SAARC in ending violence against children.

The meeting was organized by the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal and the South Asia Coordinating Group on Violence against Women and Children (SACG) spearheaded by Save the Children Sweden and with guidance from the social sector desk of the Ministry. The meeting was attended by the SAF Coordinators from the governments of **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka**. The governments of India and Maldives communicated their regrets for not being able to participate in the meeting. The meeting was also attended by the SACG members such as Save the Children Sweden, UNFPA ECPAT, Plan, UNICEF, UNIFEM, and Planete Enfants.

The opening session was attended by Mr. Hassan Shifau, Director of the SAARC secretariat, **Ms. Bindra Hada Bhattarai**, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal, and other officials of the government of Nepal. **Mr. Sarv Dev Prasad Ojha**, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal was the Guest of Honour.

The sessions began with participants being introduced to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the South Asian Coordinating Group on Violence against Women and Children (SACG) and given a brief history of SAF. The participants were also briefed on the progress or status of establishing institutional linkage of SAF with the SAARC Secretariat and what remains yet to be accomplished in that direction. The Participants were also provided with presentations on the thematic areas of early marriage, child protection, child trafficking and child sexual exploitation which included the status of the issue, main challenges and key recommendations.

The recommendations from the deliberations pertaining to different subject matters discussed during the two days consultation which form the basis of the 'Way Forward' document of the meeting are as follows:

Change the name of SAF to the South Asian Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC);

1. Establish a permanent secretariat for the SAIEVAC as a Regional Centre in Kathmandu and seek recognition of SAARC;
2. Ensure regional representation and sustainability, a new organizational structure for SAIEVAC was also developed and endorsed;
3. Constitute a Governing Board with clear Terms of Reference and with clear institutional linkages with the Member States, SAARC Secretariat, and the SACG. The TOR of the Board can be found on Page 7 of the Report.

The 4th SAF Coordinators Meeting while finalizing the above recommendations also endorsed that the recommendations must be submitted to the SAF Ministerial Meeting along with a comprehensive proposal to that effect. The SAF Coordinators entrusted the responsibility to develop this proposal and to undertake related steps to the SAF Secretariat, Government of Nepal and the SACG.

In addition, it was also endorsed that the SAF Secretariat with the support of SACG will develop the following:

- a) a proposal to the SAARC Secretariat in terms of developing institutional linkages with its related mechanisms,
- b) a communications and advocacy strategy, and
- c) a monitoring and evaluation strategy.

The Recommendations of the two days Meeting was presented to the Closing Session presided over by the Hon'ble Minister and the Secretary of Women, Children and Social Welfare of the Government of Nepal, The Minister expressed his appreciation and commitment in fulfilling the recommendations of the meeting, particularly in launching and maintaining the SAIEVAC.

The closing session was also attended by the Director of SAARC Secretariat, the SACG Chairs, members of the SACG and other guests.

The Kathmandu Commitment to Action for Ending Violence Against Children

The 4th South Asia Forum for Ending Violence Against Children (SAF) met in Kathmandu on 21-22 January, 2010. Taking stock of progress and the opportunities presented, members of the Forum in collaboration with the SAARC Secretariat endorsed a new Institutional Framework for Ending Violence Against Children in which the Forum will transform into a permanent Regional Centre with the change in Nomenclature to '*South Asia Initiative for Ending Violence against Children*' (SAIEVAC). SAIEVAC will be composed of representatives from the governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SAIEVAC activities will be decided by the Board, made up of representatives from all 8 member states and coordinated by a Permanent Secretariat hosted by the Government of Nepal. SAIEVAC will continue to strengthen its institutional linkages with the SAARC mechanisms in its mission to end violence against children in South Asia.

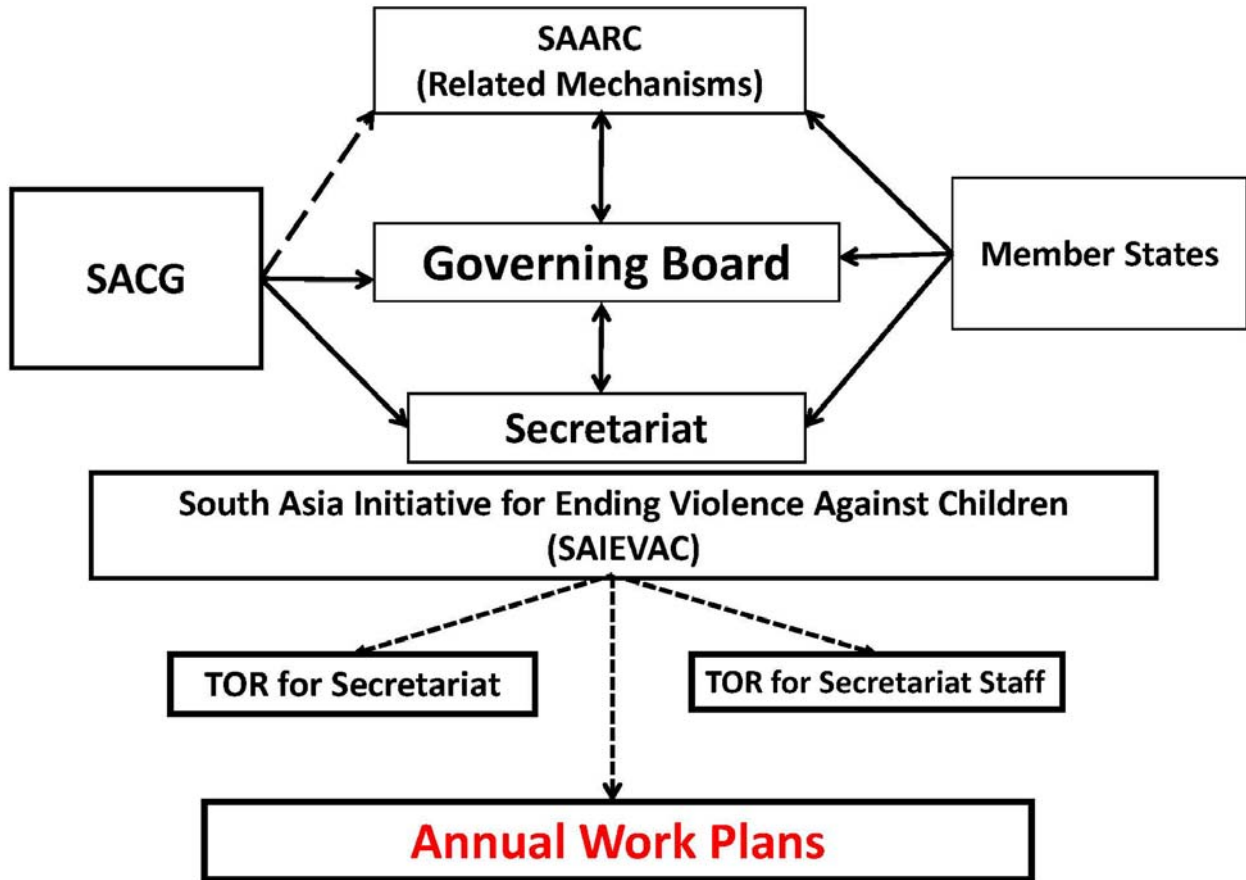
SAIEVAC and the SACG therefore make this Commitment to Action by putting forth the following recommendations.

