

STRENGTHENING RESPONSES TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN ASIA

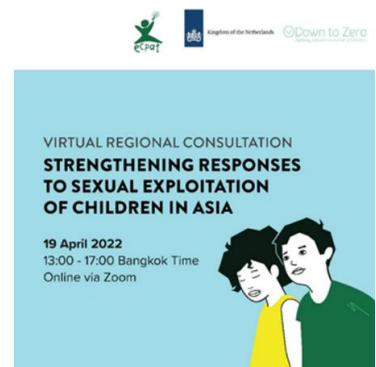
[Virtual Regional Consultation, 19 April 2022]

OUTCOME DOCUMENT

Background

Following the first Regional Consultation on Strengthening Responses to Sexual Exploitation of Children in Asia in the Context of Covid-19¹, **ECPAT International**, in cooperation with the **Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Indonesia** and with the **Down to Zero Alliance**, organized a Virtual Regional Consultation to continue to provide a platform for enhanced collaboration towards ending the sexual exploitation of children, and to keep the momentum towards the event to be organized with the support of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the second half of 2022.

The second regional consultation provided an exchange platform for key stakeholders, including law enforcement representatives, liaison officers working in South Asia and Southeast Asia, representatives of the intergovernmental bodies (AIPA and SAIEVAC) and civil society organisations, in particular ECPAT International and the Down to Zero Alliance. A total of 93 participants registered for the event from 19 countries in Asia, Europe and Australia. 40% of the participants attended the first regional consultation organised by ECPAT International and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Thailand.



The Virtual Regional Consultation resulted in increased commitments to:

- 1. Improve regional legal and policy frameworks** to protect children from sexual exploitation in Asia, based on the [legal checklist](#) in as much as the document endorsed by the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPA) and expected to be internalized by South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC). This, in particular, through:
 - **Criminalizing grooming** of children for sexual purposes including through Internet and other communication technologies that facilitate online or offline sexual exploitation.
 - **Improving the use of the extraterritorial jurisdiction and extradition legislation** as a tool to fight sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism and online environment.
- 2. Reinforce cooperation channels** while addressing online and offline sexual exploitation of children to combat transnational child sexual abuse through strengthened exchange among the law enforcement and civil society organisations between different countries.
- 3. Work together to make progress towards** the third Regional Consultation to be organised in cooperation with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the second half of 2022.



Watch a [video summary](#) from the event.²

¹ The first Regional Consultation was held in a hybrid way at the premises of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Thailand in November 2020, Bangkok.

² Please note, that until confirmed by the speakers, this is an unlisted video not publically available.



Kingdom of the Netherlands



Framework to improve prevention and responses to sexual exploitation of children in Asia

Lambert Grijns, Ambassador to Indonesia, Timor-Leste and ASEAN, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Watch the full video recorded message [here](#).

The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Indonesia, together with the Down to Zero Alliance, and ECPAT organized this regional consultation to continue to provide a platform for enhanced collaboration towards ending the sexual exploitation of children. The sexual exploitation of children is a global phenomenon that requires increasing international cooperation as the situation has worsened due to failing protection systems, natural disasters, political instability, rising poverty, closing of schools and children being increasingly online, often not supervised. Due to the continuing crisis, the circumstances are there to allow sex offenders to gain trust and access victims both online and in the context of domestic and foreign travel.

One of the most fundamental dimensions of the vulnerability of children is linked with the sexual violence. Children need protection against any form of abuse and exploitation. To protect children from sex offenders there is an urgent need to criminalise grooming and improve the use of extra territorial jurisdiction and extradition legislation as tools to fight online exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism. Beyond legal frameworks, there are several practical obstacles in the fight against this crime, including obstacles related to improved cooperation channels. Therefore, it is essential to overcome them through these enhanced partnerships.

Gerard Van Heerwaarde, Dutch Police Liaison Officer for Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

It is important to keep creating opportunities and a platform for stakeholders to build connections. It is only through enhanced cooperation and collaboration among all the parties involved that we could obtain better outcomes and results in the fight against sexual exploitation of children. The Covid-19 Pandemic might have stopped sex offenders to travel to Asia, but it did not, unfortunately, stop the abuse. While children were confined home, surfing the internet to study, play and meet their friends, predators have shown increased flexibility in shifting their offences in the online environment. This has led to a surge in the reported cases of child sexual abuse online.

