



# Global Monitoring

status of action against commercial  
sexual exploitation of children

## SINGAPORE



2<sup>nd</sup> EDITION

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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

- **AIMS:** Advisory Council on the Impact of New Media on Society (AIMS)
- **ASEAN:** Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- **CIS:** Commonwealth of Independent States
- **CPS:** Child Protection Service
- **CRC:** United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
- **CSEC:** The commercial sexual exploitation of children consists of criminal practices that demean, degrade and threaten the physical and psychosocial integrity of children. There are three primary and interrelated forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children: prostitution, pornography and trafficking for sexual purposes. Commercial sexual exploitation of children comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or in kind to the child or third person or persons.
- **CST:** Child Sex Tourism
- **ECPAT:** End Child Prostitution, Child pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes.
- **FAN:** Family Access Networks
- **Grooming:** Preparing a child for sexual abuse or exploitation
- **ICT:** Internet and Communications Technology
- **ILO:** International Labour Organization
- **IOM:** International Organization for Migration
- **ISP:** Internet Service Provider
- **MCYS:** The Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports
- **MDA:** Media Development Authority
- **MOE:** Ministry of Education
- **NGO:** Non-governmental organization
- **NPA:** National Plan of Action
- **UN:** United Nation
- **UNDP:** UN Development Programme
- **UNICEF:** United Nations Children's Fund
- **UNIFEM:** UN Development Fund for Women

# FOREWORD

The 2008 Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents (CSEC) represents a broad societal alliance that builds on more than twenty years of global action. The First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children was held in 1996 in Stockholm, Sweden. It marked the first public recognition by governments of the existence of CSEC and resulted in a commitment to an Agenda for Action adopted by 122 governments.

Since 1996, many actors around the world have focused their efforts around this common agenda, and more government and non-government entities have joined in to advance positive change for children and to protect their right to live free from sexual exploitation.

However, the increasing sophistication of resources available to those who seek to exploit children has grown in equal measure. Responding to these challenges, and particularly to new CSEC manifestations such as exploitation using the Internet and mobile technologies, requires new partnerships, and more coordinated and targeted efforts to address a borderless crime.

Experience demonstrates that the level of responsibility and role that a government takes to set and uphold standards of protection determines the nature, quantity and quality of what the country achieves overall for its children. Unfortunately, country actions have not been uniform, and far more urgent work must be done. In particular, the Rio Declaration highlights the increased vulnerability of children in a less stable world.

This is why I welcome the publication of second editions of ECPAT International's Agenda for Action (A4A) Country Reports Monitoring the Status of Action against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

We are confident these unique publications will support governments to take prescribed actions to protect children from such heinous violations, which are still perpetrated with impunity in many countries. They also have the potential to stimulate the exchange of experience and knowledge among different actors to create a dialogue that can enhance our collective efforts against CSEC.

Over the years, ECPAT's A4A reports have become a baseline of information on actions taken and a roadmap for addressing gaps in each country based on the framework of the Stockholm Agenda. The reports succeeded in their goal of providing a basis for more systematic assessment of progress on implementation of country commitments. Moreover, we know they provide an important support to the implementation of other international mechanisms that exist to protect children's rights, such as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* and the *Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography*. Today, 193 countries have ratified the CRC, and 143 the OPSC.

Production of such comprehensive publications requires global collaboration. ECPAT International would like to thank all those who participated in the work and contributed their inputs. This includes ECPAT member groups, local experts and organisations, as well as the dedicated staff and interns in the Secretariat of ECPAT International. We acknowledge the generous support of donors who back these efforts. The A4A reports would not have been realised without their support and solidarity.



Kathleen Speake  
Executive Director, ECPAT International

# Methodology

The Agenda for Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children provides a detailed framework and categories of actions to be taken by governments in partnership with civil society organizations and other relevant actors for combating commercial sexual crimes against children. Broadly, these actions are focused on: 1) Coordination and Cooperation; 2) Prevention; 3) Protection; 4) Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reintegration; and 5) Child Participation. The Agenda for Action is thus the formal and guiding structure used by governments that have adopted it and committed to work against CSEC. As such, the Agenda for Action is also the main organising framework for reporting on the status of implementation of the Agenda as seen in the World Congress II of 2001, the Mid-Term Review meetings held between 2004 and 2005 and the World Congress III in 2008. It has been used in the same way to structure and guide the research, analysis and preparation of information presented in these reports on the status of implementation of the Agenda in the individual countries.

Preparatory work for this 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition report involved a review of the literature available on sexual exploitation for each of the countries where ECPAT works. A number of tools were prepared, such as a detailed glossary of CSEC terms, explanatory literature on more difficult themes and concepts and a guide to relevant CSEC-related research tools, to assist researchers in their work and to ensure consistency in the gathering, interpreting and analysing of

information from different sources and parts of the world.

Desktop research has shown a continuing lack of information in the areas of Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reintegration. After extensive efforts to collect information relevant to these areas for each of the countries covered, it was decided that as this information was not consistently available, the reports thus focus only on those areas of the Agenda for Action where verifiable information can be obtained. Thus, the report covers: Coordination and Cooperation; Prevention; Protection and Child and Youth Participation, and where information on recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration, was available, it has been included under the country overview. These 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Reports also reflect a greater focus on integrated and inter-sector collaboration for the realisation of the right of the child to protection from sexual exploitation, including the need nationally for comprehensive child protection systems.

Research of secondary sources, including CRC country and alternative reports, OPSC country and alternative reports, the reports of the Special Rapporteurs, as well as research and field studies of ECPAT, governmental and non-governmental organizations, regional bodies and UN agencies, provided the initial information for each report. This information was compiled, reviewed and used to produce first draft reports. In-house and consultant specialists undertook a similar process of review to generate information on

specialised areas of the reports, such as the legal sections. Nevertheless, researchers often encountered a lack of information. While sources also included unpublished reports and field and case reports of ECPAT and other partners, many countries lacked up-to-date data and information on areas relevant to this report.

Despite these limitations, sufficient information was gathered to provide a broad overview of the situation in each country. Subsequently, first drafts were prepared and shared with ECPAT groups, which then supplemented the information with other local sources and analysis (taking care to identify them and source appropriately). Upon receipt of these inputs, a series of questions were generated by the ECPAT International team for deeper discussion, which involved ECPAT groups and specialists invited by them. The information from these discussions was used to finalise inputs to each of the reports. These consultations proved to be invaluable for analysis of the country situation. They also served as a measure for triangulating and

validating information as different actors offered their perspective and analysis based on their direct work.

As previously noted, the information of each country report is organised to correspond to the structure of the Agenda for Action. Thus all the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition reports feature updated information in relation to: (i) an overview of the main CSEC manifestations affecting the country; (ii) analysis of the country's National Plan of Action (NPA) against CSEC and its implementation (or the absence of an NPA); (iii) overview and analysis of coordination and cooperation efforts during the period under review; (iv) overview and analysis of prevention efforts; (v) overview and analysis of protection efforts, which includes detailed information on national legislation related to CSEC (see [www.ecpat.net](http://www.ecpat.net) for further details); (vi) overview and analysis of country's efforts incorporate participation of children in youth in the development and implementation of efforts to combat CSEC and (vii) priority actions required.



# SINGAPORE

## INTRODUCTION

Following British colonization during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Singapore became an independent republic within the Commonwealth of Nations in 1965.<sup>1</sup> As established by the Constitution of the city-state, Singapore is formally a representative democracy with an elected parliamentary system of government.<sup>2</sup> However, foreign political analysts and several opposition parties have argued that Singapore is a *de facto* one-party state.<sup>3</sup>

Singapore has undergone dramatic economic growth during the past forty years. With the country rapidly becoming one of the wealthiest and most developed in Asia, it has earned a place as one of the four “East Asian Tigers”. With a gross national income per capita of US \$34,760 in 2008, the World Bank has classified Singapore’s economy as a “high income” economy.<sup>4</sup>

According to the UN Development Programme’s (UNDP) classification of countries based on their level of human development, Singapore is considered to have “very high human development”.<sup>5</sup> Not surprisingly, Singaporean children enjoy the lowest infant mortality rate in the world (2.31% in 2009)<sup>6</sup>, with state-funded systems of education, medical care and protection services<sup>7</sup>. However, the present economic downturn is exposing an increasing number of families to various economic difficulties. A flow of immigrants (including undocumented migrants), mainly from China and Asia (eg, Thailand and the Philippines),<sup>8</sup> and the growing exposure of children and young people to several forms of abuse (emotional, sexual, physical, neglect, etc) is resulting in several challenges with regard to the protection of child rights within Singapore.

## Child prostitution

Information and data on child prostitution in Singapore is quite limited. According to the US Department of State’s report on human rights, some child prostitution occurred in the city-island in 2007 where 40 young females involved in prostitution (and believed to be under 18) were arrested by authorities.<sup>9</sup> It is not clear, however, whether these prostituted children were also victims of trafficking.

Because employment of people under 18 in the legal licensed brothels operating

throughout the country is forbidden, child prostitution mainly takes place in off-street locations such as hotels, karaoke bars, apartments, and massage parlours. Additionally, anecdotal evidence suggests that an increasing number of Singaporean teenagers are using the Internet or mobile phones to advertise or sell sex-services in order to access modern goods or simply make extra pocket-money.<sup>10</sup> This form of prostitution (also known by its Japanese name as “enjo kosai”) is usually occasional and appears to affect both girls and boys.



A number of court cases and media reports confirm how prevalent *enjo kosai* has become. In one incident, a 14-year-old girl who needed money to pay her bills reportedly

provided sexual favours to at least five men.<sup>11</sup> In another case, a 15-year-old girl settled her boyfriend's debts by having sex with three men she met in chat rooms for money.<sup>12</sup>

### Case study: Teenage boy engages in prostitution via the internet

A 15-year-old Singaporean boy decided to get money from strangers by offering "paid fun". According to court documents, the boy had been chatting with strangers on social networking websites since he was in Primary Three. It began when he came across a website popular with homosexuals and later started posting messages and chatting there. In December 2006, needing money to "maintain his lifestyle", the boy posted messages saying he was "seeking paid fun". On the website he claimed to be 16, however he did not reveal his real age to anyone he met in person or spoke to on the telephone. A month or two after the boy posted the messages, a man, aged 37, responded and agreed to pay him Singapore \$50 in exchange for sexual favours. The boy told him his address and they met at the boy's home on the same day. After this encounter, the boy had sex in exchange for money with two more men who got to know the boy online through the same website.

In July 2009, all three men pleaded guilty in the Subordinate Courts to one charge each of performing obscene acts with the child.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the absence of statistics on *enjo kosai* in Singapore, calls to the Singapore Planned Parenthood Association hotline from girls inquiring on whether it was acceptable to have sex for money, quadrupled in 2004-2005.<sup>14</sup> This suggests that the phenomenon might have increased in the last few years, in conjunction with the rise in internet and communication technology usage by children and young people.

According to counselors and social workers, some teenagers feel compelled to sell sex services in order to buy products their parents cannot afford, such as mobile phones,

the latest fashions or recreational gadgets. In addition to widespread consumerism which targets children as both primary consumers and objects of consumption, the phenomenon of *enjo kosai* in Singapore has received little attention by parents, and little has been done as to address the 'glamorization' of sex and the pervasive sexualisation of children in the media.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, products marketed to children can induce girls to see themselves as sexual objects and may contribute to some adults perceiving children as sexual beings available for exploitation.

