



The Cabinet

**THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
CHILDHOOD AND MOTHERHOOD**



Report

**Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional
Consultation on Violence against Children
Follow-up Consultation
and
The MENA Regional Conference of Child Helpline
International
25-28 March 2006**

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Annexes to this report include the presentations and other Consultation documentation. This report and its annexes can be downloaded from the NCCM website: www.nccm.org.eg.

Section 1: Background

Upon the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Child, the UN Secretary General commissioned a **global Study on Violence Against Children** which “should lead to development of strategies aimed at effectively preventing and combating all forms of violence against children, outlining steps to be taken at the international level and by states to provide effective prevention, protection, intervention, treatment, recovery and reintegration”. The study is led by the independent expert Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, and will be presented to the General Assembly of 2006.

The Study initiated a global interactive process since 2004, which has resulted in a series of **Regional Consultations** around the world. In preparation for the consultation, **governments completed a questionnaire** designed to elicit information on the legal frameworks in place to protect children from violence and sanction those responsible for it. Public submissions were sought and input from civil society organizations taken into account. Also, **a number of countries held national consultations to prepare for the regional consultation** and in many cases the national groups put in place mechanisms to continue efforts to abolish violence against children as the process of the Study continues. The participants of each of the consultations, including children and young people themselves, developed an **outcome document** that in most cases was both a statement of intent and also a set of recommendations to be undertaken.

For the MENA Region, a Regional movement was initiated by the establishment of the Steering Committee in October 2004, chaired by Egypt's National Council for Childhood and Motherhood; to coordinate the preparation for the regional requirements to complete the UN Study on Violence against Children. A **Regional Desktop Review** was compiled which presented a regional overview of the incidence and patterns of violence in each of the UN study settings: *Violence in the home and family, Violence in schools, Violence in care and justice systems, Violence against working children, and Violence in the community and on the street*. The review was based on the MENA replies to a questionnaire targeting governments which was designed by the UN Study secretariat, and based on the concluding observations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on CRC status reports submitted by the MENA countries, and on a compilation of secondary data.

The MENA Regional Consultation on Violence against Children, which took place in June 2005 in Cairo was preceded by an eight-month long process of dialogue and exchange involving many segments of society throughout the Middle East North Africa region. More than 600 people

participated in the MENA Regional Consultation; which included government representatives, regional and national civil society groups, activists and media professionals. Active were also 27 young people's representatives from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Yemen, Qatar, Bahrain, Algeria and Sudan. Besides stating their recommendations to the governments, media and other relevant stakeholders, children also looked specifically at how they themselves have a role and can be involved in putting an end to violence against children:

The "**Cairo Declaration**" and the **regional recommendations** that evolved from the MENA consultation as outlined in the **Outcome Document of the Regional Consultation (June 2005)**, focused on several key issues which included:

- Mobilizing public opinion against all forms of violence and abuse against children, including physical, sexual and psychological violence, that could affect their development or their human rights, and calling for the protection of children from discrimination and all forms of violence.
- Providing studies and data on the forms and magnitude of violence against children in the various settings, and facilitating an exchange of information among parties concerned at both national and regional levels;
- Developing integrated model(s) for identifying and monitoring incidents of violence, and to set up unified indicators for accurately following up children's protection;
- Reviewing national laws to ensure conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and tackling legal loopholes in conformity with an overall Rights' perspective and in the best interests of the child;
- Raising children's awareness of their rights, and spreading the culture of peace and dialogue, with the aim of changing negative concepts and erroneous beliefs in children's upbringing and education, and settling disputes peacefully, and dedicating a major role for government and private media in spreading such culture;
- Capacity-building of those in charge of the upbringing and educational process of children, including parents, teachers, physicians, police officers, judiciary staff, social workers, psychiatrists, media, law enforcers and all those dealing with children.
- Activating principles of community participation and responsibility among all governmental authorities concerned, NGOs, media, private

sector, professional and other specialists, with the particular participation of children in phases of planning, implementation and follow-up;

- Empowering children and raising their awareness of their rights and duties, and means of protecting themselves against any form of violence, while urging them to report of any abuse or violence, and providing the appropriate mechanisms for that;
- Strengthening partnerships at the regional and national levels, in order to come up with a model for protecting children, based on prompt and early intervention for protecting children, who are subject to hazards, and enhancing them with the basic services that guarantee healthy growth and safe childhood.
- To meet in a follow up meeting to review progress and to ensure that violence against children remains a priority on the agenda

Section 2: Executive Summary

1. The MENA Regional Consultation on Violence against Children Follow-up Consultation and the MENA Regional Conference of the Child Helpline International (*which will henceforth be referred to interchangeably as "Follow-Up Consultation"*) was held under the auspices and participation of **H.E. Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak**, the First Lady of Egypt and Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. The First Lady chaired sessions 6, 7, 8 and 9. She opened the sessions by presenting the global plight of trafficking in human beings especially the situation of women and children, H.E. gave an overview of the activities of the "*Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement*" to advocate "zero tolerance to trafficking;" in addition to plans of the Movement in inspiring civil society to develop anti-trafficking strategies. She appealed for vigorous action to end trafficking. (Details of the sessions follows)