The Dutch government is committed to respond to this challenge. Although some legislation is in place and international agreements have been made – it's not good enough yet. This initiative of joint effort should be taken as a good practice in addressing sexual abuse and exploitation. There is a need for continued cooperation, and effort from all parties involved, especially in light of the transnational nature of the phenomenon and the continuous rise of new communication technologies.

Guillaume Landry, Executive Director, ECPAT International

There are many reasons why cooperation is needed, and the real challenge is to set up mechanisms for information to flow in a multi-sectoral way, in the best interest of the child. Another challenge is to prevent - not only address sexual exploitation of children. Loopholes that have been identified in the first round of consultations in Thailand are still to be fulfilled. Grooming must be criminalised.

There is an incredible potential of collaboration between law enforcement authorities in addressing and preventing sexual exploitation of children. The local police force is the closest actor to children, making them a critical actor in building trust within the community. Addressing sexual exploitation of children globally requires more than sharing trainings at the international level. It requires national strategies and policing that international cooperation, and such a cooperation platform can support. This conversation is instrumental in helping us to bring this practical sense, linking the policies and legislation to the application, close to the circle of effects on children that can really make the difference in our global world.

Regional frameworks to protect children from sexual exploitation in Asia

Nguyen Tuong Van, Secretary General, The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPA)

The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPA) consists of approximately 3000 parliamentarians and supports the 10 governments of ASEAN countries in achieving the goals of ASEAN community, including in relation to child protection. The COVID 19 pandemic has exposed children at heightened risk of becoming victims of sexual exploitation. As this situation has become a common concern in our ASEAN Member States, AIPA adopted a number of [resolutions](#) on strengthening legal framework to eliminate violence against children, especially to protect them from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism. Over the last years, with the support from the ECPAT International, AIPA convened workshops to strengthen regional and international frameworks and brought together parliamentarians' experts from ASEAN and representatives from organizations working in child protection.



In 2022, AIPA will resubmit a resolution for the establishment of the AIPA Working Group on Children at the next General Assembly. AIPA believes that the Working Group on Children will provide a platform for parliamentarians to share information on the existing legislation and to continue to improve national legal frameworks. **AIPA encouraged the member parliaments to effectively use the [legal checklist](#) with key legal interventions to protect children.** Whilst recognizing progress, there is a strong awareness of how much work still needs to be done together by all the organizations, including Parliaments, civil society and regional organisations.

Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, The South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)

The South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) is an intergovernmental body working in partnership with Children and Civil Society Organizations, with a vision that all children, girls and boys, throughout South Asia should enjoy their right to live in an environment free from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and discrimination. This regional pioneer initiative driven by the commitment of South Asian governments from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, strongly engages a wide-range of stakeholders including governments, children, INGOs, UN Agencies and civil society organizations.



The 8th SAIEVAC Governing Board Meeting held in Maldives in 2019 endorsed the **Regional Action Plan of SAIEVAC to End Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation including Online Safety (CSAE&OS)** in South Asia. To ensure protection of children in travel and tourism, on 17 May 2022, SAIEVAC internalised the [legal checklist](#) with key legal interventions, already endorsed by AIPA for Southeast Asia, as an integral part of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) of SAIEVAC in South Asia. The legal checklist has the potential to greatly complement to strengthen the RAP by providing a framework to monitor the implementation of the RAP by SAIEVAC mechanisms.



Kingdom of the Netherlands



Key note speech - criminalising grooming of children and using extraterritorial jurisdiction and extradition legislation as a tool to fight sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism, and online

Marissa Ward, Detective Senior Constable, ARGOS, Child Abuse & Sexual Crime Group, Crime & Intelligence Command, Queensland Police Service, Australia

ARGOS is the Australian police taskforce set up for the purpose of investigating online child sexual exploitation. As this is a borderless crime, ARGOS has put in place several partnerships statewide and internationally to refer evidence to other countries and to investigate the offenders. Australia is composed of eight states and territories, and each state has its own legislation that applies to child sexual offenses and online grooming. While some states do not have robust legislation, Queensland has a good legal framework in place. Australia also benefits from Commonwealth legislation. Any state in the country can implement that legislation, and Commonwealth legislation encompasses grooming offences and procuring of children on the internet.

