Missing Child Alert System

Trilateral Convention
of
Stakeholders

February 26 - 28, 2013
Bangkok, Thailand

Trilateral Convention of Stakeholders on Missing Child Alert

Jointly Organised by SAIEVAC and Plan Asia Regional Office

Bangkok, Thailand, 26-28 February 2013.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Trilateral Convention of Stakeholders on Missing Child Alert System was jointly organized by the Regional Secretariat of South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) and the Plan Asia Regional Office (Plan ARO) with the following objectives:

1) To review current regional, bilateral and trilateral efforts to combat human trafficking and find a place for the Missing Child Alert (MCA) system;

2) To form a Regional Technical Advisory Group for MCA that can provide technical direction for the interventions under MCA; and

3) To develop a cooperation framework among ministries of three Governments, SAIEVAC, UN agencies and Civil Society Organizations to lead anti-trafficking activities in Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

The Convention brought together 61 participants from 11 countries, including 15 State Representatives and 12 Civil Society Organization (CSO) Representatives from the three countries of Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, as well as Representatives from regional bodies, NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies, five Plan offices, and members of the corporate and academic sectors.

The central purpose of the Convention was to introduce the MCA project within the context of the current efforts in combating human trafficking and to facilitate effective coordination between key stakeholders in the project and the fight against trafficking. To this end, the existing efforts and contexts of human trafficking from the three countries of Bangladesh, India and Nepal were presented on the first day of the Convention by the State Representatives, as was the feasibility study report on the MCA project (commissioned by Plan), Responding to Cross Border Child Trafficking in South Asia, presented by its researcher.

The second day was devoted to Group Exercises on the key issues of the convention. The participants were clustered into three groups comprising of the State, CSO and Technical groups. The groups discussed international cooperation in combating trafficking, as well as the roles of CSOs and technology experts.

The final day of the convention was focused on presentations from the previous day's consultation groups' meetings. Each group presented to the plenary a summary of their discussions, findings and key recommendations for the future the course of action for the MCA Programme.

On the third objective the convention, which pertains to the formation of a Regional Technical Advisory Group for MCA, this was highlighted as an important aspect that drew consensus in the State Consultation Group and the Convention also endorsed a timeframe for its formation and directed SAIEVAC and Plan MCA Project to undertake relevant and appropriate follow up actions to this effect.

The Convention over the course of 3 days succeeded in providing a better insight and understanding of the proposed MCA system and how it aims to both support and supplement existing efforts being made throughout the region. The participants during the deliberations underlined the need for the Member States and other collaborating organizations and partners to engage in closer cooperation and coordination at bilateral, trilateral, and regional levels to effectively address the scourge of human trafficking. The Convention also served as an effective platform for participants and the institutions they represented to establish personal contacts as well as commit to reinforcing joint efforts to take forward the recommendations of the Trilateral Convention.

DAY I

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

WELCOME REMARKS BY DR. RINCHEN CHOPHEL, DIRECTOR GENERAL, SAIEVAC & FACILITATOR AND CO-ORGANISER OF THE CONVENTION

The Director General, SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat, welcomed all the delegates to the Trilateral Convention, which included representatives from the Governments of Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, as well as representatives from the NGOs, CSOs, UN organizations, and the Facilitators for the Convention on behalf of SAIEVAC and the Plan International who are co-organizing the Convention. He expressed his deep appreciation to all the senior delegates from the Governments of Bangladesh, India, and Nepal for their presence. He said that their presence is a clear indication of the concern of the governments and their commitment to the cause of Missing Children, in finding a lasting solution to address this challenge. He welcomed the CSO and NGO partners from all three countries as well as the UN and other NGO partners for finding time to come and participate in the Convention. He also welcomed the delegates from SAARCLAW and the SACG for their continued partnership and support to SAIEVAC and also for their participation in the Convention.

He also thanked the Plan International and Mr. Mark Pierce, Regional Director of Plan ARO for this most essential cooperation and collaboration with SAIEVAC and the Stakeholders of the Region to work on the Missing Child Alert (MCA) Project. He thanked Ms. Evora Myrna, Country Director of Plan Bangladesh and Member of the MCA Steering Committee for her support to the Trilateral as well as for accepting to moderate the Convention. He expressed his confidence and hope that the Convention will not only run smoothly but also be able to realize the objectives set by charting out a strategic Plan that can be fulfilled in the next 2 years. He ended by introducing Mr. Ashish Damle, the Regional Project Manager of the MCA from Plan International who is also the Convener of the Convention.

PRESENTATION OF MCA PROJECT

Mr. Ashish Damle, the Regional Project Manager of MCA presented the background information on the Project and why such a Project was envisioned. His presentation covered its entire framework – emphasizing the need for a multilateral approach requiring coordinated efforts among different organizations. He emphasized that the MCA is not merely an addition to the existing interventions but a very strategic approach to bolster these by creating and bringing into play a regional umbrella spearheaded by the SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat. He further elaborated the process and the activities undertaken by the Project since its inception underlined the objectives, principles and the timeline for the next 2 years.

3. OPENING REMARKS

TARIQ-UL-ISLAM, SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILDREN AFFAIRS, GOVT. OF BANGLADESH

The Secretary welcomed all the participants to the Convention and expressed his hope that the meeting will result in a very productive outcome. He said that Bangladesh not only accords high priority to the subject under consideration but also has initiated number of activities to address this. He expressed his appreciation to the neighboring countries for their help in the repatriation of, and providing accommodation prior to repatriation for trafficking victims and expressed his hope that the MCA project would further reinforce this collaboration. He also thanked the SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat and Plan International for giving him and his delegation the opportunity to participate in the Convention.

ROSHNI SEN, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF WOMAN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, GOVT. OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA

The Secretary, Department of Social Welfare, Woman and Child Development, Govt. of West Bengal, India, thanked all the participants for their participation in the Trilateral Convention. She said that human trafficking is a social evil, which requires international cooperation in order to combat it effectively. She emphasized that for the participating countries in the Convention, the need for understanding and collaboration assumes even greater importance and significance. In relation to the MCA Project, she outlined the Track Child Project, a tracking system from West Bengal that had been rolled out nationally in India. She expressed her hope that the Convention will provide an opportunity for all the participants to deliberate and come up with tangible way forward direction so that we can address the whole spectrum of human trafficking in general and trafficking of children in particular effectively.

DR. KIRAN RUPAKHETEE, UNDER SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILDREN & SOCIAL WELFARE, GOVT. OF NEPAL

The Under Secretary, Ministry of Women & Children & Social Welfare, Govt. of Nepal, thanked all participants for their attendance. He presented the Nepalese government's view that human trafficking is a form of modern slavery. He mentioned the lack of scientific data on such trafficking as a major impediment in addressing this menace in his country and provided the forum an insight into the available estimates from existing studies. He also outlined the initiatives related to telephone hotlines that had been set up in most parts of the country to address the issue. He expressed his hope that the Convention will provide a platform for learning for the participating countries and organizations and also provide an opportunity to strengthen the networking and cooperation in the days to come.

MARK PIERCE, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, PLAN ARO

The Regional Director opened his remarks by welcoming all the senior dignitaries on the dias, and all other hon'ble guests and participants from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and other countries to Thailand. He stated that human trafficking is slavery fuelling a black economy run by a nexus of criminals across the globe, and explained the necessity, therefore, that it be addressed with a similarly integrated and holistic approach. He observed that such an approach was being taken here at the Convention, with representatives from key ministries in the Governments of Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, SAIEVAC, SAARCLAW, UNICEF, ILO, UNODC, IOM, Save the Children, World Vision, ECPAT, tech experts, and CSOs all in attendance. He emphasized that the MCA project is very important, and though he admitted that the project is ambitious, he affirmed that it is not unrealistic. He outlined Plan International's commitment to strengthening child protection systems across the world, commenting on the causal chain of problems linking, *inter alia,* poverty and education issues with exploitation, and explained that the MCA project's approach would address the problem of human trafficking holistically in line with Plan's philosophy of using strategic collaboration and networking. He emphasized the importance of this convention and thanked all participants for being part of a movement to create this new approach, and wished them a productive convention.

The Director General SAIEVAC thanked the Regional Director for reinforcing the understanding of the MCA project and for Plan ARO's commitment to continuing their journey with the project. He then introduced Evora Myrna, Country Director of Plan Bangladesh and member of the Steering Committee for the MCA project, who served as Convention moderator.

EVORA MYRNA, COUNTRY DIRECTOR, PLAN BANGLADESH & MCA SC MEMBER

The Country Director for Plan Bangladesh extended her warmest appreciation and gratitude to all the distinguished participants specifically the Government Representatives, UN and allied bodies, CSOs, and corporate sector to the Convention on behalf of SAIEVAC and Plan Thailand, Netherlands, Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. As a Member of the Steering Committee she understood that the MCA Project to be high level and challenging, and hoped that, in two years' time, participating members would be able to re-convene and congratulate one another on their roles in its success.
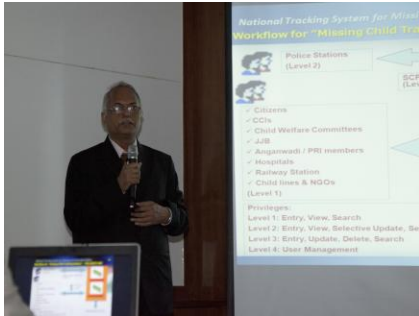
She also stated that she had the privilege of moderating the country presentations and urged all the hon'ble presenters to graciously limit their presentations to the slotted time.

4. OVERVIEW OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING MOVEMENT AND BOTTLENECKS FROM THE THREE COUNTRIES

INDIA

Ms. Roshni Sen, Secretary, Department of Woman and Child Development of the Government of West Bengal, India, and Dr. S.S. Singh, Senior Technical Director of the National Informatics Centre, Department of Woman and Child Development of the Government of West Bengal, India, presented an overview of the Indian anti-trafficking movement and the bottlenecks they had faced.

The Secretary discussed the national tracking system, developed with the National Informatic Centre in West Bengal which was rolled out nationally, that provides for individuals to enter data directly, and that the database is not limited to just those missing but includes all vulnerable children. She also mentioned about that the existing cooperation with the Government of Bangladesh in this area. She emphasized that the objective of the system is to protect the rights of children as well as the children themselves, and noted that the major stakeholders in the system are the police, crime recording bureaus, anti-trafficking units, child care institutes, urban and rural local bodies, child welfare committees/juvenile justice boards, CSOs that are trained in the relevant software, and the general population. She stressed the importance of giving real-time tracking of every child, that while successful tracking had improved tremendously over the past few years – reaching up to 34% from just 4% several years back – there still remained much room for improvement. Highlighting the challenges she said that the critical need is to ensure 100% of cases are reported and the details of those cases are entered into a central data repository while at the same time to ensure matching of missing children with those found. She said that a step which must be taken is developing the capacity to match children by physical features and, later, through biometry.