2. The MENA Regional Consultation on Violence against Children Follow-up Consultation and the MENA Regional Conference of the Child Helpline International were integrated due to their complementarities; as child helplines are a mechanism to lodge complaints against violence and are used as a tool for uncovering violence, its causes and potential treatments. Thus, the combination of these two conferences will add value to the process

3. The Follow-Up Consultation was designed as a highly interactive and participatory process that involved a diverse range of stakeholders including government entities with policy making and executive responsibilities in the child rights sector, regional and national civil society representatives, opinion leaders, activists and media professionals. The progress made regarding the follow-up to the MENA Regional Consultation, especially within the framework of the Cairo Declaration on Violence against Children, is a clear statement of the Arab world's position condemning all forms of violence. The delegates met to review progress achieved to implement the Cairo Declaration and the recommendations and to ensure that violence against children remains high on national and regional agendas.

4. The participation of children continued to be an integral part of the process. A workshop was conducted to share Egypt's National Plan of Action to stop Violence against Children "NPA" with children from Egypt and to receive their feedback and input on their roles to eliminate violence against children. Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, the Independent expert appointed by the UN Secretary General to lead the global study on violence against children, held an extensive meeting with the children during the Follow-Up Consultation.

5. The attendance of Professor Pinheiro was pivotal in presenting the key emerging issues of the UN Study on Violence against Children. The Secretary General's Independent Expert urged the delegations to keep up this regional momentum on violence against children which has been developing since the Regional Consultation and **recommended the delegations to establish a regional coordination mechanism to follow-up on the UN Study recommendations** upon its adoption by the UN General Assembly session of 2006.

6. The main outputs of the Follow-Up Consultation include:

- **Institutionalizing child help lines:** A mechanism to lodge complaints and to enable children to freely express their views and as a tool to monitor violence against children.

- **National Plans of Action:** A set of elements and objectives that were compiled by the delegations to be included in all NPAs and national strategies which encompass protection and prevention policies. It should be based on solid data and situation analysis, legal revision and enforcement, public awareness, capacity building, service provision and child participation.

- **Measurement tools:** A set of tools that assist in measuring violence against children that are qualitatively and quantitatively based.

- **Prevention Mechanisms:** A set of mechanisms that can be adopted by tourism, travel and transport companies that help the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation of children.

- **Training Tools:** A set of training modules and tools that can assist countries in developing a local computing security and internet safety programme.

- **Regional Network:** Renewed commitment of the delegations to establish a regional network that will act as a platform for monitoring the Regional Recommendations of June 2005 and providing technical support accordingly to the individual countries in the MENA region.

Section 3: Proceedings of the Follow-up Regional Consultation

Session One: Opening

Ambassador Khattab thanked the participants and especially H.E. Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak for her continuous support and informed participants of the recommendation by H.E. Mrs. Mubarak to integrate the two conferences due to their complementarities. Child helplines are a mechanism to lodge complaints against violence and are used as a tool for uncovering violence, its causes and potential treatments; thus, the combination of these two conferences will add value to the process. Focus of the follow-up meeting is to agree on a mechanism of follow up at the national, regional and international levels to maintain effective links with the international level. She added that according to Professor Pinheiro; the MENA region is the first region to organize a regional follow-up consultation in order to assess the implementation of the regional obligations as stated in the Cairo Declaration and the recommendation of the June 2005 MENA Regional Conference on Violence against Children; within the overall context of, and consistent with, the implementation of the recommendations of the global study. The study is intended to lead to the development of strategies aimed at effectively preventing and combating all forms of violence against children.

Counselor Adly Hussein, Governor of Kaliobiya (representing the Governors of Egypt)

Governors' role is essential as the local authority in charge of coordinating the input of both government and NGO's. The duty of governors is to protect children from all forms of violence (both corporal and psychological abuse) and monitor them. The Cairo Declaration led to placing violence against children high on the agenda and promoting the participation of all stakeholders. Thus, it is no longer only a duty of the police or the judiciary, but rather it involves a greater participation from all parties concerned, including the local communities and the private sector. It was recommended to focus on more in-depth training and to be fully aware of the current trends, research etc, in order to fulfil this obligation.

Independent Expert, Professor Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro

Professor Pinheiro expressed his sincere thanks to H.E. Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak for her personal engagement and for the commitment of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the cause of ending violence against children.

He noted that the regional consultations were quite successful, as the record number of responses to the questionnaire sent to Governments reached 122 official replies to date. In addition, the numerous submissions from civil society organizations and the vibrant contributions from the children and young people are evidence of the achievements of a broad engagement.

