



Report of the twenty-first meeting of the

**TASK FORCE  
FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN TOURISM**  
**(London, UK, 12 November 2007)**

1. The Task Force for the Protection of Children in Tourism held its twenty-first meeting in London on 12 November 2007, as part of the parallel events held during WTM. The meeting, which was attended by approx. 70 delegates, featured a Special Session on Successful Strategies and Good Practices against Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism (SECT).

### **OPENING REMARKS**

2. The Chairman of the Task Force **Dr. Dawid de Villiers** opened the Task Force meeting by welcoming participants from 22 governments, 5 intergovernmental organizations, 6 international and regional tourism organizations, 9 national associations and companies, 20 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and 2 educational institutions.

3. The Chairman underlined the strong representation of delegates from governments and the different tourism sectors and expressed his satisfaction for the constant growth in participation and the progress made in involving, informing and connecting people to create a global network for the protection of children, since the inception of the group in 1997. But sadly, he added, the exploitation of children had grown as well, expanding more and more its presence through the internet. Dr. de Villiers believed that the activities carried out in several countries had led to a much better understanding of the problem worldwide. But, nevertheless, the Task Force needed to work harder.

4. Dr. de Villiers reminded that in the last meeting held in Berlin in March 2007, the Task Force decided to broaden its field of focus to the exploitation of children in general. This was due to the fact that one form of exploitation often led to another form, linking the sexual exploitation to trafficking in children and young people and to child labour. The Chairman explained that the Task Force had already started to work in these related areas. The reason of the extension of this mandate was due to the agreement reached with the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, to which the Task Force would begin to serve as an advisory body on child protection matters. The Chairman also reminded that the World Committee was established after the adoption of The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism by the UNWTO General Assembly. The World Committee's function was to keep alive the Code of Ethics and its application. Dr. de Villiers finally asked participants not to confuse the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, which promoted responsible and sustainable tourism development in a broad sense, with the ECPAT Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism (CC). Focused on the tourism supply side, the CC offered an operational tool for tour operators, hotels and airlines to raise awareness to and react in cases of sexual exploitation of children.

### **SPECIAL SESSION: SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES AND GOOD PRACTICES AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN TOURISM (SECT)**

#### **In the field of Law Enforcement**

5. **Ms. Ruth Allen**, Head of Intelligence of **CEOP - UK** (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Center) informed the Task Force about CEOP's action carried out in Cambodia. She explained that the British Ambassador to Cambodia recognized in 2002 the problem of UK nationals traveling to this country with the purpose of sexually exploiting children. Aware of the need to act, the UK government developed a strong relationship with the

Cambodian authorities, organized training and capacity building courses specifically addressed to the latter and to NGOs. Different parts of the Cambodian and international system joined this cooperation but, unfortunately, eventually the CEOP funds for training ran out. Subsequently, an agreement was signed in 2006 with the Cambodian authorities creating a sustainable chain of training. While continuing activities in Cambodia, Ms. Allen also indicated that the Center was focusing more attention on specific areas and themes where an exchange of expertise was possible. She further informed about an upcoming joint project with the Cambodian Government for the launch of a media campaign to serve as deterrent against child sex tourism. CEOP was planning to set up an advisory panel of local people, representatives of authorities, NGOs and experts to monitor the situation in this country and suggest ways to support the national authorities. Ms. Allen expressed her wish to see the Cambodian experience replicated in other countries. She finally mentioned CEOP's studies on travellers' behaviour, as well as their collaboration with the UK travel industry. [\*\*Presentation of Ms. Allen\*\*](#)

6. **Ms. Anita Dodds**, ASEAN Regional Task Force Coordinator from **ChildWise Australia**, presented the results of the Annual Report on Child Sex Tourism in Asia, prepared by the ASEAN Regional Taskforce which grouped representatives from national tourism administrations and police agencies of the 10 ASEAN countries. Ms. Dodds added that the contribution of police departments had been crucial for the compilation of the ASEAN Child Sex Tourism Review as for designing the necessary actions to tackle the sexual exploitation of children in tourism. She presented the statistical data collected on specific topics, such as hotline numbers, number of arrests, information related to offenders (age, nationality, occupation, etc.) and victims, etc. and underlined the importance of the information collected with a view of designing and planning more effective actions against the sexual exploitation of children in tourism. [\*\*Presentation of Ms. Dodds\*\*](#)

7. **Mr. Hamish McCulloch**, Project and Technical Advisor of the **ICPO-INTERPOL** for the G8 International Child Sexual Exploitation Image Dbase, made a presentation on the contents of the Image Data Base constituted by Interpol for the prevention on sexual abuse of children. Mr. McCulloch explained that the Department had compiled in a database all pictures representing situations of sexual abuse on children made available by police agencies around the world. Through a thorough analysis of the pictures, the Department tried to identify the children pictured on them by concentrating on the various objects captured in the image. These often represented decisive clues leading to the identification of the minor. Mr. McCulloch illustrated the procedure followed through a concrete example. Subsequently, he also gave the example of the arrest of a child offender which had been made possible thanks to modern techniques of investigation and the comparison between images posted in the Image Data Base and those recorded by a camera placed at an airport. [\*\*Presentation of Mr. McCulloch\*\*](#)

8. After the presentations of the law enforcement segment, questions were addressed to the speakers by a group of three panelists which included **Mr. Birger Bäckman**, Senior Advisor, UFTAA Board; **Mr. Theo Noten**, Manager, **ECPAT Netherlands**, and **Mr. Vernon Jones**, Project Coordinator, **Save the Children / ECPAT Denmark**.