The Senior Technical Director discussed the architecture of the system portal, denoting the various levels of system access privileges and the bodies assigned those privileges. He provided an overview of system features, including its input forms, extensive recording of physical features, automatic matching between missing and found children, local language search interfaces, and alert messaging. He drew a future roadmap for technology development in the areas of developing matching technology and face recognition, implementation of the system in multiple sectors, and integration with other existing databases. He presented data on the impact of ICT interventions and success stories from the system's use, and discussed the national roll-out of the system taking place in India. He also discussed the possibilities of extending the system to other SAARC countries, creating a data sharing protocol, and creating links between police and other organizations in SAARC countries.

BANGLADESH

Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed, the Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home, Government of Bangladesh, presented an overview of the Bangladeshi anti-trafficking movement and the bottlenecks they have faced. The Additional Secretary focused on the anti-trafficking efforts since 2009 when initiatives were started to revitalise activities. He presented statistics on human trafficking worldwide, including gender and age demographics, and noted that the majority of victims are people in developing countries. He also discussed the low conviction rates in trafficking cases and presented a map of trafficking routes in South Asia. He told a personal anecdote about a visit to a trafficking victims' shelter in India. He thanked the government of India for their support in providing shelter and food for those victims but noted that the children housed in the shelter were desperate to return to Bangladesh. He also displayed pictures of human organ trade connected to human trafficking.

While proposing the development of public awareness, capacity building, and increased law enforcement he also highlighted the key challenges, including understanding the trafficking nexus, effectively implementing international and national laws and policies, and poverty reduction. He stressed that trafficked persons are victims, not violators or offenders, and recommended providing trafficking victims with legal remedies and safe shelters. He gave Bangladesh migration statistics, pointing out that traffickers fish for victims in streams of migration, and noted that the majority of trafficking victims are unskilled and semi-skilled work migrants.

The Additional Secretary also presented that the government initiatives are in three key areas of prevention measures, protection measures, and prosecution and with five core goals of prevention, protection, prosecution, the development of partnership, and the development of a monitoring and reporting system. He concluded by asserting that Bangladesh had come a long

way in its anti-trafficking measures, and stated that the government would like to reiterate its commitment and resolve in this regard to combat trafficking in persons and seeks cooperation from countries of trafficking transit and destination.

NEPAL

Dr. Kiran Rupakhetee, Under Secretary, Ministry of Women & Children & Social Welfare, Government of Nepal, presented an overview of the anti-trafficking movement in Nepal and the bottlenecks encountered. He said that while the Government of Nepal is yet to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the magnitude of the human trafficking problem but there is no doubt that it is quite substantial. The rationale and the contributing factors for this is based on poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, gender-based discrimination, violence, patriarchy, and socio cultural taboos. He stated that Nepal is a source country for human trafficking and that the trafficking from Nepal has three destinations:

a. Domestic work in entertainment and the sex industry;
b. Across the Indian border to cities for commercial sex work; and
c. Trafficking to other countries, especially to the Gulf countries for labour

He reiterated that much more needs to be done in the protection and prosecution of trafficking victims, and underlined the concern that the use of children as domestic workers had been increasing, with parents often sending their own children, and with many children working in the embroidery industry.

He further elaborated that trafficking victims are mostly uneducated women and girls from rural areas between the ages of 8-30, from indigenous tribal communities and are either illiterate or barely literate. One of the conditions contributing to trafficking according to him is due to an overly-crowded agriculture industry. Perpetrators of trafficking are frequently relatives of the victims, people who had themselves previously been trafficked, and are often also illiterate members of the same communities. He recommended as a solution the commercialization of agriculture to increase work and productivity.

The Under Secretary underscored that the role of government is the facilitation and provision of policy which INGOs and NGOs, working at the grassroots level, can make use of in their rescue and repatriation operations. He informed the status of key interventions, including national plans of action and coordination meetings between the Ministries of Home Affairs of Nepal and India. He also said that a national minimum standard has been set on services which must be provided to trafficking victims, and that telephone hotlines had been established and each district had its own fund to provide for rescue and rehabilitation.

The Under Secretary outlined the following challenges:

1. Need for reliable data,

2. Reluctance of victims to complain out of fear of reprisals and social stigma,
3. Multidimensional problems which are harder to address,
4. Insufficient services related to care that are provided,
5. Problems in the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims and protection of victims/survivors,
6. Lack of bilateral agreements with other countries including India, the attitudes of officials of administration and law enforcement,
7. Possibility that rescued victims would return to their trafficked professions due to social stigma and fear of prosecution,
8. Gap between policy and implementation, inadequate political commitment, and
9. Corrupt collusion between politicians and criminals.

He emphasized that there is a need for more focus on rehabilitation and reintegration, and suggested that a best practice for rehabilitation centres would be funded by government and run by NGOs. He also said that involving youth volunteers and achieving political commitment would improve prevention efforts. He concluded by saying that a critical mass in the anti-trafficking movement would be necessary to fight human trafficking and that interventions should be linked with larger economic and political agendas of livelihood.

DISCUSSIONS:

Following the presentations, the moderator opened the floor for discussions and questions. The report captures key areas covered.

On the query of convergence methodologies used by the different ministries of the three participating countries to counter trafficking by Mr. Digambar Narzary, Chairperson of the NEDAN Foundation, the following responses were presented:

- The Secretary of the Department of Woman and Child Development of the Government of West Bengal, India, admitted that convergence was a challenge and outlined the different roles played by the different bodies at different administrative levels, from the District Magistrate to the Development Department. She mentioned the *National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme*, under which scheme the parents of children who are likely to get trafficked are guaranteed 100 days of work per year, as part of the plan to integrate vulnerable families in an effort to empower the family as a whole, rather than the family's children alone.
- The Under Secretary, Ministry of Women & Children & Social Welfare, Government of Nepal replied that ideally there would be coordination in which every stakeholder would have a part to play, for which Nepal was not yet ready. He mentioned that at the apex level there is a national committee chaired by the Ministry of Women & Children, while at the district level magistrates attempt to bridge the gap between other stakeholders, such as police and journalists and district officers. He clarified that much discussion about such coordination happens but that its actual practice falls short.

- The Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home, Government of Bangladesh highlighted the framework and strategy development which took place in 2009, during which stakeholders, including all relevant ministries, met and decided by consensus that the Ministry of Home Affairs would be responsible for coordination, including with NGOs.

Roop Sen from Change Mantras, asked about mechanisms protecting victims' rights of participation in assessing the qualities of services they received, and about how helpful the process is after victims are returned to their families.

The Moderator taking note of the time requested one answer from a CSO and one from a government.

- Abid Gulzar, Regional Associate at World Vision in Cambodia taking the CSO slot said that they have invited reintegrated victims to dialogue in order to voice their concerns to different levels of government and speak with government face-to-face, which has resulted in policy improvement.
- The Under Secretary, Ministry of Women & Children & Social Welfare, Government of Nepal replied that the SOP of the Government of Nepal compels service providers to explore the interests of victims before providing services in the process of integration.

The Moderator summarized the inputs by stating that the methods of facilitating the assessment of services by victims differ in specifics but are institutional in character and improve through evaluation. She observed that this would lead to the topic of the following day, which would be how to make children right-holders in the MCA project.

Justice Tshering Wangchuk, President of SAARCLAW, asked if repatriation is based on legal instruments combating child trafficking and prostitution or on bilateral agreements. He also asked what states do to support victims afflicted with HIV/AIDS, as most human trafficking relates to sex, and how successful the support given is.

- The Secretary of the Department of Woman and Child Development of the Government of West Bengal, India, replied that the procedure for repatriation is clearly laid out, and that state-level and national task forces work according to protocols. She emphasised that Bangladesh and India are making an SOP for repatriation, for which the background work is already done, and which will soon be signed.
- The Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home, Government of Bangladesh added that, along with the SOP, they had already drafted an MOU. He noted that Bangladesh's task was simpler than India's due to their unitary, as opposed to state-level, government and that implementation had become more successful due to streamlined procedures, as well as discussed ministry procedures for protection and repatriation and reintegration.

The moderator noted that while there are bilateral agreements, the group as a whole has been trying to go beyond those, as well as trilateral agreements, in order to be able to provide a model for other countries in similar situations in the future.

5. GLOBAL INITIATIVES AND ACTION ON PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM EXPLOITATION AND ABDUCTION: INTRODUCTION TO ICMEC

Ms. Bindu Sharma, the Asia Pacific Policy Director of the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC), explained that ICMEC is a global missing children network managed from the US that works directly on policy and advocacy with no operations on the ground in countries. She explained that ICMEC runs 5 programs globally which include the following:

1) Missing Child Network,
2) Financial Coalition to Eradicate Commercial Child Pornography,
3) Program that provides training and assistance to law enforcement to combat child pornography, advocacy, and
4) A Congressionally funded program to promote the creation of national centres.

She gave an overview of the network, which comprises organisations in 22 member countries which collaborate and share best practices and models across countries. The Policy Director went on to explain Amber Alert, the program set up in 2003 coordinated by the US Department of Justice to send out alerts for abductions that law enforcement deems poses physical danger or a death risk to the abducted child, and discussed the methods of communication used therein. She also talked about the work reviewing the legislation and policies of a number of countries and the campaigns against international child abduction that have been conducted and stated that there have not been any international conventions held or common policies created related to missing children, and that sometimes even national or local harmonisation had been found lacking. She gave statistics for missing children that had been reported in several Western countries. She also discussed the global campaign against child pornography and its disruption of the child pornography trade's economics, as well as the technology of the child exploitation tracking system. She mentioned the Koons Family Institute which does research on the subject, a global health care initiative comprising pharmaceutical and health care providers, and mentioned that national centres had been established in five countries and that work was in progress to establish the same in two more.

The Moderator thanked the Policy Director, ICMEC, for the reminder that developed countries also have problems with child trafficking, for providing inspiration for addressing child trafficking, and for the reminder to engage the corporate sector.

6. FEASIBILITY STUDY: PROCESS, OUTCOMES, AND RECOMMENDED TECHNICAL OPTIONS

Dr. John Lannon, a Facilitator for the Convention from the University of Limerick, Ireland, presented the feasibility study, which was conducted on the MCA Project, commissioned by Plan International to research its processes and outcomes and recommend technical options thereof. He gave an overview of the study's process and methodology, covering its main findings, key recommendations, and technical options. He stated that the core principles of the project were to offer child protection and facilitate children participation in a holistic approach that factors in gender sensitivity, inclusiveness, confidentiality, transparency /integrity/ accountability, and sustainability.

The objectives of the study were to provide an overview of opportunities, constraints, and risks, identify existing alert systems, describe legal, financial, and social and political contexts, understand key actors in ICT usage and their capacities, outline the functionality and high-level architecture of MCA, indicate likely implementation and running costs, and recommend a timeframe and future actions.

Presenting the findings of the study he stated that while much work had been done at national and regional levels, much more needs to be done in recording missing and found children and in ensuring that repatriation procedures are effective and child-centred. He added that there is enough rationale for the law enforcement agencies and SAARC/SAIEVAC to play key roles in the project, and that many existing systems already exist which should be integrated into the MCA, such as Don Bosco's Home Link and the Track Child system. He emphasized the importance of participation from families and children as well as their right to access information.