Commitment to Action

1. We the members of the *South Asia Initiative for Ending Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)* commit to ensuring heightened attention to ending violence against children and simultaneously ensuring adequate focus and promotion of the well-being of children, women, and youth in the South Asian Region as laid forth in the Social Charter of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and in line with the recommendations of the UN Study on Violence Against Children (2006).
2. We the members of the *South Asia Initiative for Ending Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)* commit to promoting institutional mechanisms that building linkages and synergies with the SAARC processes so as to achieve the objective of region-wide consensus on social action for realizing the rights of the child and the goals set for them within the framework of the survival, development, participation and protection strategy addressed during the SAARC Ministerial Conferences on Children.
3. We the members of the *South Asia Initiative for Ending Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)* commit to strengthening regional cooperation and coordination between governments, bilateral agencies, UN-agencies, INGO/NGOs, networks, regional judiciary forums, media, the corporate sector, academia, women, children and young people to address and implement recommendations from the UN Study on Violence Against Children (2006) and additional recommendations from global, regional, ministerial, and local studies and reports to end violence against children, women, and youth in South Asia, specifically recognizing and acting on the key issues for the region (ANNEX 1) which include early marriage, violence, child trafficking, and sexual abuse and exploitation.
4. We the members of the *South Asia Initiative for Ending Violence against Children (SAIEVAC)* commit to involve children and youth, strengthen and support child-led organizations and ensure children and youth's participation in decision-making on all matters that affect their lives.

(For the full commitment to action please see **ANNEXURE 12**)

SAIEVAC ORGANOGRAM



Terms of Reference for the Board

South Asia Initiative for Ending Violence against Children (SAIEVAC)

- 1. Background:** *The South Asia Forum for Ending Violence Against Children (SAF)* is a regional mechanism initiated in 2005 with the vision of ending all forms of violence against children in South Asia. SAF works within the mandate of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and within the mandate of The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). SAF is composed of representatives from the governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SAF activities are coordinated by a Regional Secretariat.

SAF has held four consultations to date hosted by Pakistan (2006), India (2007), Kathmandu (2008), and Kathmandu (2009) with support from the South Asia Coordinating Group on Violence against Women and Children (SACG) to consolidate work throughout the region and to bring this agenda to the forefront of government debate.

The 4th SAF Consultation was held in Kathmandu on 21-22 January, 2010. After taking stock of progress and the opportunities presented by this Forum, participants, in collaboration with SAARC and SACG, endorsed the need to create a new Institutional Framework for ending violence against children throughout the region. To this purpose the decision was taken to change SAF to the South Asian Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC).

- 2. Scope:** To end violence against children in South Asia
- 3. Mandate:**
 - To review, approve and facilitate measures that ensure protection of children against violence in the region
 - To supervise and oversee the functions of the SAIEVAC Secretariat.
 - To support the processes of institutionalization of SAIEVAC into the SAARC.
- 4. Roles and Responsibilities:**
 - To ensure SAIEVAC meets its goals and objectives
 - To review policies, legislative framework, and programme intervention according to the SAARC and international instruments and make recommendations.
 - To develop a Strategic Framework for SAIEVAC ensuring complementary with the SAARC existing initiatives and avoiding duplication.
 - To ensure the development of the Advocacy and the Communication strategy for SAIEVAC.
 - To monitor the implementation and the impact of the strategic framework through the establishment of “bench marks”
 - To support in resource mobilization
 - To approve work-plans, budget of the SAIEVAC and the country Coordinators (six monthly reports to be submitted by the SAIEVAC Coordinators to the Secretariat for Board review).
 - To guarantee regular communication and coordination with the SAIEVAC Secretariat, SAARC and the SACG Secretariat.
- 5. Frequency of the Meetings and attendance**

The Board should meet at least once a year. A quorum shall be 2/3 of the voting members.

6. Composition of the Board:

- Appointed Government Representative from each SAIEVAC member countries -8
- SACG Chair (observer) - 1
- Child Representative (boy and girl-Observer rotational basis) - 2
- National CSO Representative (Observer rotational basis) -1
- SAIEVAC Secretariat Coordinator (ex officio member) -1

7. Communication:

The formal channel of communication pertaining to all matters of the SAIEVAC will be initiated by the SAIEVAC Secretariat and will be communicated through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal. However, the SAIEVAC Secretariat will ensure that it conforms to established procedures and practices of the SAARC, once formal institutional linkage is established.

The Secretariat will also maintain an informal and direct channel of communication between the SAIEVAC Coordinators to ensure timely and continued follow up actions.

Any shift or change in the line of communication will be dictated by the board in their regular meetings

SAF 4th Coordinators Meeting minutes

DAY ONE

The Inaugural Session was presided over by H.E Mr. Sarv Dev Prasad Ojha, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Affairs. Mr. **Hassan Shifau**, Director, SAARC secretariat, **Ms. Bindra Hada Bhattarai**, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal; Ms. Turid Heidberg, SACG Chair cum Regional Director, Save The Children Sweden, Ms. Naveda Khawaja, UNFPA and Co-Chair SACG, Members of the SACG, Officials of the government of Nepal, other UN Agencies and INGO's and the **SAF Coordinators** from the governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated in the inaugural session . (For a full participants list see **Page 27 of the report and** for speeches see **ANNEXURE 1**)

Session 1: Welcome and Introductions

Ratna Kaji Bajracharya, Joint Secretary/ SAF Coordinator, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and Chair of the meeting welcomed all the participants to the meeting followed by an introduction of the participants

This was followed by the presentation of the objectives of the consultation:

1. To Follow up on past recommendations in terms of their status of implementation;
2. To Develop and endorse the 'Kathmandu Commitment to Action';
3. To review and reaffirm the role of SAF, SACG, and SAARC and identify synergies;
4. To strategise the process for the institutionalization of SAF including roles and responsibilities; and
5. To review and update on the status of core issues- early marriage, trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation, and child protection

Session 2: The role of SAARC in Ending Violence Against Women and Children and in engaging the governments in the region

Presentation by Hassan Shifau, Director, SAARC Secretariat (ANNEXURE 2)

Hassan briefed the forum on the different SAARC mechanisms and processes with special focus on the anti- trafficking and the promotion of child welfare including the SAARC Social Charter, the 'SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution' and 'SAARC Convention of Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia'. In addition he also highlighted the mechanism of the 'Regional Taskforce on Trafficking and Child Welfare' which reports directly to SAARC Meeting of Home/Interior Ministers and meets annually to review and access implementation of the two conventions. The most important development of the taskforce is the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which details the procedures of member states to handle cases of repatriation and the establishment of regional helplines, one for women and one for children.