9. The questions intended to CEOP focused on international coordination in training; joint training of all the stakeholders with disregard to their different nature; the existence of UK legislation allowing for risk assessments on convicted sex offenders; and ways of conveying information to law enforcement agencies in various countries.

10. In her response, **Ms. Allen** of **CEOP** admitted the need for improving the coordination of national training. The training was provided to those persons involved in protecting children (social workers, NGOs, etc.). Specialized training on specific issues, such us medical care or investigation, was only given to a defined group of people. She further referred to the existing UK legislation which made it compulsory for identified sex offenders to register with the police their travel details for any trip abroad of more than 3 days. This enabled the law enforcement agencies to disseminate this information to their counterparts at the destination. However, Ms Allen also added that it was not always possible for the police to make sure that the offenders had really notified all their travel details.

11. The questions addressed to Mr. McCulloch focused on whose ownership it was to identify traveling sex offenders; the possibility for the travel industry to access the information on the Image Data Base; and a query on whether sexual exploitation of children in tourism was mostly linked to Western travellers.

12. **Mr. McCulloch** said that in international cases where the crime was committed in another country than that of the offender, the prime objective was the identification of the country prior to defining to whom the responsibility of the case corresponded. He further considered that both countries of origin and destination, including airlines, should be able to access the Image Data Base. However, every country had its own legislation on data protection. Therefore, efforts were underway to find a balance between international investigation needs and local and national legislation. Mr. McCulloch finally declared that child sex offenders were from every part of the world, and that the number of Eastern offenders was as big as that of Westerners. The only fact that may distinguish Western offenders was that they were traveling farther from home to commit the offence (usually to Eastern countries).

13. The speakers took some questions from the floor requesting additional information about the Image Data Base, inquiring about the financial resources allotted by countries for the identification of victims and offenders, and also referring to corruption existing among police officers who allowed tourists to sexually exploit children in exchange for money, etc.

### **Hospitality Sector**

14. **Ms. Katarzyna Gontarczyk**, Director of Public Relations of the **Starwood Hotels Company in Poland**, presented the successful experience of the Sheraton Warsaw Hotel in partnering with YCI Poland (Youth Career Initiative). The program, which started in 2004, involved six young persons selected from poor areas of the country who participated in an intensive course of 20 weeks. During this time, they received professional training as well as training in other life skills such as English language, health, diet, finance, environmental awareness, etc. Ms. Gontarczyk explained that the YCI program combined theory and practical instruction that could be implemented at the local level. YCI enabled cooperation between organizations from the private, public and non-profit sectors. The cost for the hotel, she added, remained low and its benefits high in terms of stimulating the professional development of employers and managers. This program also represented a good opportunity for the company's local in-country engagement. Starwood's favourable experiences and opinions of YCI also encouraged other hotel chains in Warsaw (Le Méridien, Marriott and Radisson SAS) to join the program. She also mentioned new programs that Sheraton had created in Jordan and Ethiopia. Ms. Gontarczyk reminded that the program was aimed at young and underprivileged people and contributed to the alleviation of poverty which, in turn, could reduce the abuses on children. [Presentation of Ms. Gontarczyk](#)

### **Non-Governmental Organizations**

15. Ms Cheryl Perera, Founder and President of OneChild Canada, introduced her organization and explained the reasons that led her to the constitution of this NGO. With a group of children and young people, she signed a petition to the private sector to raise awareness on the problem of sexual exploitation of children. The Group produced a video in 2005 which was broadcast in Toronto and had such a big impact that it was agreed to show it on flights leaving from or arriving to Canada. She further stressed that the initiative helped to create OneChild as the premier organization inspiring a movement of children and youth to take action against child sex slavery. The association was presently collaborating with many other associations and organizations. As last comment, Ms. Perera suggested that the children did not need to be talked about, but that they also needed to be listened to. [Presentation of Ms. Perera and video](#)

16. After closing the Special Session of the meeting, Mr. de Villiers read the draft of the new mission statement and objectives of the Task Force for the Protection of Children in Tourism, inviting everybody to express their comments. Suggestions could also be sent in writing to the Secretariat of the Task Force.

17. Subsequently, Mr. de Villiers communicated the two themes that the Executive Committee was proposing for the next Task Force meeting of March 2008. Participants were requested to select one of the following two options: (a) Practical responses by the Tourism Industry to empower minors by proving decent opportunities, or (b) Addressing the exploitation of minors in Eastern European countries. The first topic was selected by participants.

