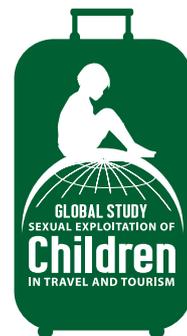
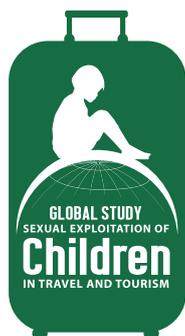


OFFENDERS ON THE MOVE

GLOBAL STUDY ON
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
OF CHILDREN IN
TRAVEL AND TOURISM
2016





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SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
OF CHILDREN IN
TRAVEL AND TOURISM**

MAY 2016

The Global Study Report on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism was written by Angela Hawke and Alison Raphael.

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A final thank you goes to all the ECPAT International colleagues and Board of Trustees who worked tirelessly to complete the Global Study.

The Global Study shows that by working together, uniting our strengths, experience and knowledge, we can combat sexual exploitation of children more effectively.



Dorine van der Keur
Director Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children
in Travel and Tourism

FOREWORD

First and foremost I would like to thank my friends and colleagues in the High-Level Taskforce to End Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism for their commitment, time and wisdom they generously shared:

- Ernie Allen, Former President and CEO of the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC)
- Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Former Chair and Chief Executive Officer of Carlson
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- Dr. Benyam Dawit Mezmur, Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and Chairperson of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC)
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As actors involved directly or indirectly in child rights protection, we jointly share the burden to end sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism. The UN, governments, NGOs, the private sector, communities, as well as children themselves all have a role to play, and together we can innovate and accelerate the change. The Global Study is just the beginning!

Let's fulfil this moral obligation and act now to effectively protect all children from this shocking crime.



Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid

Chair High-Level Taskforce to End Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism and former Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography 2008 - 2014

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	ITU	United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies - ICTs
ANPPCAN	Africa Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect	LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
APLE	Action Pour Les Enfants	MENA	Middle East and North Africa
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations	NCMEC	National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children
CEOP	UK's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre	NCOS	National Child Offender System
CoE	Council of Europe	NGO	Non-governmental organisation
CRBP	Children's Rights and Business Principles	NPA	National Plan of Action
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	OAS	Organisation of American States
CSEC	Commercial sexual exploitation of children	OPSC	Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
CSR	Corporate social responsibility	PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes	PATA	Pacific Asia Travel Association
ECTAA	European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Association	PICs	Pacific Island countries
EU	European Union	RSO	Registered Sex Offender
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
FEDECATUR	Federation of Chambers of Tourism of Central America	SAIVAC	South Asian Initiative to Prevent Violence against Children
GDP	Gross domestic product	SECTT	Sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism
GARA	Regional Action Group of the Americas	SORNA	Sex Offenders Registration and Notification Act
GNCRC	Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child	TCSO	Travelling child sex offender
HAVEN	Halting European Abusing Victims in Every Nation	TIP	Trafficking in Persons
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus	TTS	Time-Space Sampling
IBCR	International Bureau for Children's Rights	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
ICT	Information and communication technology	UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
IIN	Instituto Internacional de Niños (International Children's Institute)	UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
IJM	International Justice Mission	U.S.	United States of America
ILO	International Labour Organisation	UFTAA	Universal Federation of Travel Agents' Association
IMVO	Internationaal maatschappelijk verantwoord ondernemen, Dutch acronym for international responsible business conduct	UK	United Kingdom
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour	UN	United Nations
ITP	International Tourism Partnership	UNGP	United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
		USA	United States of America
		WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

GLOBAL STUDY REPORTS

What started off as a small project quickly became a fountain of information, with many partners and experts willing to contribute their particular knowledge of topics, regions and countries to the Global Study, resulting in a database of almost 2,500 pages. These research reports

and expert papers were all written in the framework of the Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism and were the basis for this Global Study report and a youth-friendly report.

EXPERT PAPERS

1.	AccorHotels	Watch Programme
2.	Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE)	Travelling child sex offenders in Cambodia
3.	Australian Federal Police	Australian travelling child sex offenders
4.	Better Volunteering Better Care	International Volunteering and Child Sexual Abuse
5.	Calabash Tours	Volunteer Tourism and the Issue of Child Protection
6.	Carlson	Carlson's Leadership in the Prevention of Human Trafficking
7.	Christiansen, Lurlene	Child Sex Tourism in Samoa
8.	Council of International Schools	International Task Force on Child Protection
9.	ECPAT International Lynch, Darlene and Schenk, Lindsay	Access to Justice for Child Victims of Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism
10.	ECPAT International Gil Gonzalez, Marta	Assessment of Legal Frameworks that Address Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism (SECTT)
11.	ECPAT International Gil Gonzalez, Marta	Corporate Responsibility and Liability of the Travel and Tourism Industry in cases of Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism
12.	ECPAT International Allen, Ernie	The Power of Public-Private Partnerships in Eradicating Child Sexual Exploitation
13.	ECPAT International Gil Gonzalez, Marta	The Right to Privacy of Travelling Child Sex Offenders versus the Right of Children to Protection
14.	ECPAT UK	Developments in the UK's Response to Child Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation
15.	EUROPOL	Europol approach to transactional child sexual exploitation
16.	Hecht, Mark Erik	A Fourth Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child
17.	Global Partnership to end Violence against Children	Observations on SECTT in the context of the Violence against Children agenda
18.	IBCR - International Bureau for Children's Rights	Law enforcement as the entry point to access justice
19.	IJM - International Justice Mission	How to Measure the Prevalence of Child Sex Trafficking
20.	INTERPOL	Connecting Police and NGOs for the safety of children
21.	ISPCAN - International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect	The recovery and reintegration of children

22.	Jonas, Dr. Kai and Guadamuz, Dr. Thomas	Travelling Sex Offenders - trends
23.	Kuoni	Leading the private sector in combating Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism
24.	Mentor Forensic Services - Dr. Joe Sullivan	Travelling Sex Offenders
25.	National Police of The Netherlands	Increased attention for transnational child sex offences
26.	National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence Against Children, The Netherlands	Governments' responsibilities as countries of demand, supply and/or victimisation
27.	NCA Crime Agency, Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), and West Mercia Police	A case study
28.	Ratnarajah, Nalini	Impact of Tourism on livelihood in Sri Lanka
29.	Save the Children	Sexual exploitation of children by travelling workers in the Solomon Islands
30.	Sharron, Derek Kent	Incomes and education, keys to combating child prostitution in Thailand
31.	Sheffield Hallam University	'Upstream' training to raise awareness and prevent the sexual exploitation of children in the international tourism, hospitality & events industry
32.	Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, Marta Santos Pais	Submission of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children to the ECPAT global study on the sexual exploitation of children in tourism and travel
33.	Terre des Hommes	Child Sexual Exploitation: What do Mega Sporting Events have to do with it?
34.	The Code	A multi-stakeholder initiative to protect children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism
35.	The Honorable Chris Smith, Member of Congress, United States of America	A Guide to Megan's Laws: Prevention of Domestic and International Sexual Exploitation of Children
36.	Tourism Watch / Bread for the World	From Volunteering to Volun-tourism Challenges for the Responsible Management of a Growing Travel Trend
37.	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations	Angelwatch
38.	UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio	Tackling the demand for the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism
36.	UNICEF	Overview of government, civil society and private sector responses to the prevention of sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism
40.	UNODC - UN Office on Drugs and Crime	Child Sexual Exploitation in travel and tourism: a brief analysis of domestic legal frameworks in Cambodia, Laos PDR, Thailand and Vietnam
41.	UNWTO - UN World Tourism Organization	The Changing Face of Tourism
42.	Ventura Aragón, Mauricio, Minister of Tourism, Costa Rica	Cost Rica: a sustainable tourist destination committed to protect children

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC REPORTS

43.	African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN)	Kenya
44.	Children in Need Network (CHIN)	Zambia
45.	ECPAT Brazil	Brazil
46.	ECPAT Colombia / Renacer	Colombia
47.	ECPAT Indonesia	Indonesia
48.	ECPAT International	China
49.	ECPAT Mexico	Mexico
50.	EQUATIONS	India: Goa
51.	Fair Trade Tourism (FTT)	South Africa
52.	Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child (GNCRC)	Ghana
53.	International Children's Center	Turkey
54.	La Strada	Ukraine
55.	Public Health Foundation (PIF)	Georgia
56.	Sanlaap	India: West Bengal
57.	Stellit	Russia

REGIONAL REPORTS

58.	Altamura, Alessia	Europe
59.	Beaulieu, Catherine	North America
60.	Crispin, Vimala and Mann, Gillian for Child Frontiers	Sub-Saharan Africa
61.	Farrington, Anneka	Southeast Asia
62.	Hecht, Mark Erik	Middle East and North Africa
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65.	Wallin, Johanna	South Asia
66.	Zambrano Moreno, Lesley and Abreu, Isabel	Latin America

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite 20 years of efforts, the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT) has expanded across the globe and out-paced every attempt to respond at the international and national level. The results of the first comprehensive global study on SECTT confirm that no region is untouched by this crime and no country is 'immune'. In an increasingly interconnected world, more people are on the move and even the most remote parts of the planet are now within reach, thanks to cheaper travel and the spread of the Internet. As a result, the risks of child sexual exploitation are increasing.

The impact on each individual child cannot be over-stated. For survivors, the legacy can include severe and life-long physical, emotional and psychological damage. As well as consuming its child victims, SECTT also fractures families and local cultures, and undermines the future prospects of entire communities. On the one hand, inaction on this crime can have serious social and economic consequences. On the other hand, effective action must be informed by hard evidence.

SECTT is, by its very nature, secretive and hidden. Little is known about what is happening and where, about the victims and perpetrators, and, very importantly, about what actually works to stop the abuse. To date, the lack of solid information about this crime, coupled with silence or even tolerance, has kept SECTT far too low on the policy agenda.

The Global Study on SECTT aims to bring this gross violation of children's right into the light, and marks the 20th anniversary of the 1st World Congress on the Sexual Exploitation of Children. Guided by a High-Level Taskforce and informed by detailed studies from every region and many countries, as well as contributions from experts and children, the Global Study is the first (and, to date, the only) research initiative on SECTT to explore emerging trends and possible solutions.

KEY FINDINGS BY REGION

A range of findings have emerged from the nine regional reports carried out for the Global Study. The reports revealed some similarities, such as increasing diversification of travel and tourism infrastructure, increased use by offenders of mobile technologies and the preponderance of domestic or intra-regional travelling offenders. However, each region faces its own particular challenges in relation to SECTT.

East Asia

Most tourists across East Asia are from within the region; domestic travellers far outnumber foreign tourists

and SECTT appears to be dominated by Asian men. Business travel is increasingly accompanied by the rise of a corporate culture involving participation in after-hours 'meetings' characterised by alcohol and sex. Inconsistent laws, definitions of children and interpretations of 'consent' in different countries of the region undermine the coordination and collaboration necessary to find and convict offenders. Many responses focus on trafficking and countries have low rates of prosecution for the sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

Europe

Europe remains the number one tourist destination, welcoming more than half of the world's tourists in 2013, and there are suggestions that children's vulnerability to SECTT is on the rise. Western European countries have long been sources of travelling child sex offenders (TCSOs), but some are now destinations. Countries in Central and Eastern Europe are emerging as source and destination countries – often lacking the laws to protect children that exist elsewhere in the region. Regional institutions have adopted measures to enhance protection against child sexual exploitation, especially trafficking, but few address SECTT, which is sometimes addressed only within broader frameworks on violence or child protection.

Latin America

Tourist arrivals have quadrupled since 1980. While around three-quarters of all international visitors come from the USA and Canada, one study of four countries showed that the number of domestic travellers was double that of foreign tourists. Several countries and many households depend on revenue from tourism and travel, which increases the risk of SECTT for children and discourages reporting of the crime and the enforcement of relevant laws. Travel and tourism hotspots are often developed near poor and excluded communities, which can intensify disparities that expose children to SECTT: from income inequality to power imbalances.

Middle East and North Africa

The region faces specific challenges that heighten the risk of SECTT: conflict, wealth disparities that fuel migration, the low status of women and girls, harmful traditions such as child or 'temporary' marriages and a lack of opportunities for youth. Some countries have been chastised by the Committee on the Rights of the Child for lacking information and awareness about SECTT and services to assist child victims. While countries have laws against child sexual exploitation, some still criminalise victims and the region lacks laws that are harmonised, allowing offenders to escape from one jurisdiction to another.

North America

Canada and the USA are source countries for offenders and, increasingly, destinations. Neither country maintains reliable data on SECTT, but there are signs that children are becoming involved at a younger age and that some engage in commercial sex for survival, with indigenous children at particular risk. A vast travel and tourism infrastructure is exploited by offenders, while traffickers supply child victims to meet the demand of business travellers attending conferences, and transient workers. The Internet and other technologies are widely used by offenders to plan crimes and by traffickers to advertise victims.

The Pacific

The Pacific region, with its thousands of islands, has very limited data on SECTT. While Australia and New Zealand have well-established tourism and travel sectors and laws on child sexual exploitation, the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are emerging destinations where awareness of the risks of SECTT and laws to address the crime are largely lacking. Children from indigenous communities seem particularly affected in Australia and New Zealand, while SECTT appears tied to specific activities in the PICs: mining, logging and fishing. Social norms fuel the risks, including child marriage, tolerance of violence and commercial sex, children's low social status and taboos around sexual matters.

South Asia

South Asia is home to around half the world's poor, and tourism is a major source of income for some countries and communities. Domestic and regional travellers outnumber international visitors and social norms (such as gender discrimination) allow SECTT to flourish. Vulnerable boys tend to be involved in street-based sexual exploitation, while girls tend to be victimised in brothels and other sex venues. Booming access to mobile technology and the massive expansion of travel and tourism infrastructure, alongside a continuing lack of social safety nets, consistent definitions and effective legislation and enforcement, means that few offenders fear punishment and few victims receive the support they need.

Southeast Asia

In 2014, Southeast Asia had the fastest growth in tourism worldwide. SECTT by foreigners was first highlighted here, sparking global efforts to combat the crime. Traditional destinations such as Thailand and the Philippines still attract TCSOs, while Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam are becoming key destinations and Myanmar is at risk as it opens up to tourists. While the focus has long been on foreign tourists, male

nationals account for the vast majority of offenders. Special Economic and Free Trade Zones in some countries have been identified as locations for SECTT and the region is seeing more webcam-based child sex tourism. No country has a specific plan or designated agency to tackle SECTT.

Sub-Saharan Africa

According to data from UNWTO, tourism in Africa has more than tripled in the last 20 years, and SECTT may be increasing, although empirical data are lacking. Increasingly diverse modes of travel and tourism attract visitors to once remote locations, and foreign direct investment is bringing in unaccompanied male workers. The region is seeing a surge in mobile data use, with mobile internet traffic expected to rise 20-fold by the end of the decade. Meanwhile, traditional norms continue to pose risks for children, particularly their low social status and child marriage. Most countries have ratified relevant international conventions, but commitments have not translated into meaningful action for children and only a small percentage of child victims receive the help they need.

KEY GLOBAL FINDINGS

A number of global findings and conclusions emerge from the mass of evidence gathered for the Global Study.

The spread of SECTT reveals the need for a broader view

Twenty years ago, it might have been possible to sketch a rough global map showing where international travelling sex offenders were from, and where they were going. Today, the distinctions between countries of origin and countries of destination are blurring. Terms such as country of 'origin', 'destination' or 'transit' are rapidly becoming outdated – countries can be any of these, or even all three, at different times. SECTT is now mainly a domestic and intra-regional crime, and can be found in both the world's most developed and least developed countries. What matters is where children are victimised and the Global Study finds that they are victimised everywhere.

Given that two decades of efforts have failed to put a dent in SECTT, that more children than ever before are being affected and that no country is immune, the Global Study highlights the need to re-frame this issue – looking beyond what was once referred to as 'child sex tourism'. This means broadening the scope of policies, programmes and research to include tourism and travel (whether international or domestic), and identifying and addressing what it is, exactly, about travel and tourism, that leaves children so vulnerable to exploitation.

Conclusion: The absence of a clear yet broad definition of SECTT has been an obstacle to effective responses. A proposed definition has emerged from the mass of research carried out for the Global Study over the past two years and should guide future efforts to combat SECTT:

SECTT: Acts of sexual exploitation embedded in a context of travel, tourism, or both.

Tourism is soaring, while child protection lags behind

Tourism has seen extraordinary growth over the past 20 years, with the number of international tourist arrivals soaring from 527 million in 1995 to 1,135 million in 2014. While tourism development can bring enormous financial gains to countries, the private sector and local communities, evidence gathered for the Global Study suggests that the rush for tourist dollars poses a threat to children in the absence of measures to ensure their protection.

Conclusion: Tourism development plans must be informed by child-rights impact assessments and include measures to protect local children (based on consultations with local stakeholders, including children).

The growth of travel and tourism carries specific risks for children

The worldwide growth of travel and tourism has been accompanied by increasingly diverse *forms* of travel and tourism. New forms of travel have proliferated, such as tourism tied to volunteering (volun-tourism) and peer-to-peer arrangements for accommodation. These have multiplied the opportunities and venues available to offenders and thus the risk to children. Put simply: more people are on the move and more countries are competing for travel and tourism dollars, creating more opportunities for offenders to exploit children. At the same time, advances in Internet and mobile technology have contributed heavily to SECTT, allowing anonymity and hidden pathways for direct contact between offenders and victims. The private sector has a pivotal role to play in the solutions to SECTT - from prevention to awareness-raising, and from reporting to blocking the pathways exploited by offenders.

Conclusions: Efforts to involve the private sector in combating SECTT need to be stepped up and should include not only multi-national companies but small and medium-size businesses and individuals involved in tourism - such as guest houses, online marketplaces, zero-star hotels and taxi drivers. Collaboration is needed among information communication technology (ICT)

companies and law enforcement agencies to block the use of new technologies for child sexual exploitation and disrupt financial gains for offenders, criminal networks and intermediaries, in collaboration with the financial industry.

There is no typical victim

The research suggests that children from minority groups, boys and young children are far more vulnerable than previously understood, along with girls and children living in poverty. While stressing that child victims have no single story and come from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances, the Global Study finds that they all have one thing in common: their vulnerability. Sadly, child victims cannot assume that society will offer them the support they need: services for their rescue, rehabilitation and recovery are inadequate the world over. These often hidden child victims need urgent help and real alternatives to build their future.

Conclusions: 'One size fits all' approaches cannot hope to protect children against SECTT. Given that there is no 'typical' victim, prevention and response measures must be tailored to the specific situation if they are to be effective. There must also be adequate resources to provide skilled care for child victims of SECTT.

There is no typical offender

SECTT has become far more complex, involving not only tourists but business travellers, migrant/transient workers and 'volun-tourists' intent on exploiting children, as well as large numbers of domestic travellers. The Global Study confirms that offenders can come from any background and that they do not all fit the stereotypical profile: a white, Western, wealthy, middle-aged male paedophile. Some may be paedophiles, but most are not. Offenders may be foreign or domestic, young or old. Some are women, and a few may be other children. Research for the Global Study indicates that the majority are 'situational' offenders – who may have never dreamed of sexually exploiting a child until given the opportunity to do so – rather than preferential offenders. The one thing both types of offenders have in common is ever-greater opportunities to exploit children, especially in environments where corruption is rife and impunity is the rule.

Conclusions: While not neglecting the need to pursue and prosecute the international preferential offenders who pose an ongoing threat to children, greater efforts are needed to tackle the situational, domestic and business travellers responsible for the vast majority of SECTT offences. The focus of SECTT research, policy and action must, therefore, be expanded to include a much broader spectrum of travellers.

Power imbalances fuel SECTT

Offenders often use their comparative wealth and power to exploit children and evade justice. The Study finds that power imbalances between offenders and their victims play a critical role in SECTT; stereotyped attitudes toward children, gender and local cultures help to perpetuate the crime. At the same time, social tolerance of child sexual abuse and harmful cultural practices (such as child marriage and rigid definitions of masculinity) allow SECTT to thrive.

Conclusions: Reversing the power imbalances between offenders and their victims is beyond the scope of any single law, policy, institution or country, rooted as they are in hard-wired attitudes around wealth, gender, childhood and sexual dynamics. However, it is possible to tip the scales in favour of vulnerable children by, for example, raising community awareness about the dangers of SECTT, empowering children to enhance their resilience to sexual harm and ensuring that effective reporting mechanisms are in place and reports of SECTT are followed up. Strong stakeholder collaboration is needed as a matter of urgency for a global effort to inform the public about SECTT and turn tolerance into intolerance – a crucial step in ending this shameful crime.

Legislation is not enough

Law enforcement efforts are undermined by weak laws to prohibit SECTT and lack of coordination among law enforcement agencies across the national jurisdictions. Most, if not all, countries have laws in place that should – at least in theory – protect children against sexual exploitation. Their enforcement, however, is hampered by the lack of a clear global definition of SECTT that is mirrored in national legislation, leaving police forces unsure about whether or how to prosecute. Enforcement is also hampered by chronic under-reporting, poor coordination across law enforcement agencies in different jurisdictions, and by a lack of understanding or urgency among some law enforcement officers.

