

**South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children**

**3rd Technical Consultation**

**on**

**Eliminating Harmful Practices Affecting Children**

**in**

**South Asia**

**Q & A:**

**Understanding SAIEVAC and**

**Related Structures and Functioning**

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SAIEVAC

SAARC Apex Body

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**With Support from the South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG), the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) and in Collaboration with the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children (SRSG-VaC)**

**Q & A: Understanding SAIEVAC and related Structures and Functioning**

**Q: What is the history of SAIEVAC?**

***A:*** In 2001, based on the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations General Assembly called for a global study on violence against children. Several consultations were held in all over the world. Following this, a South Asian Regional Consultation was held in Islamabad, Pakistan in May 2005, where ministers, senior government officials, SAARC[[1]](#footnote-2) Secretariat members, representatives from civil society, INGOs, UN agencies, the UN Study Secretariat, bilateral agencies, experts and resource persons, children and young people, the media and opinion formers from SAARC Member countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) came together. During this regional consultation, the participants along with all the government representatives decided to form an inter-governmental forum to look and address all forms of violence against children in South Asia region. They gave this form the name “The South Asian Forum for Ending Violence Against Children (SAF)”. This forum formed a Governing Board and each of the countries identified their coordinators who will coordinate the national activities/events in their respective countries.

In June 2010, after the 4th SAF Coordinators meeting in January 2010, the 3rd Ministerial Meeting[[2]](#footnote-3) of the SAG was organized in Kathmandu, Nepal. In the same meeting, on the recommendation of the 4th SAF Coordinators Meeting, the name of the SAF was changed to “South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)”. This meeting also approved the setting up of institutional mechanisms to make it operational which included:

1. A Permanent Regional Secretariat,
2. A Governing Board, (including 2 child representatives along with others),
3. A 5 Year Work-plan, and
4. other oversight mechanisms

The 1st Governing Board Meeting of SAIEVAC, held in November 2010, approved the organizational structure of the Regional Secretariat, the Terms of References for different mechanisms including Regional and National Children’s forum. In December 2010, the Director General of the SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat was appointed through a rigorous selection process.

**Q: How does SAIEVAC link to SAARC?**

***A:*** SAARC was a founding member of SAIEVAC in 2005 and during the 17th SAARC Summit in Maldives in November 2011, SAIEVAC was granted the status of a it’s “Apex Body”, making SAIEVAC the first ever regional organization for children. As a SAARC Apex Body, SAIEVAC becomes the recognized entity to represent the cause of children and fight for the rights of all children in South Asia. The Apex Body status also provides SAIEVAC with the opportunity to tap into the larger framework of SAARC, not only in terms of funding but also by opportunities to influence the plans and programmes of the SAARC Member States in the area of ensuring child rights in general and ending violence against children in particular.

SAIEVAC now is the only regional inter-governmental organization that can provide dedicated services to implement various directives of SAARC in relation to children, such as

* Colombo Declaration on Children of South Asia and the findings of the Assessment of the SAARC Decade of the Rights of the Child,
* SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution,
* Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia, and
* Other international human rights instruments related to children’s rights.

SAIEVAC has the crucial added value of having NGOs and children represented in its Governing Board and can greatly reinforce the work of SAARC.

**Q: What is the structure of SAIEVAC?**

***A:*** The SAIEVAC Governing Board supervises and oversees SAIEVAC’s overall work. The Governing Board consists of 8 Government Representatives, 2 Child Representatives, 1 International Agency Representatives, and 2 Civil Society (NGO) Representatives from the SAARC member countries. Additional 2 child representative as “observers” are part of the SAIEVAC governing board. So far, SAIEVAC have had its 3 Governing Board meetings in November 2010 (Nepal), September 2011 (Nepal) and May 2012 (Sri Lanka). The duration of the Governing Board Members is two years and will be rotated alphabetically as per the SAARC process.

SAIEVAC also has its Regional Secretariat that is based in Kathmandu, Nepal. This secretariat consists of a Director General along with other team members to carry out the day-to-day work to make SAIEVAC functional. The regional secretariat is responsible to ensure the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SAIEVAC’s 5 year work-plan.