## Trafficking of children for sexual purposes

Singapore is one of the major destination countries in the ASEAN region for labour migration and migration for sex-related work, including trafficking of women and girls for sexual purposes. Since 2004, the US Department of State's report on human trafficking has noted that the city-state has a "significant" trafficking problem involving women and children.<sup>16</sup> The Government of Singapore has systematically refuted these findings, claiming the report to be a "gross distortion of reality".<sup>17</sup>

Reliable figures on child victims of trafficking for sexual purposes in Singapore are difficult to obtain due to a lack of disaggregated data and the hidden and illegal nature of this crime. This also makes it difficult to

identify trends in the development of the phenomenon. According to reports by the government of Singapore on the situation of trafficking during 2010, of the 4,500 foreign females from 7,083 arrests for prostitution violations, 81 were identified as trafficked victims, 23 of whom were children<sup>18</sup>. Only one Singaporean child was identified as a trafficked victim in 2010.

Singapore is primarily a destination country for children and young people trafficked into the sex industry from the People's Republic of China,<sup>19</sup> the Philippines,<sup>20</sup> Thailand,<sup>21</sup> Malaysia, Indonesia<sup>22</sup> and Cambodia.<sup>23</sup> Cases of child trafficking for sexual purposes from Vietnam,<sup>24</sup> Sri Lanka<sup>25</sup> and India<sup>26</sup> have also been reported.

The US Department of State annually releases a Trafficking in Persons Report which categorizes countries into different "tiers" based on the extent of government action to combat human trafficking. Countries that have the highest level of compliance with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's Minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking are placed on Tier 1. Those who have made "significant efforts" to meet the standards are placed in Tier 2 and countries that are not making significant efforts to combat human trafficking are placed in Tier 3<sup>27</sup>.

Singapore was placed in Tier 2 in the US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report 2011.<sup>28</sup> The U.S. had placed Singapore on the Tier-2 watch list in 2010<sup>29</sup>, however removed them off the watch list in 2011.

A common way to recruit young people into trafficking is through deception about job opportunities in Singapore. Women and girls leave their countries of origin with the belief that they are going to attain legitimate labor upon arrival to Singapore, however, they often discover that they have been brought over under false pretences and are forced into prostitution. Even women who enter Singapore with the intention of working as prostitutes, are often subjected to forced prostitution.<sup>30</sup> US Secretary Clinton has spoken about such cases internationally stating "unfortunately, because of the ease of transportation and the global communication

that can reach deep into villages with promises and pictures of what a better life might be, we now see that more human beings are exploited than before"<sup>31</sup>. The 2008 report presented by the Embassy of Philippines highlights for the commonality of illegal recruiters to promise young women and girls non-existent jobs as waitresses or guest relations officers in restaurants and hotels in Singapore.<sup>32</sup> Women and girls are lured by recruiting agencies that pay agents to find victims in the countries of origin, provide them with travel documents and organise transport to Singapore.

A number of sources indicate that human trafficking victims usually enter Singapore with social passes, tourist visas and fake documents. Once in the country, they are exploited in prostitution in various locations, including the main red-light district<sup>33</sup> and the so-called 'forest brothels' located not far

outside of central Singapore where there are foreign worker dormitories.<sup>34</sup> There is increasing concern that recruiting networks and organized crime syndicates are operating internationally to traffic women and girls into Singapore to serve in the sex trade<sup>35</sup>.



## STOP Sex Trafficking of Children & Young People Campaign

In an effort to expand and deepen the knowledge base on child trafficking for sexual purposes in Singapore, in early 2010, ECPAT International (in partnership with Dr. Sallie Yea) with support from The Body Shop and in collaboration with the NGO H.O.M.E. conducted a situational analysis study on commercial sexual exploitation of children and its links to child trafficking. The Body Shop has engaged the UNIFEM National Committee of Singapore for the campaign's public education and stakeholder engagement initiatives. The report focuses on the identification and understanding of the causes of and risk factors surrounding the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The research is expected to be a useful resource for government agencies and international and non-governmental organisations wishing to undertake targeted preventive and protective actions.

Based on a wide range of resources, documentation and field interviews with young people involved in commercial sex, the research revealed that despite being one of the most developed countries in the world with high social and economic indicators and a child protection system in place, Singapore is affected by all manifestations of commercial sexual exploitation of children (prostitution of children, child trafficking, child sex tourism and child pornography). While the absence of official statistics and estimates does not allow for an assessment of the true extent of the problem, information gathered suggests that these manifestations are increasingly intertwined.

Information from the 111 in-depth interviews of the field level research (one-third of which were with minors and young people themselves) conducted between October 2009 –

March 2010) shows that women, as well as children and young people are indeed trafficked to Singapore for sexual exploitation. Children and young people that are victims of commercial sexual exploitation in Singapore are denied freedom of mobility and association by their traffickers (they are kept under constant and close surveillance). Attempting to leave, run away or seek assistance is nearly impossible with threats of violence to the trafficked young people and their families. They are also burdened with a debt that is manipulated by the traffickers; terms and conditions are altered and amounts are greatly inflated. While Singapore has been strong in its efforts regarding general child protection issues, there have been limited initiatives against the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The research also examines the legal framework related to CSEC in Singapore, identifies gaps and challenges and provides recommendations for future steps.

The research report is available online at: [www.ecpat.net](http://www.ecpat.net).

Available information suggests that children and young people are trafficked to and through Singapore mainly for exploitation in prostitution. No cases of trafficking for the production of sexual abuse materials have been identified. Nevertheless, child trafficking for sexual purposes appears to be fueled not only by local demand for commercial sex, but also by a desire for sex services from foreign male workers, tourists and travelers.<sup>36</sup>

A number of media and NGO reports revealed that some women and girls who are recruited and trafficked for domestic work are subjected to various violations, including sexual assault and exploitation within their employer's home. This has been the case for girls from Indonesia, the Philippines and Cambodia, among others.<sup>37</sup>

## Child pornography/ child abuse images

Despite the lack of official statistics about child pornography and online sexual exploitation of children, it is evident that this form of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is creating concern in Singapore.

The possession, distribution and

downloading of material displaying children partaking in sexual acts in Singapore has been reported by various media sources. According to information provided by the Media Development Authority (MDA), which keeps the list of banned URLs, access to child pornography websites is also a problem in Singapore.<sup>38</sup>

### Downloading child pornography

July 2009 - Five computers in Singapore were used to download obscene videos and images from a child pornography network involving roughly 9,000 people in more than 90 countries. According to the German police who initiated the investigation, the network distributed the obscene material to several European countries, as well as the US, Canada and New Zealand. In Singapore, footage containing "images of the most serious sexual abuse" were circulated through peer-to-peer technologies. In the event of a conviction, each obscene video clip could result in an individual being jailed for up to six months, fined S\$500, or both - with a maximum possible fine of S\$20,000.<sup>39</sup>

### Possessing and exporting child pornography

February 2008 - A Singapore Airlines pilot was fined A\$12,000 for trying to bring child pornography into Australia. According to a newspaper website, on arrival to Adelaide, customs officials searched the pilot's laptop and found seven video clips, some of which contained footage of rape, sexual violence and children engaged in sexual activity. The offender pleaded guilty to charges of importing banned material and providing false statements to a customs officer. The maximum sentence in Australia for offences involving child pornography is a fine of A\$275,000 and 10 years imprisonment.<sup>40</sup>

The increasing use of new ICTs by Singaporean children and young people is exposing them to various risks, including sexual abuse and exploitation. According to

a study on children's online behavior and parental awareness of online risks published in 2009, Singapore teenagers spend an average of 18 hours online each week. Nearly

50% of adolescents surveyed chatted with strangers online more than once a week and 43% gave out personal information online. Furthermore, one in five teenagers admitted to having accessed illegal or unlicensed materials, including pornography.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to being voluntarily and involuntarily exposed to pornography (note that a research study published in 2001 found that one in two teenagers were tricked into accessing pornographic sites<sup>42</sup>), some Singaporean children are solicited while using chat rooms and social networking websites for on- and off-line sexual abuse and for the production and dissemination of child pornography. The rise in the number of cases of teenagers being raped by people they have met in chat rooms as a result of sexual grooming has been reported since 2001<sup>43</sup> and was confirmed by a more recent survey of approximately 20 adults who molested children. According to this small study, six in

10 abusers 'groomed' the child before abusing him or her; some of them spent hours chatting with victims online before initiating any physical contact.<sup>44</sup>

Incidents of self-generated sexual images or films posted online by teenagers themselves or ex-boyfriends have also been reported, showing that more needs to be done to prevent this harmful behaviour. According to a recent media article, the practice of 'sexting' (whereby teens take nude photos of themselves or others and send them on their mobile phones or post them online) has apparently caught on in Singapore. Some teens seem to do it as a joke, while others reportedly use the practice to get dates.<sup>45</sup> The self-victimisation of children through the use of new ICTs is often associated with the problem of peer-to-peer exploitation and bullying. For example, in a case reported in 2007, a girl was slapped, stripped and filmed by her schoolmates.<sup>46</sup>

## Child sex tourism

Although precise information on child sex tourism is not available, it appears that some Singaporean citizens engage in sexual acts with children during their trips abroad. According to a report on child sex tourism (CST) in the ASEAN region, Singapore is a sending country of sex tourists.<sup>47</sup> However, no empirical data currently exists to conclude that Singapore is a significant contributor to child sex tourism. There have only been a few cases reported of Singaporeans being charged overseas for sexual offences against young persons.<sup>48</sup> Recent information provided by the Singapore Police Force confirms this, highlighting the absence of arrests in the

years 2007-2008 for CST offences occurring in Singapore or committed by Singaporean citizens abroad.<sup>49</sup>

A number of studies, documentaries and media articles have indicated the Indonesian Riau Archipelago, especially Batam, as one of the main locations for Singaporean child sex tourists. According to an NGO survey, almost half of all clients of prostitution in the Riau Islands are from Singapore. In many cases they are working-class men in search of sex who are attracted by the lower prices of sex services in the region compared to Singapore.<sup>50</sup>

## Booms and busts in sex tourism of Singaporean men to the Riau Islands

"The sex tourists who frequent the karaoke bars and discos [of the Riau Islands] make a major contribution to the local economy of the islands, providing jobs not just for sex workers, but for motorcycle taxi-drivers, hotel staff, hawkers and workers in countless other service industry occupations. Incomes in these associated industries are cyclical, reflecting the influx of tourists during peak periods like weekends and public holidays, and the reduction in sex tourist numbers during quiet times like Ramadan and Chinese New Year."<sup>51</sup>

"The sex tourism boom ended when the Singapore economy experienced a downturn in 2002. There were significant job losses in many industries, leaving potential sex tourists with a lot less disposable income. The SARS epidemic of 2003 also had a significant impact on their ability to travel. The local Singapore sex industry has also witnessed a transformation, with large numbers of Vietnamese and Chinese nationals working as illegal sex workers on short-term tourists passes. The diversification of the Singapore industry has led to a shift in local price structures and reduced the 'push factors' that led men to cross the border into Indonesia."<sup>52</sup>

