



## Report of the 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the World Tourism Network on Child Protection (formerly the Task Force for the Protection of Children in Tourism)

ITB Berlin, Germany, 6 March 2015

1. The World Tourism Network on Child Protection held its 30<sup>th</sup> meeting in Berlin on 6 March 2015. The event featured a Special Session on policing and law enforcement as well as a Reporting Session wherein representatives of public bodies, international organisations, the tourism industry, and NGOs gave a first-hand account of their recent activities in the field of child protection in travel and tourism. The meeting was led by the new Chair, Carol Bellamy, former Executive Director of UNICEF.

### Introductory Remarks

2. **Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, UNWTO**, opened the meeting by calling attention to the UNWTO current statistics as well as the forecasts of tourism growth by 2030 expected to register 1.8 billion international travellers. Against this background, the Secretary-General pointed out that tourism infrastructures, such as hotels and modes of transportation, are still being misused for child exploitation and that all stakeholders share the responsibility to prevent, combat, and finally eradicate the exploitation of children throughout the sector.

3. **Carol Bellamy, Chair of the World Tourism Network on Child Protection**, gave an account of the expectations on the Network over the coming years and summarized the outcomes of the Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting of the previous day. The Network is in the process of revitalizing to become more effective with “action” as the key word. Future meetings will contain less reporting and instead focus on ways forward in areas where the Network can have a substantial impact. General focus areas will be gathering and sharing of current best practices, addressing domestic travellers as well as cross-border travellers, and strengthening advocacy vis-à-vis governments and the tourism industry to raise the profile of the issue.

More specifically, the ExCom agreed that the UNWTO will lend its voice to ensure that language around child protection is included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the post-2015 development agenda. The Network will also present before the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE) on the issue of child protection in travel and tourism, as well as on areas in which the Committee is considering to strengthen the accountability of governments in this field. Lastly, the Network will urge that child protection in travel and tourism will be the topic of the ministerial session at ITB Berlin in 2016.

## Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism

**4. Najat Maalla M'jid, Chair, High-Level Global Task Force to End Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism**, reported on the progress of the Global Study on the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism, which the Task Force is guiding. First, Ms. M'jid underlined that this crime has increased and evolved over the past decades. Over time the phenomenon of domestic and international travelling child sex offenders, coming from various backgrounds, has evolved. Offenders are increasingly adept at using the travel and tourism industries as a route to child exploitation; and the Internet has heightened the dangers for children as child sex offenders can contact children directly and anonymously. Destinations evolve quickly and frequently, as a result of the development of new tourism destinations but also economic, social and political developments. As soon as prevention and protection efforts are intensified in a particular country, child sexual exploiters seem to move on to another country. The sexual exploitation of children is now more often committed in rented houses, hosted families, small hotels/restaurants, massage rooms, while the profile of the perpetrators is changing.

Despite many initiatives and actions undertaken by various actors at national, regional and international levels, there is still a broad range of challenges which need to be urgently addressed, including the lack of reliable data, knowledge gaps, difficulty in monitoring and measuring, insufficient legislation, corruption and a persistent taboo to speak openly about this crime. As a consequence, under-reporting and under-prosecution, combined with an increased social tolerance of child abuse, are important obstacles to the fight against child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism.

Based on these premises, the Global Study sets out from the recognition that it is time to provide a global and updated picture of sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism, taking into account the growing number of travellers, the increased usage of IT, the link to mega events, the increase in child mobility and vulnerability, and the increased demand for sex with children. It will map current developments, inform decision makers, raise public awareness, share concrete suggestions to stakeholders in order to be a tool for action, and include children's voices throughout the whole process. The study will be launched during 2016 to mark the 20th anniversary of the First World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Stockholm in 1996.

### Special session on policing and law enforcement

**5. Paula Hudson, Federal Agent, Australian Federal Police (AFP) Liaison Officer**, reported on the innovative strategy implemented in Vietnam in partnership between Australian Law Enforcement, the Vietnamese authorities and the tourism sector to take affirmative prevention and disruption actions against travelling child sex offenders.