Professor Pinheiro presented **the key emerging issues of the upcoming global UN Study on Violence** which will be launched in 2006. The study will call on Member States to adopt these recommendations:

1. Strengthen national commitments and national responses by developing NPAs that would encompass prevention and protection policies.
2. Strengthen the legal framework for the prevention of violence and abuse against children and ensure the protection of the abused, and the legal conviction of the perpetrators.
3. Create accessible monitoring mechanisms, such as child helpline communications systems and others, in which children at risk have access to seek help and are provided with protection and referral services.
4. Ensure systematic data collection to monitor the situation of violence against children and the performance of prevention and protection services accordingly.
5. Ensure active involvement of children in which they express their views and experiences to inform preventive actions and responses to violence against them; their role as partners in actions on their behalf should be recognized and facilitated at all levels.
6. Strengthen capacity building measures to ensure that professional carers, teachers, social service workers, police, those working in criminal justice, and all those who work with children would be adequately informed and trained according to clear codes of conduct and standards of practice.
7. Provide accessible and quality services to improve the prospects of preventing and responding to violence against children effectively.
8. Abandon social norms that condone violence against children including harmful traditional practices primarily inflicted on girls, and promoting the creation of positive, non-violent environments for children to grow up in.

Mr. Tom Mc Dermott, UNICEF MENA Regional Director

The main achievements and landmarks in the MENA region in the past few years related to violence against children include:

1. Morocco convened two regional meetings on commercial sexual exploitation of children.
2. Jordan in 2004 brought together Arab Parliamentarians from 17 countries. The Amman Declaration promises to strengthen child protection, allocate additional funds and to establish Parliamentary Committees on Child Rights.
3. Tunisia convened a workshop in 2005 to discuss violence in schools - both against children and by children. That meeting proved to be an important opportunity to review national studies in seven countries.
4. Jordan convened a meeting in December 2005 on violence in the family; providing an important opportunity to examine the interlinking of police, judges and social workers in defusing family violence.
5. Egypt hosted the High Level Conference on the Rights of the Child in 2001 resulted in resolutions on child health and education being easily accepted. In contrast, child protection, sexual exploitation, and violence proved to be far more difficult. Today the situation is dramatically different; in which the silence has been broken and as a result we have working groups of child advocates in every country, as well as solid research, regional conferences, and political resolutions. If we compare the situation at the time of the Cairo conference; we conclude that the MENA region is going through a regional movement for protecting children.

Ms. Mona Kamel: The League of the Arab States

Arab children constitute 48% of the region's population, thus concerted efforts to protect children is necessary.

Great attention has been accorded to the development and protection of the Arab child, in which the Charter on the Rights of the Arab Child in 1983, the first plan of action for the Protection and Development of Childhood in 1992 and the Second Plan in 2004 were formulated. Therefore, addressing violence against children would require a comprehensive Arab plan for the protection and care of childhood taking into consideration the MDGs while preserving Arab civilization and culture.

Ms. Karen Lucke, Regional Coordinator for the Arab Region: The Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Greater attention should be accorded to having a strong and visible follow-up process. Political mobilization, as well as mobilization of resources, is needed now at all levels, to allow us to plan for effective implementation of the recommendations as well as international and regional monitoring mechanisms. A follow-up mechanism is being considered to sustain visibility of the issue of violence against children and to translate the commitment of these stakeholders into action.

The importance of children's meaningful participation in the implementation of the study's final recommendations is crucial. The MENA region has set a shining example of how to empower children to participate in activities to prevent and protect against violence.

Ms. Jeroo Billimoria, Executive Director; Child Helpline International

Child helplines are one of the mechanisms to reach out to children. Children can contact a helpline when they need crisis intervention, rehabilitation, counselling or just someone to talk to. The reasons why children call are varied; they include abuse, shelter, HIV/AIDS, relationship problems, violence, exploitation, addiction, suicide, etc.

Countries in the Middle East and North Africa region have started cooperating with CHI in order to take the initiative of establishing child helplines in the region forward. Currently, children in the region can access such a service in few countries through existing child helplines or family helplines.

Taking into consideration the child population and the telecoms infrastructure in the MENA region, the potential number of calls to child helplines could reach 4 million calls per year. Child helplines across the world annually receive 11.3 million calls. This number simply shows the need for such helplines that will not only serve as a mean to reach out to children in need, but also provide a primary source of reporting and documenting cases of violence against children.

Representatives from the Egyptian Children

Two youth representatives, a boy and a girl, shared their vision on what their role should be to abolishing violence in the various settings:

- **In the home**, children will assist in promoting the helpline, brochures, spread information, and participate in plays in the schools in order to address domestic violence;

- **In the community**, their role is to form child groups to help, posters and stickers, go there were children gather so that they learn about their rights.
- **In the schools**, their role should involve the use of posters, a daily component of the schools radio and exchanging experiences.
- **In the institutions**, their role should be in assisting social workers and psychologists.

Essam Aly: Egyptian NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child

The NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child's role currently focuses on promoting children's participation for local community development; raising awareness to stop violence; creating a movement emanating from working children from various governorates in order to defend their rights.

The NGOs working in the field of child labor, together with experts are studying how to eliminate the worst forms of labor through policies combating poverty, upgrading industries, organizing vocational training, and providing vocational health services. Many studies were conducted on violence in Upper Egypt and a survey is currently being conducted on how the Egyptian child perceives violence.

