



## HIGH-LEVEL ROUND-TABLE MEETING

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS RELATING TO ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

## IN SOUTH ASIA

**Organized by the SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat,  
South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against  
Violence against Children**

Supported by  
Hosted by the

ECPAT International and the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia  
Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka  
(SAIEVAC National Mechanism)



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

The report provides a summary of and recommendations generated from discussions at the High-level Round-table Meeting on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals Related to Ending Violence against Children in South Asia, which was held 14–15 March 2016 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Key points are meant to contribute to the development of a more detailed foundation for sustainable development, addressing SDG-VaC goals and targets and other considerations related to moving ahead in South Asia on addressing and supporting implementation of the Agenda 2030.

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All presentations, background documents and meeting reports of this round-table can be found at [www.saievac.org](http://www.saievac.org) under the “Downloads” link and the High-level Round-table Meeting file listed here.

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## HIGH-LEVEL ROUND-TABLE MEETING

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS RELATING TO ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN SOUTH ASIA

Meeting Report  
14-15 March, 2016, Colombo, Sri Lanka



South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children [SAIEVAC]  
SAARC Apex Body

"In Solidarity with the Children of SAARC"



### High-Level Round-table Meeting on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Relating to Violence against Children in South Asia



14 - 15 March, 2016  
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Organized by SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat  
In collaboration with the South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children [SACG]  
Supported by ECPAT and UNICEF South Asia  
Hosted by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs [SAIEVAC National Mechanism], Government of Sri Lanka



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# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CAAC</b>	Children Affected by Armed Conflict
<b>CDC</b>	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<b>CRC</b>	Committee on the Rights of the Child
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organization
<b>CWIN</b>	Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre
<b>ECPAT</b>	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes International
<b>GB</b>	Governing Board
<b>IAEG-SDGs</b>	Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>INGO</b>	international non-governmental organization
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>NACG</b>	National Action and Coordinating Group Ending Violence against Children
<b>NCWC</b>	National Commission for Women and Children
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>ODA</b>	overseas development assistance
<b>ROSA</b>	UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
<b>SAARC</b>	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
<b>SACG</b>	South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children
<b>SAIEVAC</b>	South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SDGs-VaC</b>	Sustainable Development Goals related to Violence against Children
<b>SRS</b>	SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat
<b>SRSg-VaC</b>	Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on VaC
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>VaC</b>	violence against children
<b>VaW</b>	violence against women
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The protection of children from violence is a fundamental right that the international community has pledged to safeguard for children, everywhere and at all times. Yet across South Asia and globally, violence against children, along with harmful attitudes and practices that are often sanctioned at multiple levels, continues to persist and threatens children's survival, development, protection and ability to reach their full potential. However, violence is not inevitable; most violence is preventable. And despite the challenges, violence can be measured. Reliable data collection contributes to making violence more visible through evidence that confirms its hidden nature while at the same time helping to initiate a process of change and to break down its social acceptance.

The new global development agenda fully recognizes that sustainable and positive outcomes in development will not be achieved unless violence against children (VaC) is addressed. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Outcome Document – Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – was adopted by Heads of State and Government during the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit from 25 to 27 September 2015. For the very first time, the right of all children to live free from fear and violence has been recognized on the international development agenda. The SDGs call attention to and include protecting children from violence as a distinct and cross-cutting priority. Five goals and eleven targets address violence and abuse, trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation, harmful practices and the worst forms of child labour, including children in armed forces, along with promotion of safe public spaces, safe and non-violent learning environments and birth registration.

In this context, the High-level Round-table Meeting on implementation of VaC-related SDGs was co-hosted by the South Asia Coordinating Group on Violence against Children (SACG) and the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) Secretariat, with support from ECPAT International and the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA). The event was held 14–15 March 2016 in Colombo, Sri Lanka with nearly 50 participants including policymakers and practitioners from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, along with the National Action and Coordinating Groups Ending Violence against Children (NACGs), members of the SAIEVAC Governing Board, representatives of regional offices of United Nations organizations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and other regional and global civil society partners and think-tank initiatives. Both the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (SRSV-VaC) and the Director of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children were in attendance.

The High-level Round-table Meeting was a participatory event designed to stimulate discussion and exchange through speakers and four thematic panels that addressed specific Sustainable Development Goals related to Violence against Children (SDG-VaC) goals and targets. Interaction among participants sought to build a common understanding of the VaC-related SDGs and inform policy objectives for SDG-VaC goal and target actualization at regional and national levels. Discussion also provided an opportunity to review and analyse – through a South Asian lens – various aspects of violence against children related to the SDGs and further prioritize key issues and concerns.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Refer to **Annex A** for a complete list of support documents and presentations, **Annex C** for the complete High-level Meeting agenda and **Annex E** for a list of High-level Meeting Participants.

## OBJECTIVES FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL ROUND-TABLE MEETING INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

1. To promote a common understanding of why ending violence against children is essential for sustainable development in the South Asian context and corresponding targets related to this;
2. To promote a common understanding of the distinct and cross-cutting targets related to violence against children;
3. To initiate discussion on national and regional policies and practices that may prevent and respond to violence against children and advance implementation of the SDGs' violence-related targets and to pursue progress in the follow-up to the United Nations Study on Violence against Children;
4. To promote learning and exchange and to share concrete examples of policy change that address violence and children; and
5. To consider the future agenda in the South Asian context, including priorities and strategies for achieving and measuring progress on the VaC-related SDGs at national and regional levels.

### Expected outcomes of the High-level Round-table Meeting:

1. Commitment to ending violence against children in the region is reaffirmed;
2. A common understanding of the VaC agenda specific to South Asia is established; and
3. High-level policy priorities or implications related to VaC are identified/agreed.

## OPENING CEREMONY AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS

For the first time, the international community has recognized ending violence as an imperative for sustainable development. A world without violence against children reflects respect for life and human dignity, equal rights, social justice and cultural diversity. The opening ceremony presentations and the keynote address highlighted Agenda 2030 and contributed to the building of a shared understanding as a platform for discussion throughout the High-level Round-table Meeting. Comments and observations stressed the objectives of the event and how the round-table meeting would help advance work on addressing violence against children across the region through the use of a coordinated and systematic approach involving multiple partners. It was also noted that the round-table meeting presented a significant opportunity to make a real difference in South Asia. Moreover, because numbers associated with VaC in South Asia remain high, subsequent work to eliminate violence against children would also have an effect on the issue at the global level as well.

**Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC**, opened the High-level Round-table Meeting and emphasized that those sitting around the table held a special place as this was the first type of consultation on the SDGs-VaC in South Asia and it was important that all key partners were present. He also noted that the Concept Note and Background Document provided a factual background for the round-table meeting and described the importance of building a common understanding on priority protection issues for the children of South Asia.

**Ms. Dorothy Rozga, Executive Director, ECPAT International**, pointed out that ECPAT is a global network of civil society organizations (CSOs) working to end the sexual exploitation of children and that ECPAT was pleased, through the South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG), to amplify the voice of civil society. Reminding those present that civil society has been active in child protection in South Asia for many years, she observed that these partners provide grass-roots links to families and communities, religious organizations and children. She further noted that while financial implications related to achieving the SDGs specifically related to violence against children remain large, the costs of inaction would be even greater.

**Dr. Philippe Cori, Deputy Regional Representative for the UNICEF Regional Office of South Asia (ROSA)**, expressed the importance of not forgetting that the high numbers and figures in South Asia actually represent children, and the loss of both health and well-being affects the entire life of a child. Further reiterating the need to make a difference not only in South Asia but also worldwide, he stressed the significance of engaging with partners, communities and families along with judiciary and other service providers. Because children face multiple risks related to violence, avoiding duplication of efforts or competing with others is required and that the use of a more collaborative approach, inclusive of non-traditional influencers and the private sector, is necessary.

The Inaugural address was delivered by **H.E. Vijayakala Maheswaran, Honourable State Minister of Child Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka**, who emphasized that for all children – both girls and boys – freedom from violence or discrimination was of major concern. She





pointed out that the Government of Sri Lanka has been working to address protection issues and, along with those officials deployed by the Government, many civil society organizations also play a critical role. In closing, participants were urged to formulate recommendations to assist the country in strengthening efforts to eradicate VaC and improve children's lives.

**Ms. Tahmina Begum, Chairperson of the SAIEVAC Governing Board**, thanked the participants for attending and said that the theme of the round-table meeting was very timely. Children are innocent, vulnerable and dependent, and childhood should be a peaceful time and one full of joy. For many however, everyday life includes discrimination, lack of education or having to face violence in various forms. Reiterating that the new global development agenda recognizes that sustainable and positive outcomes for development will not be achieved without eliminating VaC, she concluded by sharing her pride in being part of the event and in lending support and commitment to giving every child in the region a better future.

## **Keynote Address: Setting the Stage for the SDGs-VaC – Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children<sup>2</sup>**



The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) expressed her pleasure to be back in the region working with old friends and partners to address violence against children and noted the importance of addressing the SDG agenda at this time. Thanking the National Coordinators, she also paid tribute to Dr. Rinchen Chopel for his energy, encouragement and skills at mobilizing a wide range of partners and stakeholders in support of the High-level Round-table Meeting.

Highlighting that VaC needs to be put at the centre of the development agenda, regardless of the multiple challenges that governments have, she emphasized it is now understood that with the SDGs, a world free from violence can be created. As all goals are interrelated, if VaC is not addressed, none of the other goals can be achieved. As part of other declarations or events, a sense of urgency around this issue is required. She further explained that the development of the 2010 SAIEVAC workplan was an achievement and that the next workplan can be shaped by the SDGs-VaC, and also be reflected in national workplans.

She observed that the discussions taking place at the round-table meeting were coming at an auspicious time as partners are now commemorating 20 years since the first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children was held in Stockholm in 1996.

Noting that for the first time in history, the global agenda includes goals and targets that call for ending all forms of violence by 2030, it was also mentioned that this period provides a unique opportunity to bring

<sup>2</sup> Refer to **Annex B** for a full transcript of the address delivered.

more partners in to support ending violence against children. A new initiative has also been launched – the High Time to Eliminate VaC, endorsed by the United Nations Secretary-General. It recognizes that goals will not be achieved until the root causes of violence are addressed at the ground level and that in the countdown to 2030, every person counts and everyone is needed to address violence regardless of the context or level they are working in.