Conclusions: Legal reforms that clearly define and prohibit SECTT are needed in all countries, along with increased resources for enforcement and greater (or improved) use of channels of information exchange, such as INTERPOL's Green Notices and national offender registries. Strenuous efforts are required to end impunity for offenders, build capacity in the justice sector and address corruption.

Data gaps and dilemmas undermine the response

The Global Study points to a number of serious data gaps and dilemmas, from the sheer difficulties of gathering data on the scale and scope to the absence of a clear definition of the crime and, therefore, a lack of clarity on what is to be measured. This lack of hard data matters immensely, as it makes it difficult to prioritise scarce resources or identify what works, and allows governments and societies to continue to ignore the problem. The absence of clear baselines and effective ways to monitor progress also undermines efforts to evaluate the impact of anti-SECTT programmes, posing a risk of donor disillusion and fatigue.

Conclusions: Data collection by national governments is essential to gauge the scale of SECTT and reveal the urgent need for domestic responses. The establishment of national systems capable of providing robust data and indicators on SECTT is the first step. Best practices should be identified and disseminated, alongside clear indicators and criteria to show what success looks like.

What works: effective responses need to be replicated and scaled up

The Study has demonstrated that efforts are underway to tackle SECTT and the approaches that are having some success. What seems to work is a comprehensive approach that mobilises a wide range of stakeholders – from government ministries to the general public – backed by good data. Countries that have addressed SECTT as part of a broader response to child sexual exploitation, focusing on prevention as well as response, seem to have had the greatest success. Efforts supported by bilateral and multilateral organisations and networks have been crucial, and international and regional cooperation has helped to overcome reluctance to acknowledge the problem. But it is impossible to overstate the importance of local prevention, local reporting and local responses.

Another important contribution of the Global Study is its increased focus on situational and domestic offenders, who account for most cases of SECTT, and on business travellers as well as tourists – a welcome shift from traditional approaches focusing solely on international preferential offenders.

NEXT STEPS

The Global Study has revealed a set of specific tasks to be carried out by those with responsibility for the well-being of children, from international and regional organisations and national governments to the grass-roots groups working to protect children in local communities. There are also recommendations for the private sector, including not only companies directly involved in travel, tourism and transportation, but also those working in information communications technology and those whose staff members travel for business. Cross-sectoral recommendations point to the importance of coordinated approaches for effective SECTT prevention and intervention.

International and regional organisations, for example, are urged to place the commercial sexual exploitation of children higher on their political agendas, and meet their international commitments to protect children. National governments should, as a minimum, ratify and implement all international child rights instruments and, wherever necessary, revise their national laws and strengthen law enforcement and international cooperation to ensure that SECTT can be addressed.

Non-governmental organisations can monitor SECTT and bridge gaps left by national governments by, for example, monitoring and researching local SECTT, empowering citizens to play a role in prevention, identifying best practices, supporting the recovery and rehabilitation of SECTT victims and exposing those involved in this crime.

Private companies can be key players in the fight against SECTT through their active involvement in the protection of children's rights. Travel, tourism and transportation firms, for example, could sign up to child protection codes such as the *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism* or – at a minimum – adopt and enforce explicit corporate policies against SECTT. All companies in the travel, tourism and transportation sphere could also sign the UNWTO Code of Ethics. Larger companies can help to bring small- and medium-size firms on board by sharing their knowledge and expertise. Measures are also

needed to ensure that volun-tourism organisations have strong child protection systems and codes of conduct in place.

The wider ICT industry needs to adopt and enforce explicit corporate policies against SECTT and ensure compliance with *Human Rights and Business Principles and Children's Rights and Business Principles*. ICT companies can take a lead on the development of technology-based solutions to combat SECTT, such as blocking payment for SECTT-related offences and new techniques to 'follow the money' and undermine the business model of SECTT offenders and their intermediaries.

Looking still wider, every company that sends its employees on business travel could arrange travel via child safe travel and tourism businesses and educate its employees on acceptable conduct and the need to protect children against SECTT. This could include the adoption and implementation of codes of conduct for travelling employees and background checks and police clearances for staff members who will have contact with children during their business trip.

One major finding of the Global Study is that ad-hoc and siloed approaches cannot hope to tackle a crime that is so complex – with no typical victims or perpetrators – that is found everywhere and that is so multi-faceted. Cross-sectoral partnerships and aligned approaches are essential to expand the impact of SECTT prevention and interventions, creating interventions that are coordinated and comprehensive rather than piecemeal. Partners across sectors should, as a first step, come together for a high-visibility global campaign to push for effective laws, strong enforcement, better protection of child victims and the end of impunity for offenders.

Finally, the Global Study has generated its own research agenda, which confirms that we need to know far more about every aspect of SECTT – its scale and scope (starting with baseline information), its victims, its perpetrators, its drivers and effective responses – if we are to stop it from spreading still further.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“What most people don’t realize is that sexual exploitation scars you for life. It still affects you years later.”

Young UK victim¹

Despite 20 years of efforts, the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT) has expanded across the globe and out-paced every attempt to respond at the international and national level. In an increasingly interconnected world, with most parts of the planet within reach thanks to ever-cheaper travel and the spread of the Internet, no region is now untouched by SECTT.

The following definition of SECTT has emerged from the Global Study:

Acts of sexual exploitation of children embedded in the context of travel, tourism or both.

This crime is, by its very nature, secretive and hidden. Far too little is known about what is happening and where, about the victims and perpetrators, and, very importantly, about what actually works to stop the abuse. At the same time, SECTT has been allowed to thrive in an atmosphere of wider social tolerance for sexual exploitation. The lack of solid information, coupled with silence or acceptance, keeps SECTT far too low on policy agendas.

The Global Study on SECTT brings this gross violation of children’s rights into the light. For the first time, a global research initiative has reviewed emerging trends and explored possible solutions. The study has searched for information that will provide a firm foundation for action by policy makers, those working to combat SECTT on the ground and the wider public. It has reviewed existing regional and national data and trends, expert commentary on specific issues related to SECTT and the results of numerous consultations to present the most comprehensive picture to date on this crime. The aim: to galvanise political will and mobilise concerted, comprehensive and coordinated action to end this exploitation.

IMPACT OF SECTT

The Global Study reveals a crime that is fuelled by a toxic mix of power, impunity and anonymity that allows offenders and their intermediaries to exploit the vulnerabilities of children and their families. Children are vulnerable for a whole range of reasons, from poverty to displacement, and from age-old social and cultural norms to the most modern technology that can facilitate their exploitation. Indeed, as the most powerless people in any society – viewed in some contexts as property or even commodities – all children are vulnerable to some extent.

The impact of sexual exploitation on each individual child cannot be over-stated. For survivors, the legacy can include severe and life-long physical, emotional and psychological damage.² Many endure repeated beatings and rape. Girls become pregnant while they are still children themselves. And children subjected to sexual exploitation are unlikely to be able to negotiate – or even be aware of – the need for safe sex to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections, such as HIV.³

Child victims often feel ashamed and guilty; some believe that they do not even deserve to be rescued. Some suffer from post-traumatic stress disorders, depression and anxiety, and their trust in other people is shattered. Some turn to substance abuse to dull the pain and trauma of their lives.⁴ Some do not consider themselves to be victims, believing that they are somehow in control of the situation, or come to see it as quite normal or the best option given their circumstances.

Far from being helped by the wider society, child victims of sexual exploitation are often stigmatised; they struggle to reintegrate into society, obtain justice or go to school. They are often shunned or even persecuted by the very people who are supposed to protect them: their families and communities, police and judges. Rescue from their abusers may not be enough to undo the damage, particularly if they are thrown back into the

same conditions of vulnerability, coupled with the lack of effective child protection measures, that allowed their exploitation in the first place.⁵

SECTT not only consumes its child victims, it also fractures families and local cultures, and undermines the future prospects of entire communities. Inaction on SECTT can have serious social and economic consequences. When a tourist destination becomes known for (child) sex and prostitution, mainstream tourists and responsible tourism investors may well take their money elsewhere. And once a location has a reputation as a sex destination, it is notoriously difficult to shift. The end result: countries tainted by SECTT may struggle to develop a responsible form of tourism that generates real and lasting prosperity.

RATIONALE FOR THE GLOBAL STUDY

There is growing recognition of the impact of SECTT and the ways in which the rapid expansion and changing dynamics of travel and tourism pose specific risks for children. The costs of tourism development that fails to consider its human impact are simply too high for the most vulnerable people in society, for communities and, ultimately, for national social and economic development. However, efforts to stop SECTT are hampered by a failure of collective action and a chronic lack of robust evidence and comparable data that, taken together, allow offenders to commit their crimes in the shadows and with impunity.

In the 20 years since the First World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Stockholm, Sweden, the context in which children are sexually abused in travel and tourism has been utterly transformed, but our understanding of the latest developments, new dimensions and effective responses has remained limited, at best. Lack of evaluation of the many initiatives to tackle SECTT conducted to date has made it difficult to assess their impact and, therefore, to guide policy makers toward successful strategies and actions.

The Global Study provides evidence to guide decisions on the protection of children and adolescents against SECTT (see the next paragraph for a summary of the Study's methodology). It aims to narrow the knowledge gap on this crime, providing a fresh picture that is based on current evidence outlining the global nature of the exploitation and what drives it, evolving trends and the most effective responses to date, as well as concrete policy recommendations for collective action.

SUMMARY OF THE GLOBAL STUDY METHODOLOGY

The Global Study on SECTT used five complementary methodologies to capture all facets of this gross violation of child rights. Relevant evidence and data for the Global Study report were drawn from:

1. Nine regional desk reviews by commissioned researchers
2. Fifteen country-specific studies by ECPAT member groups
3. Forty-two papers by invited partners and experts
4. Nine consultations with 288 key stakeholders from governments, academia and the travel and tourism industries
5. Ten consultations with the most important stakeholders of all: children and young people (395 young people from 8-to-25-years of age).

Together all these reports and papers form the Global Study in its entirety and the basis for the global report.

Method 1: Nine regional reports updated the picture of SECTT in: East Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, The Pacific, North America, Southeast Asia, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.⁶ The reports reviewed available data and research to identify emerging trends and new developments; they also provide available data and a mapping and assessment of responses to date. Each report was reviewed by an academic or technical expert.

Method 2: Country-specific research was conducted by 14 ECPAT member groups, ECPAT partners and ECPAT International in 14 countries: Brazil, China, Colombia, Georgia, Ghana, India (two research projects), Indonesia, Kenya, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine and Zambia. Research protocols and guidelines developed by ECPAT International supported the groups to plan and conduct their research and write their reports. For sub-Saharan Africa, technical support for the research, analysis and writing process of the five participating countries was provided by Child Frontiers

Method 3: Partners and experts were invited to submit papers on their specific area of expertise in the global effort to combat SECTT. In total forty-two experts contributed their expertise, see the Global Study reports on page 10.

Method 4: Stakeholder consultations gave key stakeholders an opportunity to inform the Global Study, including travel and tourist corporations, civil-society organisations, the UN and government agencies. These consultations helped to establish priorities, assess emerging trends and formulate recommendations.

Method 5: Children's voices were heard so that their views could inform the Global Study. Their testimonies were collected in eight countries⁷ through consultations on SECTT to reveal their unique perspectives on the issue and solutions. Victim's voices were captured in a video that brings home the messages from the Global Study.

UNICEF laid the groundwork for the chapter on responses. UNICEF used a desk-review approach drawing upon research, reports and studies available from the ECPAT database for the Global Study, as well as published and unpublished research, project documents, evaluations and guidance materials developed by UNICEF, ECPAT International, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and other international organisations, NGOs, the private sector and academia. Around 150 documents were reviewed in English, Spanish and French, covering 2000 to 2015.

The High-Level Taskforce. The Global Study was guided by a High-Level Taskforce, with members drawn from a wide range of expertise and backgrounds, including governmental, non-governmental and the private sector. The Taskforce provided oversight for the Global Study, advised on recommendations to support evidence-based action to combat SECTT and continues to advocate for commitment to such action across all relevant sectors. The members of the Taskforce are:

- **Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid**, Chair, Former UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
- **Ernie Allen**, Former President and CEO of the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC)
- **Marilyn Carlson Nelson**, Former Chair and CEO of Carlson, a global travel and hospitality company, headquartered in Minneapolis
- **Corinne Dettmeijer-Vermeulen**, National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children, The Netherlands
- **Milena Grillo**, Executive Director of Fundación Paniamor, Costa Rica (ECPAT Representative)
- **Dr. Benyam Dawit Mezmur**, Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and Chairperson of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC)
- **Dr. Taleb Rifai**, Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
- **Jean-Cyril Spinetta**, Former CEO of Air France-KLM SA.

IMPORTANT CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The very nature of SECTT makes it hard to quantify, and the Global Study faced challenges and limitations in relation to data. There are few concrete or verifiable statistics on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in general, or on SECTT in particular. This coincides with a far wider lack of data on the poorest and most vulnerable children, who often remain 'invisible' in official statistics. Data gaps hinder the measurement of both the scale of the problem and the impact of interventions. While the Study has not revealed any startling new global-level data, it confirms that no region is untouched and – based on available information – provides an updated picture of SECTT, highlighting attempts to measure incidence in some national settings. Although secondary data was referred to in the regional reports, it was not always possible to assess its quality or reliability. However, the core analysis has been subjected to scrutiny at various stakeholder consultations and through peer reviews. Although research protocols and guidelines were developed to support ECPAT member groups and partners, some used different methodologies; thus data from the nine studies are not always comparable. The exceptions were the four case studies in sub-Saharan Africa, where technical assistance made it possible to coordinate the research projects more closely.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL STUDY REPORT

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 summarises the findings of nine regional reports on SECTT – the backbone of the Global Study. These reports, carried out by expert researchers and partners the world over, build a picture of SECTT as a crime that has become truly global as a result of the expansion of travel and tourism into new areas.

The chapter demonstrates that the global 'map' of SECTT is increasingly blurred, with terms such as 'countries of origin' and 'countries of destination' fast becoming outdated.⁸ The regional summaries confirm that domestic and intra-regional travellers are playing a major role in SECTT within their own countries, in lawless border zones and in neighbouring countries,⁹ whether they are preferential offenders looking for children to exploit, or situational offenders who find themselves in an environment where such exploitation appears commonplace.

Chapter 3 begins by discussing the definition of SECTT, recognising that the words we use matter, both for analysing the problem and crafting effective responses. It goes on to reinforce the importance of using travel and tourism as a lens, given the factors within these spheres that heighten children's vulnerability and present new opportunities for abuse.

Chapter 3 proposes a new analytical tool for the examination of SECTT and the design of effective responses. The tool aims to capture its rapid evolution and expansion by assessing what it is about travel and tourism, specifically, that allows SECTT to flourish. This tool looks beyond the traditional tourism industry to include the multiple forms of travel and tourism that have emerged in recent years, following the 'journeys' of both victims and offenders to the arenas where exploitation takes place. It recognises an intersection between the wider context of child sexual exploitation and the specifics of exploitation via travel and tourism – an intersection that both allows the escalation of child rights violations and makes it more difficult to mount an effective response.

The chapter examines five key factors on the journey to exploitation. First, the context of the children – the circumstances and pressures that heighten their vulnerability, from the additional strains placed on their communities by the unfettered growth of travel and tourism to the impact of family breakdown and poverty. The Global Study finds that child victims have no single story, and that many face multiple types of sexual exploitation. The report stresses that no child is completely 'immune' to the dangers, and that these dangers increase when social structures and family dynamics face new and severe pressures. Poverty and a chronic lack of child-protection measures remain major factors and support systems are needed at every level. But it is clear that family troubles, normal adolescent risk-taking and social isolation all play a part in vulnerability to SECTT, often bringing potential victims into direct contact with offenders. The one thing that all victims have in common is their vulnerability.

Second, it focuses on the complex and evolving context of offenders. The report moves beyond the stereotypical image of the typical travelling sex offender as a middle-aged, white, male paedophile from a wealthy (often Western) country, travelling thousands of miles across the world to a much poorer (often Southeast Asian) country, to abuse a child (often female). The report reveals an image of offenders that is far more nuanced. Some repeat offenders travel to exploit children within their own countries. Many victims are boys and some offenders are women. Some 'situational' offenders, who travel with

no intention of abusing a child, find themselves in an environment where they can convince themselves that such abuse is 'acceptable', and where the risk of arrest is non-existent. Some offenders may be business people travelling to conferences. They may be married or single, young or old, very wealthy or just slightly better off than their victims. The one thing that all *offenders* have in common is their access to more opportunities than ever before to exploit children via travel and tourism.

Third, power imbalances: social distancing allows offenders to see their victims as 'lesser', different and even willing, reinforcing their own sense of anonymity, impunity and justification. Offenders have greater power than their victims in terms of wealth, social standing and authority, and the rapid expansion of travel and tourism has given them more opportunities to exploit their comparative advantages, putting more children at risk.

Fourth: the impact of multiple, evolving and increasingly informal 'infrastructures' of travel and tourism, which play a key role, often inadvertently, in the expansion of SECTT. These include new forms of tourism, such as volun-tourism, the use of 'zero star' hostels far from the usual tourist routes, private rentals and extended stays that allow offenders to blend into local communities. They also include the use of technologies that have become game changers in the field of travel and tourism, and often facilitate unprecedented and direct contact between offenders and their victims. ICTs have created new risks for children, allowing the sexting and sextortion that often pave the way for their sexual exploitation, as well as the live-streaming of online exploitation of children for the pleasure of offenders. Grave concerns about the expansion of these new opportunities for SECTT offenders do not negate the need for constant vigilance over more traditional approaches, bearing in mind that the pursuit of tourist dollars often rides roughshod over concerns about children's well-being.

Finally, Chapter 3 highlights weaknesses in child-protection legislation and law enforcement. These weaknesses allow preferential offenders to pick and choose among locations where laws are weak or not enforced and police forces are overwhelmed, and give situational offenders a sense of freedom from any legal repercussions. The Global Study confirms that most, if not all, countries have legislation in place that could – in theory – protect children from SECTT. Countries worldwide have also pledged to combat the sexual exploitation of children by adopting the Sustainable Development Goals. What is missing at present is legislation specific to SECTT, backed by concerted political will, rigorous enforcement, and adequate resources.

Chapter 4 sets out the serious data challenges that have confronted every attempt to gauge the scale and scope of SECTT, including the Global Study, from the lack of agreed terminology for defining the problem to be measured, to the lack of accurate, timely and comparable data. As well as providing examples of efforts to capture such data, this chapter discusses a number of dilemmas (data for whom; to achieve what?) and the need for a variety of data collection strategies that are flexible and nimble enough to keep pace with new developments. The chapter also examines efforts to improve the way in which SECTT is measured and monitored – no easy task, given its shadowy nature. It sets out possible criteria and indicators for the effective monitoring of such a complex phenomenon and the need for a greater focus on monitoring the impact of efforts to prevent the exploitation of children and to rescue and assist those who have already become victims.

Chapter 5 focuses on the response to SECTT to date, setting out what effective legislation and enforcement look like and outlining a range of promising practices

from governments, civil society and the travel and tourism industries. It sets out the international framework for action as well as global, regional and national political commitments and outlines some of the many initiatives undertaken by the travel and tourism sectors, from codes of conduct to capacity building, and from awareness raising to reporting.

Finally, in Chapter 6, the Global Study presents out next steps, positioning SECTT as a child-rights issue, a criminal justice issue and, above all, an international issue, that requires a truly global, concerted and coordinated response. The chapter includes specific recommendations for key stakeholders, from governments to civil-society groups, as well as a forward-looking research agenda.

The report argues that it is possible to reduce the risks of the SECTT if we work together across sectors and borders and at every level. What is needed is a shift from piecemeal interventions to multilateral, multi-stakeholder and comprehensive approaches to prevent and respond to SECTT.



CHAPTER 2

REGIONAL TRENDS



CHAPTER 2

REGIONAL TRENDS

“Tourism represents today 9% of global GDP, 30% of the world’s export services and one in every 11 jobs worldwide. These are encouraging facts, especially in the context of a challenging global economy. But we cannot ignore that it is also a serious responsibility. With the economic growth, job creation and development opportunities that tourism brings, comes the challenge of its possible detrimental impacts on the communities and the environment. This is particularly true for the more vulnerable groups of society such as children and youth in those cases when the industry’s facilities are used for nefarious purposes such as exploitation.”

Dr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization and member of the Taskforce

Comprehensive research reports from nine regions constitute a major component of the Global Study on SECTT. Those preparing the reports gathered and analysed the most recent information available from a wide variety of sources (academics and other experts, NGOs, media reports, UN and law enforcement agencies etc.) to provide an overview of current trends and challenges related to child sexual exploitation by travellers and tourists. The reports also describe the current status of legislation to prevent SECTT in each region and efforts to combat the crime.

The summaries presented in this chapter highlight the main points made in the full reports, which are available online via www.globalstudysectt.org. While the evolution and details of SECTT may differ from region-to-region, much of what emerges from the reports points to similarities: lack of data to measure the scope of SECTT; the special vulnerability of poor and excluded children; impact of new technologies; widespread impunity enjoyed by travelling child sex offenders; and paucity of reliable research studies are among the main issues faced

globally. The evidence gathered for the reports also points to an increase in SECTT in most regions, especially in countries where travel and tourism have increased.