Hassan also said that, the 'SAARC Technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children' meets annually and makes recommendations on different subject matters pertaining to women, youth and Children. He also said that the SAARC Gender Info Base (SGIB) and the 'SAARC Strategic Framework for Protection and Care for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS (CABA)' as key Regional initiatives of the SAARC and the Member States that address the specific needs of women and children.

For SAF to be integrated into the SAARC he stated that the SAARC Mechanisms have provided clear directives and these must be followed through. These directives include SAF concentrating on establishing its institutional structure and fully operationalizing its Secretariat with clear rationale, goals and modalities defined and SAF showcasing its substantial contribution, impact and outcome and ensuring its regional presence. He also stressed that one critical aspect of SAF is its alliance and networking with actors/ NGOs on the ground and this need to stay as a central strategy of SAF.

The presentation was followed by substantive discussion on the strategic framework of SAF. The discussions however reinforced that civil society was an important partner with valuable contributions to the work of SAF and this is something that SAF could offer SAARC through the SACG and other forms of participation. The forum drew consensus that SAF supported by SACG, can become an important actor by supporting SAARC to ensure a comprehensive response that addresses all issues of violence. This way SAF would complement the work of SAARC and have added value.

Session 3: Presenting SACG, its role and contributions since 2005

Presenters: Naveeda Khawaja (UNFPA) and Turid Heiberg (Save the Children Sweden) (ANNEXURE 3)

Naveeda gave a brief background of SACG, which emerged from the UN Study on Violence Against Children consultation held in Islamabad in 2005. She said that the priority action at the beginning was to reduce corporal punishment in schools, early marriages and trafficking. Different agencies of the SACG took on different responsibilities for the thematic areas. She also informed the forum that the last meeting was held two years back in Kathmandu and focused on the preparation for III World Congress against the sexual exploitation of children and that there was a good participation from civil society, UN agencies and children and sexual exploitation of children was also added as a fourth thematic area.

Turid then updated on this years progress, saying that SACG have done quite a lot and worked in close cooperation with the Nepal Ministry and Dr. Rinchen. She said that SACG has properly taken the role of supporting SAF and is doing networking, capacity building, and advocacy as well as building knowledge base on violence issues with a focus on the four main SAF issues and currently developing and updating the website so that we can see what agencies are doing throughout the region regarding the most prevalent violence issues.

She reiterated that SACG is there to create synergy between the SAF and SAARC and the other half of the total governmental, regional, international and local levels. She informed the forum that the SACG and SAF are now considered a good model of partnership because of the presence of UN Agencies, INGOs, and government with SACG catalyzing interagency cooperation at national level facilitated by SAF Coordinators.

Session 4: The role of SAF and the SAF Coordinators- The Opportunity to include SAF and its work to end violence against women and children on the regional and national agenda

Presented by Dr. Rinchen Chopel and Ratna Kaji Baracharya (ANNEXURE 4).

Dr. Rinchen in his personal capacity as an old SAF Coordinator took participants through the SAF journey saying it started in response to the call for the Global UN Study on Violence and regional and national responses to that event. He highlighted that the Governments in South Asia organized national level consultations on violence against children and put together national recommendations that formed the substantive input into the regional consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children organized in May 2005 in Islamabad, Pakistan and attended by representatives from the SAARC Secretariat, delegations from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka comprising ministers, senior government officials, representatives from civil society, INGOs, UN agencies, the UN Study Secretariat, bilateral agencies, experts and resource persons, children and young people, media and opinion formers. Here regional work was consolidated and SAF was born. The SAF he said was the South Asian response to the Global Call for ending Violence Against Children – a government owned initiative and the most significant outcome of the regional consultation.

He said that when SAF started, two themes including early marriage and physical and psychological punishment were decided as the focus and trafficking was addressed as a cross-cutting theme. To take this forward the first South Asia Forum Regional Consultation was held in July, 2006 in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, and was headed by a Minister and attended by the Government officials and NGO representatives as well as children. In this meeting coordinators identified TORs and the ministers endorsed them.

Dr. Rinchen noted that to make SAF meaningful it is important that the SAF process find institutional linkage with SAARC and that it is critical to devote time to look at the synergy between SAF and SAARC and justify to SAARC that SAF can act as the operational strategy for SAARC and can use its networks in government to push the agenda forward. To this effect he stressed that SAF should not create duplication of efforts but show how SAF reinforces the SAARC processes and in the interim phase develop and strengthen institutional linkages with the SAARC Secretariat, make dedicated efforts to seek the guidance and support of SAARC to implement future activities, urge the SACG to continue to support the activities of the SAF both in terms of technical, human and financial resources, where applicable.

Session 5 – Brainstorming Session with participants to take forward recommendations and institutionalize SAF

Facilitated by Dr. Rinchen Chopel

The session was devoted to deliberating on the four points presented earlier by Mr. Hassan and to strategize in terms of the roles and responsibilities for all actors and at all levels.

1.) SAF should concentrate on establishing its institutional structure and fully operationalise its secretariat with clearly defined rationale, goals and modalities

The Coordinators and the participants stated that the title ‘SAF’ does not clearly indicate or convey the scope of work being undertaken under this initiative and that SAF needs to be renamed. This was also

pertinent because if the SAF process is to be institutionalized it can no longer be a forum, but must have a tangible existence/structure. The Meeting after significant discussion recommended that the SAF be renamed as the South Asian Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC).

The meeting also endorsed the recommendation to set up a permanent secretariat for SAIEVAC so that it can be institutionalized a Regional Centre. Since the SAF Secretariat was already formalized in Nepal, the meeting also recommended that the SAIEVAC Centre be established in Nepal under the supervision of the Nepal Government particularly since the SAARC Secretariat was also based in Kathmandu.

The Participants decided that the role of the secretariat and secretariat coordinator/assistant coordinator already had clear TOR's and they could be left as they were for the time being, as TOR's were already endorsed by the Ministers. The Current SAF Secretariat would continue to coordinate the work till a more definitive decision on the SAIEVAC was taken up by the Minister's Meeting.

2.) Need to showcase substantial contribution and produce impact and outcome

The need for the thematic focus areas to be clearly defined and establishing their complementarity within the existing SAARC mechanism for dealing with such issues was underscored as very critical. The idea was to advocate SAF themes as having the potential of being catalytic for SAARC related activities for ending violence against children.

3.) Ensure regional presence

To ensure that SAF (SAIEVAC) projects and represent a regional status of participants it was recommended that SAIEVAC establish a decision-making BOARD made up of representatives from all member governments.

