SAARC Apex Body

“In Solidarity with the Children of SAARC”

General Guidelines for Translators for Meetings/Consultations Organized or Supported by SAIEVAC

(Chaperones may also be the translators for the child participants)

These guidelines are for translators for children and young people attending the meetings/consultations organized or supported by SAIEVAC.

**Purpose:** You have been selected by the organisers/lead organisations of the Consultation as the translator for the Consultation or you may have been selected by the sponsoring agency as a chaperone to accompany children to the Consultation as well as to act as the translator to children throughout the consultation period.

Children who are participating in the Consultation need to be given the space to speak out. Your role as a translator, therefore, becomes very important as you become the voices of the children. The role and work of the translators is crucial to the successful participation of the children and young people at the Regional Consultation. You will not only translate what the children are saying but also what the adults are saying. Therefore, the following guidelines are intended to provide you with a set of responsibilities that the organisers will expect from you as a translator.

**Training:** All translators will be briefed at the beginning of the Consultation to ensure that the following guidelines are understood and that a translation service is provided during all the sessions of the consultation in accordance with the standards outlined below.

**RESPONSIBILITIES WHILE TRANSLATING**

- Before departing from your respective place, you may wish to discuss with the child’s guardian/s and find out the background of the child’s experiences in participating in other conferences.
- When a child is speaking, especially in a plenary session, stand up together with them and interpret when they have finished speaking. To show respect for the child, interpret exactly what they say. For example, “My name is ... and I come from ... my experience is.”. The Translator should talk using the first-person language while translating.
- Request that the child give adequate pauses. You can also jot down important ideas for easier translation.
- Avoid “she/he says ... What she/he wants to say is that ... I do not understand what she/he is saying, but I think”. Never give your own opinion or examples from your own experience.
- If you do not understand what the child has said, make sure you get clarification before you start interpreting.
• Avoid the use of colloquialisms, “buzz words” and unfamiliar acronyms wherever possible to allow children to get fully involved in discussions. But, remember not to oversimplify or “talk down” to the children.
• Encourage children to speak out when they are unable to follow discussions.
• Immediately inform the facilitators if the children do not understand what is being said. Do not take on the role of giving explanations.
• Do not answer for the children; ask them for their answer first even if you can guess what it is.
• Learn to read the body language (non-verbal) of each child, so you can act on any concerns if the child has any difficulty of following the consultation proceedings.
• Congratulate the child for every progress achieved in overcoming inhibitions, and for any presentation made.
• Do not show any doubt to what the child is saying. Remember that when speaking in front of people, the child totally relies on your help to communicate with others.
• Recognise that it may be the first time for the child to visit a different place or a foreign country. Help make this visit truly an educational experience.
• Do not promise or give anything, in cash or in kind that may raise false expectations from the child.
• Make a closure at the end of each day by formally turning over the child to the chaperone (unless you are the chaperone too).
• Ensure confidentiality of the information about the child’s personal life.
• If the child informs you of an issue that you think requires the attention of the child protection focal person, speak to the child about the issue and get their agreement before you approach the child protection focal person.
• If the child wishes to speak in English instead of their local language let them do so, but do not force them to.
• Avoid engaging in long discussions with adults without translating to the child.
• When handing the child back to the chaperone (unless you are also the chaperone) at the end of each day, please spend 5 minutes explaining to the chaperone how the day went.
• Refrain from using your computer, mobile phone or any other equipment that may hinder you from fulfilling your primary responsibility effectively.

WORKING WITH THE FACILITATORS AND ORGANISERS

• Be open to discuss with any of the facilitators, any problem or difficulty you encounter so that they can immediately deal with it.
• Try to receive in advance, copies of all written information available to participants.
• Make the agreed sign if someone is speaking too quickly for good interpretation. Lift a hand (or do the “T” sign) and indicate the need for extra time for translation.
• Immediately inform the facilitators or organisers if any of the children with whom you are working need any special attention or do not feel well.
• If a child protection issue is raised by the child, ensure you have the permission of the child before you speak to the Child Protection Focal Person. Encourage the child to accompany you to speak to the Child Protection Focal Person.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL INFORMATION

Children and young people have the right to be protected from any information they do not need to know and for which they may not have the understanding and maturity to cope. This is especially true if the information deals with sexual matters. All adults participating in the Consultation have a duty to
ensure that no child is harmed as a result of information from presentations and discussions whether in spoken, written or visual form or any other kind of communication. This means:

- No shocking/offensive stories or case studies, images;
- No emotional, personal testimony of abuse and exploitation;
- No role play or drama depicting rape or other sexual or violent acts;
- Sensitivity to other cultures;
- No 'bad' (improper/offensive) language.

All adults should be alert to such situations and are responsible for protecting all children and young people attending the event. Facilitators will be prepared to stop discussions or presentations that are inappropriate and remind participants that:

- Child protection is mandatory;
- Activities must remain within professional limits;
- Time out may be necessary.

Anyone (child or adult) who feels uncomfortable or needs a break from a presentation or discussion can leave the consultation room, without disturbing others. There will be a quiet place for reflection available at the consultation venue with a supportive counselor if needed.