EAST ASIA

The region

The East Asia region includes China, Japan, the two Koreas, Mongolia and Taiwan. Historically East Asian countries shared strong historical and cultural ties, including a tradition that subordinates women and girls to men. Following rapid industrialisation, first in Japan and then in Republic of Korea (South Korea), Taiwan and China, the region’s shared identity and trajectory began to unravel. Mongolia and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) remain economically stagnant and, especially in the latter, politically closed.

Modernisation and globalisation led to growing affluence and the rise of a wealthy middle class in the four industrialised states and gave rise to new patterns of intra-regional travel and tourism. In these countries, particularly China, stark inequalities have emerged, setting off a wave of intense internal migration (especially from Mongolia and North Korea) and the rise of burgeoning “entertainment” enterprises that often involve a sexual component.

Travel and tourism

According to UNWTO data for the period 2009-2013, while international tourism in China has risen slightly, the number of outgoing Chinese tourists and travellers more than doubled and domestic tourism also rose sharply: from 1.9 million to nearly 3.3 million. The industry generated 9.3% of China’s GDP in 2013 with a total impact of \$817 billion, larger than the size of the automotive industry.¹⁰ Taiwan experienced a sharp rise in both international arrivals (4.3 to 8.0 million) and domestic tourism, which increased by nearly 50%, but only a gradual rise in outbound tourism. In South Korea all three indicators rose at a steady clip. Japanese outbound travel declined over the same period and domestic travel dropped by more than half, although foreign tourism rose slightly. Mongolia’s travel and tourism figures were well below the other countries.

UNWTO data point to two unmistakable trends: the vast majority of tourists in East Asia were from other countries in the region (mainly China and South Korea), and domestic travellers far outnumber foreign tourists.

Current and emerging trends

China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are primarily countries of origin of travelling child sex offenders, both within the region and to Southeast Asia; Japan is also a transit and destination country.¹¹ Mongolia and China are destinations for both international and domestic offenders. In less affluent Asian countries, sex offenders from Japan and South Korea are preferred by young girls due to their wealth and the prestige of being with an affluent foreigner.¹²

Increased business travel by East Asians over the past 20 years, both within and outside the region, marks an important change that raises the risk of SECTT. Corporate culture in these countries often calls for after-hours “meetings” characterised by alcohol and sex to cement social and business relations; dinner and drinks in restaurants, karaoke sessions, massages and evening entertainment are part of the “package”. In these venues, minors may be found; in some cases personnel may also suggest young “entertainers” to accompany businessmen during the evening. When this occurs, business travellers become child sex offenders.

Evidence suggests that Chinese men are the largest group of travellers and tourists buying sex with adults and minors in Thailand (after Thai citizens).¹³ Other hotspots for child sexual exploitation by Chinese offenders appear to be located along border areas between China’s Yunnan province and Myanmar, Lao PDR and Vietnam, as well as Cambodia. They often initiate encounters with children and adult women at resorts and casinos built by Chinese corporations in recent decades.¹⁴ In Cambodia, Chinese sex offenders are mostly business travellers who live in Cambodia for months or years, rather than tourists.¹⁵ However, there is also evidence that Chinese and South Korean males who travel on holiday packages to Southeast Asia seek sexual encounters with adults and children, even when accompanied by a spouse.¹⁶ Chinese sex offenders reportedly tend to seek sex with virgins; that is, young girls. Brokers at entertainment venues approach men to offer virgins and arrange encounters in hotel rooms or other “discreet locations”.¹⁷

Vietnamese and Indonesian women and girls often enter Taiwan as brides of local men, but routinely desert their marriages due to abuse and other problems; a substantial number wind up in Taiwan’s sex industry.¹⁸ Two foreign English teachers were convicted in Taiwan for sexually exploiting minors; one case involved the production of abusive photographs.¹⁹ SECTT offences

– both abuse and the production of abusive images – by Taiwanese have also been reported in China and elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

Although little information is available on North Korea, reports from South Korea-based researchers refer to the existence of commercial sex in the North;²⁰ however it is difficult to find a clear link with SECTT due to the general absence of tourism. Sino NK reported in 2012 that prostitution was rising rapidly in the North Korean border city of Hyesan, where Chinese businessmen were seeking ‘exotic’ sexual experiences with North Korean women.²¹

Child sexual exploitation in Mongolia is often linked to homelessness, often due to dysfunctional family life characterised by alcohol-fuelled domestic violence.²² In addition, the development of free trade zones in the country, notably along its border with China, attracts sex workers who respond to Chinese demand for exotic sexual encounters. The Chinese-Mongolian Free Trade Zone has reportedly become a hot-spot for prostitution.²³

Internet: The Internet has changed the organisation and dynamic of the commercial sex sector, rendering the phenomenon extremely difficult to investigate. In South Korea for instance, economic development and advanced communication technologies have facilitated the unleashing of unregulated commercial sex, leaving children unprotected.²⁴ The country has one of the highest levels of Internet access in the world, and one researcher concluded that “more than 95% of commercial sexual exploitation of children in South Korea is arranged over the Internet”, providing anonymity for offenders.²⁵ Children’s vulnerability is enhanced because parents are unfamiliar with new ICT tools, and unable to advise children on safe Internet practices. Moreover, a survey conducted by the Ministry of Gender, Equality and Family indicates that 20% of school girls in Busan engage in the sex trade”.²⁶

Demand for virgins, exotic encounters:

Overall tourism and SECTT in the region appears to be dominated by Asian men. Along with domestic perpetrators, travellers and businessmen from China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are reportedly driving the development of Cambodia’s sex tourism industry; especially the trade in virgins.²⁷ “Virginity-seeking is reported to be highly prevalent in the Philippines... [where] demand... is driven largely by Japanese, Korean and Chinese men travelling to [the Philippines and other Southeast Asian] countries. Chinese men value sexual relations with children, especially virgins, because of the belief that the act would be ‘rejuvenating’ or would bring good luck to a planned business venture”.²⁸ Social anthropologist Heather Peters estimates that there is a

“separate market” for paedophiles seeking to engage in sex with pre-pubescent children reportedly dominated by Western men.²⁹

Commodification of young girls and ‘compensated dating’: In urban China and other industrialised areas of East Asia young peoples’ sexual behaviours are changing, following global trends; many girls have begun to engage in sexual relations, including commercial sex. In Japan, in particular, phenomena such as anime and manga portray ‘virtual’ child sexual abuse images. These “comics” are part of sub-culture known as ‘Lolicon’, a form of obsessive attraction to young and sexualized ‘Lolitas’, which is reportedly common in Japan.³⁰ The commodification of girls’ used school uniforms, underwear, swimwear, socks and sexually suggestive photographs has become a steadily growing market since the 1990s.³¹

Also in Japan – but increasingly in China, South Korea and Taiwan as well – the trend of “compensated dating” (*enjokosai*) has become a popular form of sex work involving minors. It involves female high school students spending time and providing sexual services to adult men in exchange for money or gifts, usually in hotels. No research is yet available to confirm the extent to which this form of sex work involves domestic or regional travellers or foreign tourists.

Response

Overall, laws, definitions of children and interpretations of “consent” to sexual activity differ widely among East Asian countries, making coordination and collaboration for finding and convicting offenders very difficult. Since the Asian Economic Community is discussing the easing of travel restrictions among countries in the region, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has recommended establishment of a database of child sex offenders “to alert immigration officials and stop criminals from crossing borders”.³² In addition, most research, policies and actions in East Asian countries have focused on trafficking, often without addressing child sexual exploitation; or care and recovery services.³³ Finally, most countries in the region share a low rate of prosecution for crimes of sexual abuse and exploitation of children, and children have only “limited access to justice.”³⁴ Information is lacking for Mongolia and North Korea.

China is legally bound by several international conventions on children’s rights and has ratified extradition treaties, mutual legal assistance and law enforcement treaties and agreements tied to human trafficking.³⁵ However, child sexual exploitation is considered politically sensitive, perhaps in part because a number of Chinese local officials have been found to be involved³⁶ or to benefit from bribes to turn a blind eye.³⁷ Despite a new Tourism Law in 2013, no SECTT-related

arrests or convictions had taken place as of 2015. In October 2013 several organs of the justice sector issued joint guidelines specifically addressing punishments for sex offences against children.³⁸ However, Article 29 refers to abuse committed by foreign citizens in China, but not to measures against Chinese nationals who commit such offences abroad. Although the private sector has not launched any initiatives to combat SECTT, 19 Chinese tourism enterprises endorsed the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.³⁹

Japan - Japan has an ‘Action Plan against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children’ that outlines mechanisms to prevent and respond to cases of sexual exploitation, as well as a unit of the National Police assigned to combat child sexual exploitation which has been particularly active in the fight against child sexual abuse images.⁴⁰ But “no comprehensive child rights law [is] in place” and some provisions of existing laws are not fully consistent with the principles of the CRC.⁴¹ Private sector responses have been limited, but following recent awareness-raising efforts by the Ministry of Transport and travel sector, 70 Japanese travel agencies signed The Code.

South Korea – The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights pointed out that although “Korean men are the primary customers of child sex tourism in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands...the Korean government has no...record of punishing any such perpetrators...” and expressed alarm that the number of cases of prostitution brokered in cyberspace had multiplied by 417-fold compared to 2008.⁴² While measures are now in place to protect South Korean children from cyber-threats, they do not refer to the threat posed to children in other countries. Two positive developments are the establishment of “Sunflower Centres” to care for child victims of sexual exploitation and 2013 crackdowns on organised “sex tours” and the issuance of passports to known offenders. Only two tourism firms have signed The Code.

Taiwan – The U.S. Government 2015 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report indicates that Taiwan is a destination country for children trafficked for sexual exploitation. Several steps were taken in 2013 in relation to Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). A Government report stated that police placed “top priority” on ending the child sex trade, through raids and increased patrols, and 199 arrests were made for engaging in sex with a minor during the first six months of the year.⁴³ The report also emphasised that Taiwanese liaison officers in foreign countries are involved in efforts to track down Taiwanese child-sex tourists. Awareness-raising about SECTT was achieved through some 37 official campaigns, including blogs, Internet games, and posters in public areas.⁴⁴

EUROPE

The region

The report covers Eastern, Central and Western Europe, a total of 54 countries at very different stages of political, economic and social development, many of which are still adjusting to transformations following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and expansion of the European Union (EU). While Western European countries have long been known as a “source” of travelling child sex offenders (TCSOs), some are now also becoming destinations for SECTT. Some Eastern and Central European nations are also emerging as both source and destination countries – but lack legal and other protections for children that are in place in the West. Globalisation and inequalities of income and opportunity between Western and other European countries have led to sharply increased migration from both within and outside the region, which can present a serious risk factor for children.

Travel and tourism

Tourism has become one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the region and worldwide. Europe welcomed 563 million visitors in 2013 (52% of the global total) and, despite increasing competition, is still both the number one tourism destination and world’s largest source of tourists. In 2013, Eastern and Central Europe showed the fastest growth. The opening up of Eastern Europe; explosion of new, less expensive modes of travel; increased ease of cross-border movements due to relaxed EU visa requirements; and ever-expanding tourism infrastructure all contribute to the increased importance of tourism in the region. By 2014 tourism was contributing 10% of overall European GDP and employing 20 million people; tourists from outside the region spend about €400 million annually in European countries.⁴⁵

Current and emerging trends

The lack of reliable, comparable data on SECTT, combined with its clandestine nature and under-reporting of the crime, makes it impossible to measure the actual scope of SECTT and accurately assess trends. However Interpol data and observations by UN agencies and NGOs strongly suggest that SECTT is on the rise in Europe. The full report maps European countries that are mainly sources of TCSOs and those confirmed as emerging destinations. The mapping exercise found that St. Petersburg, Russia, and the Czech Republic have made progress toward reducing SECTT – in part due to improved economic conditions and enhanced child protection efforts – while children in Moldova, Portugal and Ukraine face increased risks.

Whilst 20 years ago Western European and Nordic countries were notorious as a source of the demand for sex with children in other regions – an ongoing trend – today the role played by the whole region has changed

dramatically. Many other European nations face an actual or potential threat from SECTT. Russia and Turkey, in particular, have increasingly emerged as a source country for TCSOs. Eastern European countries such as Moldova, Turkey and Ukraine have become major hotspots for SECTT, and Southern European countries are progressively becoming preferred destinations. Children are also increasingly at risk in some countries in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Balkans that are experiencing tourism growth. Western Europe, while never a major destination for SECTT, has recorded a few cases of travellers using the tourism infrastructure to access children for sex.

Children’s vulnerability has increased and evidence has emerged that boys are also highly vulnerable to SECTT. Groups of children most at risk of being sexually exploited through travel and tourism in Europe include: children from ethnic minorities (especially Roma children), children from dysfunctional families and previous victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, children affected by migration, children with a disability, children of sex workers, trafficked children, children in institutions and working children – particularly those employed in the tourism/hospitality sector. In large part, these are the same children identified by regional institutions as being out of school and/or facing social exclusion.⁴⁶

Boys’ involvement in sexual exploitation continues to go largely undetected and unaddressed. In the Czech Republic, for example, research found that TCSOs target *primarily* boys, and in Ukraine the involvement of boys in prostitution was reported to be on the increase. Boys are mainly targeted by preferential offenders.

SECTT has become more invisible, shifting to indoor locations such as brothels and clubs, hotels and guesthouses in urban, rural and coastal settings. While some perpetrators continue to make contact with vulnerable children on the streets, widespread access to the Internet and mobile phones allows offenders to reduce their visibility and thus their risk of arrest. The Internet is also used in Europe as a tool for marketing commercial sex services, contacting and grooming children prior to travel and exchanging information on places where it is easy to approach them or how to initiate contact.

The profile of perpetrators has become more complex. Expatriates and other extended-stay residents constitute a significant proportion of the offender population involved in SECTT in European destinations. Increasing globalisation of the labour market, combined with government policies aimed at stimulating foreign investment and economic growth, have led to unprecedented cross-border movement of highly skilled workers. Attracted by more affordable housing and a lower overall cost of living, many people are relocating

abroad. Business travellers and short- and long-term expats now constitute, together with tourists, an important source of the demand fuelling SECTT.

New tourism products and services have evolved in Europe. Demand for “authenticity” in tourism and a growing interest in contributing to the destination in some way have led to new forms of community-based tourism (such as homestays) and an increase in volunteerism. While intended to benefit communities, these new products also present new risks for local children to be sexually abused and exploited particularly when child protection measures are not in place and financial gain is the sole purpose of tourism development. The recent development of the “sharing economy” – allowing travellers to share or exchange accommodation, transportation and other services through online platforms created and managed by private companies (e.g., Airbnb and Uber) – may offer another channel for perpetrating sex crimes against vulnerable children.

Response

Europe’s regional institutions – such as the European Union (EU), Council of Europe (CoE) and Organisation for Safety and Cooperation in Europe – have adopted numerous legal, preventive and counter measures to enhance child protection against all manifestations of sexual exploitation, especially trafficking. Only a few, however, directly address SECTT. As early as 1996, the EU developed a two-fold strategy to reduce both demand (mainly through cooperation with the tourist industry and relevant NGOs) and “supply” in destination countries (via support to developing country governments).⁴⁷ In 2009, the European Economic and Social Committee recommended the urgent development and implementation of a comprehensive European strategy against SECTT, including treatment for victims.⁴⁸

An important step by the CoE was its 2007 *Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse* – also known as the Lanzarote Convention – widely considered to be the most advanced, comprehensive international legal instrument of its kind, as outlined in Chapter 5.⁴⁹ Both the CoE Convention and a 2011 EU directive address the criminal liability of legal persons, such as private companies. In 2013 the CoE followed up with a *Resolution against Sex Tourism* that provides clear guidance to member states on how to stem and counteract child sexual abuse and exploitation by travelling sex offenders. Despite these and other promising regional initiatives, follow-up has been weak and efforts to gauge their effectiveness are lacking.

Commitment by national governments to combat SECTT varies, reflected in an abundance of initiatives in Western European countries and a dearth of programmes in Central and Eastern Europe. A similar pattern can be

seen in relation to services for child victims, with far fewer options and initiatives in Eastern Europe and almost none in the countries comprising the Commonwealth of Independent States.⁵⁰

Strategies adopted to stop SECTT include the development of National Plans of Action (NPA); establishment of coordination and cooperation mechanisms and actions; development, revision and application of legal frameworks; implementation of prevention programmes; provision of support services to victims; and the promotion of participation by children and young people in actions addressing the problem. Civil society organisations have played a key role in such interventions; collaboration across sectors has increasingly emerged as pivotal to the fight against SECTT in the region.

However the number of countries that have adopted comprehensive NPAs declined drastically during the last decade, signalling waning commitment. Some countries have incorporated their response to SECTT into larger policy frameworks related to violence or child protection, undermining the focus needed to specifically address SECTT. In addition, no governments appear to have established a specific body in charge of coordinating and monitoring policies and initiatives to systematically tackle the issue. Moreover, and crucially, existing child protection mechanisms often lack the human and financial resources needed to ensure full cooperation among all actors concerned.

Several European countries have established hotlines for reporting suspected incidents of SECTT, mostly in collaboration with civil society organisations like ECPAT. But data provided by ECPAT groups and others indicates that to date, hotlines have received only a limited number of calls, and few reports of SECTT lead to investigation or prosecution of offenders.⁵¹

No European government offers disaggregated data on the number of foreigners arrested, prosecuted and convicted in their jurisdiction for sexually exploiting children. British and Dutch law enforcement agencies, however, have made efforts to track and provide data on SECTT related to their nationals.⁵² In both countries ‘Child Protection Certificates’ were developed, involving police checks of nationals seeking to work at schools, charities or other facilities serving children in other countries.⁵³

ECPAT Germany led the ‘Offenders Beware’ project (2009-2011) described in Chapter 5.⁵⁴ The 2012-2015 ‘Don’t look away - be aware and report the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism’ campaign sought to prevent SECTT and combat impunity and social tolerance of related crimes. The campaign informed travellers of laws prohibiting sexual exploitation of children abroad and the consequences for child

victims and sought to motivate travellers to report suspicious situations. Coordinated by ECPAT France and funded by the European Commission, the 'Don't Look Away!' project was implemented widely in Europe, as described in Chapter 5, often in partnership with relevant stakeholders such as government agencies, police, the tourism industry and other NGOs.⁵⁵

In 1998 ECPAT Sweden initiated the *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism*, outlined in more detail in Chapter 5. Although many European travel industry firms have signed The Code and it is seen as an important step toward SECTT prevention, gaps and weaknesses in its implementation remain.⁵⁶

LATIN AMERICA

The region

Latin America is a vast region reaching across two continents and 20 countries. Fourteen countries were researched for the full report, based mainly on the availability of information relevant to the Global Study: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. The region is geographically, politically, economically, socially, racially, ethnically and culturally diverse.

One shared characteristic is the presence of large child populations (around one-third of the total population region-wide) and high levels of child poverty — reaching 70% in two of the countries reviewed and hovering between 30% and 60% in seven others. Furthermore, the region's history of political, economic and social instability has created high levels of inequality that make disadvantaged groups in society, such as children, even more vulnerable.

Travel and tourism

Latin America has long been a tourist destination thanks to such attractions as Peru's Machu Picchu, Rio's beaches, historic sites showcasing ancient civilizations in Mexico and Carnival in Brazil and Trinidad. In recent years non-traditional tourism modalities have evolved, such as eco-tourism and large-scale sporting events.

Tourism generates about 9% of GDP across the region,⁵⁷ creating over 16 million jobs in the formal and informal sectors combined. Tourist arrivals quadrupled since 1980, generating sharply increased revenues: from \$278 million to over \$1 billion in 2013. Around three-quarters of all international travellers to Latin America originate from the USA and Canada; others are mostly from Europe.⁵⁸ Domestic and inter-regional travel is also significant; in four countries where studies were carried out the number of domestic travellers was found to be double the number of foreign tourists.

The region also experiences a large volume of business- and conference-related travel, as well as transient workers on construction sites, migration across borders and from rural areas to cities, and has a well-developed transportation network (including ports and bus terminals where SECTT is common). All of these factors have been associated with an increased number of offenders actively seeking, or taking advantage of, opportunities to engage in sexual activity with children.

Contributing factors

Heavy dependence on income from tourism and travel: Several countries rely heavily on income from tourism and travel to bolster national economies; in such countries household budgets may also depend on jobs generated by the industry. These factors increase the risk of SECTT for children and serve to discourage both reporting of incidents and enforcement of relevant laws.

Travel and tourism hotspots are often developed near communities suffering from poverty and social exclusion.⁵⁹ Developers and supporters of tourism zones often argue that tourism will increase prosperity among local populations, but a study in Costa Rica found that recently developed tourist zones do not appreciably increase income for the poor.⁶⁰ Instead, they often displace families living from traditional means (farming, fishing, etc.), leaving them with few alternatives other than menial work in the tourism sector.