The Participants defined the scope of the board as:

- Constituted by representation from the all the Member States (Coordinators could be appointed as members of the Board). However Criteria for appointment to be developed
- Elect the Chair on a rotational basis
- Board to have its larger role and mandate - separate from the Secretariat
- Representation of the Following in the Board :
 - Chair of SACG to be a member of the Board
 - Civil Society representative (as this is a strong point of SAF currently)
 - Children's representative
- Board would approve activities/annual workplans of regional secretariat

4.) Need to form a formal alliance and network with actors and NGOs on the ground

This was stressed as an important area but SAF (SAIEVAC) has to be very clear in terms of the involvement of the CSO/NGOs, their eligibility for partnership particularly taking into consideration those who commit significant time and work to violence issues. It is also critical to link with children's organizations and create movements, networks or organizations where necessary.

To realize the objectives and maintain momentum until SAF (SAIEVAC) becomes fully established, SACG should continue technical and financial support and be represented on the board in the new structure.

Participants noted that all decisions made at this meeting would need to be approved at a Ministerial meeting later in the year.

Key Strategies for Success of New Structure

To ensure SAIEVAC's success, participants decided to initiate focus through three key strategies.

1. A Strategy for Transfer (proposal to SAARC)

This strategy would define Institutional Mechanisms including the TOR for the Board and agree on broad areas of work. It would also identify a clear institutional link between SAARC and SAF and would present valid reasons or rationale as to why SAF should be a part of SAARC. In addition it will also identify the role of SACG in supporting the process and how SACG will link with both the board and the secretariat.

2. Communications and Advocacy Strategy

This strategy would look at how the SAF (SAIEVAC) Secretariat, the SACG and even the SAARC Secretariat at an optimal time would raise awareness of the work of the Centre and create a better understanding of its institutional framework, roles and responsibilities and how it can contribute to the whole movement of ending violence against children in South Asia. This will also include adequate tools to gain support from a range of stakeholders.

3. Strategy for Monitoring and Evaluation

There need to have a clear Audit Mechanism and a monitoring system for SAIEVAC was underscored by the meeting. While some participants were of the view that this would be done through existing SAARC mechanisms, it was ultimately decided that SAIEVAC should strategize and develop its own framework until such time decisions are taken otherwise. It was also decided that SACG would have a monitoring role initially as the donor and that this would offer more opportunities for fundraising.

SAARC Strategic Paper:

While endorsing the above key elements of SAIEVAC the Participants also discussed and recommended that the strategic objectives needs to be updated based on the new SAARC strategic paper given that the SAF (SAIEVAC) mandate will fall under the overall SAARC agenda. Participants agreed to revisit the strategic objectives for ending violence against children and translate this into regional and national workplans which will provide guidance for SACG and resource mobilization.

End Violence Strategic Framework

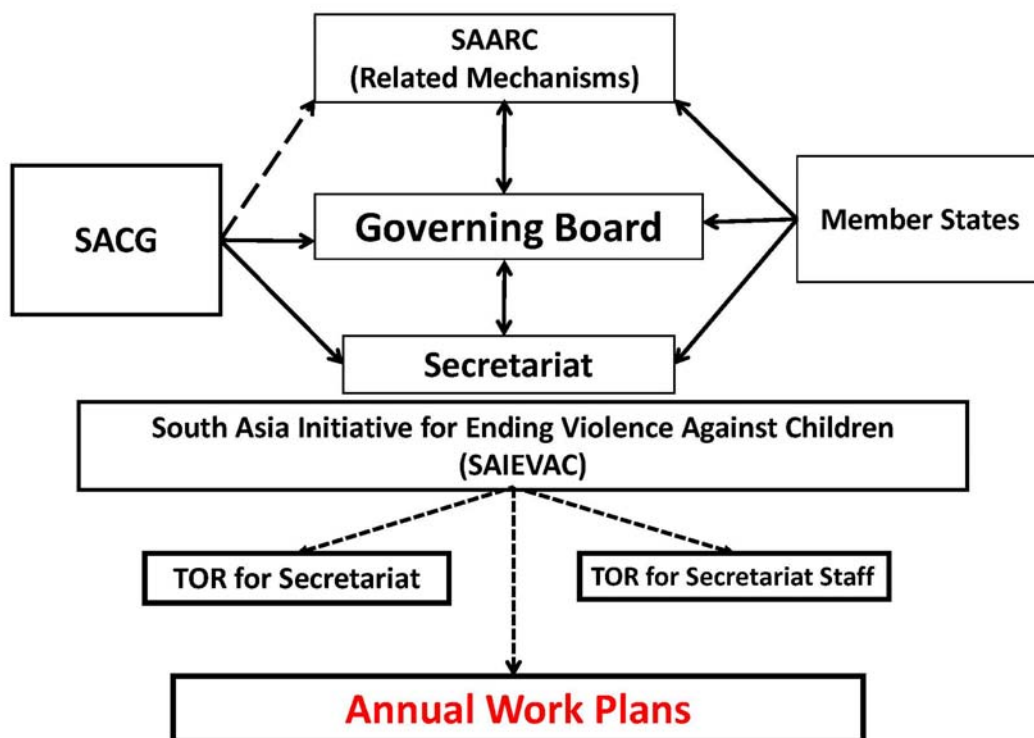
Taking note of the CABA Framework developed by the SAARC and UNICEF participants deliberated on the need to develop a similar mechanism for ending violence against children. This was justified by the fact that while a social charter and conventions exist, there is not a strategic framework for ending violence against children in South Asia. SAARC conventions do not deal with all issues affecting children. The meeting resolved that this could be achieved by first developing a framework and then developing the initiative as the implementing body of this framework- or by developing the initiative which will encompass the strategic framework and take it forward based on evidence and experience.

DAY TWO

Session 1: Reviewing the decisions taken on the previous day and confirming the structure of the board

Facilitated by Dr. Rinchen Chopel

Dr. Rinchen started the session by presenting a flow chart based on discussions that took place in Day 1. He also highlighted the roles, the administrative and coordinating and a draft organogram (included below and in **ANNEXURE 7**) which defines areas of cooperation and linkages between relevant partners.



The Board:

The meeting after substantive discussion endorsed the recommendation of setting up a permanent secretariat with a Board that reports to their own governments and ensures regional representation. Under this new structure the Board would have decision making powers, can review the staff, and is accountable to both the governments and SAARC through the (Technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children)TCWYC/(Regional Task Force on Trafficking and Child Welfare) RTF. The meeting also developed a TOR for the Board which can be found on Page 7 of this report.

Session 2: Thematic presentations in trafficking, early marriage, child protection, sexual exploitation.

TRAFFICKING

Presentation by Anuradha Sen Mookerjee, UNIFEM (ANNEXURE 5)

Anuradha of UNIFEM SARO introduced the situation of trafficking by explaining that numbers are high, it's a cross border and internal issue, and that trafficking is not just commercial sex work but also includes labour and affects boys as well. Anuradha said was that there is a need for adequate legislation that takes forward substantive equality and a need for capacity and awareness as one area of response. In order to have that kind of awareness, changes and attitude shifts in knowledge would be necessary. She said there is still a need for statistics and research as we cannot say how much money needs to be budgeted unless we know how many people need support.