The Presenter described the technical options for matching missing and found children, comprising biometrics and photographs matching, but warned that child protection issues must also be remembered. He stated that national Missing Child Systems can be managed by governments while cross-border mechanisms require sustained regional coordination from apex bodies like SAIEVAC, and that the reporting standard used throughout the various systems must be consistent to avoid interface and usage problems. He added that as past experience from other countries had shown the considerable time an MCA system may require to be fully implemented and adopted, a pilot project in a regional area should begin before a wider roll-out occurs.

The key recommendations presented by the facilitator were as follows:

1) That existing systems should be strengthened to facilitate effective responses, as the total solution is wider and more contextual than merely technical;
2) That existing technology-based mechanisms should be incorporated into, rather than replace, regional solutions;
3) That it should be recognised that effective engagement of state parties is regional, rather

than bilateral or trilateral, engagement, and that SAARC and other regional mechanisms like SAIEVAC, as well as CSOs, are necessary

4) That a range of tech solutions is required for different specific places, as local solutions are context-dependent; and
5) That on-going research is required in a number of key program areas, including on the involvement of children and child-led organisations in preventing trafficking.

He also presented three technical options for implementing the MCA system, namely:

1) A decentralised network of national MC systems,
2) A centralised cross-border child trafficking response system, and
3) A collaboration with Homelink/YaR.

Of the three options, the decentralised model was found to require effective national MC Systems that can address internal trafficking, while the centralised model was found to have a likelihood of faster development due to some countries lacking national systems and to possibly enable easier international reporting coordination.

He said that the technical detail had been cut from the presentation due to insufficient time, and that, for the same reason, the presentation was an oversimplification of study results. He also added that there is chaos and disorganization about the MC solutions that have been put in place around the region that needs to be brought together under MCA, where the technical aspect is only a small part of the problem, and that it will take years or decades to fully implement the system.

On a question raised concerning the centralised and decentralised technical options, the Presenter responded by providing greater detail about the specific requirements of each model, giving examples of how they could be implemented.

Fr. Joseph Prabu, the National Director of Don Bosco/Home Link, supplemented by commenting that the organisation had worked with vulnerable children for more than 30 years and used technology in their work for 12 years, and that the process will take time to implement. He stressed the need for a scientific approach to issues, and warned that rescued children may face labour or prostitution again. He added that the group at the convention needed to view the issues comprehensively as they were serving as the voice of vulnerable children.

On a question regarding the possibility of starting the MCA as a decentralised system then centralising it over time the Presenter answered that it would technically be possible but that such a strategy would also present problems, and that would be important to plan in advance how data would ultimately be stored.

<u>**DAY II**</u>

7. THEMATIC CONSULTATIONS IN GROUPS

Dr. Rinchen Chophel, Director General, SAIEVAC, opened the second day of the Convention by welcoming Hemant Batra, Secretary General, SAARCLAW. He added that Dr. P.M. Nair, Director General of the National Disaster Response Force & Civil Defense, would join the proceedings by video link later in the day. He introduced the three groups that would engage in the thematic consultations that had been organised, as follows:

1) Trilateral Cooperation on Action Against Trafficking: Role of State Parties;
2) Organising CSO and CBO response to cross border trafficking: Opportunities and Future Strategies; and
3) The Use of Technology and Role of Techno-experts: Way Forward.

The three Groups will discuss the topic clusters in each of the three sessions with focus on:

- Prevention and Protection,
- Setting Up Technological Breakthrough, and
- Repatriation, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration of Traffic Victims and Legal Framework.

The **first session** would address cooperation opportunities in creating and disseminating knowledge and information, while the **second session** would address cooperation opportunities in the use of technology to prevent trafficking, and the **third session** would address cooperation opportunities to set up bilaterally agreed-upon practices concerning repatriation and reintegration of victims of trafficking and the regional legal framework.

1) Trilateral Cooperation on Action Against Trafficking: Role of State Parties

The First Group consisted primarily of representatives from governing and administrative bodies.

PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

The Group considered which state actions against human trafficking require mass awareness and discussed the need for trilateral cooperation on raising such awareness. They also considered how the Child Protection Safety Net across the three countries of Bangladesh, India, and Nepal might be strengthened with consistent capacity building and access to information. The following points were raised and agreed upon by consensus:

1. In recognition of the link between migration and trafficking, wherein children, particularly

adolescents, in poverty and situations of social oppression resort to distress migration for livelihoods as well as to find social opportunities, without adequate safeguards, the group agreed to the need for trilateral cooperation between member States of India, Bangladesh and Nepal, on social communication for mass awareness generation on methods and services to avail for safe migration, and how to protect oneself from unsafe migration that may result in trafficking.

Towards this end, the Group recommended the development, production and use of information, education and communication materials for behaviour change communication that is target-group specific and caters to their needs for better information in order to make informed choices and decisions about cross-border mobility and migration.

2. In recognition of the existing national child protection systems in India, Bangladesh and Nepal, *the Group recommended that member States strengthen those domestic systems, wherein each of the States would benefit from learning from each other about system effectiveness through impact research.*

3. In recognition of the phenomena of child trafficking being a human rights issue as much as a penal issue, *the Group agreed that interventions for the prevention of child trafficking and protection of children at risk require welfare considerations to respond to social and economic crisis, through vulnerability mapping and targeted interventions.* The group recognised the potential of learning about the effectiveness of such strategies taken in each country through sharing impact assessments of those actions with other member States. Further, in accordance with human rights instruments and its protocols, *the Group recommended that accountability systems be strengthened through treaty body mechanisms wherein SAIEVAC could well serve as the nodal body.*

4. In view of the mandates and importance of coordination and convergence between ministries and departments at different levels of governments, wherein child trafficking must be concurrently addressed by Ministries with portfolios on women and children, labour and home affairs, *the Group proposed that SAIEVAC explore mechanisms to promote increased communication between ministries and departments transversally.*

5. In recognition of the current gaps in addressing demand for trafficked victims, the Group agreed on the potential of sharing information on trafficking networks and its allies and conduits, and emphasized the need for regional cooperation on prosecution. *The Group recommended operations be modelled after regional task forces on information flows on drug traffickers and offenders involved in trans-national terrorism (namely, SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) and SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (SDOMD), and a separate task force be created.*

6. In recognition of the current gaps in alignment between international law and domestic law in member States and the consequent challenges in harmonisation of systems between the trafficking source and destination countries in question, the Group viewed that there lies potential in using landmark judgments by courts of law in significant cases to influence the judiciaries of other countries to set precedence. *The Group recommended that SAIEVAC play a facilitating role to support this need of information sharing.*

7. In recognition of the significance of the border and potential in effective border control mechanisms and the current challenges therein, *the Group recommended exploration of the link between people smuggling and human trafficking, and the impact of corruption therein, and response with appropriate measures to address transnational trafficking in persons, especially children and young people.*

8. In recognition of the significant resources that have already been developed that have a strong potential in strengthening capacities of service providers and stakeholders, *the Group recommended that such resources be identified and widely disseminated through trainings, capacity-building efforts and sensitisation.*

9. In recognition of the need for more sustainable solutions to child trafficking, *the Group recommended that prevention be focused on as a long term solution and for efforts to be long-term and strategic.*

10. In keeping with the 'Principle of Child Participation' that is an obligation by Member States, all of whom are signatories to the Convention on the Rights of The Child, *the Group reinforced the need for investment towards promoting and supporting efforts in child participation and child protection initiatives to help children strengthen their agency in resisting abuse, violence and exploitation.*

SETTING UP OF TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGH

The Group discussed the feasibility of the model options available in the implementation of the MCA system as well as the challenges they perceived in implementation. They considered possible ways of engaging state parties in setting up a technologically enabled alert system that can connect state law enforcement agencies with real-time information on potential or risky movements across borders, and discussed bottlenecks and counter strategies and opportunities.

The Group reached consensus on the following points:

1. To the task of identifying a feasible technological solution for better flow of information and knowledge, the *Group recognised the need for back-end work and study by a technical group that could advise and educate Member States on best possible solutions for a common regional information system.*

2. In recognition of the opportunity to use the proposed MOU between India and Bangladesh, and the task forces therein, *the Group saw potential in developing a micro-system to be used by task forces to share real-time information on missing and trafficked children for early interception and rescue.*

3. In recognition of the existing challenges in manpower and resources for operationalization and maintenance of any system, *the Group recommended that SAIEVAC facilitate sharing between member States to strengthen existing child protection systems.*

4. The Group recognised the scope of using directives and judgments from courts of law in respective Member States to inspire setting up and operationalising child-tracking technological systems.

5. In recognition of other practices wherein there are official dialogue spaces between the District Magistrates (India), and Deputy Commissioners or Chief District Officer (Bangladesh and Nepal), *the Group recommended that the DM/DC dialogues include discussions about trafficking as part of their core agenda, and that decisions taken during those dialogues be uploaded to appropriate portals, such as 'Trackchild 1.0'.*

REPATRIATION, REHABILITATION, AND REINTEGRATION OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS & LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Group discussed existing SOP and MOU processes and bottlenecks as well as identified specific requirements for accomplishing bilateral agreement, including examining the roles of SAARC and SAIEVAC. They considered the role that NGOs play in the process of repatriation, rehabilitation, and reintegration, as well as the role that victims of child trafficking play in decision-making. They also discussed issues that trafficking survivors face post-reunification and ultimately recommended that an advisory group be formed from members of the three countries in order to take quick action on the decisions and agreements made during the convention.

Dr. P.M. Nair, Director General, National Disaster Response Force & Civil Defence (NDRF & CD), Ministry of Home Affairs, India, had been scheduled to join the group via video-link but the poor Internet quality disrupted his connection and he was unable to participate.

The following points were raised and agreed upon by consensus:

1. In recognition of delays in repatriation of survivors of trafficking, and unintended but consequent detention of survivors in shelter homes for inordinate periods of time, while there are the following instruments as key in standardizing and streamlining repatriation instruments: (a) the regional SOP on trafficking at the SAARC level, (b) the draft bilateral MOU between India and Bangladesh and (c) the in-draft MOU between India and Nepal and Member States have clearly defined processes on repatriation of victims, *the Group recommended an audit of this repatriation process to identify bottlenecks that currently cause significant delays so as to take corrective measures and improve the process, including reviewing national, bilateral and regional SOPs and MOUs in order to explore potential benefits of enforcement or implementation of protocols.* The group recognised that, ultimately, all instruments are obligated to act in the best interests of the child/victim.

2. In recognition of the role that NGOs play as service providers in rescue, repatriation, reunification and reintegration of victims of child trafficking, *the Group acknowledged the need to ensure financial sustainability of such service providers, and felt that Member States must consider bringing such services under welfare support*.

3. In recognition of the lack of research and audit on experiences of survivors' post-family reunification, the Group expressed concern about the survivors' protection and safety in the

face of stigmatisation, discrimination and shaming, and threats and intimidation from traffickers, and urged that such audits be commissioned to appraise of the impact of all rehabilitation measures. The Group recognised that communication technology would be very useful in enabling flow of information in the case management process so as to be able to create a transparent process and inform all service providers and stakeholders in the case management system on the impact of rehabilitation and the gaps therein.