"The sex industry in the islands then experienced an even more dramatic downturn in the second half of 2005 after Sutanto, the new Indonesian national Head of Police, issued an edict that gambling was no longer to be tolerated. The sex industry, which had been closely tied to gambling, was badly affected. With the exception of floating casinos (charter boats that organise gambling on board), much of the gambling industry has been shut down. The Singapore [G]overnment's plan to open a number of local casinos further threatens the symbiotic link between gambling and sex across the border."<sup>53</sup>

"The importance of gambling to the sex industry demonstrates the complex set of factors that drive cross-border sex tourism. While good exchange rates and the low comparative cost of sex fuel demand, the attraction of the islands is more than economic. By crossing the border, Singaporean working class men acquire much [greater] purchasing power."<sup>54</sup>

A study by the John Hopkins University published in 2007 found that Singaporeans are among the most frequent traveling sex tourists in Thailand.<sup>55</sup> While western European men make up the largest number of sex tourists in Bangkok and Chonburi, Malaysians and Singaporeans represent the highest percentage of foreign tourists seeking prostitution in Southern Thailand.<sup>56</sup> The same research also revealed that, according to World Vision Cambodia, known sex offenders travelling to Cambodia originate from Singapore, among other countries.<sup>57</sup>

Some media articles have mentioned incidents of travelers, foreign workers (eg, Thais and Indians) and expatriates buying sex services, including from minors, during their stay in Singapore.<sup>58</sup> While cases of expatriates

who have become long-time residents in the countries where they perpetrate their child-sex offences should not be labeled as child sex tourism (note that according to the UN World Tourism Organisation, "tourism" is defined as a stay of less than 12 months), the possibility that Singapore is also a destination country for child sex tourism needs to be further investigated.

Following the 1996 Stockholm and the 2001 Yokohama global forums on CSEC, Singapore reaffirmed its commitments at the World Congress III against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, in November 2008 in Brazil. The World Congress III renewed global commitment and galvanized international resolve to combat sexual exploitation of children

and adolescents. In total, more than 3000 people took part in the three-day gathering, including representatives from government,

the private sector and civil society as well as 300 children and adolescents from around the world.

## NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION

The adoption of a National Plan of Action (NPA) demonstrates a State's commitment to prioritise and allocate efforts and resources to guarantee the right of children to be protected from sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Although the Government of Singapore participated in the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents held in Brazil in November 2008 and signed the *Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call to Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents*, the country has not yet developed a National Plan of Action to address the different manifestations of CSEC. Nor has it adopted a multi-dimensional strategy on child protection or a comprehensive child rights policy. On the other hand, the protection of children from various forms of violence is said to be a priority for Singapore and is reportedly embedded in the general legal framework and in a number of specific provisions.<sup>59</sup>

## COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

### Local and national levels

A number of efforts have been made by the Singapore Government to establish inter-agency coordination and cooperation in managing trafficking and child abuse cases, including sexual exploitation, as well as in providing support services to victims. However, cooperative exchange of information about potential trafficking issues with NGOs and foreign diplomatic missions in Singapore remains unsatisfactory and needs to be further strengthened.<sup>60</sup> Mechanisms to facilitate coordination at the national level have been set up for enhanced cooperation among government ministries, the private sector, media and representatives of civil society with a view of enabling and supporting concrete action to prevent online sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

The Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) chairs an Inter-Ministry Working Group on the Management of Child Abuse, comprised of child protection professionals. The working group (set up in 1997) works to establish clear guidelines to protect the children's

interests and welfare. It provides a platform for professionals from the Health Ministry, the Police and the Education Ministry to discuss issues concerning child protection, and to put into place systems and procedures for the management of child protection cases. It also defines the roles and responsibilities



of partners in child protection and reviews them regularly. The Child Protection Service (CPS) within MCYS is the main coordinator of the system. It has developed the *National Standards for the Protection of Children* which establishes the standards and roles for all agencies involved in the management of child protection.<sup>61</sup>

Multi-stakeholder working groups exist, such as the National Family Violence Network and the National Family Violence Dialogue Group. These bodies are comprised of representatives from relevant government agencies, the voluntary sector and concerned individuals. These groups look at the management of family violence in Singapore, the protocols and the coordination of agencies involved in the management of cases and the implementation of nationwide campaigns and public education. Although focusing primarily on family violence, programs and services under this national family violence framework bear relevance to victims of trafficking.<sup>62</sup>

The Government works closely with NGOs on ensuring adequate support services for victims of trafficking. Agencies are also part of a larger network of NGOs that provides a platform for coordination with relevant agencies, as well as sharing of knowledge and expertise.<sup>63</sup>

Coordinating mechanisms have been established since the nineties to ensure children's safety in using the Internet and

other ICTs. The National Internet Advisory Committee (NIAC) was formed in 1996 to advise the Media Development Authority (MDA) on its policies and regulations governing the Internet, new media and related services.<sup>64</sup> The Committee, which was comprised of representatives from government agencies, universities, businesses and media, has recently been absorbed into the Internet and Media Advisory Committee (INMAC). Created in 2007, this new structure provides advice on public education programmes and promotes media literacy.<sup>65</sup> It is also responsible for fostering responsible usage of the Internet and new media and facilitating greater industry co-regulation.<sup>66</sup> INMAC is made up of key stakeholders from the public and private sectors, including Microsoft, Nokia, People's Association, SPH, MediaCorp, StarHub and SingTel.<sup>67</sup>

In addition, in January 2009, the Government set up the Inter-Ministry Cyberwellness Steering Committee (ICSC), which is co-chaired by the Deputy Secretaries of the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) and the Ministry of Education (MOE). This taskforce coordinates the Government's efforts and initiatives with the private sector and INMAC to implement a national strategy for the protection of minors and cyber-wellness public education in Singapore. MICA and MOE will contribute a total of Singapore \$10 million over five years to support the work of ICSC.<sup>68</sup>

## Data collection

The Singaporean government has made commendable efforts to provide statistical data on many areas pertaining to the CRC; however, it fails to adequately provide data on violence against children, child victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation of children<sup>69</sup>. Singapore does not have an

independent mechanism to ensure that the CRC is applied, nor does it have an organism to individually investigate reports on instances of child rights violations<sup>70</sup>. The lack of an independent monitoring system makes it difficult to collect disaggregated data on the situation of child sexual



exploitation in Singapore. The government has provided statistics on prosecutions of sex traffickers and the number of victims referred

to government shelters, however, it seldom distinguishes between adult and child cases.

## Private sector

Various industry-led actions have been promoted to enhance protection of children from online sexual exploitation. In March 2006, in light of the pervasive use of mobile services and mobile content, especially by the young, the industry came together to develop the *Voluntary Content Code for Self-Regulation of Mobile Content (Mobile Content Code)*. The *Mobile Content Code* is a

joint effort of NIAC<sup>71</sup> and the three local telecommunication companies (MobileOne, SingTel Mobile and StarHub Mobile). It seeks to protect youth from age inappropriate content that can be accessed through mobile devices. To ensure its effective implementation, mechanisms to enforce the code have been put in place.<sup>72</sup>

## A financial coalition to counteract child pornography

In January 2007, the Association of Banks in Singapore (ABS) announced the creation of a financial coalition against child pornography, including its nine member banks. The coalition aims to support the global effort to identify commercial sources of child abuse images and prevent funds supporting their dissemination. As part of this endeavor, the ABS manages a telephone hotline to facilitate sharing of information from banks and members of the public through the reporting of suspected child pornography websites.<sup>73</sup>

In 2007, MTV, in partnership with the US Agency for International Development (USAID), launched the regional MTV EXIT (End Exploitation and Trafficking) campaign, involving countries such as Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines.<sup>74</sup> In the framework of this initiative, a documentary called “Traffic”,

aimed at raising awareness and increasing prevention of human trafficking in the Asia-Pacific region, was produced and aired in 2007.<sup>75</sup> As a follow-up, an animated film about human trafficking and sexual exploitation entitled “Intersection”, was broadcast in March 2009 on MTV channels in Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.<sup>76</sup>

## Regional and international level

Although various actions have been taken to improve police and judicial collaboration at regional and international levels with regards to counteracting and preventing human trafficking, child sex tourism and cybercrime, including child pornography, it was reported that Singapore needs to enhance cooperation with foreign governments to institutionalise procedures for reporting, investigating and prosecuting child sex tourism committed overseas by Singaporean citizens and permanent residents.<sup>77</sup>

Singapore has established good regional and bilateral cooperation on criminal matters. The country is a party to the *Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters among like-minded ASEAN Member Countries* (2004), which is relevant to trafficking in persons.<sup>78</sup> It has also made reciprocal arrangements with Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam allowing for extradition between the city-state and these two countries.<sup>79</sup> Bilateral agreements with Hong Kong<sup>80</sup> and Indonesia<sup>81</sup> for extradition in relation to international crimes has further strengthened legal cooperation at the regional level.

Informal cooperation between police in Singapore, the Criminal Investigation Division's anti-trafficking unit in Indonesia and police in Malaysia has also been fostered. This cooperation is reflected in some enforcement successes, including the uncovering of a child trafficking ring operating across Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.<sup>82</sup> The Government has also developed bilateral cooperation with foreign embassies in Singapore, such as the Thai and Filipino embassies, to provide assistance to and organise the repatriation of trafficking victims.<sup>83</sup>

Regional and international cooperation

to combat cybercrime, including child pornography, has been established in the framework of the Association of National Police Forces of the ASEAN Region (ASEANPOL). During the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEANAPOL Conference, held in June 2007 and attended by representatives of police forces from the 10 ASEAN countries and delegates from observer countries such as Australia, China, Japan, Korea and New Zealand, a joint communiqué was signed. The document puts forth resolutions for cooperation in tackling regional security issues such as terrorism, cybercrime, commercial crimes and transnational frauds. It also provides for strengthening capacity building efforts among the member countries.<sup>84</sup>

The Singapore Police Force (SPF), chair of the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEANAPOL Conference, also co-hosted the inaugural Global Conference on Asian Organised Crime in January 2008. The theme of the conference was "Combating Threats, Anticipating Challenges". More than 200 specialists from 32 countries attended the conference to discuss issues such as casino operations, money laundering and drug and human trafficking.<sup>85</sup>

## The ASEAN campaign against child sex tourism

The campaign "Combating Child Sex Tourism in Southeast Asia", initiated and coordinated by Child Wise (ECPAT in Australia) since 2005, has made a significant contribution to strengthening regional collaboration of ASEAN tourism destination and source countries (destination countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam; source countries: Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore) in combating child sex tourism. The campaign is designed to mobilise responsible travelers and local citizens to report suspected CST cases to dedicated hotline numbers, deter potential child sex offenders and create a culture of intolerance towards the sexual exploitation of children.<sup>86</sup> Due to its success, this initiative has been hailed as an example of best practice by the US Government and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation.<sup>87</sup>

As a follow up to the campaign, a multi-year programme called "The South East Asian Plan – A Sustainable Regional Response to Preventing the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism Destinations (2009 – 2013)" has been developed. The campaign unites a wide range of key stakeholders, at the regional, national and local levels, from governments, international organisations, NGOs and the private sector, as well as individuals from vulnerable communities (including children and youth). The five-year plan will offer a more holistic and comprehensive approach to combating CST, while strengthening the protection afforded to children who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation in tourism destinations throughout the region.<sup>88</sup>

## PREVENTION

Several preventive activities relating to CSEC have been undertaken by the Singapore Government in collaboration with other stakeholders, including the private sector, NGOs and UN agencies. While actions to promote safe use of the Internet have been numerous, though uncoordinated, responses to prevent trafficking for sexual purposes have been very limited and, for the most part, not child-focused. Continuous efforts for more effective preventive measures are necessary, including efforts to reduce demand for sex services from children in Singapore and abroad.

