Summary Report
of
The Second Regional Convening On Using Law to Promote Accountability To End Child Marriage in South Asia

19 – 20 September 2016
Pokhara, Nepal

Hosted by the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MoWCSW), Government of Nepal
Organized by the SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat and Centre for Reproductive Rights
Second Regional Convening on Using Law to Promote Accountability to End Child Marriage in South Asia

Executive Summary

Building upon the momentum of the first regional convening on legal accountability for child marriage and in preparation for mounting wider regional advocacy as the region gears up for the 19th SAARC Summit to be held in Pakistan in November 2016, SAIEVAC and the Center organized the 2nd Regional Convening to take stock of actions taken by governments and other stakeholders in the region to implement the strategies enumerated in Expected Outcome 1 (EO 1) of the RAP and the KCA.

The MoWCSW, Government of Nepal, again hosted the regional convening as part of its continued support for concerted action in the region to address child marriage. The 2nd Regional Convening contributed towards creating momentum within SAARC to support the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goal Target 5.3 on eliminating harmful practices, including child marriage.

The Regional Convening was attended by participants (Annex – D) from SAIEVAC Government Mechanisms, relevant government agencies handling child marriage, Social Affairs Division of the SAARC Secretariat, NACG Chairs/thematic leaders and representatives from SAARCLAW.

Mr. Bishnu Prasad Lamsal, Hon’ble Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal presided over the Inaugural Ceremony as the Chief Guest

Key Outcomes of the Consultation

1. To involve/engage the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Member States in future national and regional dialogues on child marriage so as to sensitize them on the issue so that they are better equipped to shape the global conversation and advocacy on child marriage and represent the South Asian perspective at the global platform.

2. SAIEVAC Regional and National Mechanisms as well as collaborating partners which includes the SAARCLAW, NHRI, SACG, Parliamentarian Forums and others to step up efforts to table the draft para on child marriage to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the respective Member States and lobby for inclusion in the 19th SAARC Summit Declaration (Ref next section).

3. The SRS to plan and execute targeted advocacy in Islamabad, Pakistan as the host of the 19th SAARC Summit, in the final build up to the Summit in collaboration with the key national
partners, with the aim to advocate for inclusion of child marriage concerns/ issues in the declaration and also get visibility of the issue itself.

4. The SRS in partnership with key regional and national partners to develop and execute a comprehensive advocacy plan at the earliest aimed at mobilizing greater political convergence in getting the issue of child marriage into the 20th SAARC Summit agenda.

5. The SRS seek support to institute and operationalize an effective monitoring framework and reporting mechanism for the Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage.

**Proposed draft para for the SAARC Summit Declaration**

**Background:**

The following paragraph was drafted by the participants to the 2nd Second Regional Convening on Using Law to Promote Accountability to End Child Marriage in South Asia held in Pokhara Nepal, hosted by the Ministry of Women, Children, Social Welfare, Government of Nepal, and organized by the SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat in collaboration with the Centre for Reproductive Rights: 19 – 20 September 2016.

The Objective of the Consultation was to review progress of the implementation of the Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia and the Kathmandu Call for Action to End Child Marriage - 2014.

The participants consisted of representatives from all the 8 Member States, SAARC Secretariat, SAARCLAW, SACG, NACG, CRR and SAIEVAC Mechanisms.

The 2nd Regional Convening unanimously endorsed that having devoted significant efforts at the technical and agency level, it was now most crucial and pertinent to pitch advocacy at the highest level to create the necessary momentum for the SAARC Region to achieve the Goals and Outcomes of the Regional Action Plan and the related SDG targets committed to by all our Governments.

**The draft Para**

“We resolve to make concerted efforts to enact, enforce and uphold laws and policies aimed at eliminating the practice of child marriage as a matter of ensuring women’s and girls’ human rights and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. We agree that the age of marriage for both boys and girls shall be set equally at a minimum of 18 years, and we commit to ensure the registration of all births and marriages”.