4. In recognition of the role of community-based organisations and NGOs on both sides of the border, *the Group recommended that cross-border networking between NGOs and service providers be encouraged, facilitated and developed to build closer links between NGOs and Governments to create and reinforce greater convergence*.

5. In recognition of the urgency of the concerns and bottlenecks, *the Group recommended that a facilitating group, like an Advisory Group of members from the three countries, subject to later endorsement from Governments of the Member States, be formed wherein membership comprises of nodal officers from relevant ministries, NGOs and CSOs who will be entrusted with the responsibility to follow through the recommendations and action points, and communicate and reconvene periodically, wherein CSOs play the role of researchers to understand effectiveness and challenges in systems, policies and practices. The Group recommended that the size of the 'Advisory Group' be around 15 members, including NGO and CSO members from each country, and recommended that this Group should meet within three months of the current convention date.*

2) Organising CSO and CBO Response to Cross-border Trafficking: Opportunities and Future Strategies

The second consultation group consisted primarily of representatives from CSOs and CBOs.

PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

The group considered questions of collective efforts and discussed the different forms that exist. They also discussed the issue of child-led approaches to the prevention of and protection against trafficking, child participation in the MCA project, and accessibility of information to children. The issues discussed and outcomes reached were as follows:

The discussions were undertaken taking into consideration the following factors:

- Whether collective efforts are driven by participation as individuals or in groups;

- How to strengthen capacity of CSOs and CBOs to better address causes of child trafficking, and learning opportunities for CSO/CBOs and for children in MCA;

- Participation/involvement of the children/youth in planning and decision-making processes and in doing advocacy work with policy makers and activists, and how the scope of child/youth participation may be defined;

- How child/youth participation can be applied in a meaningful way in MCA efforts (i.e. participation of children for protection of children, and child-led participation);

- Ways in which MCA can create space for child/youth participation, in specific contexts and based on the capacity of children;

- Creating and disseminating child-friendly information

The Group after extensive discussions agreed that:

- *The MCA Project must invest dedicated efforts to develop/promote synergy between child participation and child protection;*

- *Given that information is key to solving child trafficking, the information received from victims directly should be made available and analysed;*

- *A culture of empowerment is to be built into the response mechanism; and*

- *A mapping of CSO/CBOs and child led organizations working on child trafficking should be undertaken.*

SETTING UP OF TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGH

The Group was introduced to the MCA Project and its key stakeholders as well as the project's service delivery system. The meeting considered the role of CSOs in creating awareness and adopting technological developments as well as the challenges faced in adopting new technology. They discussed the opportunities of making use of social media, as well as more traditional media (radio, print journalism, etc).

The Group also had a Skype conference with Ms. Caroline Barebwoha from Uganda at a UNICEF-supported NGO that works with youth who use SMS technology as a form of protection.

After discussing at great length the technology specific to the MCA project it was suggested that transit home and long-range wireless phones could be set up at border areas.

The Group also recommended the following:

- *Mobilization of media, e.g FM radio, electronic, print and youth journalism etc.;*
- *MCA can adopt long range wireless and CCTV in the border areas;*
- *Explore the possibility of creating a separate child-friendly technology system for trafficked children; and*

- *To further explore enhancing coordination with Governments for SOP Partnership with Local CSO*

3) **The Use of Technology and Role of Techno-experts: Way Forward**

The third Group consisted primarily of members of the technology community and included representatives from the Corporate, State, and NGO sectors.

PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

The Group discussed the need to look at the root causes of trafficking and the current technological trends in communities across the three countries, comprising access to television, radio, internet, and mobile phones. They considered the need for ICT infrastructure and the role of the Government in providing it. The discussions also covered content development and delivery in the context of child trafficking prevention and protection, and the role of Government in content roll-out and corporate and media partners in content delivery.

SETTING UP OF TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGH

The group considered the models that had been proposed for the MCA System and expressed a preference for the decentralised model. They discussed the need for sharing data between national child trafficking systems and providing cross-border authorities with search and view options in national systems.

The Group recommended that MCA focus on missing and "found but untraced" children, and also discussed the importance, as well as limitations, of biometrics, and the potential to collect data in schools on all children who are at risk.

REPATRIATION, REHABILITATION, AND REINTEGRATION OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS & LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Group discussed how repatriation ought to be carried out in ways that best serve the child's interests and discussed the practical implications of acknowledging a child's identity and establishing their rights. They considered the potential role of technology systems in advocacy work and the value of aggregate data from the MCA System. They discussed data storage and legal issues, as well as child protection issues, concerning data protection, freedom of information, and the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) in India. They brainstormed the development of use case scenarios for the MCA pilot and discussed the need for a gap analysis between existing systems (such as Track Child) and what is required - emphasizing the need for governments to commit to exchanging data - and discussed the roadmap for the 2 year MCA pilot program.

The Group after prolonged deliberations recommended that:

- *The MCA Project must cultivate close coordination and linkages with Governments because of their central and crucial role the State plays in MCA at different levels;*
- *The Project consider schools-based strategy in relation to prevention and protection, as well as collection of biometric data on all children who are at risk;*
- *The Preferred MCA technical solution is a decentralised model;*
- *The Project Focus on "missing" and "found but untraced" children; and*
- *The Project develop a high-level roadmap for MCA pilot (2 years)*

DAY III

8. GROUP PRESENTATIONS AND COLLECTIVE DECISIONS ON TWO YEARS' STRATEGY

Dr. Rinchen Chophel, Director General, SAIEVAC, observed that the deliberations on the 2nd Day had generated significant convergence on the issues pertaining to the MCA and had also paved the way for many productive agreements and recommendations. He announced that the results from that day's thematic consultations would be presented and hopefully the presentations will also address the many questions concerning the feasibility study report. He also reminded participants that the feasibility study was not final and was unpublished, and requested that any feedback can still be considered before its publication. He suggested that if any of the participants have suggestions and feedback it should be done so by 15 March beyond which the MCA Project will go ahead and finalize the Report.

Before the Presentations were made, opportunity was taken by Mr. Raša Sekulović, Regional Adviser on Child Rights and Protection, Plan ARO, to promote a collection of child-friendly resources on child trafficking created by Plan. He also informed the participants that they can have access to the copies at the Convention desk outside the hall.

GROUP PRESENTATIONS:

Thematic group 1: Trilateral cooperation on action against Trafficking: role of state parties

Mr. Roop Sen, on behalf of the Group read out the statements that the group had reached consensus on from the group's first session, entitled "Prevention and Protection" (Refer Annexes).

Concerning the second session, entitled "Setting up Technological Breakthrough", Secretary Roshni Sen, Secretary, Department of Woman and Child Development, Govt of West Bengal, India, informed participants that the "Trilateral Cooperation" consultation group had decided that technical decisions could not be arrived to before further recommendations from the

technical group were reviewed. She then read the statements that the Group had agreed to by consensus from the second and third sessions (Ref Annexures).

The discussions after the Presentation took note of the following:

- *More emphasis on prevention and on child involvement as well as for the inclusion of relevant Ministries in diplomatic processes;*
- *Called for greater investment into SAIEVAC due to increased expectations, and it was observed that, having become an Apex Body of SAARC, SAIEVAC now qualified for more funding;*
- *Questions were asked about the SAARC task forces, STOMD (SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk) and SDOMD (SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk), and the real-time nature of their operations was emphasised;*
- *The existing MOU's, which are still pending signature, should have a timeframe attached to them;*
- *That technology must be made available at the grassroots level, and observed that since Nepal and Bangladesh lag behind India in this regard, sharing knowledge and resources in this regard would be very helpful.*

Thematic group 2: organizing CSO and CBO response to cross- Border trafficking: opportunities and Future strategies

Members of the Group were introduced and a summary presentation of the Group's discussions from all three sessions was presented.

The presentation touched on the source and destination areas of trafficking in India. West Bengal was identified as a transit area due to its location. Other transit areas in India were identified, and Gulf countries were mentioned as destination countries. The presentation also shared available information concerning the Bangladesh-India border and trafficking across the immigration checkpoints. The Group stated that traffickers in Bangladesh use lucrative job offers in India to lure their victims, the majority of whom are unaware about trafficking.

The group also deliberated on the issues of child participation and good practices for child participation from other countries, providing some examples. They discussed CSO and CLO (Child Labor Organization) efforts to address human trafficking and generate mass awareness on unsafe movement, explored technology options to prevent trafficking (both existing and future possibilities), and considered which different social bodies should be sensitized to the issues. They explored current challenges in repatriation, noting the differences in the situations for Bangladesh and Nepal. Other challenges, including the lack of legal frameworks and existing law enforcement, were discussed.

The discussions following the presentation covered the following areas:

- The problems that occur when trafficking victims are themselves prosecuted;
- That trafficking victims are now protected from such prosecution under Indian law;

- Cases of Indian girls who go to Nepal to perform sex work and the issue of forced repatriation;
- That trafficking does not only happen from Nepal and Bangladesh to India and that "child migration" also happens within India (which lacks systematic data), and Indian children are also trafficked to Nepal;
- The trafficking of children to Middle Eastern countries and the use by trafficking networks of trafficked children to smuggle drugs.

Following this, a trafficking survivor's story was then briefly shared.

Thematic group 3: the use of technology and role of techno-experts: way forward

The presenter after introducing the Group members, made a brief mention of the role of techno experts and the involvement of corporate institutions. The presentation elaborated specifically concerning the use of technology, entitled "Setting up Technological Breakthrough".

The discussions touched on the topics of prevention and protection, and it was observed that good service delivery systems do exist in all the three countries. It was also noted that States should have primary responsibility in implementing technical solutions, and that the panchayats and schools could play important roles as data entry points. Involvement of Regional Bodies (such as SAARC) was regarded as critical.

Discussing the existing software solutions including Track Child, Homelink and D Net in Bangladesh, it was noted that none of the existing systems were comprehensive enough. The "unique ID" system of India was presented as a fourth option. It was mentioned that, of the model options that were presented in the feasibility study, the 'Decentralized Option' seemed most suitable for use. In the area of data entry, two types of data entry were emphasized – one pertaining to Missing Children and the other, which concerned children who had been found but were untraced. A discussion of the advantages that biometric identification parameters held over the use of changing names and addresses followed. *The meeting recommended the digitalization of birth registration in all three countries, along with the use of biometrics by schools and panchayats linked to the system.*

Concerning the 'Way Forward', it was recommended that:

1) A minimum standard should be established and a gap analysis be performed, within a timeframe, on the minimum standard and existing systems; and
2) Coordination with governments for MOUs and data and information sharing within a timeframe.

A question was raised about how privacy and the confidentiality of information could be ensured, and another about whether the system would have an inbuilt mechanism to screen false information -- noting that child hotlines receive false submissions regularly. Dr. Lannon replied that, in the MCA system, information is screened before action is taken, screening out false alarms before alerts are sent. Another question was raised about the access traffickers

would have to the portal, to which Dr. Lannon replied that levels of access differed and that they would be graded and authenticated.