The Australian national child offense register system contains data on convicted child sex offenders who must notify the authorities of any national and international travel plans. Together with 39 other countries, Australia has extended geographical jurisdiction for child sex offences, meaning that citizens of those countries can be prosecuted anywhere in the world. Using these tools, the AFP and Vietnam Ministry of Public Security established in March 2013 an agreement to monitor and prevent Australian child sex offenders who travel to Vietnam. Key aims of the strategy include to drive stakeholder engagement between police, government and the tourism industry

sector, and to gather data on the registered child sex offenders within Vietnam (such as their use of tourism facilities and preferred destinations), to prevent future crimes.

Two years of monitoring of convicted Australian child sex offenders in Vietnam demonstrate that the majority stay longer in the country than the average Australian traveller and use land border crossings to go to other locations; 73 % stay in hotels while 27 % use private residences; 85 % stay in low-quality hotels in non-tourist/business locations. A key challenge is to engage the latter in the fight against child exploitation, while recognizing that the perpetrators' strategies evolve with the advancement of the law enforcing operations.

**6. Robert Shilling, Coordinator of Operations, Crimes against Children, Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation Unit, INTERPOL**, described the IC-CAM project initiated in November 2013 in collaboration with the INHOPE network of hotlines. The project consists of a database hosted by INTERPOL with images first submitted to the hotlines. The hotlines analyse the content and report the IP-address to the INTERPOL database, if the image in question is classed as a criminal offense. By enabling the INHOPE hotline members to create a signature of reported pictures or videos, the database will reduce duplication of effort and facilitate the work to identify and analyse child sexual abuse images and videos. It will match previously seen material and prevent analysts from viewing the same re-circulated content. This will in turn allow a faster escalation of new child sexual abuse material to law enforcement, where attempts can be made to identify new victims. So far, several thousands of baseline images that have not previously been recognized by the database have been uploaded and officers around the world are now trying to identify the children so that they can be saved.

Another INTERPOL initiative in the area of child protection is the system of notices. Whenever a convicted child sex offender crosses an international border, a green notice will appear at the border control station, which allows the authorities to decide whether the person should be allowed into the country or not. By the end of 2015 or during 2016, an international certificate of non-conviction will also be implemented. It will replace various national certificates and will serve persons applying to work for example for children's organizations to prove their appropriateness.

As previously mentioned by Federal Agent Hudson, Mr. Shilling reported that perpetrators are developing new strategies as the law enforcement authorities make progress. For instance, the sexual abuse of pre-verbal children (infants and toddlers) incapable of testifying against the perpetrators is growing rapidly in destinations for transnational sex offenders.

**7. Petra Tammert Seidefors, Development Manager against Prostitution and Human Trafficking, County Administrative Board of Stockholm**, presented the Swedish authorities' campaign "Travel courage", which was a joint initiative of the Ministry for Social Affairs, the Swedish Police, the County Administrative Board of Stockholm and the World Childhood Foundation. The campaign aimed to raise awareness about the prevalence of sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism and to inform the public that Swedish citizens can be convicted for offences committed abroad, regardless of the national laws of the country in question. According to a study commissioned by the County of Stockholm, only one in ten Swedes knows how to report a child sex offense abroad. The campaign therefore also aimed at encouraging the public to contact the police if confronted with a suspicious situation and at providing information on how to get in touch with local and international law enforcement entities.

The campaign film was shown at Swedish airports, airport shuttles and trains during the Christmas holidays of 2014. By March 2015, the film had over 500 000 views on YouTube and Facebook, and the web page [www.resekurage.se](http://www.resekurage.se) had been visited over 13 000 times. The campaign will run again during the summer of 2015 and will be translated to English in cooperation with law enforcing counterparts in Canada and Finland.