The issues that Anuradha raised were that violations were not singular but rather part of a continual cycle. She mentioned that there was an inadequate understanding, not just in support services but in formulation of laws and strategies. She also stressed the need for positive behavior change in individuals and communities and a consolidation of efforts.

Anuradha mentioned that an initial mapping of roles and responsibilities had been undertaken at the Core Group Meeting, 3-4 December, 2009. All South Asian countries were represented in this meeting with the exception of India. In addition she presented a series of recommendations for the future including specific recommendations for rehabilitation and repatriation.

An open discussion followed the presentation. Participants also expressed the need to focus on border control. Participants also agreed that it is important to look at community monitoring systems and best practice with regards to dealing with trafficking as informal mechanisms often are able to rescue more people than formal border control. In addition, participants stressed the need to develop accurate data systems and a common set of indicators to be used throughout the region.

Mr. Hassan noted that there is a lack of coordination in member states within internal systems. He mentioned that SAARC has already developed a Standard Operating Procedure but it appears that another one is being developed. He highlighted that SAARC had agreed and have been working on SGIB to collect information regarding trafficking since 2004 but it appears that we are trying to duplicate this as well. He stressed that we need to have people who are coordinating and should disseminate information as it seems often efforts are being replicated and duplicated which is a waste of resources.

EARLY MARRIAGE:

Presented by Naveeda Khawaja, UNFPA (ANNEXURE 6)

Ms. Naveeda initiated her presentation by saying early marriage was a key issue countries wanted to address when they first started SAF and so far work has looked at situational analysis and hasn't really looked practically at what we can do. She mentioned that the concept paper she distributed can be used as part of this and help guide recommendations.

Naveeda's presentation covered how child marriage is defined and also gave an overview of the status of child marriage in the region, its causes, its consequences and issues. She concluded by saying that the practice of child marriage is rooted in gender inequality and socio-cultural, patriarchal values/belief systems. In addition, she stated that age at marriage is a significant indicator of gender roles and

relationships, the socio-cultural value system, poverty, health etc. She also presented her recommendations.

The Participants stressed that this was a cruel process and an extreme violation of children's rights which is happening in many countries. Participants agreed education may be key to ending such practices. Participants looked at the example of Sri Lanka where the marriage age is now 25. Naveeda mentioned that in urban areas change is happening and 80-90% of children are going to school. The forum also took note that early marriage is continuing in certain communities oftentimes because families feel they are protecting their daughters by marrying them at a young age. The forum highlighted that these perceptions need to be changed and interventions need to show communities how their daughters can be vulnerable to violence in these situations.

CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS:

Presentation by Turid Heiberg, Save the Children Sweden (ANNEXURE 7)

Ms. Turid stressed that it is important to remember that children have the right to protection through UN mechanisms and conventions and specifically Article 19 of the UNCRC. However, Turid explained that we don't have a ministry for child protection like other areas of work (ie education and education ministry) so work sometimes becomes vague and responsibilities are not clear. Before work on child protection used to focus on specific issues but now we are trying to look more comprehensively at the problem.

To address child protection, Turid said governments need a comprehensive strategy which lays out how different elements including legal/policy, Multi-sectoral cooperation including civil society, public awareness, research and documentation work together. Turid highlighted that child protection systems involve a continuum of services including the referral system. She presented diagrams to detail what a child protection system should look like. At national level she stressed the need for a designated ministry in charge of the child protection. Additionally, a certain section in each ministry will coordinate child protection (even down to doctor, nurse, police, etc..) so that all actors know how to manage, detect and act on violence issues. The role of government is to develop strategies to cover areas of prevention, protection and recovery.

She also stressed that Civil Society has a different role of training, capacity building, pilots, research and funding. All the other sectors can also offer resources (i.e. media, academia, religious leaders etc..) Today very often civil society does a lot of child protection work and service delivery but not within a holistic plan and in a very ad hoc manner that is not always integrated into national strategies.

Turid said that some of the recommendations she has for child protection systems have been touched on in other places but are still very important and include creating synergies, seeing things in a more systematic manner, coordinating work and not duplicating efforts.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Presented by Junita Upadhyay, ECPAT (ANNEXURE 8)

Some specific challenges Junita highlighted were that there is a lack of specific National Plans of Action against sexual exploitation, incomplete and inconsistent definitions of child prostitution and child trafficking which mainly accord protection to children under the age of 16, and a lack of protection and response mechanisms for the sexual exploitation of boys. In addition there is a lack of provision of

adequate compensation and access to recovery and reintegration services making children vulnerable to re-victimization/trafficking. There is also a lack of effective systems of data collection disaggregated by age, gender etc. and inadequate laws protecting children against online exploitation/ child pornography.

She noted that the largest accomplishment in the last two years had been the South Asia Forum Regional Preparatory Consultation held in Kathmandu on the 27-29 August 2008 for the III World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents which had excellent collaboration from children, NGOs and the UN. The main outcomes of the Consultation were the identification of strategies for strengthening national and regional capacities in addressing sexual exploitation of children; multi stakeholder agreement to ensure actions that are rights-based, holistic and that reinforce the systems that guarantee children's rights; and mobilization of commitment of key stakeholders to the regional and their implementation in the region.

The major outcome of the III World Congress was the 'Rio Call to Action' which is significant because children were involved in drafting it and it was affirmed by all participating governments, civil society organizations, independent experts. Additionally, SAF and SACG were acknowledged as an example of best practice.

Junita then presented the recommendations put forth by children, recommendations from the 'Rio Call to Action', and specific recommendations in the areas of prevention, protection and assistance to victims, legislation, child victims and legal proceedings, private sector involvement and inter-sector policies.

CONCLUSION OF THEMATIC PRESENTATIONS:

Participants decided that it was beyond the scope of this meeting to address or discuss in great detail all the issues raised in the Thematic Presentations. In principle the participants endorsed recommendations but endorsed the decision the SACG and the Secretariat should fine tune at the earliest and send to the members states for full endorsement. Since these recommendations will form the basis of the workplans, the recommendations must be tangible for endorsement at the Ministerial Meeting. The SACG Secretariat agreed to develop one proposal with a timeline for endorsement.

Session 3: Kathmandu Commitment to Action (ANNEXURE 9)

Facilitated by Dr Rinchen Chopel

Dr Rinchen contextualizing the issue under discussion stated that this is not a declaration but endorsement of our commitment to take the SAF process forward.

The discussions drew consensus on the fact that this commitment to action should be about children and avoid the risk of losing focus on children and youth because they are always linked with women. The forum also agreed that there are many initiatives addressing women's issues but not much that specifically addresses children. Participants felt that moving forward we should address children specifically and look at things from the children's perspective.