Session Two and Three: Proceedings of Regional National Plans of Actions, Achievements and Current Activities

Syria

The ***National Plan for Child Protection*** is part of a comprehensive three pillar family protection strategy addressing the protection of children, youth and women. NPA is coordinated by the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs, while the implementation will take place by the related ministries with the support of NGOs, universities and UN organizations.

The plan is guided by **three objectives**: building knowledge and awareness, offering protection and support, and securing treatment and rehabilitation, while the **main activities** relate to knowledge creation and conducting research and having a data base of incidences of child maltreatment, achieving a comprehensive child protection legislation, capacity building to incorporate child protection in the curriculum of higher education, child protection services, and behavioural change activities.

Jordan

The ***Strategic National Plan for the Protection of the Family against Violence*** is based on a partnership amongst various governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Objectives: the creation of a functioning multi-agency approach for responding to violence in the family, providing quality protection and referral services, and institutionalising mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation. Jordan's approach is divided into different phases: the **prevention phase**, the **detection and reporting phase**, the **initial assessment phase**, the **initial response phase**, the **intervention phase** and the **evaluation phase**.

Egypt

Egypt presented its ***draft National Plan of Action to Stop Violence against Children***, formulated through a participatory process involving government and non-governmental organisations and has been reviewed by children who were part of the process since the June 2005 consultation.

Objectives: ensuring a protective environment for all children including those at risk of abuse and violence, developing a protective mechanism for monitoring children at risk of abuse and violence and the provision of protective and rehabilitative services for abused children and their families.

Programme Components: legal amendment, capacity building for individuals and institutions, public awareness and behavioural change activities, institutionalising monitoring mechanisms.

Main achievements: establishment of a solid and disaggregated data base; the establishment of a child helpline in June 2005 as a tool of monitoring and intervention.

Lebanon

There has been a formation of a technical steering committee coordinated by the Lebanese Higher Council of Childhood, with the key task of devising a **National Strategy on Violence against Children**. Several committees were formed to devise this strategy such as legal, research, capacity building, sexual exploitation, child abuse and neglect committee, and a media committee.

A holistic quantitative and qualitative situation analysis study on violence and abuse is underway. Seminars and workshops were conducted on Lebanon's juvenile justice system, public awareness campaigns, legal reforms for street children, and violence against children in schools and to prohibit corporal punishment.

Sudan

The Sudanese National Council for Childhood Care formed a technical committee of governmental and non-governmental representatives, including UN and other developmental organisations, to counter violence against children headed by the Secretary General of the council with the **objective** of raising public awareness, collecting data, prepare a qualitative and quantitative comprehensive study, and finally the technical committee will be designated **to draft a National Action Plan on combating violence against children**.

Palestine

The **Palestinian** Higher Council for Childhood and Motherhood undertakes initiatives to network and partnerships among the stakeholders to agree on a framework and contents for a National Plan of Action. The political scene poses an obstacle, as Israeli attacks hinder the establishment of a protective environment for children. .

Morocco

The **Moroccan government's** achievements include amendments in a number of laws, such as the family law, raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 years and the minimum age of work to 15 years. Legislations were also modified to improve the situation of guardianship for children of divorced parents by giving them freedom of choice and to provide *kafala* (support) for children who are deprived of family care. The nationality law is currently being discussed by the Moroccan parliament.

Units for child protection were established in 16 regions in the country to provide support for children at risk of violence or who lack care and protection. In addition, Morocco took advanced steps in **drafting the national plan** of action that is based on the rights of children in a healthy life in education, protection, participation and equity.

Yemen

The national network for combating violence against children was established and included all relevant stakeholders who are concerned with childhood and motherhood. Capacity building of the involved professional cadres to cope with the latest amendments in legislations and to advance the implementation of the CRC's concluding observations and recommendations was a priority to Yemen; as well as raising community awareness on violence issues. In addition, structures and mechanisms for reporting and monitoring cases of violence and providing them with support and protection were set in place. Finally, children participation was given greater consideration, and was promoted by civil society partners.

Main Discussions on the NPAs and Country Achievements

Commenting on the NPA's presented, Prof. Pinheiro stated that Syria focused on social awareness campaigns, and the setting up of a national registry data base, while Jordan was vague regarding data base collection and focused more on the family rather than the child. He felt that both Jordan and Syria stressed the importance of the legal aspect of child protection; in addition, both have a protection mechanism to receive and handle complaints and follow-up. However, the participation of children in the NPA processes is ambiguous. The methodology of the Egyptian NPA is based on a **child-right's approach**, with family as the base for child protection; with NPA focuses on Protection, Rehabilitation and Prevention.

He recommended to the three countries to ensure that there are accessible mechanisms for children, such as establishing institutions serving children, monitoring children at risk, as well as developing monitoring mechanisms for the NPAs, empowering families and providing them with the necessary services, and finally establishing independent bodies, such as an Ombudsperson.