Ms. Santos Pais cautioned that while the group celebrates this major breakthrough in placing ending violence on the global agenda, it is important to understand the responsibility that comes with undertaking protection work. Leadership and accountability are vital, and there is a continued need to monitor and improve actions, but this should be done in a very participatory manner that also includes children.

Pointing out the difference between the SDGs and the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), she stressed five elements:

1. The new agenda is very ambitious and it is transformational – the 17 goals and 169 targets are much more than what the MDGs contained but it should not be forgotten that they are all connected and bring human rights together as a foundation to move ahead.
2. The framework represents a global and universal agenda applicable to all countries in the world. It was stressed repeatedly that there is an opportunity for a win-win situation, as countries can learn from one another, and South Asia can play a lead role in this.
3. There is a need to include and consider ALL children, and none should be left out or behind. It will be important to reach out to those who are actually furthest behind, the most vulnerable, the forgotten – those not covered by policies, research or data – but to do this will require resources and investment.
4. The agenda recognizes that all goals and targets are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. One of the significant lessons learned from the MDG era was the failure to address violence as a major factor that hampered development. Violence brings vulnerability, deprivation and poverty and is associated with weak enforcement, a culture of impunity and prevents people from seeking help.
5. The agenda emphasizes a means of implementation, follow-up and review. If there is a vision without a plan, there will be a beautiful dream but a plan without a vision can be a nightmare. The success of this endeavour will be in having both a vision and a plan.

Additional recommendations on how to move ahead included the following:

- Work should start at the national level – the goal is to have a comprehensive, cohesive plan and road map that bring different sectors together in order to move ahead;
- Understanding that it will be difficult to move ahead without the necessary resources;
- Work needs to be done in conformity with international standards – the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child remain very relevant;
- There is a need for clarity and understanding on where we are headed and for the SAIEVAC mechanism to keep investing in the process through work with national coordinators and enlisting or working together with other partners as part of the process;
- It is essential to continue building on existing processes and platforms, lessons learned and to draw from evidence and robust data but these require more investment and support in order to maintain a strong foundation; and
- There is a need to monitor progress, and all countries will be expected to report.

Ms. Santos Pais explained that regional groups play a key role in moving ahead with the SDG goals and targets as well as for sharing successful approaches and for collaborating on issues of regional concern. While the current High-level Round-table Meeting may support development of national agendas, the regional agenda is an important objective as well. In other regions, development of regional action plans is taking place and SAIEVAC and South Asia need to keep pace.

It was reiterated that now is an opportune moment, and the opportunity should not be missed. It will be vital to continue building on the progress that has been made and draw from this in order to support the agenda. Having good evidence will enable governments make better decisions. Having a well-coordinated plan and vision is necessary, and we should no longer accept complacency concerning these issues because children will continue to die due to violence and urgent action is required. The children of South Asia deserve no less.

**South Asia Regional Response: Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC**, explained that one of the key challenges for SAIEVAC was generating adequate support. SAIEVAC is not a traditional organization, and instead focuses on its role as a facilitator for moving the regional movement to end VaC through sharing information and resources along with enhancement of regional cooperation. The Governing Board of SAIEVAC had been structured with this in mind and also includes children, INGOs, NGOs and others. He mentioned that the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) had awarded the organization with an Apex body status, and this demonstrated commitment from all the governments of the region.

Another key role of SAIEVAC was to keep children in the news in terms of securing their rights and addressing VaC. Now that SAIEVAC'S role and function are better understood, there is increased demand for SRS to provide support both at the regional and national levels.

**National-level Response: Ms. Chandrani Senaratna, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka**, noted that Sri Lanka has made progress through the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs to prevent all forms of VaC by strengthening existing frameworks, formulating and amending policies and laws to protect children, supporting commodities for the health and the development of children (formal and non-formal learning opportunities), and further building capacity of government staff and partners related to child protection.

She mentioned that within the government, the National Child Protection Authority, National Department of Child Care and Welfare, and the Child Secretariat are also involved. In addition, through support and engagement from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and the Police Department, work has been undertaken to address trafficking, to establish women and children's desks for improved response to incidents of violence, and to strengthen the enforcement of laws and policies related to the protection of children. In addition, child development initiatives for rural communities have been introduced and the Model Village concept implemented. This includes child advocacy teams (composed of both children and adults) that are responsible for promoting increased understanding on children's rights and prevention of violence.

## Additional discussion points from participants

Discussion following the opening ceremony presentations included the following:

### Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment is a core issue in the region. Based on recent studies, many people still feel the use of corporal punishment is necessary. The harm caused by corporal punishment, including its impact on self-esteem and other psychological dimensions, is not recognized. More information must be given to family members and caregivers about alternate forms of discipline. Community-based programmes are needed in order to reach out to families and to bring about change in both attitudes and practices, and this should be the place to start.

## Addressing gender inequity and the vulnerability of girls

Promoting gender equality is essential in order to have an effect on VaC. Girls are not valued as they are women “to be,” and women themselves are not valued in many cultures or societies. In terms of corporal punishment, one of the main forms used is to humiliate boys and treat them like girls. The issue is really about valuing women and girls. There is a need to change how parents respond and value their children – girls just as much as boys.

## Strengthening engagement with families

It is necessary to link with families and communities and especially those in marginalized communities – a need to think in greater depth on how to address this through the SDGs. Again, working at the home or family level is the best place to start.

## Additional needs and challenges

CSOs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) tend to focus on policy-level initiatives for governments but they also need a better understanding of the legal dimensions of VaC, including both crimes committed against children and crimes committed by children. There is some lack of incentive within the government with regard to taking on child-friendly budgeting or gender analysis related to budgets. Is it possible to twin or combine the two so that it will be easier for the government? While data collection is very important, its application and use should not be overlooked.

## Other protection areas that need focus

Protection of children who are addicts and children with mental and physical disabilities is a challenge and requires specific focus within the SDG-VaC agenda. And within this, those who are girls face even greater vulnerability and risk. There are various other problems and challenges in each country such as early/forced marriage, children in conflict with the law and child labour. Joblessness or unemployment contribute to these issues and must be addressed. Child protection is also a concern during natural disasters. The group can learn from Nepal’s earthquake and Sri Lanka’s tsunami experience; as South Asia is very prone to natural disasters, particular attention should be paid to the protection of children within this context.



## Summary of the Session and Synthesis of Discussion/Recommendations

- The SDG agenda is ambitious and interconnected. It combines rights and development. Therefore, no goal can be reached unless violence against children is addressed.
- Protection from violence should be for ALL children; however, particular attention needs to be paid to drug addicts, the disabled and those in families without employment.
- To achieve the agenda requires a systems approach within each sector and linking with other sectors.
- In South Asia, there is much to build upon. The SAIEVAC mechanism provides a platform for sharing information, capacity-building, development of regional plans and more.
- There are unique aspects within the region that must be considered including lack of value for girls, the use of humiliation to punish children (corporal punishment) and practices (dancing boys) that emphasize the gender-related hardships.
- Security and natural disasters are of concern, as the region is prone to both and each affects children and places them at greater risk.
- While SDGs are the governments' responsibility, partners must join hands with each other to end violence against children. This will require a coordinated and integrated approach including international organizations, civil society and the private sector and through involvement of families and communities and children themselves in order to inform and reshape family practices.



***If we do not prevent violence  
against children we will not  
achieve any other goal.***



**Marta Santos Pais,**  
Special Representative of the United Nations  
Secretary-General on Violence against Children

## SESSION 1: CHILD LABOUR, EXPLOITATION, TRAFFICKING AND CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT AND EMERGENCY

(SDG Target 8.7)

Goals and targets related to addressing the worst forms of child labour, exploitation, trafficking and protecting children in times of emergency and conflict can be both sensitive and challenging. Session 1 presentations, and the discussion that followed, sought to address this. Panel presentations reviewed recent and planned initiatives along with continuing actions and strategies needed for eliminating these forms of violence, while at the same time also addressing capacity-building needs and issues of concern for front-line workers and child protection staff.

**Dr. Philippe Cori of ROSA, Technical Facilitator**, opened the session by stating that addressing SDGs-VaC provides an excellent opportunity to continue work and build on gains and achievements. He emphasized the need for political traction to maintain and ensure the centrality of children within the new agenda. He observed that due to the framework's integration, there is a danger of losing children within all the targets and goals, and that the focus on sustainability – as part of the SDGs – is critical and reiterates the importance of investing in children for growth, development and progress.

### Panel Presentations:

**Ms. Sherin Khan, Senior Specialist (Child Labour), International Labour Organization (ILO) Decent Work Team for South Asia**, explained that multiple factors contribute to child labour. Within South Asia this is exacerbated by caste, class and other dimensions that are very difficult to transcend. Addressing child labour requires a multifactor approach and strong coordination and collaboration between United Nations organizations, international agencies, civil society groups and other partners. To engage with child labour, there are two categories of SDGs – one based on the core labour SDG goals (SDG Goal 8) – and another set related to the peripheral SDGs. To end child labour, it will be necessary to explore ways to link institutions/mechanisms among the SDGs (Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 16 and 17).

In order to move ahead it will be important to institutionalize practices that are effective and respectful of local culture and contexts. While laws, policies and plans of actions are needed, data show implementation gaps that require critical attention. Governments must commit resources to this issue. However, addressing the issue will also require the resources and capacities of others to sustain longer-term action. Answers to some of the challenges may be low cost. Indigenous solutions that are effective and efficient may often be overlooked. There must be accountability and transparency as we move ahead and recognition of failure as part of the learning process in the journey.

**Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC**, shared the Regional Action Plan for Ending Child Labour. The SRS – with support from the SACG/ILO – developed the strategy outline into a proper framework, which was endorsed for further development in 2014. Based on this, a regional project was designed and shared with the Government of India for its approval and further engagement as it had expressed interest in supporting a regional initiative.

In December 2015, an expert group reviewed the proposal, which is expected to be endorsed shortly. All countries and many organizations are involved in work concerning child labour, and the challenge for SAIEVAC is to bring all the partners together to work on and contribute to the regional plan.

**Ms. Sumnima Tuladhar, Executive Director, Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN)** noted that children who are affected by armed conflict need attention and support but that this is a complex topic, particularly as conflict has increased everywhere. South Asia has been affected (with Afghanistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka being examples of this) but not all countries in the region have ratified the Optional Protocol on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

She observed that in Nepal, when children were released from the military, issues of social re-integration emerged. Many were labelled as terrorists but these children also had hope and were actually peacebuilders. Support was also needed for the front-line workers as they were threatened because they worked with these children. She also mentioned the importance of continued work with these children in order to avoid re-recruitment and said that effective response included learning from and consulting with children to identify what was needed next in order to support their reintegration into a positive and productive life.