## Reporting session

**8. Anna Hårleman de Geer, Secretary-General, World Childhood Foundation**, addressed the growing trend of travellers wishing to “do something good” on their holidays, such as volunteering in orphanages. The Foundation estimates that 85 % of children in orphanages and similar institutions in developing countries have at least one parent alive and have been recruited to satisfy a tourism demand. As orphanages also may attract child sex offenders, institutionalized children are at risk. Cases where children have been sold for sexual purposes from orphanages have been reported for example in Nepal and Cambodia.

Ms. Hårleman de Geer urged actors in the field of child protection to cooperate with the tourism industry. For instance, the industry can promote and support ethical tourist establishments in collaboration with specialized organizations and NGO's, such as Friends International and their campaign “Children are not Tourist Attractions”. If advised and informed on how to contribute to better tourism, the one billion travellers who cross international borders each year can be one billion ambassadors for ethical tourism.

**9. Sarah de Carvalho, CEO, Happy Child International (HCI) Foundation, UK**, exemplified how harnessing the power of sports can tackle the sexual exploitation of children. While mega events can attract exploiters, they can also be a catalyst to implement child protection strategies, to improve cooperation and to bring stakeholders together. With this conviction as starting point, the HCI Foundation's “It's a penalty” campaign was promoted during the World Cup 2014 in Brazil and focused on prevention by targeting tourists and football fans before they arrived in Brazil. According to the Metropolitan Police, 95 % of potential perpetrators can be deterred from committing child sex offenses through information about extra-territorial legislation. For this purpose, HCI partnered with UNICEF Brazil, the Brazilian government and Europol and the campaign video was shown on all British Airways and Thomson flights for ten weeks, with the run up during the World Cup. The campaign was seen by 300 million worldwide and resulted in over 11 000 calls to the “Dial 100 hotline” to which suspected child sex offenses could be reported. The calls resulted in 87 arrests of foreigners for child exploitation of which 26 were for child sexual exploitation.

The Foundation is now aiming to show the film in more airlines and to lobby governments for extra-territorial legislation, which is currently applied only in 47 countries. The campaign will be replicated during the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 and during other upcoming international sporting events.

**10. Dorothea Busche, Manager, DRV German Travel Association and Dorothea Czarnecki, Project Coordinator, ECPAT Germany**, reported on their workshops conducted in Vietnam in 2013 and 2014. DRV signed the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (TheCode) in 2001 and established thereafter a working group for the implementation, consisting of tour operators, travel agencies and police officers. During the last 15 years, the working group has organized training workshops with ECPAT Germany in destinations, such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Min City in 2013 and in 2014, to train tourism

professionals, police officers and government representatives. The workshops in Vietnam addressed leisure travellers, business travellers as well as cross-border tourism to Cambodia. The follow-up demonstrated that 100% of the participants who responded to the questionnaire (representing a total response rate of 52%) had taken action after the workshop, including sharing information with colleagues and family members, reporting on suspected child abuse and organizing similar trainings themselves.

**11. Gabriele Guglielmi, Coordinator of International Relations, Italian Federation of Trade, Tourism and Service Sector Workers (FILCAMS CGIL), Italy,** presented a SAFE HOST project (Social Partners Together Against Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism) initiated by FILCAMS CGIL, which was aimed at implementing and disseminating tools against sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism in and from Europe. The project was set out from the conviction that companies and workers in the tourism sector play an important role in this process and that tourism professionals should receive training to be able to identify and prevent this type of crime. European trade unions in the sphere of tourism, transports and services, national trade unions from Hungary, Spain, and Italy, and Italian and European NGOs took part in the initiative and were provided with guidelines as well as a multi-language online training course. The training is currently available in English, Spanish, Italian and Hungarian and can be found at: <http://www.safehostfilcams.org/?p=516>.

SAFE HOST is now launching the awareness-raising campaign “You too can sound an alarm bell” which aims to promote online training for tourism professionals, specifically targeting hotel workers. The campaign is supported by the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association (IUF/UITA) and their affiliates.