A significant number of actions have been implemented to prevent and counteract child pornography and online sexual exploitation of children. More specifically, the Government of Singapore has adopted three combined approaches to promote a safer internet environment. These include: developing a regulatory framework, encouraging industry self-regulation and promoting online safety awareness through public and child education.<sup>89</sup>

Singapore has regulated internet content since 1996 through the *Media Development Authority of Singapore Act*.<sup>90</sup> The Act gives the MDA authority to block specific external sites, and to mandate removal or moderation of “objectionable” content hosted by service or content providers.<sup>91</sup> The MDA’s *Internet Code of Practice* defines prohibited content that internet service providers (ISPs) must block, including pornography and materials depicting pedophilia or sexual activity by a person who is, or appears to be, less than 16-years-old.<sup>92</sup> The MDA claims to have established a list of “high-impact objectionable websites” that are officially blocked; persons attempting to view any site on this list will be informed that the site in question is blocked.<sup>93</sup> In addition to the filtering that occurs under the mandates of the MDA, the Ministry of Education has adopted a system to block access to pornographic and similarly objectionable internet sites from its proxy servers.<sup>94</sup> However, “the Government recognises that blocking all undesirable websites is not

feasible and that there are ways to get round the ban. But it has chosen to maintain this blacklist for its symbolic value, [in order to reflect] society’s values and disapproval of such content.”<sup>95</sup>

The MDA has also encouraged the three main ISPs<sup>96</sup> to develop and provide Family Access Networks (FAN) which serve to filter out pornographic and other objectionable websites for an additional fee (about S\$2 per month).<sup>97</sup> Established in 1998, this service provides subscribers with internet access that is filtered at the server level and essentially delivers a “clean feed” to the household without having to install additional software.<sup>98</sup> Content filtered by FAN includes pornography and other undesirable materials.<sup>99</sup> Despite FAN being a valid option for preventing access to child abuse and other illegal materials, it has not been well absorbed by the population. In 2010, the subscription fee was \$3 a month. Some suggest that the fee might be a deterrence to parents and that MDA should consider licensing the software for free so that anyone can access it at no cost<sup>100</sup>.

The Government oversees the reporting of illegal content. Reports can be submitted via email to the MDA which either issues a “take down notice” for material emanating from within Singapore, or works with international counterparts to address material hosted outside of the country. Unfortunately, this reporting channel has not been well publicised and thus not well utilised.

Additionally, as part of the software package, FAN subscribers can report child abuse images via an online form. Complaints are collected by the software vendor who then investigates and updates the filter database.<sup>101</sup>

Another pillar of child pornography prevention is education. In 2001, the Singapore Broadcasting Authority (predecessor of the MDA) set up a S\$5 million Internet Public Education Fund. Aimed at promoting online safety, the fund was used to support efforts to create educational materials for children and organise public education programmes promoted by industry and community groups. Although the resources allocated to this fund were fully utilised by 2005, the MDA continued to provide funding for this cause.<sup>102</sup>

Within the framework of Government initiatives, a cyber-wellness programme was launched in 2004.<sup>103</sup> The programme promotes understanding of the risks of harmful online behavior and awareness of how to protect oneself and others from such behavior.<sup>104</sup> It has been incorporated into the curriculum for trainee teachers and students in primary and secondary schools.<sup>105</sup> The MOE provides schools with starter kits so that they can develop their own materials and methods for educating children about cyber-safety.<sup>106</sup> Despite the programme reaching out to thousands of beneficiaries, the Advisory Council on the Impact of New Media on Society (AIMS) has noted that “the MOE has left the implementation of these non-examinable soft-skills to the discretion of the individual schools [and, therefore,] there are great discrepancies between schools, with some children receiving little or no cyber safety instruction at all.”<sup>107</sup>

In its report on the impact of new media

on Singaporean society, AIMS stressed that “while there have been commendable efforts by MDA, MOE and community groups, they have largely been ad hoc and uncoordinated.”<sup>108</sup>

The MDA has implemented the MediAction! Programme to raise awareness among internet users about the challenges and dangers of the Internet. The MDA has worked with more than 100 partners from the public and private sectors, and from the general population, to educate youth, teachers, parents and the public on safe internet use. In 2007, more than 300,000 people participated in the programme.<sup>109</sup>

In relation to child trafficking for sexual purposes, Government preventive responses were limited due to lack of acknowledgement of this form of child sexual exploitation. During 2010, the government did not sponsor any research or assessments on the problem of human trafficking within Singapore<sup>110</sup>. International organisations and NGOs, however, have supported and implemented some interventions to increase awareness and reduce children’s vulnerability to CSEC.

According to the 2011 Trafficking in Persons Report, in March 2011, the government created an Inter-Agency Task Force on Human Trafficking<sup>111</sup>. Having previously treated workers who enter Singapore to partake in the illegal workforce as offenders, regardless of their subjective situation, the government has expressed a shift in the manner in which this illegal immigrants will be viewed. Specifically, people claiming to have been trafficked, deceived and forced into labor will be treated as victims and not offenders. Victims will be permitted entry into a Singaporean shelter and allowed to remain in Singapore while their cases are investigated<sup>112</sup>.

Since 1998, the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in Singapore has funded a number of projects in southeast Asia (eg, Vietnam, Laos) aimed at diminishing supply for human trafficking, mainly through the economic empowerment of women and girls who are particularly exposed to the sex trade.<sup>113</sup> Emphasis has also been placed on providing education on human trafficking. In 2007,

UNIFEM Singapore started the School Talk programme, targeting secondary school students, to actively promote awareness on issues affecting women and children, including trafficking.<sup>114</sup> In collaboration with various institutions, workshops and roundtable discussions on human trafficking were also recently organised by UNIFEM Singapore to raise awareness among university students and the public at large.<sup>115</sup>



## STOP Sex Trafficking of Children & Young People Campaign

Conducted in partnership between The Body Shop and ECPAT, this three-year campaign, launched in 2009, seeks to provide immediate relief to child victims with funds raised and to create long-term changes through engaging the public

in awareness raising and lobbying decision makers to strengthen concerted action against child trafficking for sexual purposes.

In August 2009, with approximately 30 guests and representatives from the media in attendance, the 'Stop Sex Trafficking of Children & Young People Campaign' was launched in Singapore with an interactive Q&A session on child

trafficking with the media. Campaign activities in Singapore also included a film screening and a visual campaign of posters in the subway and on a city metro bus. Moreover, ECPAT International, together with The Body Shop, UNIFEM and HOME, has conducted a research project on child trafficking for sexual purposes in Singapore.

It was not possible to identify any measures focusing specifically on child prostitution prevention. However, the Government has

made some efforts to empower children in making informed decisions on sex-related issues.

## Sex education in schools as a strategy to prevent child prostitution

The Ministry of Education has made it mandatory for schools to implement sex education. Providing information on the consequences of sex and encouraging the development of life-skills (such as communication, negotiation, decision making, problem solving and assertiveness) form an essential part of the sexual education curriculum. Sex education provides a platform for students to reflect on their values and attitudes towards sexual issues and to raise awareness of the options available to them and the consequences of those options. As part of the “Growing Years Series”, which provides training to teachers on sexuality education, since 2001, the Police have been delivering talks covering the legal issues relating to sexual crime, as well as trends; particularly those relating to Internet Relay Chat and telephone chat lines. Although the curriculum does not address child sexual exploitation explicitly, sex education has proved to be an effective strategy in the prevention of prostitution-related practices, such as *enjo kosai*, which have become quite common among Singaporean children.<sup>116</sup>

In 2007, the “Love Them. Talk about Sex” programme was launched to teach parents with children aged 10-17 how to talk to their children about sexuality issues. Face-to-face workshops were conducted for parents at workplaces and schools and parents were provided with a resource booklet, a website and a helpline for additional support. Information and practical tips on talking to children about sexuality issues were also spread through the media, including on the radio and through magazine ads.<sup>117</sup> The program is ongoing and the information and skills booklet for parents is available online. Both resources are advertised on the internet on the Health Promotion Board which is party to the Singaporean Government<sup>118</sup>,

Initiatives to prevent child sex tourism have also been undertaken by the Singapore Government and UN agencies. In collaboration with ASEAN countries, in 2005, Singapore embarked on a regional education campaign entitled ‘Combating Child Sex Tourism in Southeast Asia’. This campaign was initiated and implemented by Child Wise (ECPAT in Australia) and aims to raise awareness about child sex tourism and deter potential child sex offenders.<sup>119</sup> In Singapore, the MCYS, together with Ministry of Home Affairs and the Singapore Tourism Board, have been working closely to mobilize the country’s commitment to this Regional Education Campaign.<sup>120</sup> As part

of this effort, in 2006, flyers against child sex tourism were distributed at the National Association of Travel Agents Singapore Fair to educate the public to help act against child sex tourists.<sup>121</sup> In order to facilitate the reporting of suspected CST cases, in 2008, Singapore also agreed to the inclusion of a police hotline number (1800-255-0000) in all ASEAN Regional Education Campaign materials distributed to the public.<sup>122</sup>

In 2007, UNIFEM Singapore launched the “Stop Child Sex” campaign to combat all forms of child sexual exploitation, including child sex tourism. The campaign was conceived as a tool to raise awareness on the problem and mobilise a wide range of target groups, including the public, students, governments, organisations, media and businesses. In the framework of this initiative, a dedicated website was established (<http://www.stopchildsex.org.sg/>). It contains information on the issues addressed, a comprehensive list of actions to be promoted by each target group and a series of poster advertisements for the campaign. The ads are aimed at informing Singaporeans and permanent residents of Singapore about the law introduced in October 2007 that penalises commercial sex with persons under the age of 18; whether the crime is committed in Singapore or overseas. Produced in both English and Chinese, the posters were also placed at

the Kranji Bus Stop from December 2007 to February 2008.<sup>123</sup> The “Stop Child Sex” campaign continues to function. On their website, UNIFEM Singapore offers ways in which individuals can help combat child sex. Through the provision of posters, contact

numbers where individuals can report cases of children involved in sex and information on child sex tourism<sup>124</sup>, UNIFEM is working to prevent the spread of the child sexual exploitation.