## **Additional discussion points from participants**

Following presentations, participants' discussion included the following:

### **Child labour reflected within the SDGs**

It was mentioned that including unpaid work in the SDG Framework is extremely challenging. At the same time, other participants mentioned that domestic work is included within the SDGs and that this is also covered by the ILO Conventions.

### **Risks and increased vulnerability of girls**

Within conflict settings, girls are at higher risk than boys. Many girls are forced to marry early and become slave workers in their own homes. This should be acknowledged and included as part of child labour. When examining child labour, it is necessary to consider work both inside and outside the home and particularly for girls who are taken out of school to work at home. There are also links between work at home and exposure to violence.

### **Children affected by armed conflict and staff working with them**

It is difficult to address child protection related to conflict when one of the biggest sources of income for some governments is the selling of arms and promoting war. Although this issue is politically challenging, civil society cannot address this issue alone. Staff working with children associated with armed groups face much suspicion and are often accused by both sides; in order to protect them, it is essential to keep a very low profile and not share or release too much information. In Nepal's situation, it was noted that organizations and human rights groups helped protect staff of another organization involved, and this type of solidarity is critical in order to carry out and continue work on the issue.

### **Additional child labour dimensions within the region**

Many industries such as carpet weaving and brick kilns use children as labourers. SAIEVAC plans a large consultation on child labour in brick kilns.

Many children, in some countries and locations, are being held almost like hostages by street begging collectives. While there is no robust evidence on this, it appears that in certain settings these children are from the same ethnic or tribal groups. Addressing child labour as part of or related to migration and movements of large groups of people may also be another area that should be explored. Bangladesh is chairing the Global Forum for Development, which will include movement and migration due to climate change as a topic. Addressing the issue of child labour may be relevant here.

While there are good examples of working with the supply chain, this approach cannot be the exclusive focus or approach to end child labour.

Participants mentioned that partners sometimes feel conflicted because eliminating child labour and educating consumers on the conditions of working children may lead to increased levels of poverty due to a shrinking of the workforce within the family. While it is up to the government to provide a social safety net, providing protection and support for both families and children remains a difficult task. Another concern is children working in border areas as labourers with handcarts, who are then caught and convicted. This is a problem that needs cross-border engagement.

Boys may be vulnerable, as well as girls. Trafficking needs attention, including across borders. Alternatives must be found for income generation for families, as poverty cannot be used as an excuse for child labour.

### Further strengthening of data and the evidence base

Border control systems are unreliable or do not disclose administrative data. Developing a way to share data across the region would be very useful and a rich source of information. SAIEVAC in the last two years has been putting together the SAIEVAC Management Information System (MIS), and SAARC and UN Women have also been working on the SAARC Gender database to eliminate bottlenecks. While it has not yet been made public, the system does contain significant information that would be useful for all.

## Summary of Session and Synthesis of Discussion/Recommendations

- Multiple factors contribute to child labour. Within the South Asia context, this includes exclusion and discrimination related to caste and class, which are very difficult to transcend. Strong statistics and data are needed to understand the issue and other dimensions related to child labour.
- Goal 8, Target 8.7 highlights that child labour is a violation of work principles. There is need to consider key approaches to address this, including institutionalizing effective practices that are also respectful of local culture and context, and seeking low-cost, local solutions.
- Migrant workers sometimes change their identity so it is unclear if they are children or adults. Border control systems are unreliable or do not disclose administrative data – if it would be possible to share data across the region, this would be very useful.
- There is little attention paid to the demand side as related to child labour - it is IMPORTANT to consider the consumers' viewpoint and engage with both companies and consumers.
- Addressing children affected by armed conflict (CAAC) is a complex issue. Social reintegration is a challenge as some are labelled as terrorists, which causes fear, but these children also have hope and can take up peacebuilding roles as well.





***More pressure should be applied to the ‘supply change’ of companies in the West because unless a factory catches fire or falls down, people tend to close their eyes and don’t look at child labour issues there.***



**Ms. Valerie Khan,  
NACG Chair, Pakistan**



***Nepal has developed and enacted a national plan of action for children who have been affected by armed conflict but its full implementation is yet to be realized. A Peace-Trust Fund aimed to support children who were affected was also created. However, it took a long time to develop a project to utilize the financial resource out of the fund. Some of the families didn’t want to report or take benefit from the project as they didn’t want to remember the wounds which already have got scars.***



**Dr. Kiran Rupakhetee,  
SAIEVAC National Coordinator, Nepal**

## SESSION 2: ADDRESSING VIOLENCE RELATED TO EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

(SDG Targets 5.1, 6.1 and 16.2)

It is well understood that exploitation and abuse of children adversely affect their development and, in turn, the development of society. The presentations and discussions that followed as part of Session 2 set the stage and provided a foundation to explore exploitation and abuse in South Asia, particularly in Nepal and Pakistan. Presentations also addressed prevention dimensions through concerted actions of partners at regional, national and community levels and highlighted opportunities available and challenges that remain related to specificities within the regional context.

**Mr. A.K.M. Masud Ali, NACG Chair, Bangladesh,** served as Technical Facilitator for the session and introduced the panel of presenters.

### Panel Presentations:

**Ms. Ramya Subrahmanian, Executive Director, Know Violence in Childhood,** acknowledged a review published in the journal *Pediatrics* that reported 50 per cent of children (aged 2–17) experienced violence in 2014. This means that 1 billion children or over half of all children face this problem and indicates that VaC is a universal issue and is being normalized. Proposing that what is needed are new ways of working to address this challenge including an integrated approach that features more enabling measures as opposed to those that are only punitive. It was further noted that a wide spectrum of VaC is being addressed by the SDGs within the three environments of home, school and within communities and public spaces, and, because some cut across all three settings, poly-victimization needs to be considered and further explored.

She emphasized the importance of early intervention and that it needs to begin from the prenatal period and consider the care and protection of the mother as well. There continue to be major data gaps related to the prevalence of violence, and challenges with data collection (including small sample sizes). It should not be forgotten that any form of violence has a cumulative impact on children and that levels of violence against children in South Asia remain high. Ms. Subrahmanian also mentioned that perpetrators of sexual violence are mostly intimate partners. Data show that children of women who experience partner violence are less likely to be immunized or more likely to be malnourished and that domestic violence is related to school drop-out, especially for girls.

Drivers and risk factors of violence include gender inequality, power imbalances between adults and children and social groups, insufficient support for caregiving (including social, economic and psychological dimensions) and lack of awareness around the ineffectiveness of and harm caused by harsh discipline.

**Ms. Valerie Khan, NACG Chair, Pakistan,** noted that in Pakistan violence against children occurs at home, in madrassas and in communities. It includes the exploitation of children through prostitution, pornography and trafficking, as well in other situations such as children who work in deep-sea fishing or as truck drivers, dancing boys, or those who are used as sex objects. She further explained that legislation is in place along with measures related to reporting (which remains limited) and that structures have been established at the government and provincial levels, as well as partner training and capacity-building in order to strengthen these services.

Challenges in the country include attitudes and perceptions that remain related to patriarchy, taboos and distorted religious narratives, which all perpetuate discriminatory perspectives. While the legal structure is in place (which allows forgiveness and negotiation), this is currently being misused to enable impunity. Another gap mentioned was the lack of a national child protection system and within the context of

devolution, there is ongoing debate around the need for the development of a national-level structure or system. Other limitations include institutions, capacities, knowledge, budget allocations and in general, governance and accountability. The scale or prevalence of VaC is hidden, and addressing it is difficult as it takes place within the private sphere.

When moving forward, she suggested that a national child protection system should be established in the context of the 18th amendment to the Constitution and that discriminatory laws be amended, along with an overall reform of the criminal justice system. Conducting of mass media campaigns, review of school curricula, better data collection systems and improvement of resource allocation mechanisms are all needed. She suggested that the Pakistan Vision 2030 document be reviewed in order to address the absence of VaC within the document.

**Dr. Kiran Rupakhetee, Under Secretary and Chief, Child Protection and Development Section, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Nepal**, explained that within the SDGs the 5 “P’s” are very important: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. Violence can be perceived in many different ways, yet the goal is same: eliminating violence and harmful practices against women, girls and boys. He further stated that Nepal’s new Constitution includes many positive aspects related to including the rights of women and children, and partners are in the process of drafting a national strategy against child marriage and continuing work on eliminating harmful practices. He noted the commonalities with other countries, and that the challenges to protecting children from violence include the patriarchal society, harmful traditional practices, insufficient resources, inadequate awareness among communities and personnel, along with the limited skills of service providers. He stated that it is necessary to strengthen regional bodies, such as SAIEVAC, and while there needs to be a national-level focus on the SDGs, regional cooperation is required to address cross-border issues.



***Government accountability has to be demonstrated by resources and addressing corruption ... to me, we need to remove the “P” associated with prosperity and instead include “P” for programme so that the work can move ahead.***



**Mr. Masud Ali,**  
Chair, NACG Bangladesh

## **Additional discussion points from participants:**

Discussion from participants following the panel presentations touched on the following issues and concerns:

### **Linkages between VaC and VaW (violence against women)**

Witnessing violence does increase the level of stress in children; a child witnessing abuse of a female caregiver does have a negative impact on the child. It may be useful for researchers to explore the differences and similarities related to drivers of violence for both groups, to inform the development of a road map for moving ahead to address both issues.

## Collection of and working with data

While it is understood that data are needed to protect children, it should be clarified whether the problem is the collection of data or whether data are not being used effectively in order to tell the child protection story properly. At the United Nations level, there is a plan for a global data forum related to the SDGs. It is essential that the data users actually understand the data. For example, data that are one year old are seen as 'old'. There is a drive to continually collect data but the "old" data still have value.

## Strengthening child protection systems

Solutions need to be sustainable, and this can take place through national child protection systems. Because the cycle of violence continues and prevents goals from being achieved, this indicates the need for continued work on the strengthening of the child protection system.

## Other issues to consider and address

The issue of corruption needs to be addressed because even with strong systems in place, if corruption is present, it will be difficult to move ahead. Government accountability has to be demonstrated through the proper use of resources and in addressing corruption. There is talk about change in culture but there is also the need to shift the culture so everyone is involved in combating VaC.