Commenting on the debate that followed the presentations and centered on the child helpline services, Prof. Pinheiro cautioned that such help lines should not be considered as the sole tool for detecting abuse cases. He stressed the need for establishing holistic prevention and protection mechanisms; such as children parliaments an independent organisation to monitor government actions and programmes; and also the need to focus on empowering families.

Session Four: Prevention and Protection Mechanisms: A way forward for Child Help lines in the MENA Region

The session provided an overview on the concept of a child helpline and helplines around the world. CHI presented the key steps to start a national child helpline:

- Step 1: Determining the needs
- Step 2: Exploring the country
- Step 3: Determining the method of communication and response strategy
- Step 4: Determining a structure
- Step 5: Funding
- Step 6: Twinning
- Step 7: Training the team on call response
- Step 8: Training the team on outreach
- Step 9: Launching the national child helpline

A training manual and a start-up kit prepared by CHI were distributed to all participants. The two documents are user- friendly guides to start or scale up national child helplines. Both documents are available from the CHI Secretariat.

Mrs. Jeroo Billimoria, Executive Director of CHI, stressed that the services incorporated within a child helpline are significant both as a reporting mechanism for incidents of violence against children, and as a channel for children to voice their concerns and ask for help in the event they are subjected to violence.

The establishment of a child helpline requires multiple partnerships with government representatives and NGOs. Countries setting up child help lines are encouraged to use a “brand add on” model where one utilizes and builds upon the country’s existing services and facilities and to integrate the child helpline as one more component of its services.

The session stressed the need to establish child helplines in each country of the MENA region, and to lobby for a common number to be assigned to child helplines. The number should be toll free and of three or four digits, which makes it easier for children to access the child helpline. A common number in the MENA region is important especially in the cases of child trafficking.

The floor was opened to the existing child helplines and family helplines in the region to share their experiences. Delegations from Egypt, Yemen,

Morocco, Bahrain and Palestine presented an overview about their activities related to helplines.

After the session and during the days of the Consultation, delegations from different countries showed their interest and commitment to launch national child helplines in their respective countries, as well as becoming members of CHI's network, these countries include: Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and the UAE.

Discussions on child help lines evolved around several issues:

- The help line may be used by children as well as adults reporting child abuse cases. The child helpline services focuses on the child in addition to the family. Therefore, it offers help and services to children regardless to who made the call as long the complaint concerns a child.
- Each country has its own specific context and the help lines differ from one country to another taking into account each country's social and administrative systems and as well to the availability of services and the networks available.
- Help lines do not preclude other preventive and protective services.
- Initiatives exist to analyze data coming through the helpline and to work on the root causes of some problems and to work also on policies and laws amendment to achieve the best interest of the child.
- In the case of Egypt, the helpline has a legal status being administered by the NCCM the main coordinating body for different ministries that are serving children both directly and indirectly.
- The main obstacles encountered relate to weak civil society institutions, follow-up and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Session Five: Tools for Needs Assessment

Monitoring Countries Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The representative from OHCHR gave a presentation on “*Monitoring countries’ implementation of the CRC*”. The minimum standards of the CRC and its two optional protocols on “the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict” and “the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.” Twelve MENA states signed the protocol on the sale of children and ten MENA states signed the protocol on children in armed conflict. State parties are responsible to take legislative, social and educational measures to help fulfil its obligations according to CRC including to achieve the four general principles of the CRC: non-discrimination, best interest of the child, child survival and development and freedom of expression. In addition, states have responsibilities to provide families and parents with assistance to assure a protective environment for the development of children.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child plays a major role in monitoring states compliance in the implementation of the above mentioned principles and rights through various channels: regular government reports, guidance to state parties, and through constructive dialogues with governments. Achievement of standards are based on participation and collaboration among all stakeholders including governments, civil society partners, NGOs, UN agencies, human rights institutions, media, and children themselves. The Committee is now also placing increased emphasis on HIV/AIDS and removal of mines. In September 2006, the committee will hold discussions with partners on the achievements and challenges faced in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The main observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child for most countries of the Middle East and North Africa focused on domestic violence, female Genital Mutilation (FGM), honor crimes and forced marriage, violence in schools and its cultural acceptance as a means to discipline children, penal measures for children less than 18 years (special emphasis on juvenile justice) and economic exploitation and worst forms of child labor.


Tools and Indicators for Measuring Violence against Children

The representatives from UNICEF and the American University in Cairo Social Research Center gave a joint presentation on the use of different approaches in measuring violence against children. A key challenge faced is the setting of indicators for the measuring of incidences and the levels of violence exerted against children. Discrepancies exist between

“announced” data and actual incidents on violence against children. The lack of transparency in releasing information and the weakness in reporting systems are a key constraint.

Common agreement on main indicators exists. However, more efforts are required to define the most appropriate approaches and methodologies of research. UNICEF suggested an indicators framework for establishing a protective environment based on eight main elements: 1) legislation, 2) attitude changes and community awareness, 3) advocacy and open discussion, 4) violence identification and reporting mechanisms, 5) monitoring mechanism, 6) children participation, 7) capacity building and 8) services provision.