In Queensland, there is the offense of using internet to procure children to engage in sexual acts. The law applies also if the act did not occur, but if the offender has taken steps to procure a child to engage in a sexual act and applies to the online environment. This law also applies in the cases where this procuring of children is done via a third person. This legislation is quite unique in that it applies both when the offender is talking with a child, or with a cover operative officer.

As for the methods applied by the unit, profiles of children are shared in related platforms, namely for adult dating. In these platforms, the cover operative officer accesses the website and adds photos. As soon as anyone starts a conversation with this profile, the agent would explicitly tell that it is a child, that is a person under 18 years old. This would deter most people from continuing conversations. However, in the presented case, it did not stop the travelling sex offender. While the individual groomed the child online, as he was planning his return travel to Australia, he started talking with the child about in-person meetings with purpose of performing sexual activities. Surveillance team followed the individual from the airport, and also found the hotel booked right behind the meeting point arranged with the child. A search was conducted in the hotel room where a backpack with alcohol and condoms was found. The investigators were able to apply the Commonwealth legislation of online grooming.

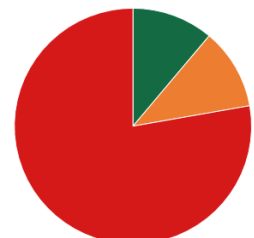
In case, if the offender did not travel to Queensland, there are extradition provisions that would allow the investigation team to apply for an extradition warrant. If the extradition was approved, then New South Wales would have arrested the offender. After the approval, the police of Queensland would travel down to New South Wales and take the individual into custody facing charges in the Queensland court, using the commonwealth legislation. As long as the investigation can show that part of the offence occurred in Australia, and the messages were received in Australia, the legislation can be applied regardless of the fact that the offender was travelling outside of the country (in the described case above, in Europe) when the grooming offences were committed. Australia has legislation that allows to charge offenders with child grooming and procuring offences even if part of the offence crosses other jurisdictions.

Referrals to Argos come from regional police if they believe that an offender is grooming a child online, but the child does not want to make a formal complaint, or the parents do not want to go through the court process. Investigators can engage under a controlled operation with the offender, so the child does not have to go to court. The undercover work must be approved by a judge before the operation starts.

WORKING GROUP 1 - Criminalising grooming of children for sexual purposes including through Internet and other communication technologies to facilitate either online or offline sexual exploitation

Regional overview from the [country legal analysis](#): Key Legal Interventions to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism indicated, that out of 9 analysed countries in Southeast Asia: Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam, and in South Asia: Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka only the Philippines criminalises grooming, while Bangladesh does it partially.³

Criminalise grooming



YES PARTIAL NO



Read more

INDICATOR: The national legislation criminalises grooming of children for sexual purposes including through Internet and other communication technologies to facilitate either online or offline sexual exploitation.	
ASSESSMENT	JUSTIFICATION
Yes	The national legislation fully criminalises grooming of children for sexual purposes to facilitate either online or offline sexual exploitation. In case of offline exploitation, the act is criminalised regardless of whether the solicitation has been followed by material acts leading to an in-person meeting, without a requirement that the meeting takes place.
Partially	The national legislation criminalises grooming of children for sexual purposes but only when the solicitation has been followed by material acts leading to an in-person meeting; OR The national legislation criminalises the grooming of children for sexual purposes but not explicitly when this is conducted using the Internet or other communication technology.
No	The national legislation does not provide any provisions that criminalise grooming of children for sexual purposes.

Key experiences and insights from the region:

