South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children
SAARC Apex Body

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In Solidarity with the Children of SAARC
What is the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC)?

SAIEVAC is the SAARC Apex Body for Children and was given this status in November 2011 during the 17th SAARC Summit held in Maldives. This provides SAIEVAC the opportunity to be a part of the SAARC framework and support plans and programmes of SAARC member countries on child rights in general and ending violence against children in particular.

It is the first ever regional organization for children to achieve this status of being a recognized body to represent the cause of children of South Asia.

How did SAIEVAC Begin?

To provide input into the UN Violence study, countries around the world held consultations on the issue of Violence against children. 8 South Asian countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) got together for the first time for a Regional consultation in Islamabad, Pakistan in 2005. The purpose of the consultation was to share the result of national consultations, experiences and make recommendations to input into the UN Study. It was organized by the South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG). Governments of South Asia in partnership through training and development of good curricula for relevant professionals.

• Supporting development of standards for caregivers of children
• Supporting Member countries to have clearly defined procedures for the referral of child victims/survivors of violence and take necessary actions to promote physical and psychological recovery and rehabilitation of child victims and witnesses of violence and their families.
• Advocating for the minimum age of criminal responsibility to be set at 12 years and to have alternatives to institutional care for children in conflict with the law.
• Raising Awareness through public information and media campaigns facilitating change by supporting the meaningful and active participation of civil society, children and young people to prevent and monitor violence against children and make recommendations for stopping it
SAIEVAC believes that measures to prevent violence need to be in place which address root causes keeping in mind immediate risk and protective factors.

What is SAIEVAC’S 5 YEAR Plan?

SAIEVAC’s Five Year Work plan consists of the following activities:

- Bringing together different activities with clear cut objectives and indicators to measure yearly progress
- Organizing technical consultations and strengthening cooperation throughout the South Asian Region to share good practices
- Supporting implementation of a national strategy, policy and plan of action on violence against children by each member country with realistic time bound targets and adequate resources
- Supporting Coordination and monitoring
- Supporting Member countries to implement national legislative measures to prevent, prohibit and eliminate all forms of violence against children in all settings including in families, in schools, in communities, workplaces, institutions and emergency situations.
- Supporting Collection of essential Data and establishment of Information Management System and conduct research to provide necessary evidence to build effective interventions including advocacy
- Supporting Capacity development of stakeholders and increasing the numbers of child rights practitioners and professionals

With Civil Society organizations, UN, INGOs, children and young people participated in the consultation. The South Asia Forum (SAF) was established as an outcome of the consultation in 2005. In its 3rd Ministerial meeting on 23 June, 2010 SAF became SAIEVAC. The meeting also approved the decision to create a new institutional mechanism for SAIEVAC at both the regional and national levels, collaboration with SAARC and development of a 5-Year Work Plan to end violence against children in the region.

What makes SAIEVAC special?

SAIEVAC is a unique regional initiative led by the Governments of South Asia which focuses on raising awareness, developing capacities, sharing good practices and lessons learnt in preventing and responding to violence against children in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

With the establishment of SAIEVAC, the South Asian governments have together agreed to make real their commitments and focus on ending violence against children in the region. SAIEVAC has begun activities as part of its 5 year plan to make South Asia a violence-free region for children.

What is the structure of SAIEVAC and what does it do?

SAIEVAC Secretariat is headed by the Director General. The work of SAIEVAC is guided and monitored by a Governing Board, headed by the Chair. The Governing Board advises and steers the SAIEVAC process. The board consists of one board member appointed by each Member Country, the
SACG chairperson, two child representatives and representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

Each Member State has in place a national SAIEVAC Coordinator, responsible for coordinating nation level activities as the focal point for SAIEVAC regional level initiatives.

SAIEVAC is responsible for implementing its 5 year plan on ending violence against children, collaborate on regional and international initiatives on child protection, build linkages with relevant global and regional bodies and hold national and regional consultations. The priority and critical regional issues for SAIEVAC are early marriage, sexual abuse and exploitation, trafficking, corporal punishment, and child labour. Gender and discrimination are cross-cutting issues throughout all areas.

**SAIEVAC’S views on Children and young people’s participation**

SAIEVAC strongly believes that children’s input and involvement is essential to stop violence against children in South Asia. It actively encourages children’s participation in every area, and at every level. SAIEVAC also believes that children should have national children’s networks to make recommendations regularly to governments in their home countries, regionally and globally. To prove its commitment towards children and young people’s participation, the SAIEVAC Governing Board has one male and one female Child Representative as Board Members. The representatives were democratically chosen by their peers through national and regional processes.

**What is SAIEVAC’S Vision?**

SAIEVAC’s vision is that all children, girls and boys, throughout South Asia enjoy their right to an environment free from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and discrimination. The 5 year work plan strives to achieve this goal.