The SAIEVAC has National Mechanisms (called SAIEVAC National Chapters) in all the 8 SAARC Member countries. The National Chapters consist of the Governing Board Member and SAIEVAC Coordinator in each respective country, who are chosen by the respective governments. The SAIEVAC Coordinator is responsible for coordinating activities, implementing the work-plan and mobilizing resources for SAIEVAC activities to end all forms of violence against children in their countries. For the ToRs of the Governing Board member and SAIEVAC Coordinator, please visit the site [www.saievac.org/category/resources/saievac-resources/terms-of-reference/](http://www.saievac.org/category/resources/saievac-resources/terms-of-reference/)

**Q: What is the role of SAIEVAC’s Regional Secretariat?**

**A:** SAIEVAC’s Regional Secretariat is the Regional Unit responsible for day-to-day management of SAIEVAC & its functioning. This function includes developing, recommending and implementing work-plans, activities and budgets, coordinating between member countries, and supporting country level initiatives, technical meetings and cross country learning. Additionally, this body monitors and evaluates country progress and reviews policies, legislative frameworks, and programme interventions within the framework of SAARC and international conventions and agreements. This regional secretariat also provides support to the Children’s forum at the regional level. It also coordinates with an inter-agency group (South Asia Coordinating Group on Actions Against Violence Against Children-SACG), that provides technical (and financial) support to the regional secretariat.

**Q: What does SAIEVAC’s Work-plan entail?**

**A:** SAIEVAC has developed a 5 year work-plan to address all forms of violence against children at regional and national levels. This work-plan serves as the strategic framework to coordinate, standardize, and monitor progress annually. This work-plan supports the development of effective and comprehensive child protection systems, and address key child protection issues. These key issues include child labour, sexual abuse and exploitation, trafficking, corporal punishment, and child marriage. It outlines key results and indicators to measure and report on progress.

Some of the key strategic objectives in the work-plan include: prevention of all forms of violence against children, developing child care standards by all member countries, appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration of children, education and awareness raising on the rights of child and child protection etc.

Through the formation of SAIEVAC, governments have reiterated their commitment to addressing the enormous scale and urgency of violence against children in all forms. This work-plan serves as the strategic framework to coordinate, standardize, and monitor progress annually. For more information, please refer to SAIEVAC’s work-plan at:

[www.saievac.org/category/resources/saievac-resources/workplan/](http://www.saievac.org/category/resources/saievac-resources/workplan/)

**Q: How do Children participate in SAIEVAC processes?**

***A:*** SAIEVAC strongly believes that children are subjects of their own rights and key stakeholders in the complex and demanding process of the UNCRC implementation. Hence, SAIEVAC has in its overall objective “to institutionalize Children’s Participation in all of its mechanisms”.

SAIEVAC Governing Board has 2 child representatives (1 boys & 1 girl) as Governing Board members, since 2010, and 2 other children (1 boys & 1 girl) have been selected as Observers, since 2011. These 2 observers will take-over the roles of child representatives to the Governing Board from the next tenure and 2 additional children from the following alphabetical list of countries will be nominated as observers. These Child Representatives are responsible to ensure that the inputs from national and regional networks are brought to the decision making level of SAIEVAC.

SAIEVAC works towards ensuring the meaningful and ethical participation of children through the development of national and regional networks. This provides a space for children where they can prevent and monitor violence, make recommendations to duty bearers and be involved in decision-making processes. SAIEVAC is also the only inter-governmental body that has children’s representatives in its highest level-the decision making level.

Children’s involvement in SAIEVAC is an essential precondition to ensure that children’s perspectives on ending violence are regularly informing decisions that are affecting their development. To that purpose, a strategic framework is being developed to institutionalize children’s participation in SAIEVAC, through establishment of a “Regional Children’s Forum to End Violence Against Children”. This forum has strong linkages with National Action and Coordination Group Against Violence Against Children and Women (NACGs)[[3]](#footnote-4) at the local and national levels to ensure robust monitoring and sustainability mechanisms and linkages with the regional platform. Under its strategy of networking and capacity building, NACG will link up with other groups/networks such as children's, young people’s and women’s groups and also with the SACG Chair, collaborate and provide support for regional initiatives[[4]](#footnote-5). While institutionalizing children’s participation at national level, NACG will support child-led initiatives and support meaningful participation of children in SAIEVAC work and processes. It also builds capacities of children on relevant issues and promotes participation of children in national campaigns and initiatives against violence against children and women. For this, the Chair of the NACG will be responsible to network, collaborate and be focal point for SAIEVAC Governing Board Members and Coordinators at the national level.