## PROTECTION

International instruments		
Human rights bodies related to child rights	Comments	
<b>Charter-based bodies</b>		
Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review – Human Rights Council	May 2011	
Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	No visit so far.	
Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children	No visit so far.	
<b>Treaty-based bodies</b>		
Committee on the Rights of the Child	Key conclusions in relation to implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;</li> <li>- create a mechanism for the promotion and protection of human rights (based on the Paris Principles) that is easily accessible to children, deals with complaints from children in a child-sensitive manner and provides remedies for violations of their rights under the Convention.</li> </ul>	
<b>Children’s rights instruments</b>	<b>Date of ratification</b>	<b>Date of submitted reports</b>
Convention on the Rights of the Child - 1989	Acceded in 1995	2009 - 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> periodic report 2002 - initial report
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography – 2000	Not yet ratified	
ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour - 1999 (No. 182)	Ratified 2001	
UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime – 2000	2007	
UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children – 2000 (supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime)	Not yet ratified	



## Legislation

The three major pieces of legislation related to child sexual exploitation in Singapore are the *Children and Young Person's Act*, the *Women's Charter*, and the *Penal Code*. While each of these statutes offers protection against crimes associated with CSEC, the non-ratification by Singapore of the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Trafficking Protocol)* and the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (Optional Protocol)* has resulted in provisions and definitions related to CSEC crimes in domestic legislation that are not fully consistent with international child rights standards, especially in the areas of child pornography and child trafficking.

### CHILD PROSTITUTION

Singapore legislation does not fully conform to international standards related to the prostitution of children. While all children (both boys and girls) under the age of 18 are protected from commercial sexual transactions (in exchange of remuneration or other form of consideration), protection from selling, hiring or obtaining possession of a person for the purpose of prostitution is limited to girls. Boys are left unprotected.

Provisions against child prostitution are contained in the *Women's Charter* and in the *Penal Code*. Section 140(1) of the *Women's Charter* makes it an offence to sell, buy or obtain possession of any woman or girl for the purpose of prostitution, either inside or outside of the country; punishable by a fine and imprisonment for up to five years.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, Section 143 of the *Charter* punishes the owner who permits a girl under 16 years of age to use his or her premises for unlawful sexual intercourse; while Section 145(1) makes it an offence to encourage the prostitution of a girl under 16 years of age. Under the *Charter* it is also prohibited for an individual to knowingly live on earnings from or trading in the prostitution of others<sup>126</sup> and to keep or manage a brothel.<sup>127</sup>

Sections 372-373 of the *Penal Code* punish, with imprisonment for up to 10 years, the selling, buying, hiring or obtaining possession of a female under the age of 21 for the purposes of prostitution; while Section 376B of the *Code* makes it a criminal offence to have commercial sex with a minor who is

under 18 years of age.<sup>128</sup> Section 376B(1) specifies that any person who obtains, for consideration, the sexual services of a person who is under 18 years of age shall be punished by imprisonment for a term up to seven years, or with a fine, or both. Additionally, Section 376B (2) states that any person who communicates with another person for the purpose of obtaining, for consideration, the sexual services of a person who is under 18 years of age shall be punished by imprisonment for up to two years, or with a fine, or both.

Section 7 of the *Children and Young Persons Act* criminalizes the sexual exploitation of children. According to the section “ Any person who, in public or private —

- (a) commits or abets the commission of or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any person of any obscene or indecent act with any child or young person; or
- (b) procures or attempts to procure the commission of any obscene or indecent act by any child or young person, shall



be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or to both and, in the case of a second or subsequent conviction, to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 4 years or to both<sup>129</sup>". Section 11 of the *Children and Young Persons Act*, further expands on the illegality of causing or luring children into entertainment

which displays them in indecent and immoral acts. This section penalizes parents and guardians who knowingly permit their children to partake in such acts, and allows for the cancellation or suspension of a license issued under Public Entertainments and Meetings Act<sup>130</sup>. In holding parents and guardians legally liable in these circumstances, Singapore's legislation conforms to article 3.2 of the CRC.

## TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES

As the Government of Singapore has not yet ratified the *Trafficking Protocol*, Singapore's anti-trafficking laws are not in line with its requirements and, therefore, they may fail to properly and effectively protect children from the spectrum of activities which compile the trafficking process. The *Trafficking Protocol* states that the process leading up to exploitation of children is important. This indicates that, whether or not the ultimate exploitation of the child occurs, the process of trafficking is still a criminal offence. It is therefore necessary to review existing legislation to ensure that all the actions taking place in the process of child trafficking are sanctioned, regardless of whether actual exploitation occurs, and that the penalties for such acts reflect the grave nature of this crime.

Section 12 of the *Children and Young Persons Act* specifically outlines a trafficking in children provision, making it an offence for anyone to participate in transferring or in conferring the possession, custody or control of a child for any valuable consideration.<sup>131</sup> The punishment for such an act is imprisonment for up to four years.<sup>132</sup> The same penalty is applied to the act of harbouring or of having possession, custody or control of a child who is being trafficked within or outside of the country.<sup>133</sup>

According to section 13 of the Act, any person who, by or under any false pretence, false representations or fraudulent or deceitful means (either within or outside of Singapore), brings or assists in bringing any child into Singapore shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction for a fine not exceeding S\$10,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding four years, or both.<sup>134</sup>

Trafficking in girls for sexual exploitation

is also punished under the *Women's Charter*. Section 141(1) expressly prohibits "traffic in women and girls"; providing that any person who buys, sells, procures, traffics or transports to or from Singapore a woman or girl for the purpose of prostitution is to be punished by a fine and imprisonment for up to five years.<sup>135</sup> Section 142 prohibits the importation of women and girls for the purpose of prostitution by false pretence, false representation or fraudulent or deceitful means and carries a punishment of a fine and imprisonment for up to five years.<sup>136</sup>

A number of provisions of the *Penal Code* (eg, sections 107 and 363-367) set forth offences related to trafficking, including abetment, abduction and kidnapping.

Data on the number of prosecutions of child sex traffickers is unavailable. During 2010, the Singaporean government convicted 6 sex offenders for acts related to prostitution. The sentences were minimal, ranging from fines to up to 15 months imprisonment.<sup>137</sup>

As the Government of Singapore has not ratified the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*, Singapore has not yet enacted legislation which specifically prohibits and criminalises the production, offering, distribution, dissemination and possession of child pornography. While the country has adopted a provision punishing online child sexual grooming, it still lacks a comprehensive definition of child pornography that is in line with international child rights standards.

There is no specific legal provision in the legislation of Singapore concerning the illegality of child pornography. However, the *Undesirable Publications Act* and the *Films Act* are relied on to regulate most obscene or objectionable material.

Section 4.1(a) of the *Undesirable Publications Act* defines objectionable publications as those that describe, depict, express or otherwise deal with matters such as sex, horror, crime, cruelty, violence or the consumption of drugs or other intoxicating substances in such a manner that the availability of the publication is likely to be injurious to the public good.<sup>138</sup> Section 4.2 lists certain factors which shall be considered when determining if a publication is objectionable. Exploitation of the nudity of persons or children, and sexual conduct linked to violence and coercion are included on the list.<sup>139</sup>

Section 11 of the *Undesirable Publications Act* indicates that any person who makes, reproduces, sells, supplies, offers to supply, exhibits, distributes, imports, exports or has in their possession any obscene publication, and knows or has reasonable cause to believe the publication is obscene, shall be guilty of an offence. The punishment for offences involving objectionable publications is a fine not exceeding S\$5,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or both.<sup>140</sup>

The *Films Act* addresses, among other things, film censorship. Section 29 provides that anyone who makes or reproduces, imports, distributes, has in their possession for the

purposes of distributing, exhibits or has in their possession for the purposes of exhibiting any obscene film (and knows or has reasonable cause to believe the film is obscene), shall be guilty of a criminal offence.<sup>141</sup> The simple possession of obscene films is also a criminal offence, though it carries a lesser punishment than the offences listed above.<sup>142</sup> Section 31 of the Act prohibits the advertisement of such films.

Section 32 of the *Films Act* describes offences involving children and young persons. It states that any person who causes or procures any child or young person to commit any offence mentioned in Sections 29, 30 or 31 (concerning obscene films) shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction for a fine of S\$80,000 or 12 months imprisonment, or both. It is also an offence under this Section for a person having custody, charge or care of a child or young person, to allow that child or young person to commit (or to abet in the commission of) any of the offences mentioned in Sections 29, 30 or 31.<sup>143</sup>

In September 2007, amendments to the Penal Code were introduced to include, under Section 376E, a grooming provision that makes it an offence to meet, or travel to meet, a minor under 16 years of age with an intention to act in such a way that would constitute an offence under Sections 354, 354A, 375, 376, 376A, 376B, 376F, 376G or 377A of the Penal Code (relating to offending the modesty of others, rape, sexual assault, commercial sex, incest and indecency).<sup>144</sup>

Singapore has recently enacted comprehensive extraterritorial legislation, as well as a number of provisions to deter activities that facilitate child sex tourism.

Singapore’s extraterritorial legislation pertaining to CSEC is found in Section 376C of the *Penal Code*, which criminalises commercial sex with a minor below the age of 18 outside of Singapore. Section 376C states: “Any person, being a citizen or a permanent resident of Singapore, who does, outside of Singapore, any act that would, if done in Singapore, constitute an offence under Section 376B [concerning commercial sex with a minor], shall be guilty of an offence.” Such a person is liable to the same punishment outlined in Section 376B.<sup>145</sup>

Activities that contribute to the commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourism are criminalised under Section 376D of the *Penal Code*.<sup>146</sup> It states: “Any person who -

- (a) makes or organises any travel arrangements for or on behalf of any other person with the intention of facilitating the commission by that other person of an offence under section 376C [pertaining to commercial sex with a minor outside of Singapore], whether or not such an offence is actually committed by that other person;
- (b) transports any other person to a place

outside Singapore with the intention of facilitating the commission by that other person of an offence under section 376C, whether or not such an offence is actually committed by that other person; or

- (c) prints, publishes or distributes any information that is intended to promote conduct that would constitute an offence under section 376C, or to assist any other person to engage in such conduct, shall be guilty of an offence.”<sup>147</sup> These offences are punishable by 10 years imprisonment or a fine, or both.<sup>148</sup>

According to the most recent Trafficking in Persons Report, “although Singaporean law provides for extraterritorial jurisdiction over Singaporean citizens and permanent residents who exploit children in other countries, the government has never investigated, prosecuted or convicted a national or permanent resident for child sex tourism”.<sup>149</sup> This issue was also mentioned in a recent publication by the Committee on the Rights of the Child with regards to Singapore’s compliance with the Convention of the Rights of the Child.<sup>150</sup>

## Child protection units

The Singapore Police Force has specialised units, including the Serious Sexual Crime Branch, where officers are trained to investigate particular sex crimes and to appropriately conduct interviews for victims of CSEC in order to ensure that victims’ rights are upheld and provided for.<sup>151</sup> As established by the *National Standards for the Protection of Children*,<sup>152</sup> the police

collaborate with other child protection agencies (such as child protection officers, health care services, court and judicial officers, community agencies, child abuse professionals and schools) to ensure adequate assistance to children.