Income inequality: Sex offenders offer cash and consumer goods to children in exchange for sex. For the most impoverished, this is a means of survival; but even those with more resources sometimes engage in commercial sex to obtain, for example, cell phones or other "luxury" items.

Crime and violence: Poverty, unemployment, internal conflict, migration and gang- and drug-related violence have all weakened the family unit in Latin American countries, leading many children to run away from home. Living on the street they are more likely to become targets for offenders and SECTT intermediaries. Social tolerance of violence in the region also helps to perpetuate sexual violence against children. The presence of armed insurgencies, violent gangs and organised trafficking networks facilitate child sexual exploitation.

Social norms, particularly around gender (and especially in relation to male superiority and virility) also contribute to tolerance for SECTT. Males are seen as biologically requiring more sex and as susceptible to 'provocation', while social norms identify females as passive objects of male sexual desire. In addition, adolescent victims are widely viewed as being complicit in situations of exploitation of which they are, in fact, victims. Homophobia is also very marked across the region;

families often reject homosexual and transgender children, driving them to the streets and thus increasing their vulnerability to exploitation by tourists, travellers and criminal networks.

Corruption, impunity and lack of appropriate responses to cases involving child sexual exploitation were common themes in all countries researched. Latin American government officials, law enforcement personnel and workers in both the formal and informal tourism and travel sector were all mentioned as being directly or indirectly complicit in SECTT. In such a context of impunity, most people – especially children – are afraid to report cases, due to fear for their lives or because they believe that reporting will not have any impact.

Current and emerging trends

Drugs and SECTT: Several Latin American countries are experiencing heightened levels of violence, increased availability of arms and drugs, a strong presence of organised crime and gangs and low levels of effectiveness of the police and justice systems. Research indicates a close relationship between these factors and the demand for sex with young girls by, for example, drug kingpins and leaders of gangs or armed insurgencies who wield power to engage in child sexual exploitation at will. This context helps to create an environment in which foreign exploiters can also act with impunity; for example, in Medellin, Colombia, an online “auction” of girls was held by a drug lord who sold the girls to the highest bidders.

Human trafficking and SECTT: Latin America is considered a source, transit and destination for human trafficking.⁶¹ In some countries, children constitute the majority of identified victims. The UNODC reported that of 1,600 cases of children trafficked in Latin America between 2007 and 2011, more than half were female children trafficked for sexual exploitation.⁶² A strong link between trafficking for sexual exploitation and SECTT, linked to booms in tourism, has been reported in the region.⁶³ Victims often live in tourist zones or are trafficked from rural areas to satisfy demand from travellers and tourists.⁶⁴ Several agencies have reported increases in human trafficking for sexual purposes carried out by organised criminals involved in the drug trade.⁶⁵

Technology and SECTT: Child sexual abuse images is being produced, disseminated and downloaded throughout the region.⁶⁶ Governments have recorded a recent increase in reported cases of child abuse images being shared through peer-to-peer technology, as well as practices such as “sexting” and grooming.⁶⁷ Several ECPAT groups report that exploiters (and facilitators) are increasingly using cell phones and the Internet to arrange contact between children and tourists and travellers, reducing the public visibility of

the child sex trade. Parental guidance and oversight of their children’s use of technology is largely absent, due in part to children’s use of cyber-cafes and in part to lack of parental knowledge about the potential dangers of Internet use.

Exploiters: The age of exploiters in Latin America appears to be lower than previously assumed. In Brazil, this includes a large number of young professional travellers and tourists. Those who engage in SECTT share certain characteristics: they are “outsiders”, conferring anonymity; they maintain *cultural distance* from their victims, used to justify the exploitation; their transience permits them to act on impulses they might control if they were at home; their higher *socio-economic status* allows them to see themselves as “helping” their victims and enhances their sense of power over them.

Children’s voices: The full regional report contains a detailed case study of “Carlos”, a young Uruguayan who due to abuse and neglect at home embarked on a journey of sexual abuse and exploitation at 13 and was eventually coerced into situations involving prostitution, cross-border trafficking pornography and SECTT. Carlos’ story highlights the ties between different elements of commercial child sexual exploitation, as well as the failure of the justice system and child protection programmes to identify and protect victims, making them less likely to seek help.

Response

The region has addressed SECTT through different initiatives, especially for prevention; however, it has yet to be placed on the political agenda alongside other CSEC. Regional efforts have been carried out by the Inter-American Children’s Institute (IIN), the UNWTO, the Regional Action Group of the Americas (GARA) and the Andean Community of Tourism Authorities. The IIN plays a key role by bringing together civil society and government stakeholders and documenting national-level activities and good practices through its ANNAObserve website. The formation of GARA in 2005, bringing together tourism ministers and other important stakeholders, had the goal of developing a regional strategy to address SECTT, representing another important advance.

Nine of the 14 countries examined for the Global Study went beyond developing a National Plan of Action to prepare specific action plans for combating SECTT; however, only four of these plans are current. Moreover, deficiencies in monitoring and evaluation, lack of cooperation between authorities at the national and local level and limited human and financial resources have led to only partial implementation, often in just a few parts of a given country. Nine countries also agreed to implement the Tourism Code of Conduct, but

implementation is largely voluntary. While all countries have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it has been observed that implementation of its underlying principles tends to be more “formalistic” than de facto.

Country reports suggest that initiatives to address SECTT are most effective when the national tourism body makes a strong commitment and when diverse population groups are targeted simultaneously. Most countries have policies and projects to address SECTT, but more civil society and private sector involvement is required to increase their impact.

In the countries researched, protection systems for guaranteeing and restoring the rights of child survivors of sexual exploitation were not working properly or consistently. Institutions in charge of protecting children generally lack the resources required to respond to large numbers of cases, and high staff turnover means that those charged with care are often not knowledgeable about SECTT or the needs of its survivors.

Child survivors tend to be invisible in justice systems in the countries studied. Barriers preventing children from accessing the justice system include: lack of legal harmonisation, lack of legislation on SECTT, lack of mechanisms and protocols for ensuring compliance with laws, limited interest in the issue and corruption.⁶⁸ Another obstacle is the pervasive belief that adolescent victims of SECTT are responsible for their situation. Despite high levels of SECTT in the region, only a handful of convictions of travelling child sex offenders have taken place.

Numerous campaigns have been launched in individual countries to raise awareness and warn tourists and travellers about legal consequences. A project in Colombia (‘I am the Wall’) was particularly successful in bringing informal sector actors together and mobilising them to take action against SECTT, as detailed in Chapter 5. Another innovative approach was used in a bilateral project between Costa Rica and Canada that addressed SECTT simultaneously in both source and destination countries (see Chapter 5 for more details).

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

The region

The 20 countries comprising the MENA region are: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine/Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria/Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Several MENA countries are, currently, or recently have been, plagued by civil war

and geopolitical instability, key factors raising the risk of SECTT for children. Like many regions, MENA features great diversity in wealth and poverty both among and within countries. This combination of factors contributes to a considerable flow of intra-regional migration from poorer to richer countries, increasing the risk of sexual exploitation for children (whether unaccompanied or left behind). The MENA region is also characterised by an absence of data on child exploitation and widespread lack of collaboration and information-sharing among governments, law enforcement, NGOs, the tourism industry and other stakeholders, making it difficult to portray an accurate picture of SECTT.

Except for the wealthy Gulf States, most MENA nations are developing countries. In 2005, 17% of MENA’s population (c. 50 million people) lived on less than US\$2 a day.⁶⁹ In addition, Tunisia and Egypt are undergoing political transitions that have slowed economic growth and worsened macroeconomic balances.⁷⁰ The low social status of women and girls in the region, combined with a lack of opportunities for youth, constitute other entry points for vulnerability to SECTT.⁷¹ Large families with many dependents are those most susceptible to poverty,⁷² and children living in poverty are the most likely to be sent to the street to procure money, or to run away and seek to survive on their own.⁷³

Travel and tourism

Despite a spate of uprisings and several ongoing conflicts, the short- and long-term prospects for the region’s tourism sector are considered hopeful. Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of the UNWTO, expects the number of visitors to MENA to reach 195 million by 2030; in 1990, that figure was just 18 million.⁷⁴ Income from tourism in 2014 was estimated at US\$49 billion in the Middle East, and US\$36 billion in North Africa. The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar are the three leading destinations for tourism in the region.⁷⁵ Another major destination, Morocco, is a hotspot for both tourism and sex tourism. A 2007 study conducted in Morocco by Johns Hopkins University concluded that the country is one of the top emerging destinations for SECTT in the region. Two years later, in 2009, Morocco experienced a 6% rise in tourism arrivals, placing it among the top touristic destinations in North Africa.⁷⁶

In many MENA countries, tourism strategies and operations are heavily dominated by the public sector, limiting the scope of cross-sector collaborations, multi-stakeholder initiatives and sectoral reform more generally. The private tourism industry is often constrained by government regulations, which limits potentially transformative partnerships and plans of action and reform, and also may constrain full involvement by the industry in combating and mitigating SECTT and other manifestations of CSEC.

Current and emerging trends

No MENA country tracks SECTT offenses; whilst some information is available on trafficking patterns, no data are available specifically on trafficking in children for purposes of sexual exploitation.⁷⁷ In general, MENA is considered to be a transit or destination point for trafficking, rather than a source, but the UNODC found in 2006 that some MENA countries are also countries of origin (Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan and Yemen).⁷⁸

Despite the lack of hard data, and in response to country reporting on progress toward ensuring children's rights, the Committee on the Rights of the Child noted in 2003: increased prostitution of children in Algeria and Djibouti, a rise in child sexual exploitation in Morocco and Sudan and increased trafficking of children for purposes of sexual exploitation in Saudi Arabia. Several countries were chastised by the Committee for their lack of information and awareness about SECTT, as well as a paucity of services to assist child victims.

Certain MENA countries are popular destinations for travelling sex offenders from wealthier countries, revealing intra-regional patterns of supply and demand that seem to corroborate the socioeconomic gap that frequently separates offenders from their victim(s). For example, wealthy men from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries have been implicated in child sex offences in Egypt, particularly through temporary child marriages. Offenders in MENA reportedly offer high prices for virgins, which may be due to cultural perceptions that highly value chastity and/or purity, alongside perpetrators' fear of contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted infections.

Among the key actors involved in SECTT are recruiters, traffickers, pimps and brothel owners, who employ manipulative tactics that may involve deception, violence, drugs, or blackmail, to lure or coerce marginalised youth into sexual exploitation, in exchange for money or in-kind compensation. Street children were found to be the most exploitable target in Egypt; other highly vulnerable children in MENA include: those who are homeless or displaced due to conflict, not in school and/or from impoverished or dysfunctional families.⁷⁹

Traditional child marriages are sanctioned by many families, tribes and religious groups in the region;⁸⁰ but exploitative forms of child marriage involving the sale of young girls to older, foreign men appear to be on the rise in MENA. In Egypt a study conducted by the National Council of Childhood and Motherhood concluded that child marriage is often motivated by the high bridal prices paid by non-Egyptian grooms. In Yemen as well, there is increasing concern that SECTT is being conducted under the guise of temporary marriages to tourists.⁸¹ A 2012 UNICEF study suggests that girls' exclusion from education is an important

factor underlying their vulnerability to exploitative forms of child marriage.⁸²

The global explosion of information and communication technologies has yet to occur in most MENA countries. The ITU estimated that by end of 2014, 36% of households in Arab states and 11% in North Africa would have access to modern ICTs, although numbers are rising steadily. Knowing the many ways that these new tools are contributing to intensified SECTT in other regions, it is unfortunate that no efforts have been made to measure the impact of ICTs on children in MENA or their prevalence in the region's tourism industry and use by travelling child sex offenders.

A 2010 State Party report on Egypt examines the results of several reports received by the NGOs Child Helpline and Family Advice Line concerning offences covered by the OPSC. Although SECTT is not mentioned specifically, the findings are relevant. Since 2004, 187 reports of sexual harassment and sexual exploitation of children had been made, of which 90 victims were female and 97 male. Eight incidents of child prostitution were reported, five female, three male.⁸³ Only recently has it become clear that worldwide, large numbers of boys are subject to sexual exploitation, including by tourists and travellers, and that the patriarchal societies in which they live, often prevents them from reporting incidents or seeking assistance.

Response

Studies and initiatives in MENA have focused far more on child trafficking than on SECTT. The strong connection between trafficking of children and their exploitation for sexual purposes nonetheless makes some of these studies relevant for assessing progress on SECTT. For example, a study by the Arab Initiative to Combat Human Trafficking demonstrates that in the MENA region, three different strategies are utilised to address trafficking demand.⁸⁴ One group of countries (Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the United Arab Emirates) has enacted comprehensive legislation. The second group, including Algeria and Lebanon, has incorporated anti-trafficking provisions into existing penal codes. The third group (Comoros, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen) have not updated penal codes and use existing legislation to prosecute cases of trafficking. It is important to note that travelling child sex offenders often exploit weaknesses and loopholes in domestic legislation, as well as differing laws in neighbouring countries, to gain impunity.

In spite of the encouraging number of countries with laws against child sexual exploitation, and the fact that all MENA countries signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, some countries continue to criminalise

victims of sexual exploitation, in contravention of international standards. Moreover, the absence of legislative harmony in the region facilitates the offenders' escape from one jurisdiction to another.

Travel and tourism companies in most MENA countries signed *The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism*, creating a commitment to proactively protect children in local communities from sexual exploitation. In Djibouti, Iraq, Sudan, Syria and Yemen the private sector has yet to agree to such initiatives. However, signing and implementing The Code is voluntary, involving minimal accountability mechanisms, and the private sector in the region has done little to actively address SECTT, even after signing The Code.

Some prominent tourism destinations in MENA, such as the United Arab Emirates, have launched their own child protection initiatives. In November 2014, at the 34th meeting of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, three top government officials announced a set of "child safety measures" in the country, ranging from a fund dedicated to victims of human trafficking to preventative measures implemented by the state.⁸⁵ As a top tourism destination in the region, the Emirates also plans to mobilise multi-sectoral teams to assess not only the economic and environmental consequences of development of its tourism industry, but *also the social impacts of international tourist arrivals on local communities* - with special regard to vulnerable women and children. Other MENA countries have made strides towards implementing preventative measures in the travel and tourism industry - Egypt implemented a "charter of honour" for tourism workers⁸⁶ and the Moroccan Committee of Responsible Tourism adopted a national charter of responsible tourism.⁸⁷

Within each country in the MENA region, non-governmental organisations are dedicated to combating child sexual exploitation.⁸⁸ However, the formation of local NGOs is constrained in some countries by suppression of the establishment of civil society groups (by withholding licenses or refusing to give State approval). Countries with a strong NGO presence that are successfully combating child sexual exploitation include: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt and Morocco. Local NGOs in countries such as Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia work in different ways to protect vulnerable children from exploitation. In addition to ECPAT, several international NGOs are present in the region, some with programmes that specifically address child sexual exploitation.

At the regional level, the African Union and League of Arab States include, between them, all states in the region. Each has spearheaded commitments to child

rights and promoted measures intended to protect children in recent decades, although SECTT has not received serious attention.

Finally, some countries have developed valuable frontline services designed to assist victims of sexual exploitation, as described in a recent publication by Save the Children.⁸⁹ Qatar's House for Lodging and Human Care, for example, provides social, legal, psychological and medical assistance to victims of sexual abuse and liaises with local police, the courts and the Director of the Human Rights Unit to facilitate child protection. Kuwait has formed a special police force to investigate offences against minors, including sexual offences. In Morocco, the Listening and Protection Centre receives child victims of physical, sexual and psychological violence, listens to the children in person, intervenes with judicial authorities and coordinates with lawyers and health care providers. Child Protection Units in Morocco also offer medical and social assistance to child victims of violence, including sexual violence and exploitation. The Ministry of Health and the Royal Oman Police also joined efforts to reduce sexual violence and abuse against children by launching public awareness campaigns on radio and television.

ECPAT, meanwhile, reported that Jordan launched the first regional training on child safety through the Queen Rania Family and Child Centre, with a special area dedicated to child safety: the Professional Training Centre, which aims to "enhance the capacity of national and regional professionals to address child abuse and promote child safety..."⁹⁰ Jordan was also a pioneer in establishing the Family Protection Department, a protection system that facilitates investigation and follow-up of cases involving child sexual exploitation and refers victims to appropriate rehabilitation services.

NORTH AMERICA

The Region

North America refers here to Canada and the United States, two highly developed countries whose populations travel regularly and have been found to engage in SECTT worldwide. Both countries have significant minority populations that are especially vulnerable to SECTT.

Travel and tourism

The travel and tourism industry plays an important role in North American economies, contributing CA\$84.3 billion (4.5%) to Canada's GDP;⁹¹ in the U.S the industry yielded around US\$2.16 trillion.⁹² Tourism is also highly profitable; in 2013 Americans spent US\$748 billion on domestic travel, a figure expected to reach US\$903 billion in 2017.⁹³ A main concern in relation to SECTT is the extensive infrastructure available (multiple lodging

and transportation alternatives), creating an enabling environment for child sexual exploitation by tourists and domestic travellers.

While Canada and the USA are known as “sending” countries of TCSOs, particularly to Latin America and the Caribbean, there is increasing evidence that they are also becoming destinations. TCSOs from Europe have been identified in both countries. Both foreign TCSOs in the region and North Americans abroad often abuse positions as teachers, volunteers or humanitarian workers and engage in volun-tourism. American and Canadian offenders have victimised children in orphanages in countries as diverse as Cambodia, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya and Nepal.

Current and emerging trends

Neither country maintains reliable data on the incidence of SECTT or number of child victims. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police estimates that 1,300 missing Canadian children are trafficked annually for sexual activity,⁹⁴ but the U.S. Crimes against Children Research Center concluded that the country has no reliable data on incidence,⁹⁵ especially because the vast majority of incidents go unreported. Available evidence suggests that children are becoming involved at a younger age, and that some children and youth in both countries engage in commercial sex for survival.⁹⁶

Native Americans in the USA and Aborigines in Canada have both been found to be at high risk for SECTT.⁹⁷ Aboriginal women and children are considered particularly vulnerable, and are overrepresented in the Canadian sex trade; 14-to-60% of youth are involved in prostitution across the country.⁹⁸ In some cities as many as 90% of sexually exploited children are Aborigines.⁹⁹ In the USA, Native American children are also more vulnerable than their peers to trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation.¹⁰⁰

U.S. military servicemen deployed far from home continue to be a “source of demand for sexual services from local populations” especially in Asian countries,¹⁰¹ usually as situational offenders. In 2005 the U.S. military banned servicemen from patronising prostitutes; 31 violations were reported over seven years, but available data does not indicate whether these cases involved children.

The involvement of domestic travellers in child sexual exploitation is another important trend, including a wide range of offender types: from businesspersons attending meetings in another city to mining and oilfield workers assigned to a remote location. Trafficking is closely linked to SECTT in North America.¹⁰² In Canada Aboriginal girls are moved around and sexually exploited by men who frequently travel back and forth to work on

oil rigs or in uranium mines for short periods.¹⁰³ SECTT began to flourish in the USA state of North Dakota when oil was discovered and thousands of men flocked there to work. Transport hubs are another environment where children and adolescents are vulnerable to exploitation, especially by truckers and other travellers who spend long periods on the road.¹⁰⁴

A 2007 study in the USA found evidence of particularly high levels of child sexual exploitation through prostitution and trafficking across state lines – mainly of young African Americans – in both Las Vegas and Atlanta (USA gambling and business hubs, respectively).¹⁰⁵ The large numbers and types of lodgings available are allowing SECTT to migrate from the street to more discrete locations. Montreal is a hotspot for SECTT in Canada given its proximity to the USA and the many sporting and cultural events it hosts.¹⁰⁶

In addition to millions of hotels, motels and guest rooms and cheap, convenient transport options, SECTT in North America is also driven by widespread access to and use of the Internet and other mobile technologies. Computers and mobile phones help TCSOs make arrangements for offending, either through specialised websites, via intermediaries or directly with children and adolescents. Traffickers make extensive use of websites to advertise their victims to “clients”. A simple cell phone call connects buyers to victims quickly and anonymously, allowing traffickers to remain out of sight.

TCSOs also use ICT tools to discover where children are available by networking with like-minded individuals.¹⁰⁷ North Americans have been convicted for using websites to organise tours involving sex with children in other regions. After laws were passed in the two countries (Canada, 2002; USA, 2006) a rapid rise occurred in the number of prosecutions of offenders using the Internet to establish relations with young people for the purpose of travelling to meet them and engaging in sex.

