



SOUTH ASIA INITIATIVE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

The 5 SAF Coordinators Meetings

1.1st SAF Coordinators Meeting, Pakistan, July 2006

With the Government of Pakistan holding the Secretariat of SAF, the first South Asia Forum was held in Rawalpindi, Pakistan on 24-26 July 2006.

1.a. The Themes

Two themes were chosen for the first SAF which were:-

- Physical and psychological punishment in homes, schools, the community, the workplace and in institutions.
- Early marriage: marriage when one or both parties are children below the age of 18.

1.b. Objectives of the First SAF

Four key objectives were set before the delegates at the first South Asia Forum. They were:

- To review the progress made by the Member States in the areas of physical and psychological punishment and early marriage, with trafficking in humans as a cross cutting theme.
- To identify a key number of actions for follow up at regional level.
- To agree and finalise the structural and operational mechanism of SAF, including networking and reporting tasks.
- To promote children's participation and listen to their voice on the issue of child marriage and physical and psychological punishment, as well as institutionalize their participation in the South Asia Forum

2. 2nd SAF Coordinators Meeting, New Delhi, July 2006

Mr. Rahat Ullah, Regional Coordinator for the SAF Secretariat, presented the following work update since the last SAF meeting in July 2006:

- Previous SAF meeting report/recommendations shared with SAF Country
- Coordinators for their consideration and implementation
- Country Coordinators requested to work toward establishing linkages with the SAARC Secretariat through their Foreign Ministries
- SAF Secretariat sent communications to the SAARC Secretariat
- Written communications to Indian Ministry for their participation at SAF/SACG meetings/processes with no response/acknowledge received to date
- Communications/preparations for the next SAF meeting.

2.1. Discussion: There was a general consensus that SAF/SACG needed to work towards forming closer links with the SAARC Secretariat in order to gather greater commitment/accountability from the governments towards SAF. Also, SAF governments need to come forward to host the SAF Regional Secretariat as the Pakistan Governments two year term has already expired and the transfer should be effective from the next SAF meeting.

This meeting needed to discuss the future of the SAF Regional Coordinator/salary until the next SAF meeting as the funding from Save the Children Sweden was up until October only. The absence of the Indian Ministry in the SAF processes was duly noted.

2.2. Decision:

- SACG to work with the SAF Regional Representative and the Country Coordinators in making some important decisions related to SAF during today's meeting. SACG to assist SAF in following up with the Indian Ministry on their SAF non –engagement.

3. 3rd SAF Coordinators Meeting, Kathmandu, August 2008

The SAF Coordinators held a luncheon meeting on the 29th of September 2008 on the sidelines of the SAF Regional Consultation in Preparation for the WC III Kathmandu Nepal, which was convened from the 27-29th August 2008. The objective of the meeting was to review and redirect the course of action of the SAF process. The meeting was attended by members from all the 8 countries of SAARC.

The SAF Coordinator from Bhutan in his capacity as the focal person of the SAF for Regional Coordination and developing linkages with SAARC Secretariat moderated the meeting. While there was no structured agenda for the meeting, the following areas were covered in the substantive discussions particularly in the light of the issues tabled and endorsed by the Regional Task Force on Trafficking.

- Transfer of SAF Secretariat from Pakistan
- Submit the strategy document for collaboration between SAF and SAARC to the Secretary General of SAARC at the earliest (in line with the decisions of the Regional Taskforce on Trafficking (RTFT)).
- Map Out RTFT Focus areas and the SAF/SACG Thematic areas for reinforcement of the activities, identifying gaps and sharing the burden:
- Regional Position Paper on CSEC for WC III using the outcome document of the current consultation:
- Circulate the latest updates of the thematic areas to the Member States so that SAF Coordinators can immediately initiate steps to prepare for the WC III of their respective governments
- SAF and SACG to work out a mechanism whereby support for regional activities can be coordinated more effectively and sensitively:
- SAF Secretariat to strategize a Regional Action Plan to reinforce the utility of the SAF process beyond the annual consultations

4. 4th SAF Coordinators Meeting, Kathmandu, January 2010

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 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). 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 some of the SACG members.

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:

1. Change the name of SAF to the South Asian Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC);
2. Establish a permanent Regional Mechanism for the SAIEVAC and seek recognition of SAARC;
3. Ensure regional representation and sustainability, a new organizational structure for SAIEVAC was also developed and endorsed;
4. 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.
5. 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.

In addition, it was also endorsed that the SAF Regional Mechanism 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 of Nepal 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.

5. 5th SAF Coordinators Meeting, Kathmandu, June 2010

The 4th Meeting of the SAF Coordinators was held on 21-22 January 2010, where the idea for a new Institutional Framework as well as a five year workplan for Ending Violence Against Children was proposed and initiated.

During the 5th SAIEVAC Coordinators Meeting held on 22 June, 2010, the Institutional Framework for SAIEVAC was expanded and key recommendations developed to be submitted for approval at the 3rd Ministerial Meeting, held June 23 2010.

Children presented two sets of recommendations to the SAIEVAC Coordinators. The process for becoming an Apex Body of SAARC was discussed. Based on the discussions, the participants drafted the recommendations to be presented to the Minister's the next day.

All documents were circulated to SAIEVAC Coordinators before the meeting and their feedback incorporated into the draft documents discussed during the meeting. However, further discussions were necessary to finalise the proposal and agree the key recommendations to be presented to Ministers.

The proposal for the new Institutional Framework included the SAIEVAC Organogram, a Terms of Reference (TOR) for the SAIEVAC Governing Board, SAIEVAC Regional Mechanism and SAIEVAC Coordinators and a five year SAIEVAC Workplan to end violence against children. The Coordinators reviewed and discussed the organogram and TORs.