- **Collaboration between law enforcement** and other relevant stakeholders is crucial, as are projects such as [Disrupting Harm](#). Although grooming of children for sexual purposes is more and more prioritised, it's still not criminalised. A lot of work remains to be done in this regard throughout the region.
- Criminalisation of grooming of children for sexual purposes has been included in the draft Child Protection Law in **Cambodia**. The law has not yet passed but is currently being drafted and once passed it will be disseminated and implemented throughout the country.
- Children do not possess the tools and knowledge to properly use the Internet. Parents also do not, which causes problems such as sharing self-generated CSAM or harassment after sending those materials. **Bangladesh** has some reporting mechanisms, but those need to be widely promoted, particularly in terms of awareness and their use. As for the legal framework, Bangladesh currently criminalises sexual exploitation of children, but not explicitly grooming, although some sections of national legislation could be invoked to cover also cases related to grooming. Also, there is a lack of harmonisation of the terminology, causing inconsistency when tackling the subject.
- Law enforcement officials in **South Korea** follow the same methods groomers use to contact children before the perpetrators do. Grooming has recently been criminalised in Korea, yet challenges remain with its effective implementation. There should be a push in educating and raising awareness among children and parents on how to use the internet and act in online environments, while explaining risks and benefits of its use. There is a need to develop techniques and regulations that protect children from grooming. The critical question is not to encourage children to stop using the internet but teach them how to use it safely. In order to create an enabling environment where children feel comfortable reporting their abuse experiences, a victim-blaming attitude has to be addressed.

³ [Global Progress Towards Ending the Sexual Exploitation of Children](#); [Legal Checklist: Key Legal Interventions to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism](#) and the [Assessment Matrix](#).

- **Indonesia** has just passed a law on sexual violence, contemplating an article on grooming, but is not entirely focused on the issue. Grooming has been investigated by the cybercrime unit in the country. Parents and the population should be educated on how to use smartphones, how to report suspected cases. There is a need for better coordination between online providers and technological companies.
- Some preventive actions from **Norway** might also be useful in ASEAN contexts: Facebook page was created to receive questions and concerns from online users, while offering guidance to step up prevention efforts. There was also the possibility of discussing sensitive issues directly with police officials. This system facilitated contact with police and allowed them to disseminate materials that focused on the risks of grooming.
- Grooming is not yet criminalised in **Thailand**, which creates some obstacles to operations. Grooming is an important issue, as part of prevention of sexual exploitation of children. Apart from the legislation aspect, collaborations and information exchange between the industry and law enforcement is crucial in tackling online grooming.
- **The Philippines** Section 4(h) of the Anti-Child Pornography Act (2009) prohibits any person from engaging in the luring or grooming of a child, and has multiple laws that can be used for offenders based in the country. However, sometimes perpetrators are based abroad and this needs to be addressed.

Key challenges in relation to criminalising grooming:

- **Definition and understanding of grooming:** law enforcement is not always aware of what 'grooming' is.
- **Coordination between different actors** is often insufficient.
- **Use of new technologies** and how to best/increasingly use AI to recognize online grooming.
- **Limitations of legal framework:** there is a need for specific laws to criminalise grooming, as countries lack specific laws and procedures to criminalise online grooming to allow authorities to proactively investigate suspected cases. Some countries already have laws in place, but there are still several loopholes. This is aggravated by the inconsistency in the definition of *child* under the law among various countries and requirements of providing substantially incriminating evidence to initiate a criminal investigation.
- **Complexity of reporting cases** related to grooming should be simplified.
- **Lack of knowledge and education of the general public:** there are persistent bias against children, and limited awareness regarding the issue of online and offline sexual exploitation of children amongst the communities. Education to children, parents, caregivers and educators about the dangers on the internet is lacking, and insufficient attention is paid on prevention of grooming. There is also lack of knowledge amongst the general public on how to take initiative when an incident of child sexual exploitation occurs in the community and reluctance or unwillingness of the victims to cooperate with law enforcement due to stigma and sizable gifts from offenders.
- **Lack of a specific law enforcement units:** specialized police is needed to gather evidence online and put it together to identify the offenders; there is a need for functioning special task forces or departments that could focus on online sexual exploitation of children.
- **Underreporting due to** absence of a child-friendly environment in police and courts.

Key actions needed to criminalise and prevent grooming:

Increase education and raising awareness

- Involve and empower children and young people.
- Raise awareness and engage with the community to increase reporting.
- Create awareness amongst the law enforcement agencies on what grooming is and how to track, monitor, and detain perpetrators.
- Promote safe internet usage for children, starting from primary school and raising awareness on

grooming and the risks of the internet among children and families (digital parenting).

- Conduct awareness campaigns engaging all stakeholders.