Legal environment

Canada and the USA both have strict laws governing child sexual exploitation both at home and abroad (through extraterritorial legislation). Several U.S. agencies cooperate to identify and prosecute Americans who offend abroad under the 2003 ‘Protect Act’, which specifically prohibits both travel for the purpose of child sexual abuse and operating sex tours. The Department of Homeland Security’s flagship initiative targeting sex offenders, ‘Operation Predator’, has led to over 8,000 arrests since 2003.¹⁰⁸

Canada’s legal framework for SECTT has several loopholes, but amendments to Canadian law to address this and other shortcomings were awaiting final approval

in mid-2015. According to Beyond Borders/ECPAT Canada the amendments will facilitate the prevention of child sex tourism and increase the likelihood that sex offenders will be prosecuted in Canada and abroad.¹⁰⁹

The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation developed a profile of North American travelling child sex offenders, noting that they are generally older and more financially secure than domestic offenders; they are comfortable navigating in another country; and although they know their conduct is illegal, they convince themselves that they are ‘helping’ the child and his or her family.¹¹⁰

Response

Several successful cross-sectoral partnerships were developed in North America between governments, NGOs and the travel and tourism sector to counteract SECTT, often under the umbrella of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Many were inspired by the *Guiding Principles* set out by the UN Human Rights Commission, which call on companies to develop a policy commitment to respect human rights and proactively take steps to prevent, mitigate and, where appropriate, remediate their adverse human rights impacts (see Chapter 5 for more information on the UN Guiding Principles).

The U.S. government is in the process of drafting a *National Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct*, with inputs by ECPAT USA on the use of voluntary instruments to prevent child rights violations, including in the hospitality industry.¹¹¹ Private companies in the USA launched initiatives, such as the Global Business Coalition against Trafficking, which seeks to “mobilise the power, resources and thought leadership of the business community to end human trafficking, including all forms of forced labour and sex trafficking”.

In Canada, the impact of the *Guiding Principles* is less clear, despite some support for development of an implementation strategy.¹¹² Leading child rights NGOs in Canada have offered suggestions on how child rights could be incorporated into such a strategy and the potential benefits to businesses.¹¹³

Because of the critical role of the travel and tourism industry, particularly hotels, in addressing SECTT, the *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism* has been, to date, the main vehicle for involving the private sector in efforts to combat SECTT in North America. ECPAT USA played a key role in encouraging some 40 industry leaders to sign the Code, including Hilton Worldwide and Wyndham Worldwide. In Canada membership remains limited, with the important exception of the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies.

Delta Airlines and Air Canada were the first airlines to sign the Code in North America, informing travellers about laws against SECTT and its impact on children through in-flight videos. Several airlines joined the “Blue Lightning” initiative developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which trains front-line personnel to recognise possible cases of SECTT. Transat, Canada’s holiday travel leader, collaborates with Beyond Borders/ECPAT Canada to train staff to recognise and address instances of child sexual exploitation, and the domestic airline WestJet uses its social media, web and in-flight platforms to call attention to SECTT (see Chapter 5 on responses for more information on these U.S. and Canada initiatives).

Given the new focus on domestic travellers as perpetrators of SECTT, efforts are underway to involve the transport industry in CSR initiatives as outlined in Chapter 5. In the case of Truckers against Trafficking (TAT) suspected cases are called into a hotline; 350 cases of trafficking have been identified to date. A young survivor of SECTT proclaimed recently: “TAT is saving lives!”¹¹⁴

ECPAT groups in both the USA and Canada have worked with partners in several Latin American countries to promote the Code, strengthen collaboration among law enforcement agencies and raise awareness among travellers in countries of origin and destination.

THE PACIFIC

The region

The Pacific Region is comprised of two large island nations (Australia and New Zealand) and 14 smaller, more sparsely populated Pacific island countries (PICs): Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The two large islands are more highly developed; social and economic development is generally less advanced and often differs from island-to-island among the PIC microstates, which rely mainly on agriculture, logging, fishing, mining or palm oil; activities that often bring overseas workers to the region. Perhaps more than any other region, evidence and data are sparse on SECTT in the Pacific Region, in part due to the cost and logistical difficulty of research on thousands of small islands spread across a large ocean.

Travel and tourism

Australia and New Zealand have robust tourism industries and nationals travel abroad frequently – sometimes to engage in SECTT. Analysis by the Australian Federal Police notes that the country is mainly a “source” (rather than a destination) of travelling child sex offenders (TCSOs) and suggests that reduced

costs for international airfares boosted international travel by Australians, including TCSOs, who fly mainly to Southeast Asia and the PICs.¹¹⁵ New Zealand has been characterised as “a destination country for foreign men and women subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking and a source country for children subjected to sex trafficking within the country”.¹¹⁶

The PICs are less accessible, and few nationals travel abroad. But some tourism takes place, particularly in islands with international airports, such as Fiji, Samoa and Rarotonga (Cook Islands). One study cites anecdotal evidence that the scope of SECTT in Samoa is “widespread and serious”.¹¹⁷ Some reports indicate that Fiji, Samoa and Tonga now rely on tourism as an important contributor to national income; others have experienced an influx of foreign workers. These increased arrivals are taking place in the context of a generalised lack of awareness of the dangers of SECTT and laws to prevent or prohibit it. Hard data on tourism in the PICs is scarce; most available information focuses on Australia and New Zealand.

SECTT: Status and contributing factors

Little recent research is available, but earlier reports note that in Australia sexual exploitation and prostitution of indigenous girls takes place in the Northern Territory,¹¹⁸ and cases of trafficking in Maori children, sex trafficking and child prostitution have occurred in New Zealand.¹¹⁹ ECPAT studies point to the poverty and social exclusion of indigenous populations as an important SECTT risk factor in both countries.¹²⁰

Cases of sexual exploitation of children in the PICs linked to travel and tourism appear to be tied mainly to specific economic activities, particularly mining, logging and fishing. Instances of young girls forced into prostitution with both foreign and transient domestic workers were reported in the Solomon Islands (logging industry),¹²¹ Kiribati (foreign fishing boat)¹²² and the Marshall Islands (overseas contract workers and seamen).¹²³ Save the Children has reported cases of sexual abuse in countries where tourism has increased, such as Fiji,¹²⁴ where the 2015 TIP report noted that: “Family members, taxi drivers, foreign tourists, businessmen, and crew on foreign fishing vessels have been alleged to participate in the prostitution of Fijian children.”¹²⁵

Traditional social and cultural beliefs and practices often increase children’s vulnerability to these forms of exploitation. A study of the Solomon Islands by Save the Children Australia found that exploitative forms of “child marriage” were increasing: “Previously, child marriage was allowed only following completion of customary ‘rite of passage’ rituals, but the presence of wealthy foreigners in the logging and fishing industries is reshaping community attitudes towards marriages”,

which now involve girls as young as 13.¹²⁶ Overall, violence is an accepted behaviour and Pacific Island societies are primarily based on patriarchal social systems.¹²⁷ Save the Children reported on the “alarming influence” of gender power relations in the recruitment of girls for transactional sex with logging workers” in the Solomon Islands, where male peers play a key role in recruiting girls to engage in sex with loggers.¹²⁸

In addition, research by Shamina Ali in 2006 highlighted that children in Pacific societies have very low status, since social standing is based on age.¹²⁹ Other social and cultural beliefs – such as taboos about sexual matters and rape, lack of education on reproductive health, high rates of domestic violence and the shift away from extended families – sharply increase girls’ risk of being sexually abused or becoming a victim of SECTT or other manifestations of CSEC.¹³⁰

Profiling victims and offenders

Victims: As noted, indigenous children in Australia appear to be at higher risk for SECTT than others, and the same is true of Maori children in New Zealand. This has been attributed to higher levels of family poverty, abuse and neglect and poor educational outcomes,¹³¹ although hard data to confirm the link with SECTT is not available. In the PICs, profiling is even more difficult. While sexual exploitation seems to affect mostly girls, cultural issues around gender and power may prevent boys from acknowledging or reporting exploitation. Available information points to one conclusion: SECTT victims are usually from an underprivileged rural background or living near a natural resources exploitation site, such as mines, harbours or forests.

Cases examined during research show an acceptance of trading sex for money or goods by Pacific societies and children themselves. In general, victims seem to engage in transactional sex because of poverty, peer pressure and a desire for consumer goods. In 2006 ECPAT New Zealand conducted a study on CSEC in the Cook Islands, interviewing residents of two islands. It found that the respondents, including children, considered giving sexual favours in exchange for money to be an acceptable practice.¹³² A survey in Kiribati found that 27% of youth aged from 15-to-24 years had engaged in sex in exchange for cash or goods.¹³³ In Papua New Guinea, a young girl involved in prostitution explained: “I started [selling sex] at the age of 12. My boyfriend forced me. At that time I needed the money to buy clothes and food for myself.”¹³⁴

Offenders: Due to the lack of data available on travellers and tourists in or from the Pacific region, profiling offenders is far more difficult than in other regions. No organised child sexual exploitation network has yet been identified, which may be due to the predominance of situational offenders

(including long-haul truckers), or of weak monitoring by authorities.

In both Australia and New Zealand there is evidence that parents play an instrumental role in involving their children in prostitution and sexual exploitation.¹³⁵ Research conducted in PICs by the UN regional commission suggests that men and family members are the main perpetrators and/or facilitators of CSEC.¹³⁶ Australia's aid agency reached the same conclusion in Fiji, estimating that 31% of perpetrators of violence against women were family members.¹³⁷ Family members and friends frequently act as "pimps and agents" (Fiji and Papua New Guinea), sometimes even handing over girls as child brides to repay debts (Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea).¹³⁸ Taxi drivers serve as facilitators in Kiribati and Vanuatu.¹³⁹

More information is available on travelling offenders from Australia. ECPAT member Child Wise found that between 2007 and 2008, 10% of offenders arrested in Southeast Asia were Australian citizens,¹⁴⁰ who take advantage of weak legal frameworks and law enforcement in other countries. In Indonesia, Australian men reportedly rely on legalised polygamy to remain immune from prosecution when they sexually abuse young Indonesian girls. Indonesia (especially Bali) and the Philippines are currently the most favoured destinations of Australian TCSOs.¹⁴¹

Response

No regional organisation has been established to monitor human rights or child rights in the Pacific, and no coordinated regional cooperation initiatives are underway. Until recently, comprehensive monitoring of the tourism industry in the PICs was also lacking. Now the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (responsible for 'marketing and developing tourism' in the region) has created a Regional Tourism Resource Centre to collect data on tourism in the PICs.¹⁴² However, it does not collect data related to SECTT or domestic travel. Some UN agencies, particularly UNICEF, have a presence in the region and have tried to quantify and call attention to issues of child sexual exploitation.

Several Australian entities, both governmental and NGO, play an important role in combating SECTT, particularly in countries where Australian TCSOs are active. The Australian Federal Police provides training to overseas law enforcement agencies and recently highlighted the growing threat posed by TCSO's use of the Internet to make arrangements for child sexual exploitation.¹⁴³ Child Wise/ECPAT Australia works to raise awareness and capacity to combat SECTT both in Australia and Southeast Asia.

Efforts in New Zealand, however, have been less robust. Despite the 2001 launch of a major initiative 'Protect

Our Innocence', a subsequent study by ECPAT member Child ALERT and the New Zealand Ministry of Justice revealed low levels of inter-agency coordination and failure to implement the plan. Some cooperation exists among law enforcement agencies, but lacks a focus on SECTT. Tourism agencies are generally unwilling to report suspicions about potential offenders.¹⁴⁴ However, Child Alert was able to conclude an agreement with the ACCOR Hotel group, which manages hotels in New Zealand and Fiji; the group signed The Code and agreed to subsequent training on SECTT for its employees in both countries.¹⁴⁵

Both Australia and New Zealand have signed the various international agreements with a bearing on preventing SECTT and prosecuting offenders. However only two PICs have ratified the OPSC (three others signed, but have not yet ratified the OPSC). Fewer than 10 PICs have ratified other important instruments such as the Palermo Protocol and ILO Convention 182. Moreover, legal frameworks of Pacific Island countries remain quite weak in terms of child protection, despite recent positive engagement in combating trafficking. Protection against the different forms of CSEC remains inadequate, and protection against SECTT is almost non-existent. A common critique of PICs' domestic laws is a lack of clear definitions. In addition, there are no specific laws on SECTT; the only protection available for child victims is legislation prohibiting child trafficking, child prostitution and extra-territorial jurisdiction.

SOUTH ASIA

The Region

The regional report on South Asia covers Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. With its combined population of 1.6 billion,¹⁴⁶ South Asia is home to about half of the world's poor. Poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities are among the key factors affecting children's vulnerability to sexual exploitation.

The region has experienced rapid social and economic changes, with intensified regional integration and liberalisation of markets that often affect and challenge currently held norms and practices.¹⁴⁷ Land used for subsistence farming is being converted to tourism sites in several countries, as the region becomes increasingly urbanised. These and other structural changes have led to increased mobility of capital and labour, expanded trans-border trade, and increased intra-regional migration. When combined with the expansion of technology and a lack of sufficient social safety nets, these changes contribute to a favourable environment for all manifestations of CSEC, including via travel and tourism.

Travel and tourism

In 2014 South Asia welcomed 17.1 million international tourists, up sharply from 12 million in 2010.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, projected growth in the region is for 21 million international visitors in 2020 and a staggering 36 million by 2030.¹⁴⁹ Tourism has become a major source of income for some countries, but its growth rates are uneven. India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives are the most popular destination countries for foreign visitors, but in all countries the number of domestic and intra-regional travellers far outstrips that of international visitors. Bangladesh generated 97.8% of its direct travel and tourism GDP (US\$ 2.8 billion) in 2013 from domestic travel spending.¹⁵⁰ Domestic and regional travellers are increasingly being recognised as real and potential child sex offenders; for example, at religious/pilgrimage sites in Pakistan and along transport routes. Nepal's tourism numbers increased following the end of its lengthy conflict and the country actively promotes tourism with slogans such as: "Nepal is Safe: Visit, Enjoy and Help Nepal." But a 2008 media headline suggested a darker side: "From Treks to Sex: Is a New Sort of Thrill-Seeker Heading for Nepal?"¹⁵¹

The region has diversified as a travel and tourism destination, offering everything from luxury resorts to eco-tourism, high-end resorts to houseboats. South Asian countries have not historically been a major destination for foreign child sex offenders, with the exception of Sri Lanka. However anecdotal evidence suggests that SECTT has moved beyond traditional locations and become apparent in other South Asian countries, especially India and Nepal. India has an extensive travel and tourism industry and a prominent sex market, especially in Goa, promoted as an 'exotic' destination.¹⁵² Kerala, a newly emerging alternative to Goa, is also a prominent destination for SECTT and Alleppy's famous houseboat market is diversifying to include sexual exploitation of children.

Current and emerging trends

Gender: Both boys and girls are vulnerable to SECTT in the region. Studies show that boys, who are generally afforded greater freedom of movement in South Asian societies, often tend to be involved in street-based prostitution, or in public places such as beaches, parks, entertainment districts and transit hubs.¹⁵³ Girls are more commonly trafficked or sold into the formal sex industry, and are thus more likely to end up in institutional settings, such as brothels and entertainment venues (bars, clubs, etc.). A study in Madhya Pradesh, India, found that boys are more often sought out by foreign predators, while local offenders tend to victimise girls.¹⁵⁴ Just as some parents sell their daughters to traffickers, a study by UNICEF reported that some parents approve, and even encourage, their sons' involvement in SECTT, in exchange for gifts and support from the foreigners.¹⁵⁵

In addition to altering perceptions about the gender of child victims, reports from South Asia confirm that not all travelling sex offenders are men. The presence of female predators has long been noted in Sri Lanka, tied to relationships with "beach boys" during holidays. Research by the NGO Equations in 2009 found that female child sex offenders are also travelling to Madhya Pradesh for extended stays to sexually exploit boys.¹⁵⁶

Child marriage: In 2012 South Asia accounted for nearly half of all child marriages in the world.¹⁵⁷ Under the Islamic tradition of *Seigha* a judge or cleric can perform a temporary marriage, with the timing and conditions agreed in advance.¹⁵⁸ Such marriages can range from one hour to 90 years;¹⁵⁹ their original purpose was to protect women during times of war. However temporary marriage now attracts child sex offenders to India: these men, often from the Gulf States, visit India to marry a young girl, exploit her and then return to their country of origin. In Hyderabad, 15 temporary marriages are estimated to take place each month.¹⁶⁰ When foreigners marry a girl 'for the wedding night', and then return home, the child is labelled as 'spoiled' or 'ruined', creating a pathway that can lead to a life of sexual exploitation. In other cases travelling offenders 'marry' a child and take her with them to their country of origin, where the sexual exploitation continues.

Changing venues: Several new contexts have evolved for child sexual exploitation, in large part due to the expansion of infrastructure to accommodate larger numbers of tourists and travellers. Rather than designated red light areas, the sex trade is shifting to hotel rooms, guesthouses and rented flats in suburban areas as well as to hotels along motorways.¹⁶¹ Moreover, informal child prostitution is becoming part of the "entertainment" industry. It is now based at massage parlours, restaurants and clubs where young masseuses, waitresses and entertainers form a significant part of the expanding child sexual exploitation business.¹⁶² With entertainment serving as a veil of legitimacy, the industry can more easily lure children, mostly young girls, into the trade.

Another emerging venue for sexual exploitation is orphanages. Increased interest by tourists in volunteering during their stay has reportedly inspired some orphanages to encourage poor families to hand over their children for care, in order to increase donations from abroad and offer more 'volun-tourism' opportunities to tourists, who may also pay the orphanage to volunteer – making volun-tourism a profitable enterprise.¹⁶³ The risk for children is high, since few institutions check credentials of volunteers. Studies in Nepal and Sri Lanka reveal that very few of the children in these institutions are actually orphans;¹⁶⁴ some are believed to be trafficking victims.

New technologies: In some parts of South Asia ICT use has increased drastically during the past five to ten years, particularly in India; in other countries cyber-cafés are widely available.¹⁶⁵ The speed at which new communication technologies are spreading across the region contributes to the profound changes, both cultural and social, that South Asia is undergoing.¹⁶⁶ Use of these tools facilitates SECTT (grooming, sexting, making contact for encounters); makes law enforcement more challenging; and contributes to the production and distribution of child abuse materials, including live-streaming via webcams. A well-known religious site in Andhra Pradesh receives 20 million visitors a year and is known as a hotspot for commercial sex. Interviews with male children between six and 18 years of age revealed a pattern by which these (mainly Indian), tourists maintained contact with the boys via cell phones and/or e-mail contact at cyber-cafés.¹⁶⁷

Response

No recent, comprehensive data is available on SECTT in the region. Children's vulnerability is enhanced by a lack of regional consensus around definitions of SECTT, ambiguous and often ineffective legislation and a failure to collectively target key issues. This leaves most offenders without fear of punishment and most child victims without access to needed services for recovery. While South Asia has made progress towards strengthening child protection and combating sexual exploitation in recent years, the region still lacks a comprehensive framework. Few initiatives directly target SECTT, which is typically incorporated into broader programmes targeting trafficking or violence.

All eight countries are members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which sponsored important initiatives on trafficking and ensuring child welfare in 2002. More recently, SAARC agreed to establish a cyber-crime monitoring desk, while another regional grouping committed to establishing toll-free hotlines for trafficking victims. In a 2010 breakthrough, the South Asian Initiative to End Violence against Children developed a five-year work-plan that acknowledges 'sex tourism' as a major form of violence against children. Yet to date little evidence is available regarding the plan's outcomes and impact. A widespread lack of monitoring and evaluation, combined with an absence of data collection systems, makes it extremely difficult to assess progress against SECTT in South Asia.

A similar problem was identified in relation to National Plans of Action developed by South Asian governments, most of which do not directly acknowledge or address SECTT or provide information on the status or results of their implementation. For example, in 2010 the Indian Ministry of Tourism developed a 'Code of Conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism' in collaboration with UNODC, the Pacific Asia Travel Association and Save

the Children India, but little information is available on its impact. Nepal established an inter-ministerial committee to address 'child sex tourism', but it is not clear if the committee is functioning or, if so, what it has done. Lack of coordination within governments and overall understanding and capacity in relation to SECTT are issues that seem to be common among South Asian countries, with the possible exception of Sri Lanka.

In relation to legal reform, although significant steps have been taken in the right direction no country has comprehensive legislation that is fully aligned with the OPSC. Countries in the region lack national legislation to specifically and comprehensively define and address SECTT. The region further lacks measure to allow for extraterritorial jurisdiction. These gaps compromise the capacity of states to address cases of offenders both at home and across national borders. As noted in Chapter 2 and 3, the Indian state of Goa, however, has a *Children's Act (2003)* and accompanying *Rules (2004)* that, although valid only in Goa, focus especially on crimes related to tourism and child sexual abuse. The act is consistent with the CRC and even suggests ways to address SECTT.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, Sri Lanka's *1992 Children's Charter* is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and appears to be comprehensive.¹⁶⁹ Enforcement efforts are widely applied, and to counter low reporting of SECTT incidents a specialised police agency for tourism works with communities to prevent SECTT and encourage reporting, as well as raiding known venues.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

The Region

The Southeast Asia region is comprised of 11 countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam). In 2014, Southeast Asia had a combined population of 625.9 million¹⁷⁰ and a combined gross domestic product of US\$235 trillion.¹⁷¹ The region is characterised by diverse forms of governance (monarchy, socialist, military and democratic), and its 11 countries are at very different stages of development.

Travel and tourism

The region has long attracted large volumes of tourists: in 2014 Southeast Asia welcomed a record 96.6 million international visitors and was identified as the fastest-growing region for tourism in the world. Southeast Asia is also the region where sexual exploitation of children by tourists was first identified, leading to global efforts to combat child sexual exploitation in countries such as Hong Kong, the Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand.