Children’s participation at the SAIEVAC national and regional consultations is one of the channels for their substantive inputs into SAIEVAC processes in reviewing progress made so far since 2006 in ending all forms of violence against children. SAIEVAC has organized 3 regional technical consultations: 1) Legal Reform to prohibit all forms of violence against children (2010); 2) Care Standards and Child-Friendly Services (2010); and 3) Follow-up Actions on Recommendations of UN VAC Study (2012). In all 3 consultations, child representatives selected by their peers from the national consultation actively participated and shared their understanding as well as presented recommendations at the larger technical consultations.

**Q: Why is SAIEVAC important?**

***A:*** SAIEVAC is a unique regional initiative led by the South Asian governments and unlike the SAARC mechanisms (which are only for the governments) it’s mechanism includes representation of Children/Young People and Civil society organizations. It engages a range of stakeholders including Government, children, INGOs, UN Agencies and civil society organizations in collaborative approach in addressing all violence against children in the region. It focuses on raising awareness, catalyzing legal reforms, building capacities and sharing good practices and lessons learnt in preventing and responding to violence against children in the region among the governments, civil society organizations and other stakeholders.

**Q: What is the situation of violence in South Asia?**

***A:*** Violence against children takes many forms and seriously affects the development and overall wellbeing of children and adolescents. It occurs in different settings of children’s lives home and family, schools and educational settings, care and justice systems, work settings, community, etc.

Violence against children is an increasing problem in all South Asian countries. In South Asia, violence against children occurs throughout all walks of life, among all cultural, religious, ethnic and geographical income groups and in all settings including homes, communities, schools, workplaces, institutions, on the streets, and within the juvenile justice system.

Frequent natural disasters, political strife, civil unrests and armed insurgencies are widespread and delay the implementation of development and child protection plans. High incidence of poverty and discrimination in the South Asia region means many children have limited access to basic social services in vital sectors such as health, water, and education. In the Region violence is also perpetuated by harmful traditional practices, such as early marriage and societal based gender biases. Issues such as child trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation, and child labour are also of particular concern in the region.

During the SAIEVAC Consultation in June 2010, children from South Asia had an extensive discussion and sharing of opinions on the violence against children. After substantive discussion among themselves and in the plenary the following outcome was endorsed for setting the agenda and focus for SAIEVAC’s work for children:

*“We, the children of South Asia, after intense consultation over a period of two and a half days, supported by facilitators from SACG, hereby submit the following recommendations to the Ministerial Meeting for endorsement’.*

1. Institutional mechanisms be put in place in each Member State for close coordination and working relations among children and the SAIEVAC coordinators;
2. The nomination to the Board and all other related mechanisms of SAIEVAC be undertaken through close consultation and involvement of children;
3. The SAIEVAC processes at regional and national level and SACG provide support in terms of financial, technical, and human resources to enable children to contribute meaningfully in the SAIEVAC process, and
4. The SAIEVAC processes ensure that the best interest of children and child-friendly environments become standard practice in SAIEVAC mechanisms.

**For more information, please see our website at** [**www.saievac.org**](http://www.saievac.org/)

**ANNEX 1**

**SOUTH ASIA COORDINATING GROUP ON ACTION AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN (SACG)**

**Background**

The “South Asia Coordinating Group against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Children and Women in South Asia” was established in March 2004 to work towards the Mid-term Review of the Yokohama Global Commitments on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

After the Regional Consultation on Violence against Children held in May 2005, Islamabad, Pakistan, the group was renamed as “South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Women and Children (SACG)” in its meeting in June 2005 to respond to a broadened scope of issues. It was further proposed that women and children will be included within the title and scope of the Group.