On the Dr. Feasibility Study Report, Dr. Lannon was asked about the different features specific to software used by other organizations and agencies that work with street children and trafficked children, and whether their software would be relevant to the MCA's needs. In his reply, Dr. Lannon emphasized the need to narrow in on areas to address clearly in order to make the project workable.

The Representative from Homelink explained that the Homelink Network comprises agencies other than Don Bosco and included those whose work did not focus on street children. Another audience member commented that mandatory reporting would be required to make the project successful. Dr. Lannon replied that coordination would be key to MCA and that the aim would be to use existing possible coordination as well as to locate and fill potential coordination gaps. The Regional Project Manager for MCA, replied that the feasibility study did cover the use of technological solutions in coordination, noting that while existing mechanisms for coordination already exist, there would be investigation into whether new mechanisms are required. Dr. Lannon added that MCA will bind together different mechanisms at state and regional levels, and that coordinating ground level stakeholders might require the addition of new infrastructure or training, which has already been addressed a little in India. He explained that coordination would need to take place at different scales.

It was then asked if MCA would play a role in rehabilitation and repatriation. Dr. Lannon replied that robust regional systems would need to be implemented first and that from a technological point of view it would be possible but that other things would also need to be considered, for which domain experts would be helpful. Another comment was put forward, suggesting that MCA should strengthen the existing systems that are at different stages of development and should be able to be integrated with and support the different government capacities in all countries.

9. CONCLUSION

Dr. Rinchen Chophel, Director General, SAIEVAC, said that in the last three days substantive pointers and recommendations have been tabled for the MCA Project and all partners to undertake in the next the immediate future as well as within the Project life span. He reminded the group that one of immediate action required was to form an 'Advisory Group', which will meet within the timeframe of three months. He reinforced that SAIEVAC and the MCA Project will need to operationalize this in consultation with the three member states, and he urged the Secretaries from Nepal, Bangladesh and the Secretary from West Bengal (in consultation with the Centre) would assist in putting together a 12-15 member group to review Convention results and take them forward. The Director General also invited one of the Member States to kindly come forward with the offer to host the Advisory Group Meeting. He affirmed that the outcomes of the Trilateral Convention will be put together in a clear and precise report reflecting the sentiments and views that were presented so that participants do not lose the essence of the decisions they had taken.

10. CLOSING REMARKS & CEREMONY

TARIQ-UL-ISLAM, SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILDREN AFFAIRS, GOVT. OF BANGLADESH

The Secretary, Ministry of Women & Children Affairs, Govt. of Bangladesh, thanked his colleagues from all three countries and all participants of the convention. He commented on the successful nature of the interactions at the convention and remarked that he had met colleagues from all three countries whom he had not met before. He observed that they had all learnt a lot and affirmed that Bangladesh would cooperate to combat human trafficking. He gave especial thanks to SAIEVAC, Plan, and the Thai government.

ROSHNI SEN, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF WOMAN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, GOVT OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA

The Secretary, Department of Social Welfare, Woman and Child Development, Govt. of West Bengal, India, thanked her colleagues and Convention participants and remarked that the Convention had been very fruitful. She noted that the Convention was the first of its kind and that there remained much work to be done. She emphasized that though the Convention's focus was on developing an alert system, the problem was at root a human, and not a technological issue, and reminded all of the importance of applying thought and compassion, and of sharing resources and working united in a regional system. She affirmed that she would take up the matter with the Central Government of India.

Mr. DINESH ADHIKARI, SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILDREN & SOCIAL WELFARE, GOVT. OF NEPAL

The Secretary, Ministry of Women & Children & Social Welfare, Govt. of Nepal, remarked that he was very happy with the way the Convention was conducted and the type of outcomes and recommendations arrived at. He also expressed his appreciation to SAIEVAC and Plan for organizing such an important Convention and also providing the opportunity to him and his delegation. He assured of his full commitment to take forward the outcome of the Trilateral Convention.

MARK PIERCE, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, PLAN ARO

The Regional Director of Plan ARO thanked everyone for their active participation. He spoke about the free movement of labour within ASEAN and the inevitable and unprecedented mass migrations that would follow due to economic reasons and climate change. He observed that such mass migration would make many children and youth vulnerable to being trafficked, and emphasized the critical nature of the MCA project in light of that. He noted that SAIEVAC had brought together all the participants in order to find solutions in a very important meeting, and reminded participants of the need for international cooperation required to address these regional and global issues. He also stated that the States would require support from other parties, including the NGO community and private sector, and that the convention was an

opportunity to explore such collaboration. He thanked all participants for their attendance at the forum and looked forward to hosting more in future.

DR. RINCHEN CHOPHEL, DIRECTOR GENERAL, SAIEVAC

Dr. Rinchen Chophel, Director General, SAIEVAC, thanked all Convention participants and hotel management, as well as Plan and representatives from all countries. He expressed special thanks to the Secretary General of SAARCLAW noting that the topics discussed would go to the SAARCLAW Meeting in May and that their support would be needed. He then closed the Convention by wishing all a safe journey home.

ANNEXURES

Trilateral Convention of Stakeholders on Missing Child Alert System
Jointly Organised by SAIEVAC and Plan Asia Regional Office
Bangkok, Thailand, 26-28 February 2013.
Background Note

1. Introduction

The Trilateral Convention of Stakeholders on Missing Child Alert System is jointly organized by SAIEVAC and Plan Asia Regional Office. This background paper explains context, the project and the objectives of the Convention.

2. The issue

Trafficking in children is considered a contemporary form of slavery and is a gross violation of children's basic human rights. Although the issue of trafficking has received considerable attention in recent years, in some cases to the detriment of a more comprehensive assessment of systemic child protection approaches, reliable quantitative and qualitative data and accurate information about the dynamics of child trafficking in South Asia remains scarce. This is partly due to the lack of mechanisms for systematic, harmonized and disaggregated data collection, analysis and dissemination.

Children are trafficked in South Asia for a wide range of purposes, including prostitution and sexual exploitation forced marriage, domestic work, agricultural labour, construction work, the carpet and garment industries, and other work sites in the formal and informal economy. Forced begging, camel jockeying, the adoption trade and organ harvesting are other causes for child trafficking. Trafficking in this region is largely gender and age specific, particularly affecting vulnerable women and children. Child trafficking victims are extremely vulnerable to violence and abuse, often have little access to education and may be conditioned to believe they have no alternative life options. They also face a wide range of health risks, including the threat of becoming infected with HIV.

It is evident that human trafficking is closely linked with international nexus of organized crime. It is predominantly an underground activity and proliferates where access to information is low, monitoring by law enforcement agencies is weak and most importantly where people are extremely vulnerable to exploitation or life hazard due to poverty, natural calamities, war, and lack of access to education and health services.

A range of actors, including government, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, have initiated anti-trafficking initiatives in South Asia, utilizing a variety of approaches and methodologies. The basic components of most anti-trafficking programmes include: prevention, protection (including victim identification, rehabilitation and reintegration) and empowerment and participation. Some are established within the context of national plans of action, while others are being implemented outside this framework.

Despite the existence of national and regional coordination mechanisms, effective coordination between stakeholders involved in efforts to combat child trafficking remains a challenge. Limited resources and lack of cooperation, often compounded by limited understanding of the situation at both the conceptual and ground level have presented

formidable constraints to effective action. Disorganized response to a crime of organized nature such as human trafficking is an ironic situation.

3. The project

'Missing Child Alert' is a three country project that **aims to be a technologically equipped, institutionalized regional system of alert that can prevent, rescue and repatriate children/ youth, who are vulnerable to or/and victim of cross border trafficking.**

The project is supported by Post Code Lotetrji, The Netherlands and anchored by Plan Asia regional office jointly with country offices of Plan in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. The project is divided into three phases…

<u>**The Pilot Phase (Jan. 2012 – Dec. 2014):**</u>

During this phase, Plan aims to assess the current child protection and anti-child trafficking initiatives and roles and responsibilities of multilateral stakeholders. Within the given social, legal, political and economic environment, Plan and its partners will work toward creating a conducive environment for a multi stakeholder and long term initiative to develop a sustainable and child friendly Missing Child Alert system.

<u>**The Rollout Phase (Jan 2015 – Dec. 2016):**</u>

During this phase, the Missing Child Alert system will be adjusted based on findings from a thorough evaluation that will be carried out during the final quarter of 2014. The MCA system will then be established and tested in specific project areas for a two year period.

<u>**The Scaling up Phase (Jan 2017 onwards):**</u>

This phase aims at institutionalisation and sustainability of the Missing Child Alert system. It is expected that State parties and regional mechanisms, such as SAIEVAC, lead the process with secured resources.

The project objectives during the pilot phase (Jan. 2012 – Dec. 2014) correspond to four result areas as mentioned below:

<u>**Result area I: Prevention and protection of children from being trafficked at source areas**
      and during transit:</u>

a. Communities that include children, parents, local self governance structures and other stakeholders have increased knowledge on the issue of trafficking and potential alert system.

<u>**Result area II: Establishment and institutionalisation of technologically enhanced alert system**</u>

b. To establish a formal agreement between three State parties, SAARC/ SAIEVAC, UN organisations, INGOs and civil society organisations and thereby ensure commitment on specifications of the technical design for a cross border system in Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

<u>**Result area III: Repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of cross border child trafficking**</u>

c. To develop a network of child protection service providers to provide specialised care for the

victims of trafficking in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. This includes health, trauma healing, legal aid and psychological support.

Result area IV: Advocacy to strengthen regional instruments and policies to ensure justice

d. To strengthen the regional convention on protection of children from trafficking and sale;

e. To develop detailed desk research on current trends in cross border trafficking and State party reporting to the UNCRC;

f. SAIEVAC has an enhanced capacity to steer the process of legal intervention on cross-border trafficking.

4. Background to the Regional Convention of Stakeholders

Plan Asia Regional Office commissioned a feasibility study for the proposed MCA system in June 2011. The Feasibility Study was led by the team of experts from the Leeds Metropolitan University (LMU) of UK and their regional partners from India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

The study reinforced the consultative multilateral approach of the intervention and proposed following broad recommendations:

a. It is imperative to strengthen the existing local child protection system such as Integrated Child Protection Scheme of India.

b. It is recommended that existing technical mechanisms must be strengthened instead of experimenting a new one.

c. It is a basket of various technical solutions that can facilitate country specific requirements to be able to feed into the larger MCA system.

d. It is must to ensure effective engagement of concerned state parties, SAIEVAC, other SAARC mechanism, Civil Society organisations and UN to improve its chances of sustainability

The regional convention of Stakeholders is jointly organised by SAIEVAC and Plan ARO to share the outcomes of the feasibility study. The convention aims at building collective consensus on the recommendations made by the feasibility study and develop broad strategies/ activities for 2013-14 to realise MCA project objectives. In brief; following are the specific objectives for the tri-lateral convention...

1. To review the current regional, bi-lateral and tri-lateral efforts to combat human trafficking and find place for MCA

2. To form a Regional Technical Advisory Group for MCA that can provide technical directions to the interventions under MCA.