Traditional destinations for foreign child sex offenders from the West, especially Thailand and the Philippines, continue to attract travelling offenders, while countries

such as Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam are also believed to have become key destinations. Lao PDR, Myanmar and Timor-Leste are becoming increasingly popular tourism destinations and, whilst little data exists, anecdotal evidence suggests that SECTT has begun to take root, on a smaller scale, in these countries.

For example, since its change in government in 2011 Myanmar has made significant efforts to attract tourists and accessibility increased dramatically, as more airlines – including budget airlines – brought international tourists to and around the country. In 2014 some 67% of these tourists were from Thailand, Japan or China, and a shift was occurring, away from package tours toward independent travellers who, along with business travellers, accounted for up to 70% of international arrivals in 2014.¹⁷² A 2010 survey of 58 sex workers under the age of 25 in three cities of Myanmar by the United Nations Population Fund and Save the Children found that 12% of respondents were aged 10-14 years and a further 33% were aged 15-19 years.¹⁷³ According to staff of the country's Sex Workers Association (CBO Network) both male and female children as young as 15 years of age are increasingly engaging in sex work in Yangon (formerly the capital, Rangoon) and foreign tourists are using their services.¹⁷⁴ There are also reports of children involved in prostitution in towns such as Mawlamyine and Kyakhtiyo.¹⁷⁵

Moreover, investigations by the responsible tourism organisation Tourism Transparency suggested that in 2013, at least one Japanese website was promoting travel to Myanmar for the purposes of sex tourism and offering a list of hotels where necessary arrangements could be made.¹⁷⁶ Anecdotal evidence suggests that some hotel owners in Myanmar are willingly connecting tourists with sex workers when asked. It is unknown whether these visitors specifically target children.

With ever-increasing numbers of tourists visiting the region, new forms of tourism are emerging (ecotourism, homestays, volun-tourism) that allow travellers to access previously isolated areas. The increasing ease and decreasing cost of travel have brought significant numbers of tourists to new destinations. The opening up of Southeast Asian countries that were largely off the tourism radar (due to political instability and/or conflict) represents a grave risk of increased SECTT for vulnerable children who, along with their parents, remain uninformed about the threat from travelling offenders.

Current and emerging trends

As a result of a combination of vulnerabilities, street children, children who migrate alone or with their families or who remain at home when their parents migrate, refugee and internally displaced children, stateless children and indigenous children are at significant risk of SECTT in Southeast Asia. Children from ethnic minorities,

such as those from hill tribe communities in Northern Thailand, are especially vulnerable.¹⁷⁷

Throughout Southeast Asia domestic travellers far outnumber foreign tourists, and some 66% of those visiting the region were either from another Southeast Asian country or East Asia.¹⁷⁸ The vast majority of child sex offenders in Southeast Asian countries are male nationals. The focus of anti-SECTT efforts has long been on foreigners, but in the Philippines, law enforcement authorities believe that foreign men are responsible for only 10-to-15% of sex crimes against children.¹⁷⁹ Similarly, it is estimated that Cambodian nationals commit three-quarters of all cases of sexual exploitation of Cambodian children.¹⁸⁰ However, very little research has been carried out about the behaviour of domestic, intraregional and intra-Asian tourists with regard to SECTT.

Tourists and domestic offenders gain access to vulnerable boys and girls through several channels: via establishment-based prostitution (bars, karaoke venues, beer gardens, massage parlours and brothels); through direct or facilitated solicitation of children living and/or working in public places such as beaches or marketplaces; as well as via voluntary or professional engagement in child-contact roles, including schools, orphanages and humanitarian aid.

Grooming of children by foreign child sex offenders is widespread. In addition, offenders are regularly gathering child abuse imagery in the course of their exploitation. Such imagery is often shared with other offenders and used to groom and/or blackmail children into ongoing sexual exploitation.¹⁸¹

In the pursuit of economic development, a number of Southeast Asian countries have encouraged large-scale foreign investment in tourism and other sectors, along with the proliferation of Special Economic and Free Trade Zones. These profitable developments – usually accompanied by casinos and a range of entertainment venues (bars, clubs, brothels) – represent a high-risk locale for SECTT. In several cases these special zones are in the very same locations identified as known locations for SECTT.¹⁸² A description of one such location, Mong La in northeastern Myanmar, along the border with China, illustrates the need for greater attention to understanding and addressing the associated risks for children:

*Mong La thrives by appealing to humanity's more base desires. Hotel rooms are littered with palm cards hawking 'newly arrived virgins', 'mother-daughter combos' and 'sassy sixteen year olds with large breasts', and hotel televisions broadcast round the clock Japanese pornography.*¹⁸³

There is growing acknowledgement that boys are also highly vulnerable to SECTT and that their experiences of exploitation are little understood and often de-valued. In Southeast Asia boys are reported to be most commonly involved in street-based sexual exploitation.

Another emerging area of grave concern is the infiltration by transnational child sex offenders into pseudo-care professions such as teaching and work with child-focused NGOs in shelters and orphanages in a professional or voluntary capacity. Orphanages have been found to employ unethical tactics and to put children at risk through exposure to un-vetted “volunteers”.¹⁸⁴

Finally, proliferation of the Internet and related communication technologies presents several new modalities of solicitation and exploitation for TCSOs. Online grooming and solicitation, the increasing ease and profitability of sexual abusive images of children and the advent of cybersex have rapidly changed the methods used by offenders and led to unprecedented numbers of vulnerable children being exploited across the region, both directly and indirectly, or trafficked for exploitation elsewhere. The Philippines is believed to be a key location in Southeast Asia for organised cybersex involving children; numerous cases have come to light in recent years. It has been estimated that tens of thousands of children in the Philippines alone are exploited by what is described by the Dutch NGO Terre des Hommes as ‘webcam child sex tourism’, which involves children performing sexual acts in front of a camera controlled by the abuser through an intermediary.¹⁸⁵

Response

Throughout Southeast Asia, serious efforts have been made to combat child sexual exploitation in recent years. At the regional level, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has acknowledged the issue in numerous regional declarations and initiatives against trafficking, violence and cybercrime. Public education campaigns have been carried out, in some cases funded by Australia’s aid agency, since Australian offenders are active in the region.

However, the commitment and capacity of national governments to combat SECTT varies across the region. The development of National Plans of Action (NPAs); establishment of coordination and cooperation mechanisms and actions; development, revision and application of legal frameworks; implementation of prevention programmes; provision of support services to victims; and engagement of children and young people have been undertaken to a greater or lesser extent in different countries. In some instances, civil society organisations have been the driving force behind anti-SECTT activities across the region. Yet none of the region’s 11 countries has a specific NPA to

address SECTT or a designated agency to oversee and coordinate anti-SECTT initiatives.

International contributions to anti-SECTT actions in the region have mainly taken the form of establishing and/or tightening extraterritorial legislation; support for developing sex offender registration and notification systems; and building cooperative relationships between regional, national and international law enforcement agencies.

Significant efforts have been undertaken in Southeast Asia to enhance national legal frameworks, but no country fully complies with the recommendations outlined in the OPSC, which address SECTT-related crimes. Only the Philippines has specific, robust national legislation describing and prohibiting SECTT. In many countries, legislation that could be applied to cases of SECTT is compromised by a failure to adequately define, criminalise and/or suitably penalise sexual offences against children. Troublingly, a number of countries also fail to explicitly state that children involved in cases of sexual exploitation are, in fact, victims, rather than offenders.

Most SECTT prevention efforts in the region have been undertaken by NGOs or supported by development partners; and while some public and private programmes exist to assist child victims of violence and abuse, support services specifically designed for victims of SECTT are rare.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

The region

Sub-Saharan Africa includes 46 countries, several of which are among the world’s poorest and least developed. The full report presents the findings of national-level research conducted in Ghana (West Africa), Kenya (East Africa), South Africa and Zambia (southern Africa), complemented by evidence from elsewhere in the region.¹⁸⁶ In the four countries studied in-depth, consultations were held with a range of stakeholders, including child victims of sexual exploitation, the results of which provide a foundation for the conclusions drawn about the current dynamics and trends of SECTT in the region.

Travel and tourism

According to data from UNWTO, tourism in Africa has more than tripled in the last 20 years. International tourism in Africa has seen a 2% increase in 2014, which amounts to one million arrivals, adding up to 56 million tourists in total, after the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Middle East and Europe. This figure is predicted to climb to 134 million by 2030.¹⁸⁷ The motive for travel and tourism varies widely across the region; for example, highly developed South Africa draws large numbers

of business-persons and attendees at mega-sporting events, as well as ordinary tourists, while Zambia's economy relies heavily on extractive industries that bring foreign investors and foreign workers to mining and other economic zones. Countries such as Kenya and South Africa have comparatively well-developed travel infrastructure, which is not always the case elsewhere in the region.

Current and emerging trends

Evidence gathered through the research indicates that SECTT is on the rise in Africa. Tourism has historically been associated with North and West African countries (such as Morocco and Senegal), but an influx of tourists seeking sex with children – including African travellers – is now being reported elsewhere in the region. Studies conducted in Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal, South Africa and The Gambia in 2013 found that SECTT was identified as a problem by stakeholders, community members and child victims in all five countries.¹⁸⁸ Members of the ECPAT International regional network point to Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, The Gambia and Tanzania (Zanzibar) as major destinations for travelling child sex offenders.

As the tourism industry undergoes dramatic changes – with the emergence of new online, unregulated modes of accommodation and transportation – children's vulnerability is also rising. In particular, research revealed a trend toward the use of new types of *infrastructure* for SECTT, beyond traditional beach-front attractions. Non-traditional venues include settings associated with “volun-tourism” and other child-contact institutions; travel infrastructure linked to national and foreign direct investment; military bases and camps, refugee and migrant detention centres, policing infrastructures and peacekeeping missions; the adult sex trade and entertainment industry; and online platforms, among others.

Volun-tourism: The growing popularity of this phenomenon among visitors from wealthy countries has reportedly led to abuse, such as encouraging parents to give their children over to “orphanages” that charge visitors for their time volunteering. Visitors are not vetted and visits are largely unregulated, leaving children vulnerable to abuse by sexual predators. A government study in Ghana revealed that some 90 per cent of the estimated 4,500 children in orphanages in Ghana are not orphans.¹⁸⁹

Foreign direct investment: Foreign direct investment contributes to increased mobility within and across countries, bringing large groups of mostly unaccompanied males into developing regions of Africa. Chinese investment on the continent, for example,

increased from less than US\$100 million/year in the 1980s to \$26 billion by end-2013.¹⁹⁰ The bulk of this investment is in mining, finance, construction and manufacturing, and often requires the creation of services and infrastructure that provide opportunities for child sexual exploitation. In Zambia, the development of a foreign-led mining industry has been linked with a rise in SECTT, in particular by Chinese contractors and workers.¹⁹¹ Foreign-financed road construction in both Zambia and Kenya was also identified as a source of demand during consultations in the two countries.

Conflict zones: Armed conflict forces entire communities to move, often to sprawling camps for the displaced, increasing children's vulnerability to sexual exploitation by armed forces, peacekeeping troops, camp personnel and visitors. In Uganda, ECPAT found that the 24-year conflict involving the Lord's Resistance Army resulted in hundreds of unaccompanied children being exploited in transactional and organised commercial sex in refugee camps for the displaced, and that girls recruited or abducted to serve the group were sexually abused by its members.¹⁹² Ongoing instability and conflict in South Sudan has reportedly contributed to a rise in child prostitution of girls as young as twelve.¹⁹³ The kidnapping of 300 schoolgirls by Boko Haram in Nigeria raised fears that the girls would be transported across borders and sold for purposes of sexual exploitation.

Adult sex/entertainment trade: The presence of children in venues where adults are engaging in commercial sex (such as massage parlours or nightclubs) greatly increases their risk. Situational offenders are less likely to distinguish between an adult woman and an adolescent girl when the venue appears to condone sex with any female. Sometimes locations for sexual exploitation are designed to appear as places for other, legal, businesses such as domestic help recruitment agencies – but the main business is to recruit children and women into prostitution.

Online platforms & ICTs: The African continent is currently experiencing one of the strongest upsurges in mobile data use in the world. The number of Internet users has increased by nearly 7,000% since 2000, although overall penetration remains low (at just 27%).¹⁹⁴ Mobile Internet traffic across Africa is expected to rise 20-fold by the end of the decade.¹⁹⁵ Research by two NGOs in Kenya revealed that children (11-18) in Nairobi often accept “friendship” requests from strangers, who then make sexual advances.¹⁹⁶ Loneliness, curiosity and the desire to travel abroad and experience new things were mentioned in country reports as potential factors increasing children's risk from online perpetrators. An influx of contraband phones with enabled Internet has made online access cheap and easily available,

reportedly increasing children's exposure to pornography sites. Chatting and picture exchange tools were reported to be the main channels used by offenders to target and recruit children into SECTT. Pimps may recruit girls by disguising themselves as international aid workers and instructing the girls to open a social media page to facilitate communication with a 'donor.'¹⁹⁷ The offender then begins to communicate with the child, gradually turning the relationship into a 'courtship' with the promise of financial stability. Online platforms are also increasingly being used by intermediaries and to distribute pornographic images of children.

Traditional practices: Some long-followed cultural and religious practices pose special risks for children. Child marriage, for example, gives men full control over a girls' life for a nominal cost. Research in Ethiopia, Mauritania and Niger showed that some child brides are sold by husbands into the sex trade, while those who run away from abusive marriages often end up working as prostitutes, due to rejection by families and societies.¹⁹⁸ In some parts of South Africa girls are abducted to serve as sex slaves to older husbands (*ukuthwala*), while in Ghana and elsewhere in West Africa girl children are given to priests of a religious cult as part of the practice of *trokosi*. Another practice, fostering, involves sending children from impoverished rural families to live with relatives in cities, where they are supposed to have better opportunities – but are often sexually exploited within the household or by others.

Research in Africa found that many of the factors that increase children's vulnerability to SECTT apply mainly to girls. This is the case with child marriage and *trokosi*, for example, as well as practices that exclude girls from inheriting land when parents die, leaving them with no home or means of support.

Children's low social status in much of Africa means they are often seen as commodities, to be sold, traded or given away, used to settle debts or disputes or to gain access to land or chieftaincies. Given this historically 'transactional' view of sex, it is not surprising that all of the Africa country case studies pointed out that, faced with few options for upward mobility, many girls seek a man with political, economic and social power to secure their future. This dynamic makes adolescents susceptible to SECTT, since intermediaries and offenders often make false promises of love and a better future. It also helps to explain overall social tolerance of commercial sex, which blunts the reality faced by victims of child sexual exploitation.

Victims and perpetrators

One major conclusion drawn from the research is the impossibility of sketching an accurate 'victim profile', as boys and girls from diverse socioeconomic groups and

locations are potentially vulnerable. While some factors appear to have a stronger influence on vulnerability than others, no single factor or indicator can be said to accurately predict whether or not a child will become a victim of SECTT. Nevertheless, the case studies found that one of the most critical factors influencing vulnerability for all children from all socio-economic groups and backgrounds is parental care and family relationships. In the four countries studied, the absence of someone to look out for the child or operate in his or her best interests was a critical risk factor.

As with SECTT victims, attempting to develop a single profile of offenders is not feasible, and potentially misleading. The old stereotype of white European paedophiles as the main actors in SECTT has given way to a more diverse reality in which many other types of travellers play a role: national and international business travellers, wealthy and influential people, government officials and others in positions of power were also identified as potential perpetrators in Africa. Offenders come from diverse locations that are constantly shifting in accordance with global socio-economic and political dynamics. As SECTT has expanded and diversified, so have the likely intermediaries, including, for example: recruitment agencies, travel agencies, adult sex workers, taxi drivers, motorcycle gangs, bar owners and organised criminal networks.

The increasing difficulty of accurately pinpointing those vulnerable to, or likely to commit, SECTT serves as a hurdle to the development of effective prevention strategies.

Response

Almost all countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have ratified the major international conventions protecting children against SECTT-related crimes. However implementation has been weak, so these commitments have generally not translated into meaningful action or change for children. Research for this report indicates that the same is true with regard to national legislation: even when updated laws are in place, enforcement is insufficient, leaving children vulnerable to SECTT and other forms of exploitation. Moreover, corruption often compounds these difficulties, creating an environment where perpetrators act with impunity.

Very low levels of prosecution for SECTT crimes were attributed by respondents in the four countries to two main factors: corruption in the judicial system and reluctance among victims to report cases or testify, due to fear of reprisals or belief that they themselves are responsible for the crime. Lack of awareness about the reporting process was also mentioned by many respondents. Another challenge is that legal systems generally place responsibility on the child or family to

report the crime, rather than on the police and other institutions normally responsible for investigating cases and holding offenders accountable.

Services for child victims of SECTT are generally lacking or poorly resourced in African countries and reach only a small percentage of those in need of recovery and reintegration assistance.¹⁹⁹

Despite this generally discouraging picture, a few promising initiatives are underway in Sub-Saharan Africa:

The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism has been adopted by 24 private businesses, mainly hotel groups and travel agencies, in the region. Unfortunately, greater scrutiny at leading hotels has driven SECTT offenders to use guesthouses, private rentals and low-budget hotels.

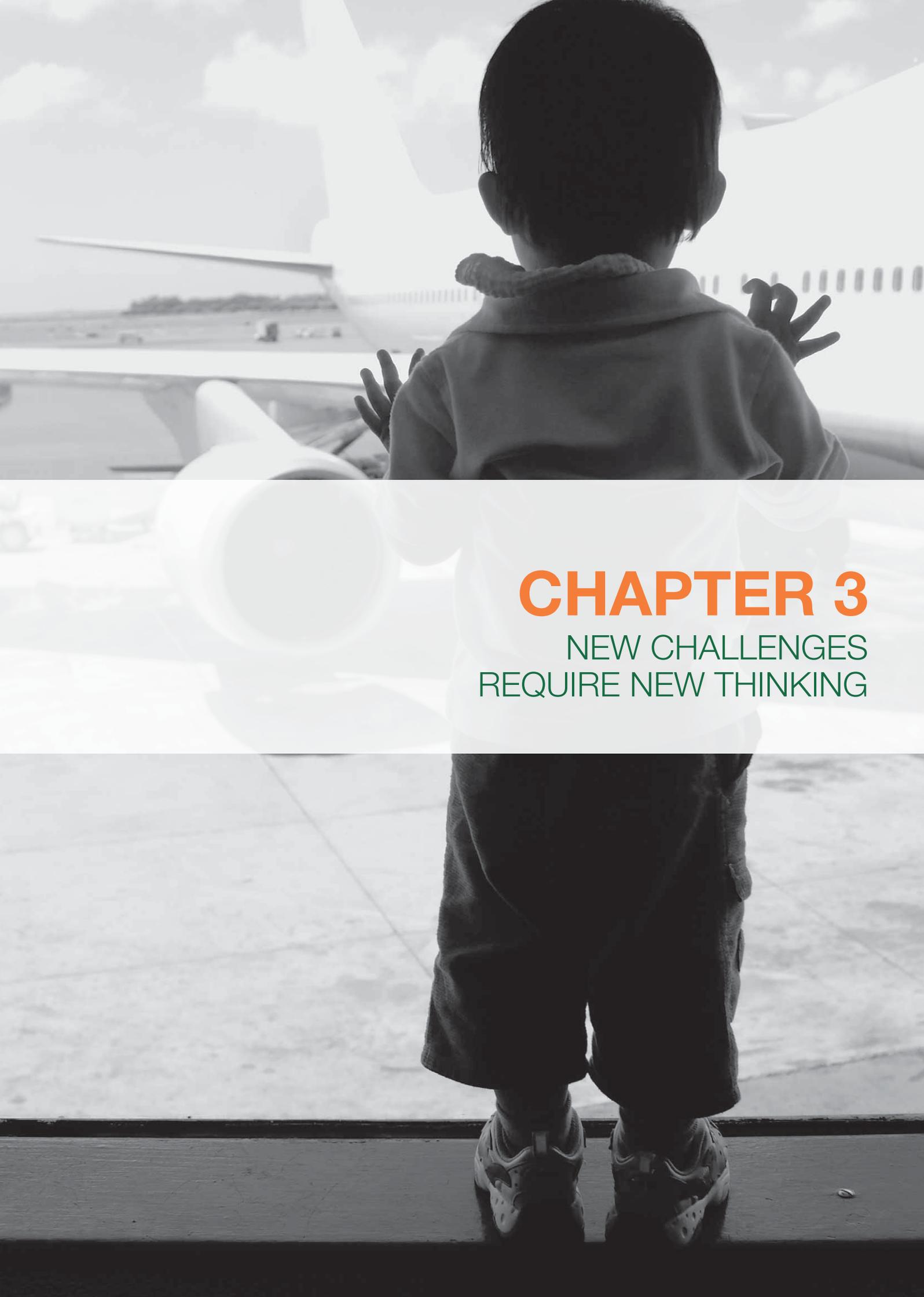
Fair Trade Tourism is leading the development of certification criteria for *volun-tourism*, focusing on the involvement of local communities, fair share of benefits, adequate screening and training of volunteers and

preventing child labour. By the end of 2015, it planned to develop additional criteria to specifically protect volunteers, as well as children involved in volunteer programmes, from exploitation or abuse.²⁰⁰

One-Stop Centres, originating in South Africa and now available in a few other countries, offer victims of sex crimes combined medical, counselling and legal services at a single location. The centres, however, often lack follow-up procedures.²⁰¹

Informal associations of adult women sex workers have emerged in Kenya, involving women in prostitution who collect fees to ensure rescue and release from detention. The study found that such informal associations are very influential and, with capacity building, could potentially play a vital role in protecting children from SECTT.