Further, in the SACG Roundtable meeting in September 2009, SACG members recommended that: “Regional interagency cooperation in South Asia be reproduced at the national level in each SAARC country and promote coordination and a comprehensive mapping on the child protection work of all agencies to assess synergies, promote joint initiatives and complementarily.”

In 2010, SACG has supported the strengthening of government cooperation in the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC), which has a Governing Board consisting of representatives from Member States (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), civil society and children, SACG Chair a Secretariat and a Five Year Work Plan.

**Objectives**

• To strengthen networking among the SACG member agencies, building a regional alliance to prevent, address and end violence against children, girls and boys.

• To promote rights based and coordinated approach in preventing violence and protecting children for strengthening national and community based protection systems.

• To engage in collaboration with other global and regional forums and bodies working on ending violence against children such as SAARC, the Office of the UN Special Representative to the Secretary General on Violence against Children and the Working group on violence against children in South East Asia.

• To provide necessary technical and other support to the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) Secretariat and participate in SAIEVAC technical meetings as participants and resource bodies.

• To provide support to NACG to support SAIEVAC Coordinators/Governing Board Members and other government representatives at national level.

• To actively contribute in implementation of the SAIEVAC Five Year Work Plan.

• To actively encourage and support national level inter-agency cooperation at all levels such as cooperation with and between government, UN agencies, INGO’s and civil society organizations including children and young people.

• To regularly communicate with the NACG Chairs

• To actively promote, support and cooperate with SAIEVAC in strengthening institutionalization of children’s participation at national and regional level.

Through the strategies developed so far, SACG cooperates with Governments and civil society including children to implement the Five Year SAIEVAC Work Plan. The overall objective of the Work Plan is to develop and strengthen national and community based child protection systems that would effectively protect children against abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. The SAIEVAC Member States have agreed to place emphasis on certain identified core child protection areas (Regional Cooperation, National Strategy, Legislative Measures, Prevention, Data Collection, Professional Training and Learning, Child Care Standards, Reporting, Referral Mechanisms, Recovery, Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration, Justice System, Education and Awareness Raising, Child and Civil Society Participation) and issue based action (early marriage, trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation, corporal punishment and child labour). Further, each of the core areas has specific objectives and indicators to be achieved by a time period as indicated in the Work Plan.

**The present Chair of the SACG is ILO, Decent Work Technical Unit, New Delhi and the Co-Chair is World Vision, Asia Regional Office**, **Philippines**

1. *The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established when its Charter was formally adopted on December 8, 1985 by the Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SAARC provides a platform for the peoples of South Asia to work together in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding. It aims to accelerate the process of economic and social development in Member States. Afghanistan joined SAARC only in 2007.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For the Recommendations made during the 3rd Ministerial Meeting held in 23 June 2010, please visit this link [www.saievac.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Recommendations-by-Children.pdf](http://www.saievac.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Recommendations-by-Children.pdf)

To read the statements of the head of delegations of the same meeting, please visit this link [www.saievac.org/category/resources/saievac-resources/statements-and-speeches/](http://www.saievac.org/category/resources/saievac-resources/statements-and-speeches/) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. A National Action and Coordinating Group against Violence against Women and Children (NACG) is being established in each SAARC Country and linkages are hoped to be developed to the regional South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Women and Children (SACG – please see more on this below ). The purpose is to strengthen inter-agency work including with governments and children groups to end violence against women and children. NACG is composed of UN agencies, multi-lateral and bi-lateral agencies, NGOs, civil society organizations and children (girls and boys) and young people’s group. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. On the advocacy on ending violence at the national level and in South Asia, NACG promotes policies and programs towards ending violence, guided by a rights-based and evidence-based approach with governments, SAIEVAC Governing Board Members/SAIEVAC Coordinators, I/NGOs and groups of women, children and young people. With regard to strengthening national monitoring function on violence issues, NACG monitors the implementation and progress of global, regional and national commitments on ending violence including CRC and its Optional Protocols, CEDAW, SAARC Conventions, follow-up to the UN Study on Violence against Children and the UN Study on Violence against Women recommendations, Global Congresses against Sexual Exploitation of Children, SAIEVAC Regional Preparatory Consultation against Sexual Exploitation of Children and SAIEVAC Regional Consultations on Violence against Children. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)