Strengthen partnerships involving different actors

- Establish/maintain national task forces engaging law enforcement and private sector specialized in handling cases of sexual exploitation of children online.
- Ensure accessible legal support to children and their families.
- Promote initiatives of law enforcement agencies working together with NGOs to educate children and caregivers on the dangers posed online.
- Create awareness amongst the representatives of educational institutions and religious leaders on the definition and forms of sexual abuse and exploitation, and preventive measures.
- Cooperate with the private sector (IT Sector and communication services providers) and law enforcement, to strengthen child-protection systems.

Improve reporting mechanisms

- Activate the local committees at the grassroots level to protect the children from sexual abuse and exploitation.
- Allow children to report notwithstanding the consent and awareness of their parents or caregivers.

Improve legal and policy frameworks

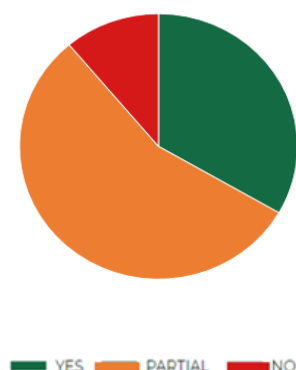
- Laws regulating access of children to the online environment.
- Make international referrals and protocols easier, faster and accountable.

Reinforce the role of police in online settings

- Focus on proactive prevention of sexual exploitation of children in online context.
- Capacity building for law enforcement agencies.

WORKING GROUP 2: Using extraterritorial jurisdiction and extradition legislation as a tool to fight sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel, tourism and online

Establish by law extra-territorial jurisdiction



Regional overview from the [country legal analysis](#): Key Legal Interventions to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism indicated, that out of 9 analysed countries in Southeast Asia: Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam, and in South Asia: Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka only Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam establish by law extra-territorial jurisdiction within the parameters of Article 4 OPSC,2 for all offences of SEC, including those occurring in the online environment.⁴



 Read more

⁴ [Global Progress Towards Ending the Sexual Exploitation of Children: Legal Checklist: Key Legal Interventions to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism](#) and the [Assessment Matrix](#).

INDICATOR: The country has appropriate extraterritoriality provisions for sexual exploitation of children crimes.	
ASSESSMENT	JUSTIFICATION
Yes	The national legislation explicitly provides for both active ³ and passive ⁴ extraterritoriality for all offences of sexual exploitation of children covered by the legislation of the concerned State. The legislation may or may not specify if offences committed in the online environment are included.
Partially	The national legislation explicitly provides for either active or passive extraterritoriality for offences of sexual exploitation of children; OR The applicability of (passive and active) extraterritoriality provisions are limited in their scope. For example, extraterritoriality is applicable only for certain of the offences related to sexual exploitation of children or does not cover perpetrators having their habitual residence in the country); or the provisions are applicable but depending on certain conditions (e.g. passive jurisdiction but the offender must be found on the State's territory).
No	Extraterritoriality provisions – neither active nor passive jurisdiction – do not apply to any offences related to sexual exploitation of children.

None of the above analysed countries fully include in extradition treaties the sexual exploitation of children as extraditable offences and apply when appropriate the rules of article 5 OPSC, regardless the nationality of the (alleged) offender. Only Nepal does NOT require the principle of double criminality for proceeding with extraterritorial jurisdiction or extradition for sexual offences against children.

Key experiences and insights from the region:

- **INTERPOL** is a network of 195 member countries. It facilitates information sharing through various notices which are powerful tools in the framework of extraterritoriality of the law that can be used to locate, arrest and/or prosecute travelling sex offenders. Interpol promotes the use of notices through a specialised group on crimes against children. Interpol facilitates international and regional cooperation and arrests of transnational child sex offenders. At country levels, the investigative unit in charge of the case must be able to share information on the offender and know how to do it. In that way the offender can be located and arrested. To this end, Interpol promotes the use of [Interpol Notices](#) that serve different purposes.
 - **Red Notices** are used to locate, detain, arrest and/or obtain some restriction of movement of people wanted (Red Notices are mostly used for extradition purposes). Any member country can issue a Red Notice provided that the person wanted has been charged and prosecuted. There are, however, specific requirements that must be fulfilled in order to issue a Red Notice. For instance, the person wanted must have committed a serious ordinary law crime. Moreover, the notice must include specific information related to the case, such as the law covering the offence, the summary of the facts, the maximum penalties provided by the law, and the judicial decision.
 - **Blue Notices** allow the investigator to locate the suspect and obtain additional information about his/her identity, location, or activities in relation to a crime. Differently from the Red Notice, the Blue Notice cannot result in the arrest or restriction of movement of the suspect but serve the purpose of obtaining more information.
 - **Green Notices** enable investigators to provide warnings about a person's criminal activities, where the person is considered to be a possible threat to public safety. As such, they can be used in relation to investigating and/or preventing sex offenders from traveling abroad.
- **Challenges exist in cooperation and information exchange** in the region, for example based on a complaint filed against a Belgian citizen for sexual abuse in Asia, a Belgian prosecutor could not process an offender as no denunciation was received from the Asian authorities.