The general consensus among respondents from all countries was that current service provision is far from comprehensive, and more information is needed about the dynamics and manifestations of SECTT in Africa in order to tailor effective strategies to combat this threat to the wellbeing of children.



CHAPTER 3

NEW CHALLENGES
REQUIRE NEW THINKING

CHAPTER 3

NEW CHALLENGES REQUIRE NEW THINKING

“In increasingly deregulated and dynamic environments, such as the tourism and travel industries, it is imperative to engage the private sector in the fight against sexual exploitation of children.”

*Maud de Boer-Buquicchio,
UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*

INTRODUCTION

Strong indications that child sexual exploitation is on the rise around the world have called attention to the correlation between this trend and the sharp increases occurring in global and domestic travel in recent decades. As noted in the Introduction to this report, the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT) can be defined concisely as:

Acts of child sexual exploitation that are embedded in a context of travel, tourism, or both.

A fuller definition was put forward by ECPAT International in 2008:

...the sexual exploitation of children by a person or persons who travel from their home district, home geographical region, or home country in order to have sexual contact with children. Child sex tourists can be domestic travellers or they can be international tourists. Child sex tourism often involves the use of accommodation, transportation and other tourism-related services that facilitate contact with children and enable the perpetrator to remain fairly inconspicuous in the surrounding population and environment.²⁰²

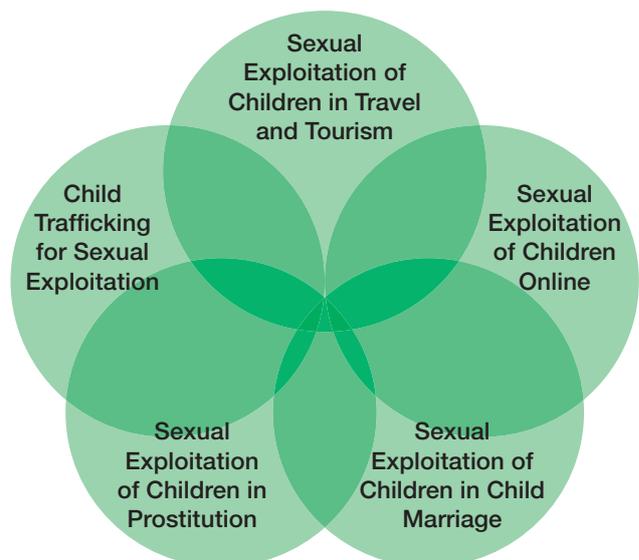
Since that time, the term ‘child sex tourism’ has been rejected, due to the implication that it is a legitimate form of tourism, although the points about domestic travellers

and the use of tourism infrastructure remain valid and are described in detail in this chapter.

Growing realisation that the lack of a clear and widely agreed definition of SECTT affects the ability of the international community to take decisive action against SECTT has lent urgency to efforts to finalise the definition. In the absence of a globally accepted definition, the present study utilises the brief definition cited at the outset.

Overall, the findings of the Global Study point to changes that, since the early 1990s, have resulted in an increasingly interconnected world and the blurring of boundaries between different manifestations of child sexual exploitation.

Figure 1: Manifestations of sexual exploitation of children



The unprecedented growth in global travel and its expansion to new destinations has vastly increased both the number of tourists and the number of children vulnerable to sexual exploitation. The threat comes not only from traditional tourism, but also from a wide array

of other travellers (businessmen and workers on short- or long-term stays, expatriates living abroad and civilians who volunteer or work in other countries). Domestic travel has also expanded at a rapid pace; domestic travellers are now believed to be responsible for the majority of cases of child sexual exploitation in all regions.

These trends call for a revision of the conceptual framework and terminology defining what was earlier referred to as ‘child sex tourism’, broadening the scope to include tourism *and travel* (both international and domestic) and exploring why it presents such a rich environment for would-be exploiters. Even the term commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is called into question by Global Study research, which reveals evolving manifestations of sexual exploitation that do not involve a direct commercial exchange (such as volun-tourism). Shifting the spotlight to *sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism* requires re-thinking and re-defining key terminology as well as the most effective legal, policy and programmatic responses.

In addition to sharply increasing the number of travellers, the globalised economy has contributed to increased cross-border migration, as have armed conflicts and natural disasters leading to mass displacements of affected populations that can heighten children’s risk of sexual exploitation by tourists and travellers.

Advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs) over the past decade are now being used to facilitate all forms of sexual exploitation of children. Widespread use of social media, the existence of a ‘darknet’ that allows anonymity and other related applications make it easier for travelling offenders to communicate and share information about vulnerable children. Access to smart phones and the Internet exposes children to websites featuring sexual abusive images of children and the potentially dangerous practice of ‘sexting.’ Of particular concern are indications that offenders who in the past remained at home to view abusive images are taking advantage of cheap travel and Internet anonymity to expand their activities into real time; in some cases orchestrating live-streaming of pornographic performances featuring children.

By facilitating the actions of offenders, ICTs make it increasingly difficult for law enforcement to identify and prosecute them. The last section of the chapter describes this and other challenges faced in the field of law and law enforcement, in particular the need for legal reforms that address widespread impunity for offenders and the treatment of child victims as criminals.

Globalisation has also contributed to producing increasingly profit-driven, consumption-oriented societies, even in some of the world’s most remote areas. At one level this influences investment decisions

by governments and the private sector. At another it promotes a desire by children and adolescents to possess consumer goods and earn money in any way they can, making them more vulnerable to SECTT. Tourism development, when motivated only by profit, unaccompanied by consideration of the well-being of local communities and children, is contributing to the victimisation of children around the world.

Macro-level changes such as these play a role in creating a global context of enhanced child vulnerability. Exploring child sexual exploitation through the lens of travel and tourism makes it abundantly clear that the discrete elements contributing to this crime are closely inter-related. Vulnerable children are *trafficked* to areas where there is strong demand from tourists and travellers; they are forced or enticed into *prostitution* at bars, clubs, restaurants and other venues frequented by tourists and travellers; and cell phones and web applications are used to locate them, pressure them, groom them and ultimately subject them to sexual exploitation. These different manifestations of child sexual exploitation are actually integral parts of a whole — and travel and tourism often lie at the heart of the circle.

This chapter of the Global Study report elaborates on these themes. It begins by describing the varied contexts that contribute to children’s vulnerability and influence the offenders who victimise them, and goes on to describe three characteristics of SECTT that exacerbate children’s vulnerability and facilitate their exploitation: power imbalances between offenders and victims, the sharply expanded global travel and tourism infrastructure and gaps and conflicts in laws and law enforcement. Each section includes a brief note on implications for policy and action arising from the specific topic addressed.

CONTEXT OF CHILDREN

In this section we focus on the interplay between travel, tourism and the lives of children, identifying the contextual factors that permit travel and tourism to increase children’s vulnerability to SECTT. Research undertaken for the Global Study makes it abundantly clear that there is no single factor or condition that determines whether a child will be victimised. Rather, children around the globe face certain circumstances — sometimes similar, sometimes different — that heighten their vulnerability: powerlessness and poverty appear to be the conditions shared by most.

Among the over-arching circumstances most likely to influence children’s future trajectory in relation to SECTT are:

- Chronic or sudden-onset impoverishment or loss of parental support
- Living on the street

- Discrimination and exclusion based on race, ethnicity, disability or citizenship
- Societal norms and practices related to gender and sexuality
- Domestic violence and abuse, parental neglect, and family dysfunction
- Lack of (access to) education

Evidence from ECPAT research in nine regions also suggests that living near a major tourism site and working in the hospitality/entertainment business, as well as proximity to an area where natural resources are being harvested or extracted, also place children in grave danger of becoming victims of SECTT. Some children face multiple vulnerabilities that work in combination to heighten their risk, for example: poverty and disability, being an orphaned girl or homosexual boy subjected to domestic violence and abuse, or being from an ethnic minority and living near a tourism site, or a transgender child working at a transport hub.

Widely accepted cultural norms that place little value on children (especially girls), and encourage boys and men to constantly display their virility feed into the strategies of sexual offenders, laying the groundwork for exploitation. Children who are neglected or rejected at home or in their communities are more likely to succumb to seduction techniques employed by experienced sexual predators or traffickers promising camaraderie, inclusion or a brighter future. Girls and boys subjected to sexual abuse and violence at home or who live in an environment where adult prostitution is widespread learn to view sexual activity as the norm. If they become involved in SECTT they may not see themselves as victims, but rather as ‘co-conspirators’. Young people exposed to increasingly sexualised images of children through the media, advertisements and the Internet also come to view this as ‘normal’.

Other changes taking place around the world also contribute to environments that favour child sexual exploitation. The globalised economy has sparked large-scale migration in search of greater opportunities. Displacement resulting from conflict or climate disasters deprives children of protections they had at home, increasing their vulnerability. Pandemics such as AIDS have created millions of orphans around the world at a time when tourists and travellers, including child sex offenders, are paying to volunteer in orphanages or child care centres.

Every child is different and responds differently to the particular set of circumstances he or she faces. But overall, the realities described above form part of a larger context that increases a child’s susceptibility to sexual exploitation. In short, no child is immune.

Without the vastly increased international and domestic travel documented in this report, most children would

not face exposure to travelling child sex offenders. They might encounter many obstacles to achieving their rights and full potential, and still be vulnerable to sexual abuse at home, but they would not be ensnared in the web of sexual exploitation. However the global race for tourism income and investment is bringing millions of outsiders to most countries, often to previously remote areas. At the same time, the globalised economy has led to large-scale movement of workforces – bringing potential offenders to new parts of the world. New travel trends (such as volun-tourism, home-stays and promotion of “exotic” venues) and the infrastructure that supports them multiply the opportunities for offenders to locate vulnerable children. Over the past 20 years, trends in global travel and tourism have come to intersect with the challenging contexts faced by many children, increasing their risk of coming into contact with a travelling child sex offender.

Combined with either a need to meet basic needs or desire to obtain consumer goods, the lure of engaging in transactional sex can lead children and adolescents to accept the overtures of strangers whom they perceive simply as wealthy benefactors. A common feature in societies where large numbers of children are involved in SECTT is lack of knowledge about the long-term consequences of sexual encounters with strangers, especially preferential offenders or traffickers. Neither children nor their parents foresee that such encounters can lead to long-term physical and psychological abuse and violence, being trafficked to another country, forced into prostitution or becoming the subject of online images that can never be erased. One victim in the USA stated:

When I was ten I met a man who said he would take care of me, love me, and give me a safe home – things I didn't have in my foster home, and I believed him. But he lied. From the time I was ten through my seventeenth birthday I was raped, sexually exploited and trafficked all over the Western United States.”²⁰³

The main circumstances that increase risk for children are examined below, based on evidence gathered for the Global Study.

Poverty

Child poverty may be chronic or result from rapid social change, such as international or rural-urban migration. In the latter case, children’s support systems are undermined as family and/or extended family members move away to seek work. Whether remaining or moving, for children these changes are likely to require them to join the labour force to bolster family income. With little education and few marketable skills, significant numbers end up working on the streets, usually in menial jobs – selling trinkets, carrying packages, or helping store owners. Living and working on the street has long been

identified as a major vulnerability for children (see below). Children who migrate alone are particularly vulnerable, as they usually lack identity papers, parental protection and access to social services – and thus a prime target for exploiters.

In some regions children of impoverished rural families are sent to cities to serve as domestic workers, where they are vulnerable to exploitation by their employers. Poverty and lack of information also drive some parents to sell their children to traffickers, who offer false promises of care, education or jobs for the child. In Pakistan, for example, a major scandal erupted when it was revealed that young boys taken to Gulf States to serve as ‘camel jockeys’ were being regularly mistreated; some returned irrevocably damaged by physical and sexual abuse.²⁰⁴

Children and families may become impoverished – homeless and without resources – as a result of sudden-onset events, such as natural disasters or armed conflict. Global Study research confirms that when this occurs, children are placed at risk. Living in crowded camps or tent cities, sometimes separated from their families; the most vulnerable are susceptible to sexual predators posing as humanitarian aid workers and others. In contexts of armed conflict, children are vulnerable to kidnapping and sexual exploitation by soldiers and members of armed groups, who have been known to auction girls they have already sexually abused to foreign bidders.²⁰⁵ Peacekeeping troops also present a risk.

In short, poverty, whether chronic or sudden-onset, has long been a primary context contributing to children’s risk of sexual exploitation.

Living on the street

Worldwide, children who experience violence and abuse in their homes often run away to live on the streets. In some cases parents eject them from the home, or neglect them entirely. Sexual abuse within the home or as a young child is considered a major risk factor for subsequent involvement in SECTT.²⁰⁶ Large numbers of African children have been forced to live on the street following the death of parents from AIDS; especially when inheritance laws result in children’s loss of their home and property.²⁰⁷ Children may also decide to live on the street for other reasons, often tied to a need for food and income.

Across the globe, living and working on the streets presents major risks for sexual exploitation. Whether they are begging or engaged in menial labour, street children are easily approached by middlemen, individual predators or traffickers who promise them a meal, a bath or cash in exchange for sex. With no source of care and protection they sometimes become attached to and dependent on their ‘benefactors’, who then involve

them in other manifestations of sexual exploitation.²⁰⁸ Providing drugs is another means of luring street children into sexual exploitation: they become dependent first on the drugs and then on payment for sexual services to support their habit – at which point they have fallen entirely under the control of their exploiter.²⁰⁹

Discrimination and social exclusion

Millions of children around the world face discrimination on the basis of their race, ethnicity, migration status or disability. Due to their low social status, Roma children in Europe, Native Americans in Canada and the USA, as well as Aborigines in Australia and Maori in New Zealand are all preferred targets of sexual offenders according to research reflected in regional and country reports prepared for the Global Study. Girls from northern hill tribe communities in Vietnam are deprived of citizenship, and have been the target of sex traffickers for decades. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child pointed out that in Japan “societal discrimination persists against children belonging to ethnic minorities, children of non-Japanese nationality, children of migrant workers, refugee children and children with disabilities”.²¹⁰ In Latin America, children of indigenous and African descent face discrimination and social exclusion. Children of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in many African and European countries are subject to xenophobia and discrimination. Religious- and caste-based discrimination in South Asia relegates entire communities to a low social status.

Discriminatory attitudes often lead to social exclusion, that is, rejection of the child by the larger society and ineligibility for social services, such as education. Unless they have strong family ties, these children face a hostile world alone and entirely unprotected, making them ideal targets for travelling child sex offenders.

The situation of children with disabilities is somewhat different, but similar in terms of the venues where sexual exploitation is likely to occur.²¹¹ In many countries those with physical disabilities are forced by their families to beg on street corners, where they may be helpless to repel sexual offenders. An offender from Norway targeted Romanian children under 14 years of age who were unable to speak or hear.²¹² Children with mental disabilities are also at risk, since they may not be able to understand or resist what is happening to them or to lodge a complaint. Children with disabilities are also more likely to be placed in residential institutions where, like orphans, they could face abuse by ill-intentioned ‘volunteers’ – both travelling offenders and long-term foreign residents.²¹³

Child victims of sexual exploitation may also experience discrimination and social exclusion by their families and communities. Reports from several regions affirm that one of the main reasons for the under-reporting

of incidents of sexual exploitation is the child's fear that he/she will never be able to go home again. In Ghana, the consequences of involvement in sexual exploitation were characterised as "stigmatization within the community, and discrimination by family members who see these victims as merely prostitutes",²¹⁴ leaving victims with little choice but to remain in the exploitative situation. Other regions reported similar consequences for female victims.

The manner and nature of discrimination and social exclusion may differ from country to country, but they form part of the larger context that contributes to children's vulnerability to SECTT. Children assigned to the margins of society – excluded from school and harassed by peers and the police – are ripe for exploitation. If they lack citizenship, they are highly vulnerable to trafficking. If they simply look 'different' and appear unattached, they attract the attention of predatory tourists and travellers and their intermediaries. For many, it takes only the potential for a connection – for the inclusion they lack in their daily lives – to allow them to fall prey to predators.

Norms and practices on gender and sexuality

Girls have long been assumed to be the main target of sexual predators, but research for the Global Study reveals that boys are also strongly affected. The context that makes both boys and girls vulnerable is tied to social norms about gender, essentially the age-old stereotypes: girls are weak and passive and should remain in the home, while boys are strong and virile and capable of taking on the world. The regional report on South Asia points out that this very belief increases vulnerability for boys, whose greater freedom of movement makes them more likely to encounter a travelling offender.

Another gender-related expectation in many cultures is that while girls should remain virgins until marriage, boys should gain as much sexual experience as possible. In much of Asia this myth has fuelled offenders' desire to have sex with a virgin, who may be a very young child.²¹⁵ As noted above, the lives of these girls are likely to be permanently destroyed once they are used for this purpose. Meanwhile, boys who are homosexual or transgender are unable to comply with social norms that demand heterosexuality, and may attempt to keep their preference hidden by engaging in sex with tourists, travellers or other strangers, opening them up to a lifetime of exploitation.

In addition, the gender myth that boys are 'invulnerable' and can take care of themselves has meant that they are far less likely to report incidents of sexual exploitation and seek assistance. Yet research for the Global Study suggests that in some regions boys are nearly as likely as girls to be victims, and in a few countries they are the victims of choice for travelling offenders.²¹⁶

Cultural norms and traditions that support child marriage or female genital mutilation, and religious practices that involve handing over a girl child to a temple or priest also create vulnerability. In South Africa, for example, the cultural tradition of *ukuthwala* involves "selling, trading and giving children to (often older) men for sex, marriage and money..."²¹⁷ Girls who resist such practices by running away from home or a forced marriage may have nowhere safe to go and no means of support, becoming easy prey for tourists, travellers and their intermediaries. Constructions of both femininity and masculinity affect what is considered appropriate behaviour; what is encouraged and what is stigmatised. These norms, therefore, also limit what can be denounced without further victimisation, what aspects of children's lives are considered to be threatened (and believed, therefore, to need safeguarding), and in which ways children are offered protection within their households and societies.²¹⁸

Social and peer pressure

Two other global trends also create pressures, especially on adolescents, affecting their attitudes and actions toward sex. As children transition into adolescence the influence of peers becomes increasingly strong, particularly for children lacking guidance from parents, excluded from school or experiencing neglect or abuse at home. They look around and see the wider world, compare their situation with that of others and may feel deeply disadvantaged. Such feelings are exacerbated by the increasingly consumption-oriented messages surrounding them that tie social status, prestige and acceptance to the possession of consumer goods. Additionally, increased sexualisation of children by the media and advertising industry and easy access to online images depicting children and adolescents in sexual situations create a sense that this is the socially acceptable norm.

The perceived 'normalisation' of sex in childhood combines with the desire to obtain consumer goods and the aura of wealth and power surrounding 'outsiders' to convince vulnerable young people that it's okay, and possibly advantageous, to become involved in what is, in fact, child sexual exploitation. Evidence from East and Southeast Asia and several countries in Africa confirms that some young people willingly engage in transactional sex in order to purchase goods they could not otherwise afford or to have extra cash in their pockets. Most are unaware that a willing encounter can be the prelude to a lifetime of sexual violence and exploitation.

Peer pressure is also exercised more directly in some situations; for example in the Solomon Islands adolescent boys mediate sex between loggers and local girls, who fear that if they refuse they will be socially marginalised.²¹⁹ In Zambia some children manage their own encounters with tourists and travellers, renting houses as a peer group and running their own sex businesses, sometimes with collaboration by owners or

staff of local businesses catering to tourists. In Japan girls arrange their enjokosai encounters with older men, arguing that they are rebelling against social norms.²²⁰ A major study in the UK found that gangs and bullying led many children and adolescents into situations of exploitation.²²¹ Numerous reports of peers and siblings talking children into involvement in SECTT appear in the research undertaken for the Global Study.

Implications for Policy and Action

The contexts faced by children across the world are complex and differ from country to country, affecting children differently at different stages of their lives. There is no silver bullet capable of overcoming these many factors; interventions must be tailored to address the wide variety of circumstances that increase children's vulnerability.

• Prevention:

- o Broader and more effective programmes to alleviate poverty and ensure that children have access to food, social services and education
- o More programmes offering parenting education and care strategies for families including single-parent households facing difficulties
- o Intensive efforts to promote inclusive societies and overcome discrimination

• Education:

- o Redoubled efforts to inform vulnerable children and their families about the different pathways leading to SECTT and outcomes of involvement, especially in communities where cultural traditions exacerbate children's vulnerability
- o Intensified efforts with families and communities to overcome cultural biases that devalue girls, and society-wide education on gender equality.