Changes were made to the commitment to action and the draft was finalized.

Session 5: The Way Forward and Key Milestones

Regionally in 2010

- A Coordinators meeting
- A Ministerial meeting (with coordinators)
- A proposal tabled and if endorsed by Ministers it could be taken forward – possibly end of June
- Develop a strategy for SAARC integration
- Develop a Strategy for Communications and Advocacy
- Develop a Strategy for M&E
- Prioritize recommendations put forward in thematic presentations

Nationally in 2010

- Member states review thematic areas and programmes
- Disseminate the SAF issues within the system
- Prioritise recommendations of thematic area presentations

SACG in 2010:

- Planning for quarterly meetings
- Resource mobilization
- Closer link from SACG to SAF and Secretariat to be developed
- To explore the mechanism for children's organizations for representation on the board
- Support the Secretariat in prioritizing recommendations put forward in thematic presentations, develop the basis of the workplan based on the recommendations and circulate to member countries for endorsement
- Support in the development of the proposal for the ministerial meeting in August including proposal for transfer to SAARC
- Support the development of Communication and Advocacy and M&E Strategies

Closing Ceremony

Facilitated by Ratna Kaji Bajracharya, Joint Secretary/ SAF Coordinator, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal and attended by Sarv Dev Prasad Ojha, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal, Ms. Bindra Hada Bhattarai, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal and Mr. Hassan Shifau, Director SAARC Secretariat.

Ratna Kaji Bajracharya welcomed the Hon'ble Minister, Secretary and all participants in the closing session of the SAIEVAC consultation. He thanked all for their contribution in making the consultation a huge success.

He briefed the Minister on the decisions taken in the Meeting which includes: **(ANNEXURE 10)**

1. Deciding to set up a permanent Secretariat in Nepal with representation on the Board from 8 Members states, 1 representation from CSO, 2 children (boy and girl) and SACG chair. The organogram of the new structure was also presented.
2. Clear TOR for the Board of the Secretariat was discussed and is in the final stage.
3. The name was changed from SAF to SAIEVAC
4. The Commitment to Action was presented
5. Decision to develop a Strategy for Transfer (proposal to SAARC).
6. Decision to develop a communication and advocacy strategy
7. Decision to develop a M&E strategy

The closing session presided over by the Honb'le Minister formally adopted the recommendations and Outcome of the 4th Coordinators Meeting.

Closing Remarks:

Participants made a series of speeches regarding the 2 day meeting. The overall feeling was that this meeting was very successful and much had been accomplished for taking SAF's work forward.

"Indeed today is a great day to celebrate –we thank SACG, Save the Children, UNFPA, ECPAT, and UNIFEM for their excellent presentations and the work put in place that has enabled us to develop the documents and contribute effectively. On the professional aspect Richen has been very effective and his voluntary role has organized and shaped the way forward. We are waiting for linking with SAARC and with technical committees on Women, Children and Youth and this meeting was in fact highly productive. The facilitation by Nepal government was highly efficient. It is now time to work to minimise the suffering of the children"

-Mr. Muhammad Hassan Mangi, SAF Coordinator and Director, National Commission for Child Welfare and Development (NCCWD), Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education (MoSW&SE) Government of Pakistan

"We have come a long way since yesterday – we started our work yesterday from a tunnel where we saw only a flicker of light, but we have reached quite a bright and new beginning. It is perseverance and dedication that brings success. When I assumed my responsibility we saw the proposal from SAF and

request for it to be integrated- after a few attempts I realized the linkage is weak and I had almost given up. But it is the determination and dedication of people who have brought us to where we are today and moving in a direction of convergence. When I look back in what I said in my presentation- I said there is a clear directive from the SAARC mechanism and the proposal has to be looked at in that spirit. This meeting has done so by deciding to set up a permanent, anchored secretariat and we have clearly agreed this and showcased a substantial contribution. We have also been able to look into roles the secretariat will be playing and what we will be doing. I also indicated that SAF has to ensure its regional presence though it has a secretariat in one member state and we have developed on this through the board which will have representation from all countries. The last point was that countries need to form alliance and network on grassroot level- this is also happening . For me if I have to give you marks for this meeting I will give 100 out of 100. I cannot give a commitment yet, but this is an evolutionary process. SAF was very forward looking giving up the name so this demonstrates that SAF has accepted the evolutionary process, decided this is the time we need to move on, made a timeframe. It is an excellent achievement. On behalf of SAARC I will try to see that this proposal moves towards synergies and collaborative work together for the ultimate goal to benefit children in the region. Thank you and honourable minister for sparing time and I see this as a commitment from Nepal. It is not simple as we will give a small baby to Nepal. The presence of the minister and secretary is a commitment. Thank you for taking this. Thanks to Turid and Ratna who are always around putting SAF in my ears.”

-Hassan Shifau, Director, SAARC secretariat

“Perhaps this is the last time we say SAF but I express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for your valuable time and input and on behalf of Nepal want to say thanks for your support you showed. A permanent secretariat is my hope, whether here or another country, so thanks for your help to establish it in Nepal. I would like to assure all of you that the government will afford every possible effort to make the South Asian Initiative a prominent regional unit to address violence against children. Special thanks to Dr. Richen. He told us this is the end of his volunteer support, but I am sure he will keep on supporting us- so thanks for bringing all these things into a real picture. Thanks to all governments of this meeting, thanks to Turid for joining hands with Ratna and Richen to keep SAF in notice of Hassan again and again. Big hand for Turid, Richen and Ratna and I am hopeful and sure in a short time the SAIEVAC will be adopted by SAARC. We will take care of this baby and ask SAARC to adopt this baby later on. Thanks for support and commitment. “

- Bindra Hada Bhattarai, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal

“I am very thankful to all of you and know the discussions in the past two days have been fruitful. I am happy to acknowledge the creation of the permanent secretariat and the creation of the baby here in Nepal. I would also like to extend my gratitude and happiness in the transition of SAF and the creation of SAIEVAC as a new breed and I hope that we all will work together in making this a success. The past five or six points discussed by Ratna complement each other and with the help of all 8 member countries we will be able to reach our goal in the near future. With the help of all the key actors like the UN, SAARC, Governments, NGOs, and children I believe we will make greater strides in battling violence against children in South Asia.”

-Sarv Dev Prasad Ojha, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal
(Translation by Ms. Sampreety Gurung, Assistant Coordinator, SAF Secretariat)

“In the break I had a talk with the Bhutan representative Mr. Norbu Gyaltshen and he said that everything is so good here in Nepal. I think that comment says it all as it is because of the Ministry of Nepal that we managed to proceed and because of so many dedicated people and an atmosphere of cooperation. We are trying to make an environment of cooperation and the way the SAIEVAC coordinators have been contributing and owning and taking the process forward is great. Hopefully we can replicate this environment at national level as that would be a real success. Then we could really mean something when we say we are putting children on the agenda and make a new world for them. There are so many people behind the scenes Naveeda, UNFPA, UNICEF, ECPAT, Plan, Jerome, Mache, Kamal, Catherine, Radha, Sompretty, Junita. Personally, I want to thank Ratna, Hassan and Rinchen for being partners in a long uphill journey. Now we have light and future in front of us so thank you so much for your dedication. Thank you to the Ministry of Nepal for accepting a permanent Secretariat and having the force to not step but jump into SAARC and the protection of children.