- **Double criminality requirements** need to be removed and laws harmonised among countries in order for offenders to be prosecuted. Double criminality requirement represents an obstacle to bring offenders to justice especially with respect to grooming.
- **Death penalty** needs to be removed, as it is a strong impediment to international police investigation and renders it impossible to extradite offenders to EU countries.
- **Institutional care** is a setting where children are trafficked and sexually exploited.
- A practice of making peace-making process between victims and offenders, that leads to a high degree of impunity of offenders in the region.
- The Dutch prosecutor can **prosecute these offenders in the Netherlands** even though the offence took place in another country, or can hand the prosecution to the foreign country where the offence took place.

Key challenges in relation to using extraterritorial jurisdiction and extradition legislation as a tool to fight sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel, tourism and online:

- Obstacles in the exchange of case-related information.
- Discrepancies in the use of Interpol notices – not all the countries have legal frameworks that allow them to issue notices, while other countries do not respond proactively to prevent sexual exploitation of children after receiving Interpol notices.
- Death penalty needs to be stopped; it makes it impossible for EU law enforcement to work on cases that can end up in death penalty. There is a possibility of including guarantees of not imposing death penalty, settled upfront.
- Gaps in legal frameworks that make it possible for convicted child sex offenders can travel to other countries in the region.
- Limited knowledge of the extraterritorial laws between the Philippines and other countries, extraterritoriality and extradition provisions are often not used for cases in the Indian context.
- The Australian trafficking and exploitation laws prevent the application of extraterritoriality for child sexual exploitation offenses occurring with trafficking overseas.
- High levels of impunity due to the widespread habits in the region to ask victims to “make peace” with the offenders, leading to impunity.
- The double criminality element represents an obstacle for prosecution.
- Criminal record of the offenders not always available and accessible to other countries.

Key actions needed to improve the use of extraterritorial jurisdiction and extradition legislation:

- Promote and **increase the use of Interpol notices** among investigators (through child protection groups, training, etc.) and **increase connection of countries from the region** to the [International Child Sexual Exploitation \(ICSE\) image and video database](#) that is an intelligence and investigative tool, which allows specialized investigators to share data on cases of child sexual abuse.
- **Support the establishment of the ASEAN Extradition Treaty**, currently being discussed as part of a Working Group.
- **Stop death penalty and introduce a minimum length of the penalty** for the crimes related to the sexual exploitation of children.
- Continue to **engage parliamentarians and policy makers** from the region to improve and harmonise legal and policy frameworks based on the [legal checklist](#).
- **Create a children caucus/working group as part of AIPA** to build support for ideas that strengthen child protection related legislations across ASEAN countries.
- High-level network of law enforcement is required to be proactive to improve strategic cooperation.
- **Protect children above the age of consent** ex. 16-18 years old from sexual exploitation.

Key actions needed in the region:

- Promote and increase the use of **Interpol notices** among investigators and connection to Interpol database.
- Engage **parliamentarians and policy makers** from the region to step up the process of improving and harmonising laws.
- Promote **education and awareness among children and families** on the dangers in the online environment and provide education and training among all stakeholders with a view to increasing reporting.
- Strengthen accessible **legal support** in case an incident of CSE takes place.
- Increase **cooperation between law enforcement agencies and NGOs**.
- Enhance **cooperation with the private sector** (travel and tourism, ICT Sector, including communication services providers and financial) and law enforcement to strengthen child-protection systems.
- Focus actions and resources not only on responses, but also on **proactive prevention of sexual exploitation of children** in online and offline contexts.