The Ministry of Communication Development, Youth and Sports is the lead

agency combating child abuse. Under the department of Child Protection and Welfare Services, cases of child maltreatment are investigated and safe housing and trauma counseling are provided for children in need. The department works closely with the police and other professionals to uphold the best interest of the child. They also offer follow-up planning and monitor the implementation of the protection and welfare plans for the child.<sup>153</sup>

Reports of alleged child abuse cases are made to the Child Protection Service which immediately opens an investigation to ascertain the safety of the child and where necessary, intervenes to safeguard and protect the child.<sup>154</sup> Following this preliminary assessment, recovery and rehabilitation services are provided by multi-disciplinary teams. The Child Abuse Protection Team

(CAPT) was established in 1996 by the Ministry for Community, Development and Sports (now MCYS)<sup>155</sup> and is made up of child protection officers, paediatricians, psychologists, social workers and other professionals.<sup>156</sup> CAPT conducts multi-disciplinary case conferences on a weekly basis to deliberate on alleged new child abuse cases that have been referred to MCYS.<sup>157</sup> During the conference, professionals share their opinions on the cases, assess the degree of risk and decide on the care and protection plan, which includes arranging appropriate housing in government facilities for victims or non-governmental crisis shelters, and providing other counselling services.<sup>158</sup> Of particular note, after court proceedings are concluded, the Subordinate Courts' Counselling Body has a programme to provide ongoing psychological and therapeutic support for victims.<sup>159</sup>

## Support services for children

A number of support services are said to be available in Singapore for child victims of various forms of abuse, including sexual exploitation. Whilst individualized case management has been developed to guarantee effective and comprehensive assistance tailored to the specific situation of each child, more needs to be done to ensure that support services are properly specialized to respond to the particular needs for the recovery and reintegration of children victims of sexual exploitation.

In its latest report on the implementation of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the Government of Singapore stressed that support services are ensured to all victims of child abuse, including child sexual abuse.

Procedures to avoid the re-victimisation of the exploited child during investigation have been adopted. To ease the trauma of repeated interviews, police and the Ministry of Community Development Youth and Sports (MCYS), has embarked on joint interviews of child victims of sexual abuse to investigate the case and determine the care and protection plan for the child<sup>160</sup>. Additionally, training of police investigation officers and child protection officers on conducting joint

investigative interviewing has been delivered since 2005.<sup>161</sup>

The Victim Care Centre conducts child interviews where only authorized personnel are permitted to enter the rooms. The Centre is equipped solely for victims and restricts access to the accused offender or witnesses.<sup>162</sup> The rooms are delicately designed, with colors that are appealing to children. There is a play room for child victims to ease them during counselling, consultations or interview. This room contains anatomically correct dolls which can assist the child in explaining the abuse they endured to investigators.<sup>163</sup>

In 2009, the government provided \$657,000 in funding to 3 NGO-run shelters service adult victims of violence and to 20 NGO-operated children's shelters which serviced child victims of trafficking.<sup>164</sup> The government managed 2 shelters for children in conflict with the law and child victims of crime.<sup>165</sup>

Singapore's *Integrated Management of Family Violence Cases Manual*, which is shared by all key agencies, puts forth a protocol to manage cases of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.<sup>166</sup> The manual details roles and responsibilities for the police, Family Court, the prisons, MCYS, hospitals, social service agencies and crisis shelters and provides an overview of the family violence system, including legislation, the networking system and principles for handling cases.<sup>167</sup> It also sets forth step-by-step procedures for agencies, including identification of cases, referral, crisis intervention and discharge.<sup>168</sup> Services provided under the ambit of the National Family Violence Networking System include hotline services, counseling, translation services (including during the interview process) and accommodation in shelters.<sup>169</sup>

Although assistance provided to victims of trafficking might vary according to the assessment made by the intervention team, it must be noted that support services available are generally not specialised. There are, in

fact, no dedicated shelters for trafficked children operated by the Government<sup>170</sup>. When a child is identified as a victim of trafficking, he or she is usually referred to their respective embassy or to an NGO residential centre,<sup>171</sup> including children's homes which are mainly run by voluntary organisations and are partially or fully funded by the Government.<sup>172</sup> Although these structures have been developed to provide individualised assistance and accommodate children and young people that have been victimised by different forms of abuse, there are no specific activities to support minors who have suffered from trafficking and sexual exploitation. Additionally, staff operating within these centres usually have limited experience or training on how to approach child victims of sexual exploitation. In 2010, NGOs reported identifying 146 male and female victims of forced prostitution and forced labor, while authorities reported having extended assistance to 15 such victims.<sup>173</sup> These victims, were offered government shelter, and in some instances initial counselling and medical assistance, however all victims referred to shelters decided to leave, including one child victim who stayed with an acquaintance instead. Victims' avoidance of the shelters suggests that the services offered are not in line with victims' needs. Even more unsettling is the fact that of the 5 sex trafficking cases referred to shelters, only one of the cases was as a result of a proactive investigation by

## Law enforcement training

Some efforts to build the capacity of law enforcers to properly address cases of child abuse, including child sexual exploitation and human trafficking, have been promoted in recent years. However, more resources should be allocated to ensure sustained training for police, immigration officials and judicial personnel on child trafficking and CSEC specifically.

In 2006, in an effort to improve knowledge and increase professionalism among Child Protection Officers (CPOs), the MCYS and the Attorney-General's Chambers conducted a training entitled, "The Role of Child Protection Officers in the Singapore Legal System". The training targeted agencies and persons involved in child protection work, including police officers, and covered topics such as the legal aspects of sexual offences against children, the role of CPOs in supporting victims of sexual offences, procedural issues in applying for care and protection orders providing evidence in court and moot court training.<sup>175</sup>

As a result of a training activity on human trafficking and smuggling investigations delivered in 2008 by the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Unit (HSTU) of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, staff of the Singapore Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA), which oversees border security, have been trained on techniques to conduct profiling of persons, goods and cargo.<sup>176</sup> Accordingly, suspicious persons, such as potential sex workers and possible victims of human trafficking, would be identified and referred for secondary examination before being permitted to cross border lines. Additionally, police investigating all reports of alleged trafficking and officers handling such cases have been trained in appropriate interview techniques.

Furthermore, following the enactment in February 2008 of amendments to the Penal Code which criminalised prostitution involving a minor under the age of 18, the

police adopted new training programs and procedures to familiarise officers with the new offenses and provide them with the skills necessary to identify potential child trafficking victims.<sup>177</sup>

Despite these capacity building activities for law enforcers, it has been reported that victims of trafficking, including children, are frequently not identified as victims and are consequently criminalised and deported without receiving appropriate care and protection. In 2009, Singapore police arrested 89 children for prostitution offences, failing to treat the children as victims. Of the 89 cases, only 4 were identified as potential sex trafficking cases, which resulted in only one successful prosecution of a child sex trafficker.<sup>178</sup>

In both the 2010 and 2011 Trafficking in Persons Report, concern surrounds the lack of proactiveness of law enforcement officials to investigate cases of sexual exploitation and trafficking. According to the reports, the government evidences limited victim protection and is not adequately identifying victims of sexual trafficking. In 2009, 7,614 foreign females were detained for prostitutions violations. Amongst these females, officials only identified on confirmed trafficked victim and nearly all the women and children were deported following their arrest<sup>179</sup>. There has been doubt expressed among NGOs as to whether police are applying routine victim identification protocols when arresting foreign females prostituting in Singapore.<sup>180</sup>

## STOP Sex Trafficking of Children & Young People Campaign



An important advocacy component of The Body Shop and ECPAT’s “Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People Campaign” is the country progress card system. The system was created by ECPAT and The Body Shop to assess the progress of state action on specific commitments and promises to uphold the right of children to be protected from sex trafficking and all forms of commercial sexual exploitation. In line with the 2008 *Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children* from the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, this innovative tool provides readers with information on states’ actions to combat child trafficking, specifically in regard to the three goals of the campaign:

1. Community-based prevention programmes to stop child trafficking are reaching at-risk populations;
2. International legal standards for protecting children from trafficking have been incorporated into the national legal framework; and

### Singapore: summary of progress card <sup>181</sup>

Goal 1: community-based prevention programmes			
Prevention	Collaboration	Awareness raising	Teacher training
		★	★
Goal 2: legal framework			
<i>Optional Protocol</i>	<i>Trafficking Protocol</i>	National legislation	Special police units
Goal 3: specialised services for child victims			
Helpline	Shelters	Medical services	Psychological counselling

Green = significant action taken by state; Yellow = partial action taken by state;  
 Red = inadequate level of state action; Star = work undertaken by NGOs

Based on the global assessment of the progress cards, Singapore is among the 12% of countries that have made slow progress toward stopping sex trafficking of children and young people. Although Singapore has made some efforts in combating this crime, particularly in strengthening of the legal framework, it has failed to ensure specific prevention measures to address child sex trafficking, as well as failing to provide sufficient specialised support and protection for child victims of trafficking in the country. In particular, sensitisation programmes to address demand should be conducted, while ensuring stricter enforcement of the new legislation criminalising the purchase of sex services from any person under 18. Also, the legal framework needs to be further enhanced through ratification of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*. Considering that some child victims of trafficking may be criminalised, it is necessary to improve the protection, recovery and reintegration services provided to child victims and to develop specialised assistance for CSEC victims.



## CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

It has been reported that Singapore has a long tradition of child and youth participation. The MCYS has developed various platforms to seek youth feedback and consultation. In August 2004, over 2,000 youth from diverse backgrounds provided feedback for the 'Youth: Creating Our Future' public consultation exercise. Ideas that were received through the feedback process subsequently formed the basis of new youth initiatives that were launched or supported by MCYS, including a specialised website for youth (<http://youth.sg>), which provides online space for youth to share and exchange ideas and acts as a 'virtual' space to complement and support youth-led projects and events.

Another important arena is the National Youth Forum ([www.nyc.pa.gov.sg](http://www.nyc.pa.gov.sg)). Created

in 2004 under the auspices of the National Youth Council, the forum provides a formal platform for youth from a variety of backgrounds to study policy formulation and debate national issues. Since its inception in 2004, the forum has engaged youth in issues of national, community and youth interest; provided training and opportunities to exercise leadership; and implemented projects on issues pertaining to youth.

In 2008, the Junior REACH Ambassadors programme was launched by the MCYS with the aim of raising the level of active citizenship from a young age. As part of this programme, in January 2009, an interactive webpage (<http://app.reach.gov.sg/reach/default.aspx>) was created to engage and reach out to the junior ambassadors and the youth community.





## PRIORITY ACTIONS REQUIRED

### National plans of action

- The Singapore Government should adopt specific policies and a national plan of action on child protection, including commercial sexual exploitation of children. This specific issue should be recognised by the State as a priority in the framework of the overall strategies necessary to protect children from violence. A wide range of stakeholders, including children, should participate in the development of such policy.
- The government must establish an independent monitoring mechanism to regularly supervise that child rights conform to the provisions set forth by the CRC.

### Coordination and cooperation

- The Government of Singapore should further strengthen cooperative exchange of information about potential child trafficking cases with NGOs and foreign diplomatic missions in Singapore.
- Singapore should establish an independent human rights commission in compliance with the *Paris Principles*. In doing so, Singapore should ensure: 1) that such an institution has an explicit mandate to deal with children's rights and 2) that experts in children's rights are appointed to such institution.
- Bilateral, regional and international cooperation should be enhanced to ensure effective investigations and prosecutions of child pornography, child trafficking for sexual purposes and child sex tourism.
- Singapore should establish a child sex offender registry and collaborate with other countries on information exchange.