Children who have experienced sexual violence have a greater risk of becoming perpetrators themselves and the response should consider this. In order to reach families on this sensitive issue, engagement with faith-based organizations and religious leaders is effective. Both adults and children develop violent tendencies based on how they were raised, and this must be addressed.

Resources, human and financial, are scarce. Security for front-line workers is another problem that needs to be addressed, as staff members are frequently in contact with perpetrators and face intimidation. Lack of resources prevents or limits training or capacity-building for staff on how to deal with this.





## Summary of Session and Synthesis of Discussion/Recommendations

- Fifty per cent or more children (aged 2–17) experienced past-year violence in 2014; that is 1 billion children or over half of all children experiencing VaC. VaC has become normalized. VaC is part of daily life and takes place at home, schools, community and in public spaces.
- Addressing VaC requires new ways of working and includes addressing corruption and impunity. To reach those who may be perpetrators within the families, religious leaders can be an effective means; yet, there is also concern about religion condoning VaC or perpetuating it. Therefore, this approach should be carefully considered.
- The focus must be on prevention and the link between VaW and VaC should be further explored to inform better prevention initiatives.
- Gaps in data need to be addressed. Exploring the use and inclusion of VaC within other survey, research or data collection systems (for health, education or others) may be a way to strengthen this. There is also a need to improve upon the use and analysis of existing data and to work in partnership with statisticians and others who can enhance use.
- Child protection system strengthening is crucial to address VaC.
- SAIEVAC is an important platform for the South Asia region, both for strengthening data collection and sharing, building capacity and further enhancing the development or strengthening of national child protection systems.



***We need to strive to provide a violence-free childhood for children because these children will grow up to be violence-free adults and break the cycle***



**Dr. Hiranthi Wijemanne,**  
Former CRC Committee Member, Sri Lanka

## SESSION 3: HARMFUL PRACTICES – CHILD MARRIAGE AND MORE (SDG Target 5.3)

Child marriage remains a prevalent practice in South Asia. While most parents are concerned with the protection and well-being of their children, some practices – such as child marriage – result in unintended harm. Driven by gender-defined roles and discrimination, child marriage is a violation of children’s rights and a form of violence against girls. Session 3 presenters, and the discussion which followed, focused on exploring challenges related to child marriage and successful strategies and approaches required for addressing this. The session promoted exploring and learning more about the role of men and boys, and the need for their increased engagement in working against harmful traditional practices and social norms related to violence.

**Dr. Sima Samar, Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission, Afghanistan, Technical Facilitator,** introduced panel members so that discussion could begin.

### Panel Presentations:

**Ms. Ingrid Fitzgerald, Regional Gender Adviser, UNPFA,** pointed out that sex selection contributes to discrepancies in population figures in many countries of South Asia. She stated that harmful practices continue not only in South Asia but globally as well as within diaspora populations in Europe and other locations. The underpinning issue of child marriage is gender discrimination combined with cultural and economic factors. Pointing out that harmful practices are interconnected – child marriage, sex selection and son preference – she emphasized that VaW and VaC must be addressed at the same time. Child marriage drives lack of equal participation and voice both in the household and the wider community and further contributes to diminished self-esteem, poor health and, in some cases, suicides in women.

She further explained that investment in prevention of child marriage has huge pay-offs for countries and their economies along with supporting the rights of women and girls. Ending child marriage requires an integrated and coordinated approach involving government, international partners and local NGOs and CSOs. Remaining gaps, including lack of efforts to target child grooms and their families, were also discussed. A multi-partner and multi-sector approach to address child marriage is required to achieve long-term change, along with strengthening of laws and policy, health and other services, shifting social norms and promoting life skills development.

**Ms. Shipra Jha, Senior Adviser, Girls Not Brides,** noted that 720 million women alive today were married before the age of 18 and that this is nearly 10 per cent of the world’s population. Child marriage takes place not just in Africa or Asia but in Europe and North America where even some of these more developed countries do not have laws against marriage under the age of 18 in place.

She observed that addressing child marriage requires tackling poverty, poor nutrition, poor health and reducing gender inequality. There is increased recognition that nation-wide, comprehensive and multi-sector government strategies are needed. Theory of Change related to ending child marriage for her organization includes the empowerment of girls (and sustaining their education), mobilizing and talking to families and communities, provision of services (which must be led by government) and establishment/implementation of laws and policies (which need additional awareness).

Addressing child marriage will require political will and collaborative leadership along with commitment and strong capacity from the government. In addition, consistent national-level engagement is required including budgeted and multi-sectoral national initiatives that are funded to address social norms related to girls and women in South Asia along with good coordination among different actors.

**Kamani Jinadasa, MenEngage Alliance**, explained that considering masculinities is important because it is not possible to end child marriage or address violence without addressing partners or perpetrators. With increased involvement of men, there are improvements in sexual and reproductive health outcomes and on ending violence against women and girls, and there is growing evidence of an improved quality of life for children as well. Men's engagement helps reduce the probability of violence perpetration in adulthood following negative childhood experiences.

She further elaborated that men traditionally have been assigned much power and privilege. This has been defined in culture, tradition and art. Religion also has a strong influence on maintaining patriarchy. Post-colonial influence also contributes. Conflict and post-conflict experiences also often lead to a strong sense of nationalism and fundamentalism that fuels these traditional views or roles and the notion of male privilege and patriarchy are also often reinforced through the media.

Citing a United Nations multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific that included six countries and men between 18 and 49 years of age, she said that findings revealed factors associated with men's perpetration of violence. This included reasons for violence taking place, how masculinity is reinforced (control issues) and how it may arise from experiences from childhood and other factors. While most discourse on perpetrators presents them as adult men, research shows that almost half of all male perpetrators had committed rape between 15 and 19 years of age, illustrating the importance of working with young boys.

In closing, she stressed that while working with men and boys, it is essential to promote non-violent masculinities and healthy families that are nurturing and promote violence-free environments. Also necessary is the inclusion and promotion of healthy sexuality for men and addressing the notion of sexual entitlement.

## **Additional points of discussion:**

Discussion in the High-level Round-table Meeting, taking place after presentations, explored the following:

### **Reasons and rationale in Nepal**

Harmful practices are not done for pleasure but based on religious codes and context that are deeply rooted in society. It is possible to void marriage only based on deceit or sale of brides but in order to void the marriage, one has to be 20 years of age and have no children. Thus, it is not possible for most.

Child marriage occurs because of the need to protect virginity, and this relates to dowry practices. Recent research findings in Nepal, found that 63 per cent of respondents who had married early did so because the marriages were arranged by parents, with another 77 per cent noting that their marriages were based solely on the father's decision.

### **Legislation and government responsibility**

Addressing child marriage must take legislation into account, but in some conflict settings, while many laws are in place, developed in accordance with various United Nations conventions and national Constitutions, power and position acquired during conflict and lack of caregivers all contribute to the practice. A bad law does not help the situation – what role can SAIEVAC play in avoiding or eliminating loopholes that allow girls at 16 to be married with parental consent?

While the situation is improving in Pakistan, the governments in both countries (Afghanistan and Pakistan) have to challenge religious stances on child marriage. Both have made commitments but have not internalized them and have failed to challenge the religious influences on them.

There are also challenges in birth registration, so correct ages are not really known.

## Gender dimensions and engagement of boys and men

The constant rationale for marrying girls as children is because they are not safe – but then who is it that they are not safe from? It is family members, teachers and others, but no one speaks about this despite it linking to engagement of men. When working with men and boys, there is a need to consider whether efforts are changing existing power structures and addressing the rights of women and girls.

## Regional Action Plan for Child Marriage

Discussion on the development of the regional action plan on child marriage began in 2010. The SAIEVAC Governing Board endorsed the plan, and in 2014 all partners came together to review efforts. This resulted in the Kathmandu Call to Action to End Child Marriage. Ministers from South Asian countries were able to take this forward and contribute to the Beijing Plus 20 efforts, further accelerating the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, which was launched at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

## Other strategies to address for enhanced protection

Through use of media and efforts by civil society, child marriages have been reduced – including cross-border areas where the practice is common. The prevalence of child marriage is linked to economic empowerment of women and education. Child clubs are an excellent way to promote child participation and also an effective tool to protect children from issues such as child marriage.

Sexuality is an area that needs to be focused upon. It is not possible to prevent young people from engaging in having sex, but it should not be criminalized. It is important to carefully consider how to approach sexuality. Research on the age of consent and child marriage is needed, and also to ensure that child marriage or related acts are not used to limit young people's access to contraception or education.

## On moving ahead – additional recommendations from participants

- Child marriage will require wider social change that is inclusive of everyone as child marriage is a violation of children's rights, and it is necessary to work together to find a better solution to enable girls to decide about their life and partner.
- This requires strong political will from the government.
- Along with laws, implementation is also important.
- Budget and resources are required from governments and donor countries to address and reduce the practice.
- It is essential to consider how children are raised (in terms of gender roles and perceptions).
- It is also necessary to increase the sensitivity of communities on the issue because it is a violation of human rights that will need collective action.





*Poverty is not the only underlying factor, population policies are the key; delaying child marriage is not enough – it is essential to challenge existing power structures.*



**Ms. Ingrid Fitzgerald,**  
Regional Gender Adviser, UNFPA



*Both VaC and VaW are very close to our hearts and because we share similar cultures and traditions, we want to see an end to these painful stories.*



**Ms. Chandrani Senaratna,**  
Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs,  
Government of Sri Lanka

## Summary of Session and Synthesis of Discussion/Recommendations

- Harmful practices are based on gender discrimination and inequality.
- Recommendations included a comprehensive range of actions including law reform and enforcement, tackling social norms, ending impunity and engaging men and boys. The importance of partnership was strongly reiterated as one of the key prerequisites for effective outcomes.
- Challenges associated with ending child marriage include the difficulty in enforcement of laws that prohibit it; the social norms that promote child marriage; and the lack of civil registration coverage, including both birth and marriage registration.
- Governments are caught between the international agenda to end child marriage and social norms in the country that continue to promote it.
- Birth registration is essential.
- The importance of early childhood interventions is one of the most effective prevention strategies and includes dismantling of gender stereotypes and promoting more respectful and equitable norms from the very earliest age.

## SESSION 4: MOVING AHEAD – STRATEGIES, INDICATORS AND COSTS (SDG Target 16.9)

Ending violence against children requires concerted action, partnerships, data and resources. Data are necessary so that change can be measured, and successful strategies must be shared and promoted in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of protection work. All these aspects require resources and action for support. Speakers, panel presentations and discussion around Session 4 provided additional information on partnerships and efforts related to strengthening data while at the same time exploring opportunities to expand the resource base for SDGs-VaC with all participants contributing to planning follow-up steps.