Way forward

Lida Tolenaars, Thematic Police Liaison Officer to the Philippines, National Police of the Netherlands

As Dutch police we feel responsible for what is happening in your countries regarding the sexual exploitation of children and that's why we would like to support you on all fronts and join forces. These types of crimes do not stop at the borders, so we need to collaborate. We therefore wholeheartedly support this event organised by ECPAT and the Down to Zero Alliance and we would like to **invite you to the follow-up event to be organised in the second half of the year with the Dutch Embassy**. Together we will be stronger in combating these crimes.

Hanneke Kramps, Team Leader, Terre des Hommes and Down to Zero Alliance

Terre des Hommes is the lead organisation of the Down to Zero alliance. The alliance is a unique partnership of the Ministry with Dutch specialist NGO's from the Netherlands with Civil Society Organisation's in Asia and Latin America, all experts on the prevention and eradication of sexual exploitation of children. Increased international cooperation is necessary to protect children from sexual exploitation, and to ensure that progress made in the past years is not going to waste due to the pandemic. Sexual exploitation of children is an important topic, it is also a taboo topic but it happens worldwide and is a complex and multi-faceted problem. Reducing it means working with a score of different actors. "Build back better" project aims to reduce the sexual exploitation of children and young people and to empower them to raise their voice, especially after the COVID19 pandemic. The pandemic has increased the vulnerability of children to sexual exploitation, both online and offline. It is crucial to continue collaborating with law enforcement not only in response to grooming and sexual exploitation of children cases, but also in preventing them. One of the challenges of our program is to fight the shame and stigma that victims experience. The Down to Zero Alliance and partners in Asia – through this event – strengthened a platform to improve collaboration between key actors in the region and civil society organisations on this very important topic.



Evaluation survey

The results from the evaluation survey conducted among the participants of this consultation indicate that

providing this collaboration platform was very relevant and allowed to involve key actors of change. It showed avenues for further collaboration by tapping into existing regional initiatives and agendas. It allowed us to understand the progress made as well as challenges in cooperation between countries that need to be addressed.

In the next regional consultation, the participants would like to see the following topics addressed:

- Grooming and extraterritorial legislation and extradition laws: continue to work on the topics already addressed with more insight into national level perspectives, and more case studies and discussions on practical challenges and what each country has done to overcome those challenges; include updates on what progress was made at country and regional levels.
- Sex offender's registries and criminal background checks.
- Child protection standards for the industry (travel and tourism, ICT, financial sector etc.)
- Improving cooperation among law enforcement through Interpol green notices and other mechanisms.
- Age of consent.
- Removal of statutes of limitation.
- Livestreaming and online sexual exploitation of children.
- Interview of child and child-friendly investigation methods.
- Balancing the rights of children in the case of child on child offending (e.g., those of the child victim/survivor and those of the child in conflict with the law), effective methods of legislating and implementing close-in-age exemptions, etc.

Documents

- **Participants list** shared internally to foster networking and partnership.
- **Legal Checklist: Key Legal Interventions to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism** and the **Assessment Matrix**
- **Country legal analysis:** www.ecpat.org/countries available for Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam; Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- **Issues Paper** [Extraterritorial jurisdiction and extradition legislation as tools to fight sexual exploitation of children - What are the challenges and what can be done?](#)
- **BORDERLESS!? An explorative study of the instruments in relation to (convicted) offenders of transnational child sexual abuse – Summary**, Bureau Beke: Joey Wolsink, Hester de Boer and Anton van Wijk; Ecorys: Linette de Swart and Gabriëlle op 't Hoog.

Contact points

ECPAT International

Deputy Executive Director, Thomas Muller, thomasm@ecpat.org

Head of Programme on child protection in travel and tourism: Gabriela Kühn, gabrielak@ecpat.org

Regional Coordinator South-East Asia: Rangsimadee Deesawadee rangsimad@ecpat.org

Regional Coordinator for South Asia: Shrinkhala Thapa shrinkhalat@ecpat.org

The consultation was organised by ECPAT International Secretariat as part of the project Building Back Better implemented with the financial assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands through the Down to Zero Programme with Defence for Children- ECPAT Netherlands.