A key challenge is the definition of tools to survey domestic violence; particularly as a combination of qualitative instruments supplementing quantitative estimates; are necessary. UNICEF asserted the importance of designing a participative assessment tool that includes children. Methods for this tool could be diversified to include: role play; free drawing, observation, case studies, social mapping, story telling, in-depth interviews and quantitative interviews. Speakers and participants highlighted the significance of child participation in conducting research. Research on children requires adequate time to build trust and to establish rapport and positive communication with them. To achieve that objective, multiple research tools have to be used such as focus group discussions with children, case studies for children who are reluctant to speak out, interviews with parents, neighbours and social workers involved in dealing with children and non-participant observation.



Session Six, Seven, Eight and Nine: Proceedings of Child Sex Tourism as a Form of Violence Against Children (ECPAT); the collaboration between the NGOs and Private Sector to protect children from sexual exploitation in tourism (ECPAT); and the implementation of the Code of Conduct in the Hotel Industry (ACCOR)

H.E Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, First Lady of Egypt

The First Lady addressed the conference and indicated that the world's attention recently has become increasingly focused on the serious problem of human trafficking especially in women and children. **It is estimated that there are 12.3 million victims of forced labor in the world today. Of whom some 2.45 million are trafficked. The trafficking in human beings for the purpose of forced prostitution has increased at a furious rate in recent years,** in which the victims are overwhelmingly women and children, and migrants away from their countries or communities of origin.

The **involvement of the private sector**, including in tourism, transport industries, in partnership with others is imperative in addressing the serious and **growing problem of trafficking of women and children**. Such industries can be directly affected by the trafficking of women and children within their own premises. Mrs. Mubarak briefed the meeting on the efforts of the "*Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement*"; including the round table discussion it organized in Greece in January 2006 to study the issue of trafficking especially in women and children.

Major companies from all over the world are now committing themselves to ethical principles and codes of conduct, towards a global fight against human trafficking namely to:

1. Explicitly demonstrating the position of ZERO tolerance against trafficking in human beings of women and children;
2. Developing a corporate strategy for an anti-trafficking policy which will permeate all their activities.
3. Ensuring that their personnel will comply with anti-trafficking policies.
4. Encouraging business partners, including suppliers, to apply ethical principles against human trafficking, and report and share information on best practices.

The First Lady referred to the concern of the sexual exploitation of children and its correlation with **the spread of HIV/AIDS**. The leadership role and the firm stand of the private sector and particularly companies in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS was greatly enhanced in their active commitment and involvement in putting a halt to the trafficking of women and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Discussion

A representative from UNICEF pinpointed that worldwide UNICEF has had a rich amount of experience in helping governments and the civil society to address the issue of trafficking from the perspective of preventative actions.

Regarding the issue of strengthening the legislative and the legal framework, UNICEF has worked particularly with several countries in helping countries of origin, transit and destination to develop a memorandum of understanding, to ensure closer cooperation both bilaterally & multilaterally to protect women and children.

The information on trafficking of women and children is lacking and more people need to be aware of this magnitude and scope of this problem. Therefore, since it is a world wide problem it needs global efforts.

UNICEF recommended having a dedicated staff which will be responsible in collecting the data and information related to the issue of trafficking and provides it to the MENA Region.

Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights: OHCHR

Trafficking has always been an area of concern to the OHCHR; and the office has developed specific guidelines on how to address this issue from a human rights perspective. The OHCHR has a special unit dealing with this issue and is willing to work with all the governments and actors that have participated in the consultation in order to further develop the guidelines from a comprehensive human rights perspective. In addition, the treaty monitoring bodies, including the CRC, have consistently highlighted the issues relating to the lack of data and the need to conduct research to highlight the issues, concerns and attain practical solutions to assist victims.

Recommendations from ECPAT International, ACCOR and the Ministry of Tourism

- Ensure that the NPAs include **clear definitions of different forms of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children**, including Trafficking, Pornography, Child Sex Tourism, Early Marriage & Sexual Exploitation including in domestic servitude.
- Identify causes of vulnerability and causes of sexual exploitation in tourism; understand manifestation of child sex tourism (geographic location, profile of children, venue, offenders, etc.) by way of situational analysis in order to ensure that an exact assessment of the situation is established on which plans of action can be determined.