**Ms. Marta Santos Pais, SRSg-VaC, Technical Facilitator**, opened the session by stating that there had been good discussions about what has taken place in the past and emphasized the need to be practical while moving ahead through partnerships between countries in the region and globally. She also pointed out that there is a greater cost in doing things separately and that it is critical to share and work with ministries and collaborate more with the academic community.

### Panel Presentations:

**Dr. Susan Bissell, Director, Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children**, introduced the new global partnership, which has been in place for approximately one year. The Partnership is supported by a paper prepared by a scholar and strategist, David Steven, “If Not Now, When?”, which explored various aspects of protection within the new agenda.

She explained that the Partnership provides a platform for implementation of the Goals and aims to change the way policymakers and the general public think about VaC, while at the same time emphasizing that it is possible to make societies safer for children. The Partnership provides a cohesive foundation for partners to work together to address:

- **The WHY?** Every five minutes a child is killed by violence. This is unacceptable in all countries. Violence causes severe physical, cognitive and economic damage and will be addressed by this new global agenda across all countries.
- **The Why Now?** Peace and sustainable development are linked in the 2030 Agenda. It sets ambitious targets to end VaC, and there is knowledge on how to make societies safe for children.
- **The If Not Now – When?** Aspiring goals must be turned into an agenda for action unifying a field that is starved of resources. This can be done through enlistment of all parts of society in making children safe because violence is a public health issue, an education issue and a population issue.



Three strategies will be used:

1. Build political will to end VaC and champion it as a global policy priority.
2. Work with countries to accelerate action to tackle the violence children face. Support pathfinder countries (early adopters of the Partnership strategy) to prevent and respond to violence.
3. Help countries to work together to tackle VaC. Tackle transnational threats to children and create a platform for sharing knowledge.

Dr. Bissell stated that an independent fund to end VaC, associated with the Partnership, will be available to support the implementation of the Partnership's strategy and accelerate action. Continued engagement will also take place with all governments that demonstrate sound commitment to step up actions, apply resources, continue to learn and implement improved approaches, especially related to prevention.

A package of interventions has been developed with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and others, which includes positive parenting skills, helping children develop social and emotional skills to stay in school, and more. Pathfinder countries were described as those that commit to moving the agenda to end violence forward. A self-selected group of nations have expressed interest in participating; current interest has been expressed by Canada, El Salvador, Indonesia, the Philippines, Romania, Sweden, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The suggestion to include regional bodies like SAIEVAC was mentioned as an interesting, as civil society needs to take on stronger leadership in the process as well – along with governments, the United Nations, leaders from faith-based organizations, children and youth.

**Ms. Aishath Shahuda, Chief Statistician, National Bureau of Statistics, Government of Maldives**, noted that there has been a call for evidence and stronger data. The United Nations Statistics Committee endorsed an indicator framework for the SDGs that will continue to evolve over time. Each indicator is associated with a definition and method of computation, along with the proposed source of data collection, and parameters surrounding disaggregation. These indicators will require an unprecedented amount of data to be produced and analysed. She further noted that the data will be well beyond what many national statistical systems are currently producing, so capacities will need to be strengthened and expanded. People with the ability to communicate the story behind the figures are also necessary, to ensure the data are understood by policy and decision makers.

In closing, she urged governments to step up ongoing work and improve the efficiency of the administrative systems used for recording crimes, child protection and justice system information, and integrate these to provide high-quality and timely administrative data. The need to mine all the data related to child protection, violence against girls and women and to expand existing surveys and introduce new surveys on women and children and more was also suggested.

## **Additional discussion points from participants:**

Following presentations, the key points of discussion emphasized the following:

### **Reporting process**

The expectation is that SDG reporting will be a country-led process and the reporting process will create peer pressure. While all countries are expected to report, there will be some flexibility in terms of timing and the process at the country level. Resources will be needed to develop the monitoring and reporting system and to motivate people to do so. There was also an agreement finalized in May 2016 with WHO to adopt a global plan on interpersonal violence, and, along with this plan, a monitoring process will be devised. This might serve as a useful resource. VaC is already included in many articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The accountability of governments is in place through their role as signatories to the Convention; they are accountable and will have to report to the monitoring Committee.

## Financial management

Resources for the agenda need to bring together overseas development assistance (ODA), domestic resources and private sector along with an integrated approach and understanding that investing against violence does make a significant impact. The era of ODA is over. We now need to work with the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and it will be necessary to leverage the support that is given to governments.

In general, financing for development will need to move away from ODA and explore domestic resource mobilization from governments as this is the way to ensure sustainability and ownership. If government spending is low and there is not enough for the health systems and social services, this indicates that tax collection is too low. This is a big issue, which applies to the SDG agenda as well. Yet domestic resources, while needed, will be a challenge. In countries with conflict, most money goes to defence, yet the country cannot feed the poor. In such a context it is difficult to allocate money from national budgets to address protection of children.

It should be noted that much of the social sector spending for the VaC agenda will be taking place at subnational levels, and a budget analysis by age groups to see how funds are allocated may be useful. If allocations do not accurately reflect needs, then this indicates that something may be wrong that needs to be changed. The challenge will be in requests for funds and focusing on prevention. Other sectors that can be involved should be explored. It is also important to be able to provide a robust analysis when requesting more funding and to be able to explain why or how the approach will work and impact upon the protection of women and children.

Who will keep the donors and countries that receive funds accountable for implementation or addressing the SDGs? Many did not keep their MDG promises and now with the SDGs, there are more goals and more indicators; who is going to be accountable for this?

## Engagement with the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children

It will be beneficial to explore SAIEVAC's engagement with the Global Partnership and whether the organization could be considered a pathfinder, because it would be very useful for the region in that role.

## Regional and national strategies

There are many different strategies for children in individual countries and across countries. In order to support the SDGs-VaC, it would be helpful to have SAIEVAC streamline the process by developing a regional strategy that could be translated into a national protection strategy on behalf of children.

## Summary of Session and Synthesis of Discussion / Recommendations

- The Global Partnership is a platform for creating political will to implement the SDG-VaC goals. South Asian countries, as well as SAIEVAC, may want to explore the possibility of working closely with the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.
- For SDG implementation, strong data and indicators are needed as part of a data revolution. This requires increased capacity and resources along with motivating and mobilizing governments to gather, make public and use data more effectively.
- Governments have a role in robust and integrated reporting on SDG implementation. SAIEVAC can serve as a learning platform and develop its new workplan to align with the SDGs.
- Financing and funding support needs to be sourced from national budgets, private sector contributions and from global commitments. Investment in prevention can lead to resources being saved. There is also a need to move away from traditional dependency on ODA and explore domestic revenue, including improved tax collection.
- It is important to know the levels of expenditure on eliminating VaC, potentially disaggregated by age groups. Knowing how much is being spent is necessary to assess the additional resources required.



***Evidence-based data is IMPORTANT. It is not only the collection but the actual use of data that is even more IMPORTANT.***



**Ms. Kunzang Lhamu,**  
Director, National Commission for Women  
and Children, Bhutan



***The era of overseas development assistance (ODA) is over, if we cherish this hope, it is just a dream.***



**Dr. Philippe Cori,**  
Deputy Regional Representative, UNICEF ROSA



# CLOSING CEREMONY

## Concluding Observations and Key Issues Raised

**Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC**, introduced the closing session and requested the SACG Chair and Co-Chairs to provide concluding points from the two days of discussions. Providing a summary on the main findings in the round-table meeting, **Ms. Kendra Gregson, Regional Child Protection Adviser, UNICEF ROSA**, on behalf of the conference organizers, noted the following:

- The SDGs are ambitious, transformational and mutually reinforcing. They combine rights of children and development. It is recognized that we cannot reach any of the goals unless we address violence against children.
- The South Asian countries share a number of similarities related to VaC, including a lack of value given to girls, discrimination based on gender, caste and class and patriarchal societal structures embedded in culture, religion and history. The region is also prone to natural disasters and conflict, and these heighten children's risk and their vulnerability to violence.
- The SDGs demand that indicators be collected and reported on, some of which are "new" indicators for child protection. There is a need for stronger data on VaC and also the ability to better use data that exist so that the story behind the numbers can effectively be told.
- Strengthening the child protection system is imperative to achieve the SDGs. The SDGs-VaC are interlinked just as the whole SDG agenda is. It is not sustainable to have a fragmented response to VaC.
- Partners cannot shy away from corruption and impunity.
- The SDG agenda calls for "supremely ambitious action," which must begin with state leadership and accountability building on existing momentum and include support from the private sector, civil society, faith-based organizations, academia and financial institutions, along with families and communities themselves. Collaboration and cooperation is required between governments, civil society, the private sector and funders, and partners can continue to build on strengths and experience. Working together the SDGs can be achieved but working alone will end in failure.
- While there was a strong focus on girls during the round-table meeting, violence against boys must also be addressed. Men and boys must be brought into the agenda of ending violence against children.
- There are also concerns related to the security of front-line workers who often face intimidation and threats. More capacity-building and support are required in order to prepare them for dealing with this.

## Priorities related to defining the way forward and moving ahead<sup>3</sup>

1. Build on what is in place and already exists.
2. Address the SDGs based on what is established, and review and strengthen these initiatives with the lens of the SDGs.
3. Recognize that the agenda is distinct; build on the momentum and accelerate progress of achievements and the foundation that is already there.
4. Link the SAIEVAC workplan with the SDGs for a new regional strategy.
5. Consider SAIEVAC as a Pathfinder within the Global Partnership.

<sup>3</sup> For additional points contributed by all round-table participants through a participatory exercise, refer to **Annex D**.

6. Build a convincing economic case about VaC. Define the resources and ask clearly – just saying there is a need for more funding is not enough.

The eight NACG Chairs attending the High-level Round-table Meeting shared their key issues and recommendations:

- It is important to involve NACGs in the development of the new SAIEVAC five-year workplan as this is necessary for the implementation of the SDGs.
- If a Regional Action Plan is developed, a plan is needed for each thematic area and this should be translated into National Action Plans within each country.
- Concerning resource allocation, request direct funding from SAIEVAC to NACGs and not through national government mechanisms.
- Accountability – how can we make the SAARC countries accountable to their commitments to SAIEVAC?
- Continue to strengthen child participation.
- There is a need to establish a SAARC human rights mechanism within the region.
- It is necessary to review the two SAARC Conventions to address VaC.

