



South Asia Initiative To End Violence Against Children



SAIEVAC ANNOUNCES THE 3rd NACG MEETING & THE ORIENTATION ON POSITIVE DISCIPLINE AND LEGAL REFORM

South Asia Initiative To End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) will organize its 3rd National Action and Coordinating Group Against Violence Against Children (NACG) Meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 18-19 December 2013 followed by the orientation on positive discipline and legal reform from the 20-21st December 2013.

The events are being hosted by the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment, Government of Sri Lanka (SAIEVAC National Mechanism, Sri Lanka). The 3rd NACG and the Orientation Programme are expected to be attended by around 35 participants which includes the National Coordinators, the Chair and Co-Chairs of the NACG and relevant SACG agencies.

Following the 2nd NACG Consultation in Malé, Maldives, the SRS undertook series of follow up activities both at the Regional and National levels. Right after this meeting, the NACGs of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Pakistan had follow up meetings. The SRS also held face to face meetings with NACG Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India NACG Working Group and discussions over telephone and emails with other NACGs. The preparations for the 3rd Technical Consultation and the 4th Governing Board Meeting also provided excellent opportunities for National Level preparations supported by Plan, SAVE, ECPAT and WVI involving the NACGs.

The 4th Governing Board Meeting also held extended discussion on the nomination and the institutional processes for the participation of the CSO Board Representatives, taking into consideration the current status of representation as Observers. The SRS will table this for information to the 3rd NACG Consultation.

The SRS has also initiated the process of involving the NACGs in the different SAIEVAC Project activities including the Missing Child Alerts Trilateral Project.

The coordination between the SAIEVAC Government Mechanisms and the NACGs have significantly improved since the 1st NACG Meeting and the level of comfort and confidence has greatly enhanced the representation of the Member States in SAIEVAC Regional events. However with increased interaction in national and regional level activities, the institutional arrangements within the NACGs and the inter-relation of the NGO/CSOs and the UN/INGO partners within the framework has come up for further discussions. The representation of Networks (one example) on the NACGs while

providing for greater involvement of partners, does pose challenges in terms of actual convergence of support based on specific agency roles and responsibilities for taking the NACG/SAIEVAC agenda forward.

Therefore as we move this important VaC/SAIEVAC mechanism forward, there is a need to create a better understanding on some of these issues jointly. Towards this end, the SRS will link with each Member State to ensure that there is adequate preparation for the 3rd NACG meeting that includes the follow up actions to the 2nd NACG Meeting.

The 3rd NACG will therefore be organized with the following objectives:

- *To assess progress on the decisions, recommendations of the 2nd NACG held in Male' in April 2013;*
- *To review and re-energize the institutionalization process of the NACGs in the different Member States;*
- *Create focus on the role of the NACGs in expanding the mission of SAIEVAC through different issue based actions;*
- *To discuss key focus areas for 2014 based on the decisions arrived at during the 3rd Technical Consultation and the 4th GB Meeting in Bhutan, and*
- *Bring NACGs and Coordinators up to date with the MCA project activities.*

The 2 days '**Orientation on Positive Discipline and Legal Reform**' for the SAIEVAC Coordinators and the NACG Chairs following the 3rd NACG is being organised as part of the Regional Campaign against Corporal Punishment supported by Save the Children.

To effectively challenge corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading punishment of children, it is important for advocates and partners to work together to develop a strategy for prohibiting and eliminating it. Prohibition of corporal punishment is the only safe foundation for an effective child protection system and ensuring equal protection of children under the law. No country can claim to have an effective child protection system in place while its laws continue to permit or authorize hitting and hurting children.

In order to prohibit corporal punishment effectively, it requires a clear understanding of why prohibition is needed (the human rights imperative), what should be prohibited (all corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading punishment), how prohibition can be enacted (law review and reform), and how such laws can be enforced. There are two essential components of law reform to achieve prohibition: (1) removing (repealing) all defenses and authorizations of corporal punishment and (2) enacting explicit prohibition of corporal punishment and other cruel and degrading punishment.

Simply removing legal defenses and authorizations for corporal punishment is a "silent" reform. It does not send a clear educational message to society that corporal punishment is unlawful. The law needs to be clear and explicit so that adults and courts cannot misinterpret it. Prohibition is achieved when the repeal of the defense is accompanied by the insertion of a statement which makes it clear that assault can no longer be justified as punishment or correction.

Legal reform to prohibit corporal punishment in all settings is vital, but it will not achieve real change for children unless change is also achieved in the prevailing attitudes which condone and support its continued use and in the conditions which deter or impede change. The promotion of positive

parenting is an integral part of effective implementation of prohibition in law. Action towards ending corporal punishment should tackle both its legality and its practice.

SAIEVAC's campaign against corporal punishment of children is carried out through the national mechanisms of the participating member states. Hence, an orientation on positive discipline and legal reform has been planned for the national mechanisms of SAIEVAC as per the campaign work plan for 2013.

The orientation workshop is being organized with the aim to instigate and strengthen national level initiatives to end all corporal punishment of children in all settings.

The specific objectives of the orientation workshop are to:

- *Strengthen the understanding around legal reform and factors involved towards achieving explicit legal prohibition as a support base for the ongoing campaign against corporal punishment in South Asia region, and*
- *Sensitize on the approach towards positive discipline in everyday parenting and teaching.*

Please see Tentative Agenda of the NACG Meeting at www.saievac.org

About SAIEVAC

The South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) is a regional inter-governmental body including representatives from civil society and children with a vision that all children, girls and boys, throughout South Asia enjoy their right to an environment free from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and discrimination. SAIEVAC was formally granted the status of SAARC Apex Body for Children during the 17th SAARC Summit in Maldives in November 2011. It is the first ever regional body to represent the cause of South Asian Children at the highest level of SAARC.

SAIEVAC's Vision

- *All children, girls and boys, throughout South Asia enjoy their right to an environment free from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and discrimination.*

SAIEVAC's Aims

- *To ensure the realization of children's rights as stated in the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols ;*
- *To prevent and respond to all forms of neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence against children in all settings;*
- *To promote the adoption, implementation, and monitoring of integrated national strategies with adequate budgets and resource allocation to prevent and protect children from violence and ensure response;*
- *To reinforce regional cooperation to end violence against children in South Asia.*