- Raise awareness among tourism professionals on issues as well as build their capacity to collectively reject/repudiate child sex tourism in tourist destinations.
- Conduct information and awareness campaigns for domestic and international tourists, especially around existing hotlines for reporting tourism-related abuse, the profiles of vulnerable and exploited children, best practices for reporting to embassies, and legislation in effect in destination countries.
- Examine the community awareness programmes in tourists' destinations on issues of Child Sex Tourism.
- Promote the **Code of Conduct to protect children from sexual exploitation in travel & tourism**, as a prevention and protection system/tool to be launched at the national level in collaboration with the ECPAT network.
- Harmonize domestic laws with relevant international laws and instruments.
- Improve enforcement of legislation by ways of capacity building/training on children's rights, investigation techniques, and collaboration with international law enforcement agencies.
- Examine services available to vulnerable and exploited children in tourism destinations throughout Egypt.
- Coordinate among governmental and non-governmental child protection agencies and identification of responsibilities.
- Ensure existing referral systems, with particular attention to how these can be used or implemented in tourism venues.
- Examine domestic and international perpetrators who have been convicted to date in order to assess which third parties (taxi drivers, bus boys, tour operators, etc) are involved in facilitating child sex tourism.
- Organize a consultation with children and NGOs working with children on how children can be involved in the prevention of child sex tourism, such as through the use of children art work raising awareness on Child Sex Tourism to be used in tourism venues, such as hotels or in tourism-related information materials.

- Ensure that National Plans of Action identify specific actors who will be carrying out implementation as well as actors monitoring the process. An establishment of a permanent steering committee to monitor & support the implementation process is essential, composed of national government agencies and NGOs must be involved in monitoring the implementation of the national plan of action.
- Identify minimum standards & methodology for monitoring as an integral part of national plans of action and its (NPA) development.
- Ensure that the NPAs include time bound measurable objectives, and adequate financial allocations, with clear role identification for each partner in implementation.
- Ensure that child victim of CSEC is **neither criminalized nor stigmatized.**
- Adhere to the guidelines and ethical code on privacy of child victims, **such as banning the publishing of names or photos of child victims in the media.**
- Establish a media plan to gradually **sensitize the public to CSEC and raise awareness.**
- Submit detailed needs assessment for capacity building of agencies working in relevance to children and a clear drafting of capacity building plans in relation to child protection for:
 - A. The police & law enforcement agencies
 - B. Social workers
 - C. NGOs working with and for child rights/children
 - D. NGOs working in sustainable tourism in relation to child protection
 - E. Government agencies working on child related issues & governmental tourism agencies
 - F. The Media

To wrap up the debate, the First Lady of Egypt emphasized the need for a solid data base; law reform; law enforcement; awareness raising as well as a close partnership involving government; civil society namely the private sector and NGO's with the active involvement of children themselves. She added that the "*Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement*" is ready to cooperate with participants in the conference to consolidate the global efforts to protect vulnerable children from being trafficked.

Session Ten: Microsoft Computer Safety on the Net

Microsoft explained that childhood worldwide is in transformation, as there are now more than 16 million internet users around the world. Therefore, it is crucial that awareness is raised regarding the trend of the internet, and methods that can be used to promote safe usage for children on the internet.

Protecting children over the internet requires a **holistic approach**, as there are many different stakeholders involved; as there is a necessary partnership with public authorities, law enforcement, NGOs and other companies as part of the Microsoft strategy. Therefore, we have to look at it from all different dimensions, while also utilizing an approach in which all industry players will abide.

It is important to have a tool that will help the countries draft the activities and the four main pillars to protect the children on the internet to be included in the plan of action are:

- **The Legal Framework.** Each and every country has a legal framework, in which the laws are already existent. However, it is suggested to broaden the definition and include protection of children on the internet within the legal framework.
- **Involvement of different stakeholders.** (parents, schools, community centers and clubs, media, ministries of information, government and the law enforcement officials)
- **NGOs.** They are among the main key players since they are close to the grassroots and they are the ones voicing their opinions.
- **Awareness and guidelines.**

Components of the Tool Kit

The tool kit is a joint effort between the UN and Microsoft. It is an online resource center which compiles a group of materials in which different stakeholders can use to start an Internet Safety Program. It will be used to provide guidance and be used by all stakeholders. The main message of the tool kit is **how to protect children on the internet**. This kit encompasses different components, which include training material, websites and resources that can be accessed. It will also consist of a menu of different activities and how to run them, templates of downloadable brochures, powerpoint decks, banners, t-shirt designs, tent cards, talking points/messaging, etc.

The goal of this tool kit is to provide a country/organization with the tools and training documents to develop a local Computing Security and Internet

Safety Program; in which the target audience is children, parents, teachers and community leaders.

Discussion and Recommendations

Representative of UNICEF shared with participants that The International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC), which put together a review of laws in 184 countries to look at what national legislation address in terms of protection of children from internet base crimes, stated that of the 5 criteria related to the national legislation, only 5 countries out of the 184 countries met all the criteria. This means that 99 countries had no laws related to internet child pornography. Therefore, establishing legislation and ensuring its implementation is an issue that must be seriously taken into consideration.

In addition, it was reaffirmed that addressing **protection** alone is not sufficient, but rather **education and democracy** are both crucial elements that must be addressed. Education should focus more on values and ethics; in addition to the importance regarding competence of the child and the trust we can perform towards the child. Thus, **it was recommended** that educational schools organize meetings for parents to discuss certain topics related to safe internet use and that more democracy and improved communication is needed within the family and within the schools, an increased focus be allocated to the quality of education; in other words, the transition from dictation to active learning; and that greater attention be focused on child participation and respect for the views of the child within the family and school.