**12. Rosa Martha Brown, President and Founder of Infancia Foundation, Mexico:**

The Infancia Foundation gives voice to vulnerable children, particularly victims of abuse. During the past year, the Foundation continued its work with promoting and implementing the Mexican Code of conduct for the protection of girls, boys and adolescents in the travel and tourism sector which already had 1400 signatories. The Foundation also met with 400 travel executives who had previously signed the code and arranged 13 awareness sessions reaching 2 300 people. An online course on the code was launched in 2014 and training sessions for tourism professionals in 32 destinations were conducted in partnership with *Confederación Revolucionaria de Obreros y Campesinos (CROC)*, the foremost union of the Mexican travel industry.

Furthermore, the Infancia Foundation continued its work with the Youth Career Initiative programme, funded by the Prince of Wales Foundation and directed to adolescents between 18 and 21 years of age. The initiative has been in place for eight years and had by March 2015 trained 450 adolescents in five star hotels for six months. The results are very encouraging; 75 % of the graduates continue to work in the industry or go back to school after completing the programme. In March 2015, a campaign targeting taxis was launched in Paraguay in cooperation with *Asociación Femenil de Ejecutivas de Empresas Turísticas (AFEET)* and the Ministry of Tourism of Paraguay. The initiative replicates a previous Infancia project in Mexico where taxi companies took a stand against child exploitation through an awareness raising campaign and distributed information about child protection in the taxis' client seats.

## Questions and comments

The issue of violations of children's rights in tourism development was raised by **Frans de Man, Retour foundation**, who reported on cases in the Dominican Republic where families have been evicted for development purposes and children have been forced to work as prostitutes. *Mr. de Man inquired as a follow-up on his question from last year's meeting whether a complaint mechanism is established in the Network to bring cases forward against governments and industries.* As explained by **Beth Verhey, Senior Advisor, Corporate Social Responsibility, UNICEF**, there is a complaint mechanism under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Optional Protocol 3, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2011, which reinforces and complements national and regional complaint mechanisms for violations of children's rights. Moreover, the business sector's obligations to protect human rights, including children's rights, are more clearly articulated since the UN guiding principles on business and human rights were adopted in 2011. The complementary Child Rights and Business Principles, on which the CRC Committee is also following up, provides an opportunity for countries currently due for reporting, and many countries are furthermore in the process of adopting national action plans through their foreign ministries and trade ministries to follow-up on the implementation.

**Joanna Rubinstein, President & CEO World Childhood Foundation USA**, asked *how the Network could engage with other UN agencies across the UN system.* Whereas the annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva and the annual meetings of the UN Global Compact could be interesting forums for the Network to reach across the UN system as mentioned by Beth Verhey, the Chair replied that the Network will discuss further whether inter-agency engagement should be an action point.

**David Frost, CEO of the South African Tourism Services Association** *pleaded for assistance regarding the South African Department of Home Affairs' recent response to child trafficking, namely to require all children travelling to and from the country to carry an unabridged birth certificate as well as an affidavit from both parents.* As this practice may be disruptive for the tourism industry, which is one of the South Africa's key economic sectors, Mr. Frost asked how other countries have dealt with this in a more tourist-friendly way.

The role of higher academics in the fight against child exploitation in tourism was highlighted by **Ray Nolan, Senior Lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University**. As an example, Mr. Nolan is working closely with the South Yorkshire Police and the National Crime Agency to integrate child protection in the curriculum of tourism studies and to deliver training to graduates so that they have appropriate knowledge and skills when going into the business.

Lastly, the Network was invited by **Simon Steyne, Head of Social Partner Engagement, ILO-IPEC**, to participate in the child labour platform which ILO is providing technical support for. The platform was a result of the Hague Global Child Labour Conference in 2010 and allows companies to exchange ideas and compare practices in the fight of child exploitation under Chatham House Rule.

## Closing

The Chair concluded the event by thanking all the speakers and participants. The Network will now look for ways to reach out and consider how and where it can be most effective.