

Background Note: SAIEVAC

In 2001, based on the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations General Assembly called for a global study on violence against children. A regional consultation for South Asia on “violence against Children” was held in Islamabad in May 2005, where ministers, senior government officials, representatives from SAARC¹, representatives from civil society, INGOs, UN agencies, the UN Study Secretariat, bilateral agencies, experts and resource persons, children and young people, the media and opinion formers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka came together.

One of the major outcomes of the Regional Consultation was the formation of the “South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)”² which is a regional mechanism initiated with the vision of ending all forms of violence against all children in South Asia.

SAIEVAC works within the mandate of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution and the SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia.

SAIEVAC is composed of representatives from the governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SAIEVAC activities are coordinated by a Regional Secretariat currently hosted by the Government of Nepal.

SAIEVAC has held four consultations to date hosted by Pakistan (2006), India (2007), Nepal (2008/2010) with support from the South Asia Coordinating Group on Violence Against Women and Children (SACG)³, to consolidate work throughout the region and to bring this agenda to the forefront of government debate.

The 4th SAIEVAC Consultation was held in Kathmandu on 21-22 January, 2010. After taking stock of progress and the opportunities presented by this Forum, participants, in collaboration with SAARC and SACG, decided to create a new Institutional Framework for ending violence against children throughout the region which includes regional and national commitment to action through the development of an agreed workplan with indicators that measure progress. The participants also decided to change the name from SAF to the “South Asian Initiative to End Violence Against Children” (SAIEVAC).

¹ *The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established when its Charter was formally adopted on December 8, 1985 by the Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SAARC provides a platform for the peoples of South Asia to work together in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding. It aims to accelerate the process of economic and social development in Member States. Afghanistan joined SAARC in 2007.*

² *SAIEVAC was previously named “The South Asian Forum for Ending Violence Against Children”. The name was changed in 2010 to broaden the scope of work and to establish a regional centre to end violence against children.*

³ *The South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Women and Children (SACG) is an inter agency group comprising of UN agencies and International NGOs working against violence against women and children in the region. This group offers financial and technical support to SAF.*