Furthermore, recommendations included:

- Focus on prevention as it is an absolute imperative in addressing the issue of child safety.
- Allocate more attention to prosecution of offenders.
- Clarify and differentiate between different usages of the internet, and focus should be on how to make internet usage safe.
- Advertise Microsoft through the media for certain websites that could be useful and beneficial for children, since there is a lack of advertising on the importance of the internet use and its pros and cons, and methods to ensure safe internet usage. Thus, there is a need to differentiate between 'internet for leisure' and 'internet for education'.

- Share material as soon as it is available to all parties concerned in the process.
- Ensure participation and contribution by different countries in the region. In addition, the original material which is being used should be adapted to all regions and be universal.
- Include the issue of children's computing safety as an official chapter in the UN Study on Violence against Children.
- Include the issue of children's computing safety as one of the thematic areas in the country plans of Action.
- Governments should review their current laws as they pertain to penalties for crimes against children, with a view to increase penalties for such crimes, in recognition of the seriousness of the crime. Special cyber laws may be needed for better child protection on the net. These laws need to cover cyber crimes against children and provide the legal framework for prosecution of such crimes. The national and regional activities on this issue shall be linked up with international cooperation such as the Interpol.
- Development of education and public awareness programs for children, parents, families, teachers and other groups who work with children, technology, media, NGOs, industry and others who are collaborating on developing information on both the benefits and potential risks of using the Internet. Ministries of Education should enforce standards and training for educators and require that education solutions regarding computer use include education on computing safety and child protection.
- Industry organizations should work with their local law enforcement to support investigations of crimes against children that are impacted by Internet use.
- Industry, in collaboration with government and other stakeholder, should provide and abide by the standards for child protection. Industry should be encouraged to provide educational awareness in addition to technology solutions.

Final Session: Closing Remarks and Recommendations

Reaffirming the commitments outlined in the regional consultation report of June 2005, and recognizing that the international recommendations will be launched in the final Study Report to be presented at the General Assembly 2006, this follow-up meeting focused on the importance of taking advantage of the continuing momentum to ensure implementation of the regional commitments and the Study recommendations at country level.

In order to ensure adequate support for the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Study, including the regional commitments, follow-up at three different levels will be critical (i) National Level, (ii) Regional Level, and (iii) International Level.

This meeting discussed the priorities at national level, and also the possibilities for the Regional level which is expected to take a central role in the overall follow-up process.

Recommendations and Results

At the National level: To identify a focal point within existing national bodies in charge of children's issues, in which the focal point would also act as the technical secretariat. These focal points would be responsible for the coordination of follow-up at the national level. Ideally, they would be linked by a (virtual) inter-country network of these focal points to share information and experiences.

Several countries presented their developments towards national plans; in addition to the presentation of several national plans and their updates on activities since the Regional Consultation of 2005 (See annexes).

Certain common actions were identified by this follow-up meeting as important across the region and these should be taken into consideration in all national plans, alongside priorities identified at the country level. The common actions include the need for coordination and strengthened action on prevention as well as responding in other ways after violence has occurred, related to:

- Data collection and monitoring of progress
- Review and implementation of the law
- Advocacy and awareness raising
- Maintaining the participation of children and improving reporting mechanisms for children
- Capacity building
- Service delivery

- Establishment of independent structures such as ombudspersons, national human rights institutions and observatories which address violence against children

At the Regional level: To establish a follow up mechanism was reaffirmed. In view of the achievements so far and to ensure the continuation of the momentum, the consensus emerged that the existing Steering Committee which was established in October 2004, to facilitate the Regional Consultation on Violence Against Children for the Middle East and North Africa in June 2005, should continue to coordinate the follow up at the regional level. The Steering Committee currently includes the Arab League, UN agencies, key NGOs, human rights institutions, and technical experts from research institutes, the media, and others. The meeting agreed that the Steering Committee should be strengthened with stronger government representation with equitable geographical distribution on a rotating basis.

The Steering Committee should primarily focus on follow up responsibilities to support the implementation of the regional commitments and the UN Study recommendations at country level. Reaffirming the sentiments of the regional consultation of June 2005, it was agreed that the responsibilities of this Committee should go beyond the mere preparations for the Study, to mobilise a societal movement to stop all forms of violence against children.

Participants recommended that the Advisory Technical Committee of the Arab League include the issue of violence against children as a permanent item on its agenda, follow-up the efforts of member countries in that regard, and receive periodic reports to support the Regional Steering Committee perform its duties.

Participants recommended that the General Assembly of the Arab League notify the Council of Arab Foreign Ministers with the recommendations of the Regional Conference in order to coordinate efforts, and give support to the UN resolution on Children as well as to the UN Secretary General Study reflecting the hopes and aspirations of children in the MENA region.

At the International Level: To take into consideration the mechanism provided by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Participants recommended providing a mechanism at the international level to follow-up the implementation of the final report of the UN Study on Violence against Children.