3. To develop a cooperation framework among ministries of three Governments, SAIEVAC, UN agencies and Civil Society organisations to lead anti-trafficking activities in three countries.

The Tri-lateral convention is organised at Bangkok from 26-28 February 2013. Following participant organisations are invited for the Convention...

A. Government

1. Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), GoI
2. Ministry of Home (MoH), GoI
3. National Informatics Centre , GoI
4. Ministry of External Affairs, GoI
5. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)
6. Child Track, Govt. of West Bengal
7. Ministry of Home/ Women and Child Development, Govt. of UP
8. Ministry of Women and Child Development Government of Bihar
9. Ministry Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), Bangladesh
10. Ministry of Information Technology, Bangladesh
11. Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Bangladesh
12. Ministry of External Affairs, Bangladesh
13. Ministry of Home Affairs, Nepal
14. Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Nepal
15. Ministry of External, UN affairs, Nepal
16. Ministry of Information and Technology, Nepal
17. SAARC law
18. SAIEVAC

B. UN organisation

19. UNICEF ROSA
20. UNHCR
21. UNODC
22. IOM

C. Civil Society organisations

23. SANLAP, India
24. Change Mantras (SANJOG), India
25. Shakti Vahini, India
26. Bidhanchandra Institute of Social Work, India
27. BNWLA, Bangladesh
28. Aparajiyo, Bangladesh
29. Dhaka Asciana Mission, Bangladesh
30. Rights Jassore, Bangladesh

31. Save the Children Regional Office, Thailand

32. ECPAT, Thailand

33. Terre Des Hommes

34. South Asia Coordination Group (SACG) Chair from ILO/ Co-Chair World Vision

35. CIWIN, Nepal

36. Shakti-Samuha, Nepal

37. Maiti-Nepal

38. ATSAC

D. Corporate

39. Microsoft

40. TCS

41. Infosys

42. ADP

Trilateral Convention of Stakeholders on Missing Child Alert System

Jointly Organised by SAIEVAC and Plan Asia Regional Office

Bangkok, Thailand, 26-28 February 2013.

Agenda

Day I : **Inauguration Context Setting**

26 February 2013, Tuesday

08:30 – 09:30 :	**Registration**	
09:30 – 10:00 :	**Welcome and Opening Ceremony**	
10:00 – 10:30 :	**Tea**	
10:30 – 11:00 :	**Cross Border trafficking in Three Countries: A regional Perspective**	
11:00 – 11:20 :	**Overview of Anti trafficking movement and bottlenecks** Country specific Presentations: India	
11:20 – 11:40	**Overview of Anti trafficking movement and bottlenecks** Country specific Presentations: Bangladesh	
11:40 – 12:00 :	**Overview of Anti trafficking movement and bottlenecks** Country specific Presentations: Nepal	
12:00 – 12:20 :	**The Uniform Toll Free Helpline: Relevance and Current Update**	
12:30 – 13:30 :	**Lunch**	
13:30 – 14:30 :	**Feasibility Study: Process, Outcomes and Recommended technical options**	
14:30 – 15:00 :	**The Missing Child Alert project: Background and Updates**	
15:00 – 15:30 :	**Tea**	
15:30 – 16:00 :	**Guidelines to the thematic consultations to be organized on the following day**	
16:00 – 17:00	**'The Return': A film by Sanjog (Group Development) India** The journey of four survivors of cross border trafficking.	

Day II   : Thematic Consultations in Groups

27 February 2013, Wednesday

		Tri-lateral diplomacy on Anti-trafficking	Role of Civil Society and Youth involvement	Role of Techno experts and corporate involvement
09:00 – 10:30	:	Prevention and Protection		
10:30 – 11:00	:	Tea		
11:00 – 12:30	:	Setting up of Technological Breakthrough		
12:30 – 13:30	:	Lunch		
13:30 – 15:00	:	Repatriation, Rehabilitation and reintegration of Traffic Victims		
15:00 – 15:30	:	Tea		
15:30 – 17:00	:	Effective National and Regional Legal Framework		

Day III   : Conclusions and Collective Decisions

28 February 2013, Thursday

09:00 – 10:00	:	**Group Presentations and Collective Decisions on two years' strategy** **Tri-Lateral Diplomacy on Anti-Trafficking activities and State Commitments**
10:00 – 11:00	:	**Group Presentations and Collective Decisions on two years' strategy** Role of Law enforcement agencies
11:00 – 11:30	:	**Tea**
11:30 – 12:30	:	**Group Presentations and Collective Decisions on two years' strategy** Role of Civil Society and Youth/ Child
12:30 – 13:30	:	**Lunch**
13:30 – 14:30	:	**Group Presentations and Collective Decisions on two years' strategy** Role of Techno-experts and Corporate fraternity
14:30 – 15:30	:	**Summing up & Closing Ceremony**
15:30 – 16:00	:	**Tea**
16:00 – 18:00	:	**Reimbursements and other informal business meetings**

List of participants

#		Name	Designation	Office Address	Representation	Thematic Area	Country
1	Mr.	Abid Gulzar	Regional Asociate: Director Advocacy	World Vision	INGO	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	Cambodia
2	Ms.	Achara Bubpapornkul	Regional Administration	Plan ARO	INGO	NA	Thailand
3	Mr.	Ananya Raihan	Executive Director	D.Net	CORPORATE	Technology	Bangladesh
4	Ms.	Anjana Shakya	Chairperson	Himrights Nepal	CSO	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	Nepal
5	Ms.	Antonella Bernardini	CP Advisor	World Vision	INGO	Trilatral Diplomacy	Philippines
6	Mr.	Ashish Damle	Regional Proj Manager: MCA	Plan Bangladesh	PLAN	NA	Bangladesh
7	Ms.	Aude Diepenhorst	Project Officer	Plan Netherlands	PLAN	Trilatral Diplomacy	The Netherlands
8	Ms.	Bindu Sharma	Asia Pecific Policy Director	ICMEC	INGO	Technology	Singapore
9	Mr.	Binoy Krishna Mallik	Exeutive Director	Rights Jassore	CSO	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	Bangladesh
10	Mr.	David Bloomer	Regional Child Protection Advisor	Save the Children	INGO	Trilatral Diplomacy	Singapore
11	Mr.	Digambar Narzary	Chairperson	Nedan Foundation	CSO	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	India
12	Mr.	Dinesh Hari Adhikari	Secretary,	Ministry of Women and Children Social welfare Government of Nepal	GOVT	Trilatral Diplomacy	Nepal
13	Mr.	Dr. John Lennon	Facilitator	Facilitator	FACILITATOR	Technology	Ireland
14	Mr.	Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed	Additional Secretary	Ministry of Home, Government of Bangladesh	GOVT	Trilatral Diplomacy	Bangladesh
15	Mr.	Dr. Kiran Rupakhetee	Under Secretary	Ministry of Women & Children & social Welfare	GOVT	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	Nepal
16	Mr.	Dr. Md. Aminul Islam	Deputy Secretary	MoWCA	GOVT	Trilatral Diplomacy	Bangladesh
17	Mr.	Dr. S.S.Singh	Sr. Technical Director	National Informatic Center, MoWCD	GOVT	Technology	India
18	Ms.	Evora Myrna	Country Director	Plan Bangladesh	PLAN	NA	Bangladesh
19	Mr.	Fr. Joseph Prabu	National Director	Don Bosco/ Home Link	CSO	Technology	India
20	Mr.	Hemant Batra	Secretary General	SAARC Law	SAARC	Trilatral Diplomacy	India
21	Mr.	Iqbal Ahmed	Director SAARC	Ministry of Foreign	GOVT	Trilatral	Bangladesh

				Affairs, Bangladesh		Diplomacy	
22	Ms.	Jesmin Akhter	Sr. Assist. Secretary	Local Govt. Division M/O of Local Govt and Cooperatives	GOVT	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	Bangladesh
23	Mr.	Joydev Majumdar	Director	Jayprakash Institute of Social Change	ACADEMIC	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	India
24	Ms.	Junita Upadhyay	Director Programmes	ECPAT	NETWORK	Technology	Thailand
25	Mr.	Justice Tshering Wangchuk	President	SAARC LAW	SAARC LAW	Trilatral Diplomacy	Bhutan
26	Ms.	Jyoti Mathur	Sr. Consultant Child Rights	Ministry of Women & Child Development, GOI	GOVT	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	India
27	Mr.	Kamal Khanal	Office Manager	SAIEVAC	SAIEVAC	NA	Nepal
28	Mr.	Ludemer Guevara	Regional ICT manager	Plan ARO	PLAN	Technology	Philippines
29	Mr.	M.S.S.R. Kumar		Infosys, Hyderabad	CORPORATE	Technology	India
30	Mr.	Madhav Pradhan	Chairperson	CWIN	CSO	Technology	Nepal
31	Mr.	Madhusudan Burlakoti	Joint Secretary	Ministry of Home	GOVT	Technology	Nepal
32	Ms.	Mariko Higuchi	Regional Migrant Assitance Associate	IOM	UN	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	Thailand
33	Mr.	Mark Piers	Regional Director	Plan ARO	INGO	NA	Thailand
34	Ms.	Pooja Mahato	Project Coordinator	Shakti Samuha	CSO	Trilatral Diplomacy	Nepal
35	Mr.	Pravin Patkar	Adjunct Professor	Amrita Vishva Vidyapeetham	CSO	Technology	India
36	Mr.	Purna Bhakta Tandukar	Joint Secretary	Ministry of Women and Children Social welfare Government of Nepal	GOVT	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	Nepal
37	Mr.	Ram Khartri	Gender & Child Rights PC	Plan Nepal	PLAN	Technology	Nepal
38	Mr.	Rasa Sekulovic	regional Child Rights and CP Advisor	Plan ARO	PLAN	Trilatral Diplomacy	Thailand
39	Mr.	Ravi Karkara	Consultant	Facilitator	FACILITATOR	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	USA
40	Mr.	Rinchen Chophel	Director General	SAIEVAC	SAIEVAC	Trilatral Diplomacy	Nepal
41	Mr.	Abid Gulzar	Regional Asociate: Director Advocacy	World Vision	INGO	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	Cambodia
42	Ms.	Achara Bubpapornkul	Regional Administration	Plan ARO	INGO	NA	Thailand
43	Mr.	Ananya Raihan	Executive Director	D.Net	CORPORATE	Technology	Bangladesh
44	Ms.	Anjana Shakya	Chairperson	Himrights Nepal	CSO	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	Nepal
45	Ms.	Antonella Bernardini	CP Advisor	World Vision	INGO	Trilatral Diplomacy	Philippines

46	Mr.	Ashish Damle	Regional Proj Manager: MCA	Plan Bangladesh	PLAN	NA	Bangladesh
41	Mr.	Abid Gulzar	Regional Asociate: Director Advocacy	World Vision	INGO	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	Cambodia
42	Ms.	Achara Bubpapornkul	Regional Administration	Plan ARO	INGO	NA	Thailand
43	Mr.	Ananya Raihan	Executive Director	D.Net	CORPORATE	Technology	Bangladesh
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45	Ms.	Antonella Bernardini	CP Advisor	World Vision	INGO	Trilatral Diplomacy	Philippines
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47	Ms.	Aude Diepenhorst	Project Officer	Plan Netherlands	PLAN	Trilatral Diplomacy	The Netherlands
48	Ms.	Bindu Sharma	Asia Pecific Policy Director	ICMEC	INGO	Technology	Singapore
49	Mr.	Binoy Krishna Mallik	Exeeutive Director	Rights Jassore	CSO	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	Bangladesh
50	Mr.	David Bloomer	Regional Child Protection Advisor	Save the Children	INGO	Trilatral Diplomacy	Singapore
51	Mr.	Digambar Narzary	Chairperson	Nedan Foundation	CSO	Civil Soc. Youth Part.	India
52	Mr.	Dinesh Hari Adhikari	Secretary,	Ministry of Women and Children Social welfare Government of Nepal	GOVT	Trilatral Diplomacy	Nepal
53	Mr.	Dr. John Lennon	Facilitator	Facilitator	FACILITATOR	Technology	Ireland

<u>Speech for Mark Pierce</u>

Dr. Rinchen, Distinguished Dignitaries on the dais, Honourable Guests, my colleagues and friends from India, Bangladesh, and Nepal and various other countries, welcome to Thailand.