## REPORTING SESSION

18. **Rev. Fr. Jeremy Fairhead**, from the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants & Itinerant People of the **Holy See**, at his first participation in a Task Force meeting, said that the Holy See had always been supporting poor people and that it was aware of the growing problem of sexual exploitation of children. Rev. Fr. Fairhead offered the collaboration of the Holy See to all organizations working to combat this phenomenon. He subsequently reported on some practical cases, such as the work of the Sisters of Adoration who operated Rescue Sex Victims Mission Centres in many countries in the world (Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, India, etc.), as well as on new initiatives in London and in Italy that rescued children and women from the sexual prostitution. Rev. Fr. Fairhead reminded that in order to tackle this problem it was also important to fight its root causes: global poverty and homelessness. With the purpose of discussing these issues, the Council had organized several events in the last 3 years, of which a first International Pastoral Meeting for children in the street in 2004, and two other International Pastoral Meetings in 2005 for women in the street and for the homeless, respectively.

19. **Ms. Susan Bissell**, Chief of the Implementing International Unit at the **UNICEF Innocenti Research Center** in Florence, Italy, explained that UNICEF established this research center in 1988, conferring to it a global mandate and an academic independence. Many global projects and studies were implemented in several countries of the world. Among the most important project of Ms. Bissell's Unit was the study of general measures and the implementation of international standards on the rights of the child, which included topics such as violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation in tourism. Other actions referred to the implementation of the CRC Optional Protocol, to the prevention as well as to the role of the private sector in prevention actions. Ms. Bissell also underlined the importance of law enforcement, and the difficulties arising from the differences in existing national legislations. Focusing on the prevention, Ms. Bissell mentioned several issues directly related to it: namely, the involvement of the business community through empowerment of adolescents through safe job opportunities; the role of the community police in protecting children from sexual exploitation; the participation of children in the prevention of sexual exploitation; the support to The Code of Conduct and related initiatives focusing on corporate social responsibility; national cooperation models for governments, law enforcement, business community, tourism industry, international organizations; awareness raising and communication strategies; tackling the demand side (work with potential perpetrators). Ms. Bissell finally recommended to assess the impacts of existing initiatives on children and to enhance the focus on prevention. [Presentation of Ms. Bissell](#)

20. **Mr. Giorgio Berardi**, Responsible Tourism Desk for ECPAT International, reported about latest developments on the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (CC). He said that his organization developed a new structuring and standardizing signature process by which a company that wished to sign the CC had to follow a 6-step procedure to obtain the final approval from ECPAT. He believed that the CC represented the most successful form of collaboration between the tourism private sector, NGOs and governments. Future challenges for his organization included the increase and diversification of partners and the progressive affirmation of the CC criteria as the de facto standard for the industry's commitment in combating SECT. Several actions were being implemented to reach these objectives: setting quality standards, active fundraising, worldwide co-ordination and representation, decentralization / regionalization of operations (regional implementation); quality assurance; regional campaigning, programme implementation and contacting of potential new signatories (at both regional and local level). Mr. Berardi also referred to two developments: the signing of the CC by a Spanish travel agency and the decision by Argentina to implement the CC. In this latter case, the absence of NGOs strong enough to support the CC nationally on their own led to the formation of a technical team in which the Argentinean Government took up the role to ensure continuity and sustainability by creating a "National Committee for the Code of Conduct". Mr. Berardi finally illustrated further developments such as the application of the CC in India and in a number of Sub-Saharan African countries. He concluded his presentation by informing the participants that the 3rd World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children was scheduled to take place in Brazil in November 2008. [Presentation of Mr. Berardi](#)

21. **Ms. Renate Penitz**, of the **Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour of Austria**, reported on various actions promoted by her Ministry on the protection of children in tourism. The aim of these actions, she said, was two-fold: (a) raising awareness for the topic of sexual exploitation of children in tourism (SECT) and (b) assisting the Austrian travel industry (tour operators and travel agencies) in implementing the Code of Conduct to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (CC). Ms. Penitz explained that Austria started fighting the problem of SECT many years ago: in 1999, the Government produced an Austrian in-flight video, called "Child abuse is not a peccadillo"; in 2002, it produced an information folder to raise awareness among the Austrian travel

industry and to assist in the implementation of the CC; in that same year, a Round Table was set up with important stakeholders of the Austrian travel & tourism industry; and, in 2003/2004, the CC was implemented in selected destinations. Ms. Penitz further reported on the last actions of the Government which were the organization in 2006 of a Poster Competition for Austrian tourism students and the announcement the winner of the Prize in spring 2007 and dissemination of the poster. Present initiatives included information flyers for travellers, advertisements for easy use in information & communication tools and education material for use in tourism schools. In concluding, Ms. Penitz recalled the invitation that the Austrian Secretary of State, Ms. Christine Marek, addressed to European Government stakeholders to exchange information, consolidate efforts and better coordinate individual measures.

#### **Presentation of Ms. Penitz**

#### **NEXT MEETING**

22. After thanking participants for their attention and contributions to the meeting, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Task Force, Dr. Dawid de Villiers announced that the twenty-second meeting of the Task Force was scheduled to take place at ITB Berlin, on 7 March 2008.