### Prevention

- Research on the different manifestations of CSEC should be undertaken and the findings should be used for policy development.
- Data on CSEC must be collected in a disaggregated manner to provide a more accurate understanding of CSEC in Singapore.
- Sustained public awareness campaigns must be conducted to inform citizens and residents about commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) with a focus on the specific

manifestations which are growing in Singapore, such as the issue of ‘compensated dating’. Sensitisation activities to prevent CSEC should also include initiatives to deter demand for sex with children in Singapore and abroad.

- The Government must also take steps to implement prevention projects in the countries of origin of child victims of trafficking by cooperating with governments in the region for safe migration and awareness raising.
- To enhance protection of children from sexual exploitation online, the present optional Family Access Network service provided by all ISPs should be widely publicised and made more accessible to Singaporean households. This can be achieved by offering the service free of charge to households who wish to have it. The Government can provide subsidies or grants for this. Furthermore, more coordination and sustainability of the various initiatives to promote child safety on the Internet should be ensured.
- Singapore should promote the Code of Conduct for the protection of children against sexual exploitation in tourism. There is a need for increased activity from the media, private and tourism sector in the effort to suppress child sex tourism.
- Awareness training on CSEC should be conducted among children. In this framework, prevention measures to address online child sexual exploitation should be implemented. These should include public awareness campaigns that target children, parents, teachers and cybercafés, and integration of online safety information into the educational system.

## Protection

- The Government of Singapore should ratify the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000)* and the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*.
- Singapore legislation should be amended in order to ensure that all children under the age of 18, both boys and girls, are fully protected from all acts related to child prostitution.
- The Government of Singapore is strongly encouraged to draft and implement legislation which will specifically prohibit and criminalise the production, offering, distribution and dissemination and possession of child pornography. This shall include “[...] any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for sexual purposes.” Singapore should complete its legislation by adding a provision on knowingly accessing and viewing child pornography materials.
- Singapore should further enhance its anti-trafficking legislation to ensure that all acts constituting child trafficking are punished regardless of the final exploitation.
- Law enforcement agencies should increase their efforts to proactively identify child victims of CSEC among vulnerable groups, to vigorously investigate and prosecute cases and to ensure that offenders are convicted and receive appropriate criminal punishments.

- ✎ Child-friendly procedures should be strengthened to ensure that child victims are not arrested, incarcerated or otherwise punished for acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked. This entails police routinely applying victim identification protocols during anti-vice sweeps.

### Support services for children

- ✎ Specialised assistance to effectively respond to the specific needs of child victims of sexual exploitation should be developed. This includes, specialised shelters, hotlines and medical/psychological support services.
- ✎ Systematic training needs to be implemented for all of the relevant stakeholders likely to be in contact with and/or to provide care, reintegration and repatriation services to child victims of sexual exploitation.

### Child and youth participation

- ✎ The government should disseminate the Convention on the Rights of the Child to students so that they can be self-informed and be active participants in its implementation.
- ✎ The government should continue to expand programs designed to engage youth in policy making and debates surround child rights.

# ANNEX

## The Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents\*

*Note: This is a condensed version. The full Rio Declaration and Call to Action also contains: Preamble; A. Review of progress and outstanding challenges; and B. Declaration.*

### C. Call for Action

We call on all States, with the support of international organizations and civil society, including NGOs, the private sector, adolescents and young people to establish and implement robust frameworks for the protection of children and adolescents from all forms of sexual exploitation, and we call upon them to:

#### I - International and Regional Instruments

- (1) Continue working towards ratification of relevant international instruments, including as appropriate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, ILO Convention 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- (2) Continue working towards ratification of relevant regional instruments, including as appropriate the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the ASEAN Charter,

the Inter-American Conventions on International Traffic in Minors and on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, and the Council of Europe Conventions on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, on Cybercrime and on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, conventions which can be ratified by States that are non-members of the Council of Europe.

- (3) State Parties should take all necessary measures to implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, taking into due accounts the conclusions and the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in the context of its review of State Parties' reports. All countries are encouraged to use this as an important reference.

#### II – Forms of Sexual Exploitation and its New Scenarios

*Child pornography/child abuse images*

- (4) Criminalize the intentional production, distribution, receipt and possession of child pornography, including virtual

images and the sexually exploitative representation of children, as well as the intentional consumption, access and viewing of such materials where there has been no physical contact with a child; legal liability should be extended to entities such as corporations and companies in case the responsibility for or involvement in the production and/or dissemination of materials.

- (5) Undertake specific and targeted actions to prevent and stop child pornography and the use of the Internet and new technologies for the grooming of children into online and off-line abuse and for the production and dissemination of child pornography and other materials. Victim identification, support and care by specialized staff should be made a high priority.
- (6) Conduct educational and awareness-raising campaigns focusing on children, parents, teachers, youth organizations and others working with and for children with a view to improve their understanding of the risks of sexually exploitative use of the Internet, mobile telephones and other new technologies, including information for children on how to protect themselves, how to get help and to report incidences of child pornography and online sexual exploitation.
- (7) Take the necessary legislative measures to require Internet service providers, mobile phone companies, search engines and other relevant actors to report and remove child pornography websites and child sexual abuse images, and develop indicators to monitor results and enhance efforts.
- (8) Call upon Internet service providers, mobile phone companies, Internet cafes and other relevant actors to develop and

implement voluntary Codes of Conduct and other corporate social responsibility mechanisms together with the development of legal tools for enabling the adoption of child protection measures in these businesses.

- (9) Call upon financial institutions to undertake actions to trace and stop the flow of financial transactions undertaken through their services which facilitate access to child pornography.
- (10) Set up a common list of websites, under the auspices of Interpol, containing sexual abuse images, based on uniform standards, whose access will be blocked; the list has to be continuously updated, exchanged on international level, and be used by the provider to perform the access blocking.
- (11) Undertake research and development, in the realm of the private sector, of robust technologies to identify images taken with electronic digital devices and trace and retract them to help identify the perpetrators.
- (12) Promote public/private partnerships to enhance the research and development of robust technologies to investigate and to trace the victims with a view to immediately stop their exploitation and provide them with all the necessary support for full recovery.
- (13) Make technologies easily available, affordable and usable for parents and other caregivers, including to assist with the use of filters to block inappropriate and harmful images of children.

*Sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in prostitution*

- (14) Address the demand that leads to children being prostituted by making

the purchase of sex or any form of transaction to obtain sexual services from a child a criminal transaction under criminal law, even when the adult is unaware of the child's age.

- (15) Provide specialized and appropriate health care for children who have been exploited in prostitution, and support child centered local models of recovery, social work systems, realistic economic alternatives and cooperation among programmes for holistic response.

*Sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in travel and tourism.*

- (16) Encourage and support the tourism, travel and hotel sectors in adopting professional Codes of Conduct, for example by joining and implementing the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism; encourage the use of businesses that put in place appropriate child protection-focused corporate social responsibility strategies; and/or provide other incentives for those participating.
- (17) Ensure that all stakeholders pay specific attention to unregulated tourism to prevent domestic and international travellers from sexually exploiting children and adolescents.
- (18) Cooperate in the establishment of an international travel notification system, such as the Interpol 'green notice' system, in accordance with applicable law and human rights standards.
- (19) Ensure investigation and, where sufficient evidence exists, that appropriate charges are brought and vigorously pursued against the State's nationals who are reported or alleged to have sexually exploited a child in a foreign country.

- (20) Prohibit the production and dissemination of material advertising the sexual exploitation of children in tourism; and alert travellers to criminal sanctions that will apply in cases of sexual exploitation of children.

- (21) Monitor new and emerging tourist destinations and establish proactive measures to work with private sector partners involved in the development of tourism services on measures to prevent the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, including the use of socially and environmentally responsible strategies that promote equitable development.

*Trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents*

- (22) Mobilize communities, including children and adolescents with a view to engaging them in dialogue on and a critical review of social norms and practices and economic and social conditions that make children vulnerable to trafficking, and establish procedures that involve them in developing strategies and programmes where they participate, where appropriate, in the planning, implementation and monitoring of such programmes.
- (23) Pilot and adapt or replicate successful models of community-based prevention and rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for child victims of trafficking.
- (24) Establish policies and programmes that address not only cross-border but also internal trafficking of children and that include, among other elements, a standard operating procedure for the safe repatriation and return of children based on the child's view and on a careful assessment of the needs and risks to the child of returning to her/his place of origin to ensure that the best interests of the child are taken into account.

- (25) Continue strengthening cross-border and internal cooperation of law enforcement officials, for example by establishing coordinating units with a mandate to issue clear guidelines for child centered investigation of cases of trafficking of children and for treating trafficked children not as criminals but as victims in need of protection.
- (26) Take legislative and other measures to ensure that a guardian is appointed without delay for every unaccompanied trafficked child, that an effective system of registration and documentation of all trafficked children is established, and that every trafficked child is provided with not only short-term protection but also with the necessary economic and psycho-social support for full and long-lasting recovery and social reintegration (in line with the UNICEF

*Guidelines on the Protection of Child Victims of Trafficking and UNHCR Guidelines on Formal Determination of the Best Interests of the Child).*

- (27) Undertake and/or support, with the involvement of civil society and children, the regular evaluation of programmes and policies to prevent and stop the trafficking of children and of legislation that may have a conducive impact on trafficking, for example laws on marriage, free education, adoption and migration, birth registration, accordance of citizenship, refugee or other status.

### **III – Legal Frameworks and Enforcement of the Law**

- (28) Define, prohibit and criminalize, in accordance with existing international human rights standards, all acts of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in their jurisdiction, irrespective of any set age of consent or marriage or cultural practice, even when the adult is unaware of the child's age.
- (29) Establish effective extraterritorial jurisdiction, abolishing the requirement of double criminality for offences of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, and facilitate mutual legal assistance, in order to achieve effective prosecution of perpetrators and appropriate sanctions. Make all acts of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents an extraditable offence in existing or newly established extradition treaties.
- (30) Designate a lead law enforcement agency, where appropriate to national circumstances, to proactively enforce extraterritorial laws related to sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.
- (31) Ensure that child victims of sexual exploitation are not criminalized or punished for their acts directly related to their exploitation, but are given the status of victim in law and are treated accordingly.
- (32) Establish special gender sensitive units/ children's desks within police forces, involving when appropriate other professionals like health care and social workers and teachers, to address sexual crimes against children, and provide specialized training to judicial and law enforcement personnel.
- (33) Address corruption in law enforcement and the judiciary, as well as other authorities with a duty of care to children, recognizing corruption as a major obstacle to effective law enforcement and protection for children.
- (34) Establish and implement international, regional and national legal mechanisms and programmes for addressing sex offender behaviour and preventing recidivism, including through risk assessment and offender management programmes, the provision of voluntary extended and comprehensive rehabilitation services (in addition to but not in lieu of criminal sanctions



as appropriate), safe reintegration of convicted offenders and the collection and sharing of good practices and establish where appropriate sex offenders registers.