Today is an extraordinary day. Seldom have we seen such an amalgamation of experts coming together against one of the most heinous offenses called 'Human Trafficking'. Human trafficking is like neo-slavery. It is directly or indirectly linked to various core issues such as livelihood, education, health, poverty and so on. Human Trafficking is run by a nexus of various actors who are criminals that create a black economy worth of millions of dollars across the globe. Hence it is imperative for us to adapt an integrated, holistic approach to curb this cancer that plagues our societies.

Today I see a realization of this approach. I am pleased to note that we have representatives from key Ministries of the Governments of India, Bangladesh and Nepal, The SAIEVAC, The SAARC Law, UNICEF, ILO, UNODC, IOM, Save the Children, World Vision, ECPAT, Techno-experts from Infosys and most importantly prominent civil society organizations working day and night at ground zero. It is heartening to see such a range of participation only for the single reason to protect girls & boys in our communities from getting trafficked and sold to an exploitative industry. This is a very promising step indeed.

For me the Missing Child Alert is more than a project. It is an innovative approach that opens up an opportunity to create harmonized, collective and a sustainable response to the core issue of cross border trafficking in persons particularly children in South Asia. The project aims at the effective engagement of policy makers, academics, technicians, corporate, media, civil society, community based organizations and children. At outset the projected sounded unrealistic, however your presence today assures me that while we are ambitious, we are certainly not unrealistic. And here I must acknowledge the presence of numerous Government representatives from India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Despite their busy schedules they have made their best efforts to give their valuable time for this convention. This not only shows their commitment to the cause but also the level of seriousness given by the Governments. We sincerely appreciate this. Thank you. [Applause]

As a representative of Plan International, we believe in strengthening child protection systems across the world. In South Asia, Plan International has been consistently investing in strengthening Child Protection Systems at the local, national and regional level. The Missing Child Alert project is consistent with this approach. The project envisions the systemic

enhancement of Child Protection in all three countries. We do of course acknowledge the presence of existing Government led initiatives on child protection, but it is the intention of the MCA project to strengthen these efforts further. Local governance is a determining factor for the successful implementation of the MCA project. Hence the project is investing heavily in strengthening local level child protection systems that includes local governing structures and community based organizations.

We at Plan believe that no problem exists in isolation. Each problem is either a consequence or a cause to some other problem. It is a chain of problems such as the lack of livelihood opportunities that leads to poverty, poverty then leads to a lack of education, a lack of education leads to a lack of awareness, a lack of awareness leads to vulnerability and vulnerability leads to exploitation. In order to address any of these issues, the whole chain of problems must be addressed. Therefore it is important that we join hands, organised our set of skills and resources and complement each-others efforts. Holistic development is therefore a cross cutting principle of Plan and it is manifested through strategic collaborations and networking. The MCA project continues to unfold its strategy with this same philosophy of holistic development. This Convention is important from this perspective.

The core objective of the MCA project is to create an Alert system that can track vulnerable children prior to their transit or during the transit or after landing at a destination so that they can be rescued and placed in a safe place. However; the project framework goes beyond 'rescue' and also covers the reintegration and rehabilitation of victims. The project aims at developing a network of service providers to create an effective service delivery mechanism across the trafficking routes. In order to ensure protection of survivors it is important that they are adequately supported to gain skills and confidence to deal with the post-repatriation challenges.

We know what we want out of this project and we are also conscious of the challenges. We know the journey to move this ambition to a reality is bold. However we also know that together we can achieve what we want. Today is a special day. A day that brings us together to resolve our goal and give a chance to a new approach called the Missing Child Alert. On behalf of Plan International, I want to thank you for being part of this movement and giving your valuable time. I wish all of you a very productive three days.

Thank you!

Responding to Cross Border Child Trafficking in South Asia: An Analysis of the Feasibility of a Technologically Enabled Missing Child Alert System:

Please refer to the SAIEVAC website at www.saievac.org or contact Dr. Rinchen Chophel at rinchen.chophel@saievac.org or Mr. Ashish Damle at ashish.damle@plan-international.org

ANNEX VI

Tri-Lateral Convention of Stakeholders on MCA

Thematic Consultations in Groups
Reporting Template
27 February, 2013

Session Name: Trilateral Cooperation on Action Against Trafficking: Role of State Parties

Facilitator: Roshni Sen, Secretary, Department of Woman and Child Development, Government of West Bengal, India

Participants (name / title):
- Antonella Bernardini, CP Advisor, World Vision
- Ashish Damle, Regional Project Manager: MCA, Plan Bangladesh
- David Bloomer, Regional Child Protection Advisor, Save the Children
- Dinesh Hari Adhikari, Secretary,   Ministry of Women and Children Social Welfare, Government of Nepal
- Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home, Government of Bangladesh
- Dr. Md. Aminul Islam, Deputy Secretary, MoWCA, Government of Bangladesh
- Evora Myrna, Country Director, Plan Bangladesh
- Hemant Batra, Secretary General, SAARCLAW
- Iqbal Ahmed, Director SAARC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh
- Junita Upadhyay, Director Programmes, ECPAT
- Justice Tshering Wangchuk, President, SAARCLAW
- Kamal Khanal, Office Manager, SAIEVAC
- Pooja Mahato, Project Coordinator, Shakti Samuha
- Rasa Sekulovic, Regional Child Rights and CP Advisor, Plan ARO

- Rinchen Chophel, Director General, SAIEVAC
- Ron Pouwels, Regional Advisor Child Protection, UNICEF
- Roop Sen, Partner, Change Mantras
- Saibun Nessa, Comms & Opps. Mgnt, Plan Bangladesh
- Salma Ali, Executive Director, BNWLA
- Sherin Khan, Chairperson, SACG/ ILO Regional Office
- Tariq-Ul-Islam, Secretary, MoWCA, Government of Bangladesh
- Thomas Greco, Documenter, Plan ARO
- Upendra P. Adhikari, Joint Secretary, SAIEVAC Governing Board Member, Government of Nepal
- Zinnath Afroz, CP Advisor, Plan Bangladesh

Issues discussed and outcomes reached, Session 1:

1 In recognition of the link between migration and trafficking, wherein children, particularly adolescents, in poverty and situations of social oppression resort to distress migration for livelihoods as well as to find social opportunities, without adequate safeguards, the group agrees to the need of trilateral cooperation between member States of India, Bangladesh and Nepal, on social communication for mass awareness generation on methods and services to avail for safe migration, and how to protect oneself from unsafe migration that may result in trafficking. Towards this end, the group recommends the development, production and use of information, education and communication materials for behaviour change communication, that is target-group specific and caters to their needs for better information for informed choice and decision making on cross border mobility and migration.

2 In recognition of the opportunity of existing national child protection systems in India, Bangladesh and Nepal, the group recommends that member States need to strengthen those domestic systems, wherein each of the States would benefit from learning from each other about system effectiveness through impact researches.

3 In recognition of the phenomena of child trafficking being a human rights issue as much as a penal issue, the group agrees that interventions for prevention of child trafficking and protection of children at risk require welfare considerations to respond to social and economic crisis, through vulnerability mapping and targeted interventions. The group recognizes the potential of learning about the effectiveness of such strategies taken in each country through sharing impact assessments of those actions with other member States. Further, in accordance with human rights instruments and its protocols, the group suggests that accountability systems may be strengthened through treaty body mechanisms wherein SAIEVAC could well serve as the nodal body.

4 In view of the mandates and importance of coordination and convergence between Ministries and Departments at different levels of governments, wherein child trafficking must be concurrently addressed by Ministries with portfolios on women and children, labour and

home affairs, the group proposes that SAIEVAC explores mechanisms to promote increased communication between Ministries and Departments transversally.

5   In recognition of the current gaps in addressing demand for trafficked victims, the group agrees on the potential of sharing information on trafficking networks and its allies and conduits, and emphasizes on the need for regional cooperation on prosecution. The group recommends that this may be operationalised following existing mechanisms of regional cooperation on information flows on drug traffickers and offenders involved in trans-national terrorism (STOMD, SDOMD), not to rely on either of these two bodies for trafficking but to create a separate body for the purpose.

6   In recognition of the current gaps in alignment between international law and domestic law in member States, and the consequent challenges in harmonization of systems between the source and destination countries in question, the group views that there lies potential in using landmark judgments by courts of law in significant cases and its use to influence the judiciary of other countries to set precedence. The group recommends that SAIEVAC play a facilitating role to support this need of sharing information.

7   In recognition of the significance of the border and potential in effective border control mechanisms and the current challenges therein, the group recommends exploration of the link between people smuggling and human trafficking, and the impact of corruption therein, and to respond with appropriate measures to address transnational trafficking in persons, especially children and young people.

8   In recognition of the significant resources that have already been developed that have a strong potential in strengthening capacities of service providers and stakeholders, the group recommends that such resources be identified and widely disseminated or transmitted through trainings, capacity building efforts and sensitization.

9   In recognition of the need for more sustainable solutions to child trafficking, the group endorses that prevention needs to be focused as a long term solution, and prevention efforts will need to be long term and strategic.

10   In keeping with the principle of child participation that is an obligation by member States, all of whom are signatories to the Convention on the Rights of The Child, the group believes in the need for investment towards supporting efforts in child participation in child protection initiatives, to help them strengthen their agency in resisting abuse, violence and exploitation.

Issues discussed and outcomes reached, Session 2:

1   To the task of identifying a feasible technological solution for better flow of information and knowledge, the group recognizes the need for back-end work and study by a technical group that could advise and educate member States on best possible solutions for a common regional information system.

2   In recognition of the opportunity of using proposed MOU between India and Bangladesh, and the task forces therein, the group sees potential in developing a micro system to be used by task forces to share real time information on missing and trafficked children, for early interception and rescue.

3   In recognition of the existing challenges in manpower and resources for operationalisation and maintenance of any system, the group recommends that SAIEVAC facilitate sharing between member States to strengthen existing child protection systems.