## Closing remarks

During her closing remarks, **Dr. Susan Bissell of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children** said that she was struck by all the positive work that has been done in South Asia but that she also realizes how much more is needed. She also emphasized that the rallying cry to the private sector will be very important in moving ahead, especially in terms of resource mobilization.

**Ms. Marta Santos Pais, SRSG-VaC**, provided concluding thoughts, noting that there is great experience in the region that can be used to address VaC as part of the SDG framework. She reiterated that the population numbers and evidence of VaC in South Asia calls for attention. It will be possible to build on the strong foundation that has already been achieved to address this new commitment. The call to action will be led by governments but should also include civil society, academia, the private sector and financial institutions. The agenda for each country must be participatory, transparent and have ownership by all members of society including religious and community leaders along with children themselves.

**Ms. Chandrani Senaratna, Honourable Secretary, Government of Sri Lanka, and SAIEVAC Governing Board Member**, expressed her gratitude and appreciation and remarked that there had been good discussions and conclusions emerging from the event. She said that the theme of the round-table meeting was very timely as governments of the region begin to prepare their plans.

**Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC**, officially closed the High-level Round-table Meeting and extended gratitude to colleagues who helped to plan and organize the event. He especially acknowledged the commitment and support demonstrated by the Government of Sri Lanka and further noted that without their investment, it would not have been possible for the round-table meeting and subsequent discussions to take place at this special location.

He also thanked the Sri Lanka NACG for organizing and hosting the High-level Round-table Meeting and offered thanks to all the participants and special guests, stating that he looked forward to further and continued strong collaboration in moving ahead to create a safer and better environment for all the children of South Asia.



*Change starts with each and every one of us ... if we don't make  
the change – who will?*



**Ms. Marta Santos Pais,**  
Special Representative of the United Nations  
Secretary-General on Violence against Children

# *Annexes*

## ANNEX A: LIST OF SUPPORT DOCUMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

(All can be downloaded from [www.saievac.org](http://www.saievac.org) under the link for “Downloads” inside the High-level Round-table Meeting file.)

### Support Documents:

- Concept Note – High-level Round-table Meeting – Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals Related to Ending Violence against Children in South Asia, SAIEVAC and SACG, February 2016
- Background Document – High-level Round-table Meeting on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals Relating to Ending Violence against Children in South Asia, SAIEVAC and SACG, March 2016
- Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations General Assembly resolution 70.1, October 2015

### Presentations:

#### Keynote Address: Setting the Stage for the SDGs

- Speech – Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children

#### Session 1: Child Labour, Exploitation, Trafficking and Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Emergency

- Measuring Children’s Work in South Asia – Findings and Recommendations – Ms. Sherin Khan, Senior Specialist on Child Labour, ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia
- Children Affected by Conflict and Child Soldiers in South Asia – Ms. Sumnima Tuladhar, CWIN Nepal

#### Session 2: Addressing Violence Related to Exploitation and Abuse

- Preventing Violence in Children in South Asia – Setting the Stage – Ms. Ramya Subrahmanian, Executive Director, Know Violence
- National Action and Coordinating Group to Eradicate Violence against Children in Pakistan – Child Abuse and Exploitation – Ms. Valerie Khan, NACG Chair, Pakistan
- Implementation of SDG Goals on Eliminating All Forms of Violence against Women and Girls in South Asia – Dr. Kiran Rupakhetee, SAIEVAC National Coordinator, Section Chief, Child Protection and Development, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal

#### Session 3: Harmful Practices – Child Marriage and More

- Child Marriage – Ms. Ingrid Fitzgerald, Regional Adviser, UNFPA Bangkok
- Child Marriage – Moving Forward – Ms. Shipra Jha, Senior Adviser, Girls Not Brides
- Bringing Men into the Agenda for Ending Violence Now – Ms. Kamani Jinadasa, Consultant, MenEngage Alliance

#### Session 4: Moving Ahead – Strategies, Indicators and Costs

- Global Partnership to End Violence against Children – Dr. Susan Bissell, Director, Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children
- Measurement Challenges – High-level Round-table Meeting on SDGs-VaC – Ms. Aishath Shahuda, Chief Statistician, National Bureau of Statistics, Maldives

#### Closing Session:

- Closing Remarks/Presentation – UNICEF–ECPAT co-organizers



## ANNEX B: KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE UN SRSG-VAC



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON  
**VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

### High-level Round-table Meeting on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals Relating to Violence against Children in South Asia

#### “Setting the Stage for the SDGs”

#### Keynote Statement by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children Ms. Marta Santos Pais

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

It is a great honour to participate in this important South Asia Round Table on the implementation of the sustainable development agenda; and to address you all at the start of this strategic round-table meeting. This high-level conference provides a very timely platform for reflection and learning across the region, and a special opportunity for renewing a strong commitment to the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children.

Allow me to use this opportunity to thank the representatives of South Asian Governments for their presence and support; to salute the Director General of SAIEVAC, Dr. Rinchen Chopel, for his leadership and steady enthusiasm and to express my gratitude to the South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children for their continuous commitment and active engagement.

Distinguished participants,

I am very pleased to be back with SAIEVAC friends in Colombo where, in 2012, we jointly organized an excellent Regional Consultation as a follow-up to the UN Study, and agreed on urgent actions to realize the rights of the child and ensure their protection from violence. The outcomes from that important Regional Consultation and developments promoted in South Asian nations became a strategic contribution to the Global Survey on Violence against Children conducted by my Office to assess progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Study on Violence against Children. As you know, the Global Survey included a strong call for the inclusion of violence against children as a priority concern in the new Sustainable Development Agenda.

At that time, very few seemed to believe this was feasible. But thanks to our joint efforts, ending violence against children is today an agreed global priority: for all countries and, more importantly, for all children, everywhere and at all times!

Dear friends,

In my numerous missions to this region and thanks to a very close collaboration with SAIEVAC over the past several years, I continue to appreciate the significant efforts being made to bring an end to violence against children. I particularly welcome your commitment and the recognition that there is still much more to be done to build a region free from violence. Over the next two days, I look forward to reflecting together with you on progress made, on persisting challenges we need to overcome, and on the strategic opportunities we need to seize to advance our common cause.

In this process, there is a lot to build upon. On the one hand, SAIEVAC is a SAARC Apex Body and has an important institutional framework at the regional and national levels, which provides a significant forum in which national governments participate alongside international organizations, civil society actors and representatives from children and young people.

On the other hand, over the past years, important political declarations have been adopted conveying a strong determination to prevent and address all forms of violence against children; and a comprehensive workplan has been developed to advance implementation of the UN Study recommendations and address areas of particular concern for the region. These include child labour, exploitation and trafficking; harmful practices, including child marriage; corporal punishment; as well as the promotion of birth registration, and the consolidation of child protection systems with robust legislation, public policies, services and reliable data.

Moreover, insightful Technical Consultations have been held to share experiences and good practices, consolidate knowledge and strengthen the ability of national governments to be effective in their efforts to curb violence against children.

As Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children, I have been honoured to participate and to learn from these important processes and reflections, and to support the sharing of experiences from South Asia with other regions. I look forward to further advancing this collaboration in the times ahead.

Dear friends,

Today's round-table meeting takes place at a very auspicious time. In fact, 2016 marks 20 years since the First World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and 10 years since the UN Study on Violence against Children was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It was also 10 years ago that the South Asia Forum for Ending Violence against Children was set up to promote a regional follow-up to the UN Study, and became later institutionalized as SAIEVAC.

This year marks in addition the start of the process of implementation of the new global development agenda, adopted by consensus in September 2015. The Agenda 2030, as it is usually known, brings an ambitious and inspiring vision of a world free from fear and from violence. For the very first time it recognizes the dignity and right of children to grow up in a violence-free environment as a priority on the international development agenda, a goal to be achieved by 2030.

Capitalizing on this unique momentum and with a strong resolve to galvanize political will and wide social support for children's protection from violence, we are joining hands with governments, international organizations, national institutions, civil society actors, religious leaders, the private sector as well as individual citizens, including children themselves, to re-energize action and bring an end to violence against children. This is the spirit behind the important initiative we have just launched – High Time to End Violence against Children.

As highlighted by the UN Secretary-General on that occasion “our efforts to end violence must start with a protection of our youngest citizens.” It is indeed high time to close the gap between the commitments to prevent and respond to violence and the actions needed, to translate this goal into a reality for all children leaving no one behind. It is high time to address root causes of this phenomenon and promote a culture of respect for children’s rights and zero tolerance of violence. It is high time to mobilize all those who can actively engage in this important movement, to which so many allies are contributing. As we like to stress, in the countdown to 2030 everybody counts and everybody is needed!

Dear friends,

The inclusion of violence against children as a cross-cutting concern and as a distinct priority on the global development agenda is a historic breakthrough! Joining hands together, we can transform this momentum into an unstoppable movement.

But alongside this opportunity comes a special responsibility: we need to show leadership and mobilize and undertake action, united in an ever-growing alliance and commitment to protect children from violence.

As we have heard this morning, what happens in this region will have a decisive impact on the world at large.

The Agenda 2030 was the result of a wide and very participatory process, which included regional, national and thematic consultations with the contribution from governments, civil society organizations, academia and also from children and young people.

In fact, the voice of children was crucial in creating the vision of a world free from violence that we now see reflected in the Agenda. And children remain strongly committed to playing a crucial role in the process of implementation. Indeed, violence is among children’s top priorities in all regions of the world.

How different is the Agenda 2030?

The new sustainable development agenda is different from the previous global development efforts. There are five particularly important differences.

**Firstly**, it includes a more ambitious agenda, “a supremely ambitious and transformational agenda.” It is an agenda that bridges development and human rights and clearly child rights and that includes 17 goals and 169 targets. Many of these goals and targets relate to violence, e.g., gender-based violence, violence in schools, in urban spaces, in work, and one specific target aims at ending all forms of violence against children by 2030.

**Secondly**, this agenda is global and universal; it is to be implemented by all countries, in all regions – North and South; East and West; and it recognizes the potential for win-win cooperation to bring gains to all parts of the world.

**Thirdly**, it concerns all children and it calls on all nations to leave no one behind and to give priority attention to the most vulnerable groups in society; the indication of success will be the progress achieved for the most invisible and forgotten children, who are also the most at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation. It is imperative to empower the most vulnerable and to reach those furthest behind first.