-Turid Heiberg, SACG Chair, Regional Director, Save the Children
Sweden Regional Office for South and Central Asia.

SAF Consultation

Kathmandu, 21 and 22 January, 2010

Venue: Hotel Annapurna

The South Asia Forum for Ending Violence Against Children is organising the SAF Coordinator's Consultation in Kathmandu to discuss the future plans for collaboration with SAARC, the 2010 workplan and the status regarding issues of violence against children and women. The Consultation is hosted by the Nepal Ministry of Women, Social and Children Welfare.

The Consultation will be supported by the "South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Women and Children (SACG)" comprised of representatives from regionally based UN agencies and International Organisations.

Objectives for the consultation:

- Consolidate SAF, the SAF Secretariat and the role of SACG
- Address the role of SAARC in ending violence against women and children –
- Update and develop a call for action in relation to the urgent issues of early marriage, child protection, child trafficking and child sexual exploitation

The consultation will be facilitated by Ratna Kaji Bajracharya, Dr. Rinchen Chopel and Turid Heiberg

Time	Session	Purpose/objectives
Day 1		
9:00 - 9:45	Inaugural Session Welcome addresses by: Ratna Kaji Bajracharya , Joint Secretary/ SAF Coordinator, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal Turid Heiberg , Regional Director, Save the Children Sweden/Chair, SACG Hassan Shifau , Director, SAARC secretariat Bindra Hada Bhattarai , Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal	

Time	Session	Purpose/objectives
	Sarv Dev Prasad Ojha , Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal	
9:45 – 10:00	Group photograph	Tea/coffee break
10.00 – 10:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of participants • Election of chair • Objectives for the consultation 	
10:15 – 11:00	The role of SAARC in ending violence against women and children and in engaging the governments in the region presented by Hassan Shifau, SAARC secretariat	Identify and clarify the role of SAARC as a proactive actor for preventing violence against women and children in the region
11:00-11:30	Presenting SACG, its role and contributions since 2005 by Naveeda Khawaja (UNFPA) and Turid Heiberg (Save the Children Sweden)	Inform about SACG, the work by its members and future opportunities
11:30 – 13:00	The role of SAF and the SAF coordinators. The opportunity to include SAF and its work to end violence against women and children on the regional and national agenda by Dr. Rinchen Chopel and Ratna Kaji Bajracharya Concluded by a Question and answer session	Give a background to SAF and discuss ways to strengthen its role by having a formal relationship to SAARC
13:00-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-15:00	Brainstorming: Including SAF as a SAARC body and other approaches to strengthen the work to end violence against women and children in the region	Develop recommendations for follow up
15:00-15:30	Tea break	
15:30 - 18:00	Panel discussion: "How to protect women and children in the Region? (Country examples of building protection systems: Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and India).	Identifying good practices and initiatives
Day 2		
8:45 – 9:15	Recap and action points Day 1	

Time	Session	Purpose/objectives
09: 15 - 09: 45	Identify progress and challenges regarding trafficking presented by Anuradha Sen Mookerjee, UNIFEM	Identifying key recommendations
09: 45- 10:15	Introducing progress and challenges regarding early marriage presented by Naveeda Khawaja, UNFPA	Identify key recommendations
10:15- 10:45	Tea break	
10:45- 11:15	Introducing progress and challenges regarding Child sexual exploitation presented by Junita Upadhyay, ECPAT International	Identify key recommendations
11:15- 11: 45	Introducing progress and challenges regarding violence against children and protection systems presented by Turid Heiberg, Save the Children Sweden	Identify key recommendations
11:45 12:30	Development of a Plan of Action including a Kathmandu Commitment for Action	
12:30- 13:00	Lunch	
13:00- 15:30	Development of a Plan of Action including a Kathmandu Commitment for Action	Way forward and agreement on next steps
15:30 – 16:00	Tea/coffee break	
16:00	<p>Closing Session and presentation of the Kathmandu Call for Action – by Chair of the Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Remarks by SAARC, -Remarks by Bindra Hada Bhattarai, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare - Remarks by Sarv Dev Prasad Ojha, Honourable Minister, Nepal Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare -Closing Remarks by the Chair of SAF secretariat -Closing Remarks and Vote of Thanks by Chair of SACG 	
17:00	Refreshments	

SAF Consultation

21-22 January 2010

Kathmandu, Nepal

PARTICIPANTS LIST

MINISTRY OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL WELFARE, NEPAL	
<p>1. Sarv Dev Prasad Ojha Hon'ble Minister Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal Add: Singh Durbar, Kathmandu Nepal Tel: +977-1-4241613 Fax: +977-1-4241516</p>	<p>2. Bindra Hada Bhattarai Secretary Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare Government of Nepal Add: Singh Durbar, Kathmandu Nepal Tel: +977-1-4241613 Fax: +977-1-4241516</p>
SAF COORDINATORS	
AFGHANISTAN	BANGLADESH
<p>3. H.E. Wasil Noor Mohmand Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled Government of Afghanistan Tel: 0093 (0) 700 290 532, 0093 (0) 798 454 506 (0) 700 290 588 Mobile No: 0093(0)70290588,(0)799043034 Office no: 0093(0)752014152 Email: wasil_noor@hotmail.com</p>	<p>4. Md. Rezaul Karim Deputy Secretary (Development) Ministry of Women and Children Affairs - Govt. of Bangladesh Add: Building No 6, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka-1000 Tel: +88 02 7162056 Mobile no: +88 01715 0348 34</p>
BHUTAN	NEPAL
<p>5. Mr. Norbu Gyaltshen (CHIEF) Acting Executive Director National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) Tel: +975 2 334552 Fax No: +975 2 334709 Email: ngyaltshen@hotmail.com</p>	<p>6. Mr. Ratna Kaji Bajracharya Joint Secretary Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal Add: Singh Durbar, Kathmandu Nepal Tel: +977-1-4241613 Mobile: +977-9851104175 Fax: +977-1-4241516 E-mail: ratnabjr@yahoo.com</p>