4   The group recognizes the scope of using directives and judgments from courts of law in respective member States to inspire setting up and operationalising child tracking technological systems.

5   In recognition of other practices wherein there are official dialogue spaces between the District Magistrates (India), and Deputy Commissioners, Chief District Officer (Bangladesh and Nepal), the group recommends that the DM/DC dialogues have discussion on trafficking as one of their core agenda, and decisions that they may have taken be uploaded on the concerned portals such as 'Trackchild 1.0'.

Issues discussed and outcomes reached, Session 3:

1   In recognition of delays in repatriation of survivors of trafficking, and unintended but consequent detention of survivors in shelter homes for inordinate periods of time, while there are the following instruments as key in standardizing and streamlining repatriation instruments (a) the regional SoP on trafficking at the SAARC level, (b) the draft bilateral MoU between India and Bangladesh and (c) the in-draft MoU between India and Nepal and member States have clearly defined processes on repatriation of victims, the group recommends audit of this repatriation process to identify bottlenecks that currently cause significant delays so as to take corrective measures and improving the process, including review of national, bilateral and regional SoPs and MoUs in order to explore potential benefits of enforcement or implementation of protocols. The group recognizes that ultimately, all instruments are obligated to act in the best interests of the child/victim.

2   In recognition of the role that NGOs play as service providers in rescue, repatriation, reunification and reintegration of victims of child trafficking, the group acknowledges the need to ensure financial sustainability of such service providers, and feel that member States must consider bringing such services under welfare support.

3   In recognition of lack of research and audit on experiences of survivors post family reunification, the group is concerned about the survivors' protection and safety in the face of stigma, discrimination and shaming, threats and intimidation from traffickers and urges that such audits be commissioned to appraise of the impact of all rehabilitation measures. The group recognizes that communication technology would be very useful in enabling flow of

information in the case management process – forwards and backwards so as to be able to create a transparent process and inform all service providers and stakeholders in the case management system on the impact of rehabilitation, and the gaps therein,

4   In recognition of the role of community based organisations and NGOs on both sides of the border, the group recommends that cross border networking between NGOs and service providers be encouraged, facilitated and developed – to build closer links between NGOs and governments to create greater convergence.

5   In recognition of the urgency of the concerns and bottlenecks, the group agrees to recommend that a facilitating group, like an advisory group of members from the three countries, subject to endorsement from governments of the member States, be formed wherein the members comprise of nodal officers from relevant ministries, NGOs and CSOs may follow through the recommends and action points, and communicates, reconvenes periodically, wherein CSOs play the role of researchers to understand effectiveness and challenges in systems, policies and practices. The group recommends that the size of the group be around 15 members, including NGO and CSO members from each country, and the group should meet within 3 months of this convention date.

Rapporteurs (name/contact information):

Thomas Greco, Documenter, Plan ARO
Roop Sen, Partner, Change Mantras

Tri-Lateral Convention of Stakeholders on MCA

Thematic Consultations in Groups

Reporting Template

27 February 2013

Session Name: Organizing CSO and CBO response to cross border trafficking: Opportunities and Future Strategies

Facilitator: Mr. Ravi Karkara, Expert Advisor, Children & Youth (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, New York)

Participants (name/title):

1 Mr. Abid Gulzar- Regional associate: Director- World Vision
2 Ms. Anjana Shakya- Chair Person- Himrights Nepal
3 Mr. Binoy Krishna Mallik, Executive Director- Rights Jessore
4 Mr. Digambar Narzary, Chairperson, Nedan Foundation
5 Dr. Kiran Rupakhetee, Under Secretary- Ministry of Women & Children & Social Welfare
6 Ms. Jesmin Akhtar, Sr. Assist, Secretary- Local Govt. Division M/O of local Govt and Cooperatives, Bangladesh
7 Mr. Jaydev Majumar, Director- Jay Prakash Institute of Social Change
8 Ms. Jyoti Mathur, Sr. Consultant Child Rights, Ministry of Women &Child Development, GOI
9 Ms. Mariko Higuchi, Regional Migrant Assistance- IOM
10 Mr. Purna Bhakta Tandulkar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Social Welfare, Govt. of Nepal
11 Ms. S V Bhavani, Project Manager, Plan India
12 Satyajit Ghosh, National Manager, MCA, Plan India
13 Mr. Shafiqul Islam, Director Programs-DAM, Bangladesh
14 Ms. Shrinkhala Thapa, National Manager, MCA, Plan Nepal
15 Mr. Subodh Kumar Das, National Manager, MCA, Plan Bangladesh
16 Ms. Tahmina Begum, Joint Secretary, MoWCA, Bangladesh
17 Ms. Tapoti Bhowmick, Sr. Programme Manager, Sanlap, India

Issues discussed:

- Introduction of MCA project and its key stakeholders
- Child Participation, Protection & Service Delivery system
- Role of CSO and Child Led Organization's work on child participation and protection
- Role of CSO in creating awareness and adopting technology development in cross border trafficking
- Challenges and problem faced while adopting new technology.

A brief introduction with all the participants was done by Mr. Ravi Karkara. The discussion was initiated by screening of video films on child participation. The issue of Child participation and protection was discussed followed by peer group work. During the group exercise, the issue of setting up technology was discussed and each group presented their discussion to the forum by using cards. The discussion helped the participants to understand about the children participation and to relate them to the MCA cause. It also helps to develop the planning procedures and decision making process in the project. The definition of the "Child Participation" was discussed at length. It was shared that the basic requirements in the project would be to hear the voices of children and to respect the right of the child. It was commonly agreed that that child Participation applies differently in different scenarios.

Besides screening various video films, there was an opportunity to discuss the child participation issue with Ms. Caroline from Uganda through Skype. Her NGO is supported by Unicef- Uganda and she is working with youth. The project adopted SMS, as part of technology as innovative strategy in the project where girls protect their rights and save from any sort of vulnerable factors. As far as the technology is concerned in MCA project, participants suggested about setting up transit home and long range wireless phone can be of options at the border areas. The issue of challenges to repatriation was also discussed in a group and presented the situation to the facilitator.

Discussion Points/Outcome reached:

1 Voices of Children need to be heard, to be ensured through their active participation
2 Children need to be helped in decision making process
3 CSO should create space for the children to participate and meaningful representation
4 Children's inclusion is important
5 Positive change is welcome
6 Encourage Children & youth to be the part of advocacy and to contribute to the social change
7 Bring the issues of children and youth in the social media.
8 Child rights and child protection need to be addressed
9 As far as the CSO's involvement is concerned, it was realized that more regional coordination amongst Govt stakeholders and CSO is required
10 SOP on safe and quick repatriation of children to be developed, implemented by three concerned countries
11 Children and adolescent groups should be engaged to address child trafficking issue
12 Development of IEC based on local content and children's participation e.g comic books, story books.
13 Engagement of local government, law enforcement agencies, immigration agencies in border areas.
14 Mobilization of Media e.g FM radio, electronic, print and youth journalism etc.
15 As far as the technology is concerned, MCA can adopt long range wireless and CCTV in the border areas
16 If possible, separate child friendly technology system for trafficked children

Future Action:

- Coordination with Governments for SOP
- Partnership with Local CSO

Rapporteurs (name/contact information):

Mr. Satyajit Ghosh, National Manager- MCA-India

Mr. Subodh Das, National Manager- MCA- Bangladesh

<div align="right">ANNEX VIII</div>

Tri-Lateral Convention of Stakeholders on MCA

<div align="center">Thematic Consultations in Groups
Reporting Template</div>

27 February, 2013

Session Name: The use of technology and role of techno-experts: Way forward

Participants (name / title):

- Dr. John Lannon, Facilitator
- Mr. Ananya Raihan, Executive Director D.Net
- Ms. Bindu Sharma, Asia Pacific Policy Director, ICMEC
- Dr. S.S. Singh, Technical Director, NIC
- Fr. Joe Prabu, National Director, Don Bosco/Homelink
- Mr Ludemar Guevara, Regional ICT Manager, Plan ARO
- Mr. M.S.S.R. Kumar, Delivery Manager, InfoSys
- Mr. Madhav Pradhan, Chairperson, CWIN
- Mr. Madhusudan Burlakoti, Joint Secretary, MHA
- Mr. Narayan P.Sanjel, Joint Secretary, Ministry of ICT
- Mr Pravin Patkar, Adjunct Professor, Amrita Vishva Vidyapeetham
- Mr Ram Khartri, Gender and Rights PC, Plan Nepal,
- Mr. Saleh Ahmed, Deputy Chief, Ministry of ICT
- Mr Vinayakan Ellath, Sr Prog Manager, Plan India
- Ms Wahida Banu, Executive Director, Aparajiyo
- Mr. Laurence Grey, World Vision.
- Ms Aude Diepenhorst, Plan NL

Issues discussed:

[*Session 1*]

- the need to look at and understand root causes of trafficking
- current technological trends at community level across the 3 countries – access to TV, radio (including community radio), Internet, cell phones
- the down sides to technology and its use
- the sensitivity of much of the data being gathered in relation to trafficking
- the need for ICT infrastructure and the role of governments in providing this
- content development in the context of child trafficking prevention and protection. Discussion included: leveraging existing research, use of audio-visual material, entertainment industry & games, as well as animation (specifically in relation to children)
- Content delivery, again in the context of child trafficking prevention and protection. Group noted the increasing use of cheap smartphones and the opportunities that presents at community level
- The role of corporate and media partners (including phone companies) in content delivery, in particular linking into CSR strategies.
- Content roll-out (also relating to child trafficking prevention and protection) and how governments can enable this, even make it compulsory, for example at railway stations
- Need to focus on schools as a key opportunity for prevention and protection

[*Session 2*]

- The proposed models for MCA system – preference for decentralised model
- Data sharing between national child trafficking systems
- Providing cross-border authorities with search and view options in national systems
- MCA focus on missing and "found but untraced" children
- The importance of biometrics, limitations and potential to collect data on all children who are at risk in schools

[*Session 3*]

- Repatriation in the best interests of the child
- Acknowledging identity of a child; establishment of their rights and the practical implications
- Potential role of tech system in advocacy
- The value of aggregated data from the MCA
- Providing hardware infrastructure for MCA pilot – connectivity & hosting
- Data storage & legal as well as CP issues – data protection, freedom of information; ICPS in India
- Development of use cases (scenarios) for MCA pilot
- Gap analysis between existing systems like Trackchild and what is required (use cases)
- Government commitments to exchange data

- Roadmap for 2 year MCA pilot

Outcomes reached:

- Government have crucial role to play in MCA at many levels
- Schools-based strategy should be considered in relation to prevention and protection, as well as collection of biometric data on all children who are at risk
- Preferred MCA tech solution is decentralised model
- Focus on "missing" and "found but untraced" children
- High-level roadmap for MCA pilot (2 years)

Rapporteurs (name / contact information):

Mr. Pravin Patkar, Adjunct Professor, Amrita Vishva Vidyapeetham

Dr. S.S. Singh, Technical Director, NIC