**Fourthly**, the 17 goals are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

One of the most important lessons from the MDG process was that it had failed to consider the impact of violence on social progress and human development; countries which were lagging behind were most often those affected by insecurity, political instability, fear and violence.

Indeed, violence goes hand in hand with vulnerability and deprivation, with high risks of poor health, poor school performance and at times long-term welfare dependency. Children exposed to violence – at home, in schools, in the community, at work, in care and justice institutions, online or across borders – are at greater risk of enduring cumulative acts of violence and engaging in aggressive and violent behaviour later in life.

Violence is equally associated with poor rule of law and weak enforcement, high levels of organized crime and homicide rates, and also with a culture of fear and impunity.

As a result, violence has a devastating, long-lasting impact on child victims and their families; but in addition, it is associated with far-reaching economic costs for society. It places a heavy strain on the budget of health, criminal justice and social services, slowing economic development and eroding nations' human and social capital. According to recent studies, the economic burden resulting from physical, psychological and sexual violence would amount to US\$7 trillion per year, or an equivalent 8 per cent of global GDP.

Put in simple words: in failing to prevent and address violence against children, the vision of the Agenda 2030 will not be met.

Many examples could be given of this interrelation, but let me illustrate with two important sustainable development goals: ending poverty and ensuring quality education.

“Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere” is the first goal in the new development agenda.

Children growing up in extreme poverty are at risk of a double disadvantage; they are less likely to access social services to prevent and respond to violence; and the services available to them are of low quality. As a result they endure a never-ending cycle of deprivation, neglect and exclusion.

Not only does violence perpetuate poverty, but poverty can also be a trigger for violence and create conditions for child exploitation and abuse to flourish.

Ending violence against children will help promote social inclusion, address material deprivation, invest in support to vulnerable families and accelerate poverty reduction.

My second example relates to SDG 4, which calls for an inclusive and equitable quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all.

Reaching the education targets is critical to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and also to prevent and address violence in and around schools, and to promote a culture of peace, tolerance and non-violence. When all children have access to a quality education rooted in human rights, it creates a ripple effect of opportunity that influences generations to come.

Dear friends,

This brings me to the fifth important dimension of the sustainable development agenda: the strong emphasis the agenda places on national implementation and on a participatory, transparent and integrated process of follow-up and review of progress.

As children often tell me “a vision without a plan is only a nice dream; and a plan without a vision can become a nightmare.”

The Agenda 2030 provides an ambitious vision of a world where everybody enjoys freedom from want, from fear and from violence.

But the value and success of this agenda will be measured by the progress achieved in its practical implementation on the ground. For this reason, the SDG agenda provides very important guidance to governments and other stakeholders of what needs to be done and how this must be pursued.

Implementation needs to be country led. Each State has the primary responsibility for its economic and social development; and its accountability includes putting in place a “cohesive, nationally owned sustainable development strategy.”

What does this mean? Three important steps are of essence: a) Adopting and implementing a comprehensive national policy agenda, promoting multi-sectorial cooperation and avoiding reactive or fragmented actions; b) Mobilizing adequate resources for implementation; and c) Ensuring full conformity with international standards, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

But in addition, States have a responsibility to promote a participatory and transparent process in which all stakeholders take part, while ensuring an open, inclusive and periodic assessment of progress. This calls for a serious engagement and the constant leadership of a dedicated group.

In essence, this is exactly what the UN Study on Violence against Children had called for 10 years ago, a call that we have seen reaffirmed in SAIEVAC’s important commitment, as was the case in the South Asia Call for Action adopted in Colombo in 2012.

This means that, as the SDG agenda also stresses, you can all build upon existing processes and platforms, draw upon lessons learnt and good practices, while ensuring that you build upon sound evidence and robust, reliable and disaggregated data. This is indispensable to promote dynamic process of positive change, consolidating achievements, overcoming challenges and emerging concerns, and keeping the ambition and vision of the Agenda 2030 at the heart of all efforts.

As mentioned earlier, national implementation and monitoring of progress are central to this process. But regional and global action remains equally important to promote sharing and cross-fertilization of experiences, to provide platforms for mutual learning, and to make available the needed expertise and scientific studies in support of the national development processes.

Indeed, regional reviews will be crucial to provide an insightful overview of progress and assess major policy trends and developments in each region. In turn, this will help to inform long-term perspectives and stimulate steady improvement along the way.

Dear friends,

As you see from this brief overview of the sustainable development agenda, the role of SAIEVAC can become even more strategic and influential over the next 15 years. Its potential to influence national progress and international developments is equally unique. This round-table meeting is a crucial stage and can make a strong contribution to this aim and to your own reflections to inform the new SAIEVAC regional strategy for the upcoming years, aligned with the sustainable development agenda.

This is a process that other regions are also taking very seriously. In ASEAN, the Summit of Heads of States and Government adopted last November a new Regional Action Plan to End Violence against Children. The Council of Europe has just adopted its new Strategy on the Rights of the Child, including protection from violence. In Latin America and in the Arab region engaged discussions are under way to achieve the same goal. It is in recognition of the potential of this process, that my mandate, together with regional organizations and institutions is organizing this year’s annual cross-regional High-level Round-table Meeting devoted to the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. SAIEVAC’s experience will constitute a key contribution to those reflections.



Dear friends,

Much progress has been made in South Asia to bring an end to violence against children but much more needs to be done. As SAIEVAC develops its navigation chart to address key priorities for the region over the next years, we know it is especially action taken at national and community levels that will make the difference in children's daily lives.

With your strong determination and commitment and the significant lessons learnt from the past, you have a unique opportunity to meet the ambition of the new sustainable development agenda.

I would like to encourage you to take bulk steps to support the development in each South Asian nation of a cohesive, integrated and cross-sectoral national strategy to address this phenomenon.

It is key to inform this process with sound evidence and robust and reliable disaggregated data, to stimulate and assess progress and to give priority attention to children furthest behind.

Naturally, the national strategy needs to be well coordinated and sustained – and the national coordination groups (NACGs) have a crucial role to play; and it needs to be supported by firm resources, and its implementation needs to be promoted through a transparent and participatory and mobilizing process to enhance the sense of ownership and commitment to the achievement of the SDGs.

Our commitment to children's protection from violence cannot become diluted in the face of other competing priorities. Urgent action is truly of the essence, and children deserve no less.

## ANNEX C: HIGH-LEVEL ROUND-TABLE MEETING AGENDA



### SOUTH ASIA INITIATIVE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN [SAIEVAC] SAARC APEX BODY

#### “In Solidarity with the Children of SAARC”

#### High-level Round-table Meeting on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Relating to Violence against Children in South Asia

#### Agenda

#### Day 1: Monday, 14 March 2016

08:00 – 8:45 a.m.	Registration
08:55 a.m.	All seated
09:00 a.m.	Opening Ceremony (see Inaugural Agenda)
10:15 – 11:00 a.m.	Group Photograph, Tea and Refreshments
11:00 – 11:30 a.m.	<b>Keynote Address: Setting the Stage for the SDGs – Violence against Children (VaC)</b> Moderator, Dr. Susan Bissell, Director, Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, New York Speech by Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children, New York <i>For the first time, the international community has recognized ending violence as an imperative for sustainable development. A world without violence against children reflects a respect for life and human dignity, equal rights, social justice and cultural diversity. The presentation will highlight the VaC-related SDG agenda supporting the development of a common understanding on the distinct and cross-cutting SDG targets related to VAC.</i>
11:30 a.m. – 12:00	Responses to Keynote Address - <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>South Asia Regional Response:</b> Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat, Kathmandu</li><li>▪ <b>National-level Response:</b> Ms. Chandrani Senaratna, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka, Colombo</li></ul>
12:00 – 12:50 p.m.	Discussion by Participants
1:00 – 2:30 p.m.	Lunch

- 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. **Session 1: Child Labour/Exploitation/Trafficking and Children Affected by Conflict and Emergency (SDG Target 8.7)**  
*The SDGs provide an opportunity to define a new path for human development that is transformational for both people and the planet. It includes protecting children from violence as a distinct and cross-cutting priority. Goals and targets to address the worst forms of child labour, exploitation, trafficking and protecting children in times of emergency and conflict can be sensitive and challenging. This session will explore recent and planned initiatives, along with continued actions necessary for eliminating these forms of violence and the heightened risks that lead to the exploitation of children.*  
 Technical Facilitator (Chair): Dr. Philippe Cori, Deputy Regional Director, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA), Kathmandu  
**Panel presentations:**
- Ms. Sherin Khan, Senior Specialist (Child Labour), ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia, Delhi
  - Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat, Kathmandu
  - Ms. Sumnima Tuladhar, Executive Director, Child Workers of Nepal (CWIN), Kathmandu
- Discussion (1 hour)
- 4:00 – 4:30 p.m. *Tea break*
- 4:30 – 5:00 p.m. **Recap of Day** – Ms. Kendra Gregson, Regional Child Protection Adviser, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia/Chair, South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG), Kathmandu

### Evening Reception and Dinner Event

## Day 2: Tuesday, 15 March 2016

- 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Opening of Day – Ms. Kunzang Lhamu, Director, National Commission for Women and Children, Bhutan and SAIEVAC Governing Board Member, Thimphu, Bhutan
- 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. **Session 2: Addressing Violence Related to Exploitation and Abuse (SDG Targets 5.2, 16.1 and 16.2):**  
*Exploitation and abuse of children impact on their development and in turn, on the development of society. It is also preventable, with the concerted actions of actors at regional, national and community levels. This session will expose the exploitation and abuse agenda in South Asia. Understanding the situation in South Asia – both challenges and opportunities – will open up ideas on how this can be addressed considering the specificities of this context.*  
 Technical Facilitator (Chair): Mr. A.K.M. Masud Ali, Chair, Bangladesh National Action and Coordinating Group against Violence against Children (NACG), Dhaka  
**Panel presentations:**
- Ms. Ramya Subrahmanian, Executive Director, Know Violence in Childhood, New Delhi
  - Ms. Valerie Khan, Chair, Pakistan National Action and Coordinating Group against Violence against Children (NACG), Islamabad
  - Dr. Kiran Rupakhetee, Under Secretary, Chief, Child Protection and Development Section, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu
- Discussion: (1 hour)
- 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. *Tea Break*

11:00 – 12:30 p.m.