PAKISTAN	SRI LANKA
<p>7. Mr. Muhammad Hassan Mangi Director, National Commission for Child Welfare and Development (NCCWD), Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education (MoSW&SE) Government of Pakistan Add: G-8, Opposite N-O-R-I Hospital, Islamabad, Pakistan Tel: +92-51-9263324, +92-51-9263747 Mobile: +923005195093 Fax: +92 519263325 E-mail: mhmangi@yahoo.com mhmangi@hotmail.com</p>	<p>8. Mr. Sarath Abegunawardana National Commissioner Department of Probation and Child Care Services Add: No 150 A Nawala Road, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka Tel : +94 2853549 Mobile: +94 0723272177 Fax : +94 2852393 E-mail: pcc@slt.net.lk , dmsarathmail@yahoo.com</p>
<p>9. Ms. Sampreety Gurung Assistant Coordinator SAF Secretariat Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal Add: Singh Durbar, Kathmandu Nepal Tel: +977-1-4241613 E-mail : sampreety@gmail.com</p>	
PARTICIPANTS FROM NEPAL	
<p>10. Mr. Dharma Raj Shrestha Executive Director Central Child Welfare Board Add: Hariharbhawan, Laitpur Tel: +977-1-5010045 Fax: +977-1-5010046 E-mail: dharmaraj@ccwb.gov.np</p>	<p>11. Mr. Laxmi Prasad Tripathi Under Secretary Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare Government of Nepal Add: Singh Durbar, Kathmandu Nepal Tel: +977-1-4241613, 9841408870 Fax: +977-1-4241516 E-mail : laxmitripathi@hotmail.com</p>
<p>12. Mr. Khadga Bahadur Rana Under Secretary Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare Government of Nepal Add: Singh Durbar, Kathmandu Nepal Tel: +977-1-4241613 Fax: +977-1-4241516</p>	<p>13. Mr. Gaja Bahadur Rana Under Secretary Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare Government of Nepal Add: Singh Durbar, Kathmandu Nepal Tel: +977-1-4241613 Fax: +977-1-4241516</p>
<p>14. Ms. Shanta Bhattarai Under Secretary Department of Women Development Government of Nepal Add: Pulchok, Lalitpur Tel: +977-1-5526779 Fax: +977-1-521214 E-mail: shantabt@gmail.com</p>	<p>15. Ms. Goma Chemjong Section Officer Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare Government of Nepal Add: Singh Durbar, Kathmandu Nepal Tel: +977-1-4241613, 9841745979 (M) Fax: +977-1-4241516 E-mail : gomachemjong@yahoo.com</p>

<p>16. Mr. Umakant Chaudhary Monitoring Officer Central Child Welfare Board Add: Hariharbhawan, Laitpur Tel: +977-1-5010045, 9841501995 (M) Fax: +977-1-5527591 E-mail: ukc007@gmail.com</p>	
SAARC	
<p>17. Hassan Shifau Director SAARC Secretariat Add: PO Box 4222, Tridevi Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: +977 1 4221794 Fax: +977 1 4227033, 4223991 E-mail: dirmal@saarc-sec.org</p>	
UN AGENCIES AND INGO'S	
<p>18. Frances Turner Deputy Regional Director UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) Add: P.O.Box 5815, Lekhnath Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: +977 1 4417082, ex 202 Fax: +977 1 4419479 E-mail: fturner@unicef.org</p>	<p>19. Roelof Pouwels Regional Advisor Child Protection UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) Add: P.O.Box 5815, Lekhnath Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: +977 1 4417082, ex-270 Fax: +977 1 4419479 E-mail: rpouwels@unicef.org</p>
<p>20. Antariksha Roka Research Assistant Child Protection UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) Add: P.O.Box 5815, Lekhnath Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: +977 1 4417082 ext 218 Fax: +977 1 4419479 E-mail: aroka@unicef.org</p>	<p>21. Naveeda Khawaja Regional Adviser HIV and SRH UNFPA-Sub-Regional Office ,Jamsikhel Sunepa P.O.Box 5940,Lalitpur Kathmandu ,Nepal Tel: +977-5523880 Mobile :+977-9851076220 E-mail: khawaja@unfpa.org</p>
<p>22. Anuradha Sen Mookerjee Regional Programme Officer (Anti Trafficking) UNIFEM South Asia Sub Regional Office Add: D-53, Defense Colony, New Delhi-110024 India Tel: +91-11-24646471, extn-139, 9810219853 (M) E-mail: anuradha.senmookerjee@unifem.org</p>	<p>23. Junita Upadhyay Child and Youth Participation Officer ECPAT International Add: 328/1 Phayathai Road, Ratchathewi Bangkok-10400, Thailand Tel: +66 22153388 E-mail: junitau@ecpat.net</p>
<p>24. Bimol Bhetwal Ypp Associate for South Asia ECPAT International Add: Pingaisthan, Gaushala, POB 9599</p>	<p>25. Turid Heiberg Regional Director, Chair SACG Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South & Central Asia</p>

<p>Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: +977 9841405918 Fax: +977 4489978 E-mail: bimolb@ecpat.net</p>	<p>Add: JDA Complex, GPO 5850, Bag Durbar, Sundhara Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: +977-1-4251389/4251627 Fax: +977-1- 4222235 Email: turidh@sca.savethechildren.se</p>
<p>26. Jerome Conilleau Regional Programme Manager Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South & Central Asia Add: JDA Complex, GPO 5850, Bag Durbar, Sundhara Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: +977-1-4251389/4251627 Fax: +977-1- 4222235 E-mail: jeromec@sca.savethechildren.se</p>	<p>27. Radha Kamath Regional Child Protection Manager Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South & Central Asia Add: JDA Complex, GPO 5850, Bag Durbar, Sundhara Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: +977-1-4251389/4251627 Fax: +977-1- 4222235 E-mail : radhak@sca.savethechildren.se</p>
<p>27. Catherine Kates Regional Advocacy and Communication Manager Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South & Central Asia Add: JDA Complex, GPO 5850, Bag Durbar, Sundhara Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: +977-1-4251389/4251627 Fax: +977-1- 4222235 E-mail : catherinek@sca.savethechildren.se</p>	<p>28. Laxman Belbase Regional Programme Officer-Gender Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South & Central Asia Add: JDA Complex, GPO 5850, Bag Durbar, Sundhara Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: +977-1-4251389/4251627 Fax: +977-1- 4222235 E-mail : laxmanb@sca.savethechildren.se</p>
<p>29. Cecilia Conilleau Country Director Planete-Enfants Add: PO box 8975, EPC 5307, Dashrathchand Marga, Bishal Nagar, Kathmandu Nepal Tel: +977-1 4414902/ 01 4445669 Fax: +977 -1 4443685 E-mail: cecilia@pe-nepal.org</p>	<p>30. Shodashi Rayamajhi Project Coordinator, Child prevention Planete-Enfants Add: PO box 8975, EPC 5307, Dashrathchand Marga, Bishal Nagar, Kathmandu Nepal Tel: +977-1 4414902/ 01 4445669 Fax: +977 -1 4443685 E-mail: shodashi@pe-nepal.org</p>
<p>FACILITATOR</p>	
<p>31. Dr. Rinchen Chopel Technical Expert SAARC/UNIFEM E-mail: rinchophel@gmail.com</p>	