#### **IV – Integrated Cross-Sectoral Policies and National Plans of Action General**

- (35) Develop and implement comprehensive National Plans of Action on the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, or include these in existing relevant planning frameworks, such as National Development Plans and ensure that these Plans are based in a cross-sectoral approach which brings all stakeholders together in a coherent and comprehensive framework for action. These Plans should incorporate gender-sensitive strategies, social protection measures and operational plans, with adequate monitoring and evaluation targeted resources and designated responsible actors, including civil society organizations for implementation of initiatives to prevent and stop the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and provide support for child victims of sexual exploitation.
- (36) Promote and support multi-sectoral policies and programmes, including community-based programmes, within the framework of a comprehensive national child protection system to address phenomena that contribute to the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents including, for example, discrimination (including on the basis of sex), harmful traditional practices, child marriage and social norms that condone sexual exploitation.
- (37) Promote and fund meaningful child and youth participation at all levels in the design, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, in campaigns and through peer-to-peer youth programmes, aimed at raising

awareness and preventing the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children and adolescents.

- (38) Initiate and support the collection and sharing of reliable information and cross-border cooperation, and contribute to databases on victims and perpetrators, to enhance assistance to children and address the demand for sex with children, in accordance with applicable laws.

#### *Prevention*

- (39) Ensure that all children born on their territory are registered immediately and for free after their birth and pay special attention to not yet registered children and children at risk and in marginalized situations.
- (40) Strengthen the role of educational institutions and staff to detect, denounce and help address sexual abuse and exploitation of children in all forms and sources.
- (41) Emphasize prevention of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, through e.g. awareness raising and educational campaigns, support for parents and eradication of poverty while reinforcing or establishing multi-sectoral referral mechanisms to provide comprehensive support and services to children who have been victimized in sexual exploitation.
- (42) Support children to gain deeper knowledge of their own rights to be free from sexual exploitation, and the options available to help them to address abuse, so that they are empowered, with the partnership of adults, to end sexual exploitation.
- (43) Engage children in meaningful and critical examination of changing contemporary values and norms and their potential to increase vulnerability



to sexual exploitation; and promote education to enhance children's understanding of these issues in relation to sexual exploitation.

- (44) Undertake research on contemporary patterns of socialization of boys and men across different contexts to identify factors that promote and strengthen boys' and men's respect for the rights of girls and women and engage them in action initiatives that inhibit and discourage them from engaging in sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

#### *Protection of the child*

- (45) Increase efforts to address the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents through the development of comprehensive and integrated national child protection systems, including the necessary budget allocations and based on identifications of settings where children are most at risk that aim to protect children from all forms of violence and abuse.
- (46) Establish by 2013 an effective and accessible system for reporting, follow up and support for child victims of suspected or actual incidents of sexual exploitation, for example by instituting mandatory reporting for people in positions of responsibility for the welfare of children.
- (47) Develop or enhance accessibility of existing telephone or web-based help lines, in particular for children in care and justice institutions, to encourage children and require care givers to confidentially report sexual exploitation and seek referral to appropriate services, and ensure that the operators of such reporting mechanisms are adequately trained and supervised.
- (48) Strengthen existing national child protection services or establish new

ones in order to provide all child victims of sexual exploitation, girls and boys, without discrimination, with the necessary economic and psychosocial support for their full physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration, and when appropriate, family reunification and interventions that support and strengthen families to mitigate the risk of further exploitation; such services to be provided by well trained multi-disciplinary teams of professionals.

- (49) Ensure that these services are accessible, appropriately resourced, comprehensive, child- and gender-sensitive, and reach all children without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex (or orientation), and social origin and including children with disabilities, from ethnic minorities, indigenous or Aboriginal children, refugee or asylum-seeking and children in domestic service or living on the streets and children displaced by conflict or emergency situations.
- (50) Develop programs that provide children of sex workers and children living in brothels with support and protection.
- (51) Promote and defend the privacy of the child victims and child perpetrators of sexual exploitation, taking into account relevant national laws and procedures, to protect their identity in investigatory or court proceedings or from disclosure by the media and ensure that these proceedings are child friendly and allow the child to participate in a meaningful way in the process of bringing the perpetrator to justice.
- (52) Ensure that children and adolescents exhibiting acts of sexual violence harmful to others receive appropriate care and attention as a first option through gender-sensitive and child-focused measures and programmes that balance their best interest with

due regard for the safety of others, and ensure compliance with the principle that depriving children of liberty should be pursued only as a measure of last resort, and ensure that those responsible for the care of such children are equipped with relevant and culturally appropriate training and skills.

## **V – International Cooperation**

- (53) Take all necessary steps to strengthen international cooperation by multilateral, regional and bilateral arrangements for the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and punishment of those responsible for acts of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents; and for the assistance of child victims in their physical and psychological recovery, social reintegration and, as appropriate, repatriation.
- (54) Establish and/or improve by 2013 concrete mechanisms and/or processes to facilitate coordination at national, regional and international levels for enhanced cooperation among government ministries, funding bodies, UN agencies, NGOs, the private sector, workers' and employers' organizations, the media, children's organizations and other representatives of civil society with a view to enabling and supporting concrete action to prevent and stop the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.
- (55) Strengthen and improve the effectiveness of existing regional mechanisms for exchange, coordination and monitoring of progress on child protection including against sexual exploitation in order to review progress and strengthen follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations made.
- (56) Provide, when in a position to do so, financial, technical and other assistance through existing multilateral, regional, bilateral and other programmes for addressing the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents; and explore the potential of a fund for child and youth initiatives in this area.
- (57) Develop, where appropriate with the support of UN agencies, NGOs, civil society organizations and the private sector, workers' and employers' organizations, policies and programmes to promote and support corporate social responsibility of enterprises operating inter alia in tourism, travel, transport and financial services, and of communication, media, Internet services, advertising and entertainment sectors; so that child-rights focused policies, standards and codes of conduct are implemented throughout the supply chain and include an independent monitoring mechanism.
- (58) Support and contribute to the Interpol international child abuse images database and nominate a responsible national focal point person or unit to collect and update promptly national data on sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, and systematically share this information with Interpol in order to support cross-border (international) law enforcement action and strengthen its effectiveness, and adopt multilateral agreements especially for police investigation work.
- (59) Undertake national and international coordinated measures to curb and stop the involvement of organized crime

in commercial sexual exploitation of children and bring persons and/or legal entities responsible for this form of organized crime to justice.

## **VI – Social Responsibility Initiatives**

We encourage the private sector, employers' and workers' organizations, to proactively engage in all efforts to prevent and stop the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, and to use their knowhow, human and financial resources, networks, structures and leveraging power to:

- (60) Integrate child protection, including the prevention of sexual exploitation of children, into new or existing corporate social responsibility policies of enterprises operating inter alia in tourism, travel, transport, agriculture and financial services, and of communication, media, Internet services, advertising and entertainment sectors, and ensure appropriate implementation of such policies and widespread public awareness.
- (61) Incorporate the prevention and protection of children from sexual exploitation in human resources policies, such as Codes of Conduct and other corporate social responsibility mechanisms throughout the supply chain.
- (62) Join efforts with Governments, UN agencies, national and international NGOs, and other stakeholders to prevent the production and dissemination of child pornography, including virtual images and the sexually exploitative representation of children, and stop the use of the Internet and new technologies for the grooming of

children into online and off-line abuse; undertake actions to trace and stop the flow of financial transactions for sexual exploitation of children through the services of financial institutions; support efforts to address the demand for sexual exploitation of children in prostitution and the strengthening of services for children victims and their families, including the establishment of accessible telephone or web-based help lines; and provide support for educational and awareness-raising campaigns targeting children, parents, teachers, youth organizations and others working with and for children, on the risks of sexual exploitation of children, sexually exploitative use of the Internet, mobile phones and other new technologies as well as on protective measures.

## **VII – Monitoring**

- (63) Establish by 2013 independent children's rights institutions such as children's ombudspersons or equivalents or focal points on children's rights in existing human rights institutions or general ombudsperson offices, highlighting the importance for States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child of General Comment No 2 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child; these bodies should play a key role in the independent monitoring of actions taken for the prevention of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, protection of children from such exploitation and the restoration of the rights of sexually exploited children, in advocating for effective legal frameworks and enforcement and in ensuring, where necessary, that child victims have effective remedies and

redress, including the possibility of filing complaints before these institutions.

We encourage the Committee on the Rights of the Child to:

- (64) Persevere with reviewing progress of States Parties' fulfilment of their obligations to uphold the right of children to protection from sexual exploitation and pay special attention to the recommendations in the Rio Call for Action in its examination of reports under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols.
- (65) Adopt as a matter of priority a General Comment on the right of the child to protection from sexual exploitation, trafficking for sexual purposes, and the abduction and sale of children, including detailed guidance to States on the development, implementation and enforcement of national legislation and policies in this regard.
- (66) Continue to work with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in protecting child rights, and raising awareness of relevant international and regional human rights mechanisms.

We encourage other United Nations human rights treaty bodies, special procedures of the Human Rights Council and special representatives of the United Nations Secretary-General, as well as regional human rights mechanisms, to:

- (67) Pay particular attention to combating the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, within their respective mandates and during their examination of State Parties' reports, country visits, in their thematic work and/or other activities.

We urge the Human Rights Council to:

- (68) Ensure that the Universal Periodic Review process includes rigorous examination of States' fulfilment of their obligations to children, including preventing and stopping the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and to respectfully the rights of child victims of such exploitation.

We urge the yet-to-be-appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially in Women and Children, together with other appropriate mandate holders and in collaboration with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, to:

- (69) Work together to avoid duplication and to maximise their impact in preventing and stopping the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and, through their work, map experiences in the area of prevention and response to sexual exploitation of children and assess their effectiveness.

We encourage UN agencies, NGOs and human rights institutions to:

- (70) Support and provide information on the extent of and responses to sexual exploitation of children and adolescents to these bodies.
- (71) Work with the media to enhance their role in education and empowerment, and in protecting children from sexual exploitation, and to mitigate the harmful potential of the media, including

through the sexualization of children in advertising.

We call on international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to:

- (72) Review their current macro-economic and poverty reduction strategies with a view to counteracting any negative social impact on children and their families, including loan conditionality which essentially limits social services and access to rights and minimizing the risk for children to sexual exploitation.

We call on religious communities to:

- (73) Reject, in the light of their consensus about the inherent dignity of every person, including children, all forms of violence against children including sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and establish, in that regard, multi-religious cooperation and partnership with other key stakeholders such as governments, children's organizations, UN agencies, NGOs, media and the private sector using their moral authority, social influence and leadership to guide communities in ending sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

## C. Call for Action

(1) We commit ourselves to the most effective follow-up to this Call for Action:

- At the national level, inter alia, by biennial public reporting on the measures taken for the implementation of the Rio Declaration and Call for Action and promoting/initiating discussions on the progress made and the remaining challenges to named responsible mechanisms for monitoring implementation while also integrating such requirements into State reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- At the international level, by encouraging and supporting coordinated actions by the relevant human rights treaty bodies, special procedures of the Human Rights Council and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations with a view to maintaining awareness of the Rio Declaration and Call for Action and promoting its implementation.

- (2) Encourage the private sector to join the United Nations Global Compact and communicate their implementation progress with regard to addressing the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and supporting the realization of this platform for coordinated corporate efforts and sharing of best practices.

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