### **Session 3: Harmful Practices – Child Marriage and More (SDG Target 5.3)**

*While the objective of the majority of people is to protect children, some of the practices employed result in unintended harm. These may be driven by gender-defined roles and discrimination; others by the understanding that a practice could positively support children. This session will explore social norms that may lead to harmful practices against children. It will look at alternative options, and particularly consider the South Asian context.*

Technical Facilitator (Chair): Dr. Sima Samar, Convener, SAARC Human Rights Mechanism, Kabul

#### **Panel Presentations:**

- Ms. Ingrid Fitzgerald, Regional Gender Adviser, UNFPA, Bangkok
- Ms. Shipra Jha, Senior Adviser, Girls Not Brides, London
- Ms. Kamani Jinadasa, MenEngage Alliance, Colombo

Discussion: (1 hour)

12:30 – 14:00 p.m.

*Lunch*

14:00 – 16:00 p.m.

### **Session 4: Moving Ahead – Strategies, Indicators and Costs (SDG Target 16.9)**

*To end violence against children requires concerted action. Data are required so that change can be measured, from knowing the number of children in the country through birth registration to having administrative data that can track the incidence of violence. Strategies that are known to be successful to prevent violence as well as to respond when it does happen need to be employed. And these strategies require adequate resources. This session will begin to explore what this means in the South Asian context.*

Technical Facilitator (Chair): Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, New York

#### **Panel Presentations:**

- Dr. Susan Bissell, Director, Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, New York
- Ms. Aishath Shahuda, Chief Statistician, National Bureau of Statistics, Maldives

Discussion: (1 hour plus)

16:00 – 16:30 p.m.

*Tea break*

16:30 – 17:30 p.m.

### **Closing Session**

Introduction of Closing Session – Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat, Kathmandu

Concluding Points from Round-table Meeting/Discussion – Ms. Dorothy Rozga, Co-Chair, SACG/Executive Director, ECPAT International, Bangkok, and Ms. Kendra Gregson, Chair, SACG/Regional Child Protection Adviser, UNICEF ROSA, Kathmandu

Discussion and Further Comments from Participants

Closing Comments:

- Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children, New York
- Ms. Chandrani Senaratna, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka, and SAIEVAC Governing Board Member

## ANNEX D: ADDITIONAL POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS RAISED BY PARTICIPANTS

- Structural challenges such as patriarchy, armed conflict and marginalization
- Link prevention of violence against children to the peace and security agenda (SDGs)
- Child participation, accountability and early childhood care and development interventions
- National Plans in sync with Regional Plans
- Need to address comprehensive sexuality education
- Importance of early childhood interventions in addressing and preventing gender stereotypes and discrimination
- We need to do some things differently
- Support to married child brides – through better access to education and health services
- Convergence of two issues – VaC and VaW
- Human resource development, accountability of SAIEVAC members, political/economic shift to invest and focus on peace, curtail war-based economy and stop selling weapons – also child participation (that is meaningful and safe)
- Obligations to stop using weapons
- Economic dimensions of women and the family
- Strengthening legal framework
- Need to strengthen/invest in statistics
- Power dynamics (in the family – between men and women), gender inequality (as a causal factor of violence and harmful practices – not only a focus on girls but also on boys) and economic inequality (not just poverty as a barrier to change)
- Child participation/mobilization for protection
- Establishment of management information systems at regional level
- SAIEVAC link to Alliance 8.7
- Continue to build on existing work – the way forward (correct SAIEVAC meetings – not a comprehensive list!), further explore/strengthen partnerships – are they compatible (example WHO Action Plan)
- Link to other sector actors – labour, health and education
- Trafficking and children in migration context
- SDG objectives
- Invest to empower families and communities
- Push to stop selling weapons and fuelling wars and using the money to fund the protection of children
- Legal accountability and interlinkages with other sectors
- Conducive environment for children
- Accountability and transparency, child protection system at the South Asia regional level, build system and trust to children and more focus on current/realistic situation and providing more focus on families and parents
- Combining different and existing processes around reporting on SDG implementation
- Data collection/establishing a combined regional management information system – research on core issues
- Human rights mechanisms at SAARC level and amending SAARC Conventions
- Social responsibility on protection of girl children
- Role of the members of putting the agenda in the system for sustainability
- Dowry, political stability and leadership, religious extremism, corporate social responsibility and the over-hauling of government mechanisms
- Early childhood care and development and child participation and accountability
- SAIEVAC Governing Board members and NACG responsibility to take forward
- Review and realign SAIEVAC management information system with SDGs



## ANNEX E: HIGH-LEVEL ROUND-TABLE MEETING LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Title	Location	
<b>NACG Chairs/Co-Chairs</b>			
1	Mr. A.K.M. Masud Ali	SAIEVAC NACG Chair, Bangladesh, CSO GB Member	Dhaka
2	Mr. Wahid Shah Amin	Interim, SAIEVAC CSO Governing Board Member, Afghanistan	Kabul
3	Mr. Kumar Bhattarai	Chair, NACG, Nepal	Kathmandu
4	Mr. Chandila Colombege	Co-Chair, NACG Sri Lanka	Colombo
5	Ms. Champa Gunasekera	Chair, NACG Sri Lanka	Colombo
6	Dr. Chiranjeeb Kakoty	Director, Chair, NACG India	Delhi
7	Ms. Valerie Khan	Chair, NACG Pakistan	Islamabad
8	Mr. Khalid Latif	Deputy Director, SAIEVAC Coordinator, Pakistan	Islamabad
9	Ms. Meenakshi Rai	Director, Representative, CSO GB Observer, Bhutan	Thimphu
10	Ms. Mariyam Shifana	Co-Chair, NACG Maldives	Male
11	Mr. Ugyen Wanchuk	SAIEVAC Coordinator, Bhutan	Thimphu
<b>SAIEVAC Governing Board Members</b>			
12	Ms. Mariyam Azra Ahmed	Minister of State for Law and Gender, Ministry of Law and Gender	Male
13	Ms. Tahmina Begum	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs	Dhaka
14	Ms. Kunzang Lhamu	Director, National Commission for Women and Children	Thimphu
15	H.E. Wasil Noor Muhmand	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Law and Social Affairs	Kabul
16	Dr. Kiran Rupakhetee	Under Secretary, SAIEVAC National Coordinator, Nepal	Kathmandu
17	Ms. Chandrani Senaratna	Secretary, Ministry Women and Child Affairs, Sri Lanka	Colombo
16.	Ms. Rashmi Saxena Sahni	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development	Delhi
<b>Regional Experts from South Asia Countries</b>			
17.	Mr. Hemant Batra	Secretary General, SAARCLAW	Kathmandu
18.	Ms. Kamani Jinadasa	Consultant, MenEngage Alliance	Colombo
19.	Dr. Sima Samar	Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission, Afghanistan	Kabul

	Name	Title	Location
20.	Ms. Aishath Shahuda	Chief Statistician, National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Treasury	Male
21.	Ms. Sumnima Tuladhar	Executive Coordinator, CWIN Nepal	Kathmandu
22.	Dr. Hiranthi Wijemanne	Former CRC Committee Member	Colombo
<b>Regional Directors</b>			
23.	Mr. Geoffrey Cordell	Country Representative, Terre des Hommes, Sri Lanka	Colombo
24.	Dr. Philippe Cori	Deputy Regional Director, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA)	Kathmandu
25.	Mr. Prasanna De Silva	Senior Director for Operations, World Vision International (WVI)	Manila
26.	Ms. Ingrid Fitzgerald	Regional Gender Adviser, UNPFA	Bangkok
27.	Ms. Christine Hunter	Bangladesh Representative, UN Women	Dhaka
28.	Ms. Sherin Khan	Senior Specialist (CL), ILO Decent Work Team, South Asia/ILO SACG Focal Point	Delhi
29.	Ms. Gabriela Olguin	Child Protection Regional Adviser, World Vision International (WVI)/WVI SACG Focal Point	Manila
30.	Ms. Shyama Salgado	Programme Coordinator, ILO	Delhi
31.	Mr. Rasa Sekulovic	Regional Adviser, Child Rights and Protection, Plan International/SACG Focal Point	Bangkok
32.	Mr. Supriyanto Supriyanto	Country Director, Plan International, Sri Lanka	Colombo
<b>International Participants</b>			
33.	Dr. Susan Bissell	Director, Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children	New York
34.	Ms. Shipra Jha	Senior Adviser, Girls Not Brides	London
35.	Ms. Sanna Kaki	Child Protection Specialist, Office of SRSG on Violence against Children	New York
36.	Mr. Thangaperumal Ponpandi	Asia Regional Manager, Trafficking and Migration, Terre des Hommes Netherlands	Bangkok
37.	Ms. Marta Santos Pais	Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on Violence against Children	New York
38.	Mr. Owen Smith	Senior Economist, World Bank	Colombo
39.	Ms. Purna Shrestha	Legal Adviser, Centre for Reproductive Rights	Kathmandu
40.	Ms. Ramya Subrahmanian	Executive Director, Know Violence in Childhood	Delhi

Name	Title	Location	
<b>Host Organization Representatives</b>			
41.	Mr. Roshan Chitrakar	Operations Officer, SAIEVAC	Kathmandu
42.	Dr. Rinchen Chopel	Director General, SAIEVAC	Kathmandu
43.	Ms. Kendra Gregson	Regional Adviser, Child Protection, UNICEF ROSA	Kathmandu
44.	Ms. Sulukshana Rana	MAC Coordinator	Kathmandu
45.	Ms. Susan Roe	Consultant	Paro
46.	Ms. Dorothy Rozga	Executive Director, ECPAT International	Bangkok
47.	Ms. Eri Mathers Suzuki	Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF ROSA	Kathmandu
48.	Ms. Alisha Tuladhar	Finance Officer, SAIEVAC	Kathmandu
49.	Ms. Junita Upadhyay	Deputy Director, Programmes, ECPAT	Bangkok
<b>Additional Sri Lanka Guest Participants</b>			
50.	Ms. Emilda Balendran	Secretary, State Ministry of Child Affairs	Colombo
51.	Mr. Hashike Elinwee	Assistant Commissioner, Department of Probation and Child Care Services	Colombo
52.	Mr. Nihal Nanayakkara	Office Assistant, Department of Probation and Child Care Services	Colombo
53.	Ms. Kumudy Perera	Legal Officer, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs	Colombo
54.	Ms. Nirmali Perera	Probation Officer, Department of Probation and Child Care Services	Colombo
55.	Mr. Yashen Waduge	IT Officer, Department of Probation and Child Care Services	Colombo