- **Services:** Ensure the availability of care and support services for all child victims of SECTT, including boys and young children

CONTEXT OF OFFENDERS

There is growing recognition that efforts to curb demand for SECTT require an adequate understanding of the offenders' profiles and the choices they make. Gaining such an understanding is a challenge when, as the evidence gathered for the Global Study confirms, there is no such thing as a 'typical' offender. Some may be paedophiles, but most are not. They may be foreign or domestic, young or old. Some are women, and a few may be other children. But the one thing they certainly have in common is ever-greater opportunities to exploit children, especially in environments where corruption is rife and impunity is the rule.²²²

Offenders may have different motivations for sexually exploiting children – many of them linked to the power imbalances outlined in the next section. However, research by La Strada in Ukraine has pointed to impunity as a key determinant: analysis of the forums used by travelling child sex offenders found they were confident that they would escape justice.²²³

No such thing as a 'typical' offender Paedophiles, preferential offenders and situational offenders

The evidence gathered for the Global Study finds that travelling child sex offenders do not fall into neat categories. Paedophiles and preferential offenders remain grave risks – looking for and exploiting every possible means to gain access to children – and this is emphasised across the research. Preferential perpetrators are individuals who travel with the deliberate purpose of having sex with children. A proportion of these are paedophiles who, according to the World Health Organization, have a sexual preference for children, usually of pre-pubertal or early pubertal age.²²⁴ Usually considered to be suffering from a clinical disorder, the paedophile may not show any preference for the gender of children and may not view sexual contact with children as harmful.²²⁵

However, the evidence also points to the presence of 'situational' offenders, who travel with no intention of abusing a child, yet find themselves in an environment where SECTT is seen as normal, and where the risk of arrest – or of any personal consequence for the damage caused – is non-existent.²²⁶ They usually have no exclusive sexual inclination towards children and commit their crimes when the opportunity arises, generally targeting children who have already reached puberty.²²⁷ The Africa report notes that:

“As a group that is neither specifically attracted to children, nor willing to engage in the commercial sexual exploitation of children under every circumstance, there are aspects of their behaviour that cannot be explained by these relatively 'stable' personal traits. This reality, therefore, calls further into question the attempts to explain the perpetrators' actions by defining their profiles.”²²⁸

No 'typical' age group

Some studies in Latin America have tried to characterise exploiters by age and profession, but this has proved difficult.²²⁹ In Brazil, for example, a study by Promundo showed that exploiters were younger and first had sex at a younger age than non-exploiters, undermining the myth that those who have sex with children in Brazil are always older men.²³⁰

Police in the Netherlands examined the socio-demographic characteristics of 92 suspects, of whom 93.5% were male and 3.3% female (the gender of the remainder was not recorded), and the average age was 56 years, with the youngest aged 25 and the oldest 73.²³¹ Research by ECPAT Italy and its partners found that most Italian travelling offenders are male (90%)²³² and that the majority were aged 20 to 40, with an average age of 27 years.²³³ In Norway, recent mapping by the Norwegian police indicates that perpetrators are often single men and unemployed.²³⁴ A similar story emerged from the case study on SECTT by La Strada Ukraine, which found that most abusers have middle or lower income levels in their country of origin but are perceived as “rich” in Ukraine.²³⁵

The offenders include women

While the vast majority of offenders are male, evidence gathered for the Global Study confirms that women account for a small proportion of SECTT offenders. Some female perpetrators label their crime as a search for ‘romance’, but as the Europe report points out the end result is the same, with the richer traveller or tourist exploiting the poorer, local child.²³⁶ Generally speaking, women appear to target mostly men aged over 18 years. However, cases of underage boys having sex with European female offenders, often for some form of remuneration, have been identified in different regions and countries. For example, a study on prostitution of children and its links to tourism in Venezuela found that foreign women travel to the country looking for ‘love’ with teenage boys and young men.²³⁷

Not all women who engage in commercial sex with boys do so in such a typical ‘romance scenario’. A recent media article on the phenomenon of male prostitution in Russia, especially in the Rostov region, highlighted that individuals purchasing sex services from men and young boys included an increasing number of businesswomen aged 30 to 35.²³⁸ As with their male counterparts, these women may not travel with an explicit intention of accessing young boys for sex, but find themselves involved in a sexual encounter with local youth when the opportunity arises.²³⁹

In Africa, research and media reports have exposed the problem that women from Europe travel to Senegal, Kenya and other countries in the region to have paid sex with youth.²⁴⁰ A study undertaken by ECPAT indicates that The Gambia has long been known to attract single European women who come on holiday looking for sex with Gambian men. Although no incidents had been officially reported involving women with minor boys, some respondents in the study claimed they had spotted women with underage men.²⁴¹

Some offenders and intermediaries are children

One particularly sensitive issue is the role of other children in SECTT. According to researchers Mark Hecht and Eliana Riggio:

“[the] perpetrator in this scenario is also covered by the legislation meant to protect the victim. While it is notoriously difficult to accurately measure the extent and most official figures are likely to be underestimates,²⁴² there is an increasing prevalence of child-on-child sexual offending.²⁴³ It [...] is important that these offending children are offered tools that might prevent further abusive behaviour and that the child victims are provided safety measures that might not otherwise be required for adult-child sexual abuse cases (such as separating the perpetrator and the victim if they frequent the same areas - schools, community areas, etc.).”²⁴⁴

Hecht and Riggio also point out that children can operate as facilitators, “leveraging the empathetic relationship established with victims to earn their trust and manipulate them,²⁴⁵ as in the case of Acapulco and Cancun in Mexico, where children often join sex trade establishments on the invitation of female friends involved in the business.”²⁴⁶

Offenders are domestic as well as international

The response to SECTT has tended to focus on international and preferential child sex offenders – often known to authorities in their home countries and their countries of destination. While these offenders continue to pose a grave risk to children, there has been a failure to address the major role of domestic travellers in SECTT. The Global Taskforce overseeing the Global Study recommended that it should analyse the role of domestic travellers “because local demand by those within the country of reference constitutes a key component of SECTT, often paving the way for foreign tourists to sexually exploit children.”²⁴⁷

Data are scanty, but the problem of domestic tourists and travellers, including business travellers, has been observed in several countries. More research into the scope and nature of SECTT amongst these groups is required, with a view to understanding the nexus between domestic and international demand for SECTT and devising tailored preventive and counteracting strategies.

In addition to information from ECPAT groups, the present study consulted numerous media reports illustrating the problem of domestic tourists and travellers in countries such as Italy, Spain²⁴⁸ and Albania. In several

cases, the number of “customers” involved was high and often included nationals on vacation as well as men on business trips who engaged in commercial sex with young people. In addition to private apartments, the abuse was sometimes perpetrated in small hotels and pensions, often with the involvement of taxi drivers to transport girls from one place to another or to market sex services to potential “customers”.²⁴⁹

Across Southeast Asia, local men represent the largest proportion of customers of the sex industry seeking out both women and children. In the Philippines, evidence suggests that nine out of ten offenders are local men.²⁵⁰ Similarly, in Cambodia it is estimated that Cambodia nationals commit three-quarters of all cases of sexual exploitation of children, with foreign offenders accounting for the remaining 25%.²⁵¹ According to the Goa case study: “the majority of demand comes from local men and migrants.”²⁵²

Similar findings can be seen across the evidence gathered for the Global Study. The Sanlaap case study on West Bengal finds that demand for sex tourism in this Indian State, which does not have a very high influx of foreign tourists, comes from domestic tourists – primarily those living in and around West Bengal.²⁵³ The Africa report notes that in The Gambia, it is Gambian men – rather than European tourists – who are reported to be predominantly responsible for the sexual exploitation of children. While The Gambia has historically been linked with sex tourism, the study found that the main abusers of local children were male Gambian ‘sugar daddies.’ The report also states that across sub-Saharan Africa:

“...potential perpetrators can come from a wide range of locations and these are likely to be shifting constantly in response to global socio-economic and political dynamics. As a result, responses strategies that target perpetrators from a specific location are unlikely to be effective: efforts should assume that offenders can come from anywhere.”²⁵⁴

Offenders are travellers as well as tourists

One over-arching finding of the Global Study is the need to expand the focus of SECTT analysis and response beyond tourism alone, to encompass wider aspects of travel. This is borne out by evidence on offenders who travel for work. The European report, for example, found that “demand for paid sex with adolescents often comes from men who are highly mobile in their work (e.g. transport industry workers such as truck drivers or air pilots).” One local NGO in Armenia identified cases of underage girls who provided sexual services to foreign truck drivers at the border with Iran.²⁵⁵ Similarly, research on the demand side of prostitution in Hungary found that locations where ‘customers’ buy sex

services from adults and underage people include gas stations and truck parking lots.²⁵⁶ Another example is a major case of transnational child sexual exploitation in Britain²⁵⁷ involving an air pilot who sexually abused dozens of African orphans and schoolchildren.²⁵⁸

The North America report looks at the role of truckers, in particular, with so-called ‘truck-stop prostitution’ catering to transient male truckers and travellers who spend long periods of time on the road. This makes them ideal clients for companionship and commercial sex.²⁵⁹ Truckers’ organisations in the USA have acknowledged this problem and are taking a strong stance against such rights violations as human trafficking.

Intermediaries and facilitators: another form of offender

According to Hecht and Riggio, those that foster the sexual exploitation of children, acting as intermediaries between offenders and victims may be:

“...individuals or groups, including traffickers; pimps; brothel owners, mamasans, procurers; criminal networks; fathers and husbands of child brides; employers of child workers; corrupt police and government officials; networks of travelling perpetrators; sex tour operators; modelling agencies. Although they may act in an individual capacity, they often operate in a group or partake in larger illicit or criminal systems. Their reward is economic gain. Their role is servicing demand.”²⁶⁰

There appear to be two main profiles, according to the report on Latin America: pimps and intermediaries. For pimps, their business and main income derives from the sexual exploitation of children. They may own brothels that control income and businesses, operating alone or as part of CSEC or trafficking networks; they may also be individuals, including peers of the victims, family members, gangs or petty criminals.²⁶¹

Intermediaries provide information and facilitate contact between victims and exploiters and the financial benefit they receive for doing so generally constitutes an extra source of income.²⁶² They tend to work both in the formal and informal sector, and get a percentage either from exploiters or victims. They could include hotel staff, taxi drivers, formal and clandestine tourist guides, owners or housekeepers of residences, street vendors, community members, etc.²⁶³ Intermediaries may not see themselves as exploiters and can be unaware that they are committing a crime, but nevertheless, they contribute strongly to SECTT.²⁶⁴ In the case of South Africa, however, travel agents in countries of origin coordinate (discreetly) with local pimps and travel agencies, as well as tourist guides, taxi drivers, landlords and car guards, who help to identify victims and know where to find them.²⁶⁵

Pimps and intermediaries sometimes work together, providing an infrastructure that allows the travelling offender to access children for sexual purposes. In Nicaragua, for example, “interviews and court records revealed that facilitators identify potential victims based on economically vulnerable families. They then deceive the families who let the girls or boys go in exchange for money, thus covering the facilitators in the eye of the law due to the ‘complicity’ of the families.”²⁶⁶

In Chile, facilitators have been reported to be linked to both hotels and travel agencies, as well as tourist transport, especially taxicab drivers, who are in a position to establish individual relationships with travellers.²⁶⁷ In Brazil, certain hotels and motels charge much more for someone who wants to have sex with children, for example: BRL500.00 (\$160) for two hours; BRL4000 (\$1,266) if the girl is a virgin. Other hotels, in low season, when they have fewer customers, remove any warnings about SECTT prevention and ‘pretend to not see exploiters coming in with victims’.²⁶⁸

It is clear that ‘one-size-fits-all’ approaches and responses to offenders cannot succeed, given their varied characteristics and motivations. Tailored approaches are needed to address offenders at every stage of the ‘process’ of SECTT, from those who facilitate the exploitation to those who perpetrate it.

Implications for policy and action

- Broaden policies and action to encompass a far wider range of offenders, recognising that there is no such thing as a typical offender; that most offenders are national; and that efforts need to look beyond tourism to also focus on travel.
- Develop global, national and local situation analyses to define the scale of offending, its characteristics and trends, to inform policy and programme development.
- Specialised agencies have concentrated their energies (quite rightly) on rescuing the victims. However, those dealing with perpetrators have valuable knowledge and experience that should be gathered and shared.
- Information and awareness for the general public is important, but there is also a need for awareness and capacity-building among those in the travel and tourism industries who come face-to-face with offenders seeking to exploit children.

POWER IMBALANCES AND SECTT

Travelling child sex offenders rely heavily on their enhanced power and status to achieve their aims. Power imbalances play a critical role in sustaining exploitation, creating stereotypes of both victims and offenders that help to perpetuate SECTT. The ways in which these imbalances affect vulnerable children become clear when travel and tourism are used as a lens to explore global increases in child sexual exploitation.

Economic inequalities have long facilitated SECTT by empowering offenders from the developed world and disempowering large segments of the population in the developing world. In recent decades, however, new factors have come into play that exacerbate the impact of these disparities, including: the rise of an affluent middle class in new countries and regions, enabling millions more people to travel for leisure; the globalisation of business, leading more people to travel overseas and domestically for work; the proliferation of low-cost air carriers, further facilitating both global and domestic travel; and increasing reliance by governments on income from travel and tourism (and the foreign direct investment it often brings) as an increasingly large component of national revenues, as described in the regional summaries presented in Chapter Two.

Simply put: more people are travelling and more countries are competing for tourism dollars, creating more opportunities for tourists and travellers to employ their comparative advantage by engaging in child sexual exploitation, and thereby putting millions more children at risk.

Power imbalances that facilitate SECTT are manifested in several ways.

- **Economic power:** Child abusers provide cash, food, consumer goods or financial help for a child’s family.
- **Income power:** Employers use their hiring and firing power to threaten children who desperately need income with the loss of their job if they refuse to engage in sex.
- **Physical power:** Adults are physically stronger than children, but also in the context of armed conflict or the presence of violent gangs, children are bullied into sexual acts for fear of being beaten or killed.
- **Gender power:** Especially in patriarchal societies, men are empowered and girls are unaccustomed and ill-equipped to resist male domination.
- **Power of authority:** Government officials, police and members of the military use their influence to take advantage of children sexually, knowing there will be no repercussions.

Regional and country reports prepared for the Global Study confirm that all of these sources of power are currently being employed to sexually abuse and exploit children. In addition, widely held societal norms and customs exert power over children and adolescents: the social and cultural devaluation of children has been singled out as a leading determinant for sexually exploitative behaviour against them.²⁶⁹

In the context of SECTT, the primary focus is on economic power; that is, the imbalance of power and status between tourists and travellers with ample resources and a child whose family may be trying to survive on a few dollars a day.

Client as king

Tourists and travellers in countries heavily reliant on tourism-related income gain further power and status from the pervasive maxim that meeting their needs puts bread on the table, creating an environment in which the “client is King”.²⁷⁰ Such environments contribute to a feeling of entitlement among tourists – especially when combined with a low risk of punishment – encouraging both visitors who intend to abuse children and situational offenders.

As a result of rising competition for tourism dollars, tourists’ status has risen among wide swathes of society in destination countries that benefit financially from the hard currency that tourists and travellers bring to the table. Among those who stand to profit are national and local governments; travel and real estate agencies; hotels and resorts; restaurants, bars and clubs; airlines and local transporters, especially taxis; and owners of massage parlours and brothels, as well as the criminal networks and intermediaries involved in luring or trafficking children to SECTT hotspots.

In such a context the power wielded by, and status afforded to, tourists cannot be underestimated, particularly in the poorest countries.

Foreigners from the West are sometimes perceived by local people as having enhanced power and status simply by virtue of coming from a wealthy, developed country. A teenager involved in SECTT in Zambia expressed her belief that: “A white man will give you money, love you, care for you and leave you with a white baby...”²⁷¹ Overall, it was reported from Africa that: “Many girls are trying to ‘find’ a man who may have more political, economic and social power, in order to secure her future....”²⁷²

Yet perceptions of wealth, power and status are sometimes relative. Travelling offenders who operate in developing countries may not be wealthy or powerful by global standards, but they inevitably have more disposable income than their victims. Cheap travel options allow offenders who enjoy little social status at home to arrive in destinations where they *appear* to have power and status because they are able to pay cash to achieve their ends. A study of offenders in Moldova, for example, concluded: “The only common element identified was that offenders had higher income levels than the average Moldovan.”²⁷³

In the less affluent countries of East Asia “Customers from Japan and South Korea are perceived to be wealthier and, as a result, young girls prefer them....”²⁷⁴ Chinese workers in Africa are often perceived “as the only ones with money to spend.”²⁷⁵ A study by La Strada Ukraine noted that travelling offenders are mostly

middle-aged men with middle or low income in their country of origin, but perceived as “rich” in Ukraine.²⁷⁶ From Ghana it was reported that:

*Some boys and girls...are influenced by the perceived fame that is associated with being in a relationship with a foreign national, especially nationals from the Americas and Europe. Also, sexual relationships with these foreigners are seen as means of securing financial support or opportunity to travel abroad... and so [children are] quite willing to make themselves available to tourists and migrant workers from Western and Asian countries....*²⁷⁷

Although they may not be highly paid, Chinese workers in Africa are elevated to the same status as Japanese businessmen in East Asia simply because they have more disposable income. Travelling child sex offenders regularly take advantage of their relative wealth and status, as reflected in the insightful comment of a travelling offender who, while working as an English teacher in Bangladesh, sexually exploited his students:

*“I was culturally and professionally empowered in a country of very powerless people.”*²⁷⁸

Beliefs about outsiders’ wealth and influence are often widespread in societies, shared by parents who may allow, encourage or even compel their children to participate in sexual liaisons with foreigners for economic gain – often based on false promises of “a better life” for the child. Parental decisions that make their children vulnerable to sexual exploitation are often tied to trafficking, but child marriage in several regions also appears to be linked to parents’ need for cash or their, usually naïve, hope that handing their child over to others will benefit the child in the long-run. In the past, for example, child marriage in the Solomon Islands was a traditional custom requiring specific rites and rituals, “but the presence of wealthy foreigners in the logging and fishing industries is reshaping community attitudes towards marriages...”²⁷⁹ Reports from Egypt indicate that more forced child marriages are now taking place “because of the high bridal prices paid by non-Egyptian grooms”; a similar trend was identified in Yemen.²⁸⁰

In environments where a high priority is placed on expanding tourism and travel, both the myth and reality of travellers’ power and wealth penetrate all levels of society – from impoverished parents to girls and boys of all social classes.

Abuse of power

‘Situational’ offenders, who often seek a one-off sexual encounter, usually depend on their economic power and enhanced status to gain access to children. They

can simply ‘flash their cash’, covering the cost of intermediaries, sexual services — and sometimes bribes.

Wealth and status are also used by preferential offenders, foreign residents/expats and ‘volun-tourists’, but in a more nuanced fashion. Having a longer-term perspective, the former two groups are likely to develop a relationship with the child’s family or influential community members by providing financial assistance; for example, paying for school fees or house repairs or donating to a community cause. They ingratiate themselves, using money and prestige to gain the trust of communities, families and children. Volun-tourists with a sexual interest in children often make several payments; for example, at orphanages they may pay for the privilege of spending time alone with children, make a donation to the institution — or both.²⁸¹ Others pay fees to travel agencies to establish a link with an overseas institution where they can ‘volunteer’. Because they are paying — and perceived as doing a good deed — little or no effort is made to check their references or control their interactions with children.²⁸²

Power imbalances also work in favour of offenders in relation to the reporting of criminal incidents. A 2008 study of sexual abuse by aid workers and peacekeepers found that many people feel “powerless” to report an abuse, as revealed in a comment by a young girl in South Sudan: *“All these things, if they happened, we would not have the power to talk about them”*. Children fear they will not be believed, that they may be punished or face retaliation, or that they will not be able to reach the person to whom a report must be made. Several participants in the study “identified discrimination associated with class, race and ethnicity as a key source of powerlessness to report an abuse.”²⁸³ Fear of confronting power and authority are potent weapons preventing children from reporting their exploitation.

Social distancing

Most travelling offenders rely not only on the favourable balance of power, but also a set of perceptions about their victims, to justify their actions. Just as beliefs and perceptions underlie children’s views of tourists and travellers, so stereotypes of children play a key role in the way that offenders rationalise their crime.

By definition, travelling offenders are away from their homes and the social, moral or cultural constraints that might moderate their behaviour or dampen their inclination to sexually exploit children. They can act anonymously; no one knows who they are, and they may never see their victims or intermediaries again. This confers a sense of freedom, an ability to act on impulses without fear of punishment.²⁸⁴ In this context, they

develop a set of justifications for their actions that has been described as ‘social distancing,’ that is, they place themselves at one end of the human spectrum and the children they exploit at the other.

Social distancing allows offenders to argue that child sexual exploitation or prostitution is acceptable in the ‘other’ culture, so they are not doing anything wrong, or to convince themselves that they are doing the children a favour by giving them cash to survive. They also rely on the argument that the child wanted the interaction — or at the very least did not object. One offender remarked of his experience in a commercial brothel for children in South America:

*“The kids didn’t seem upset about it....they just... you know it was just, I guess, their life...”*²⁸⁵

Underlying these rationales is the essentially racist view that people (especially children) in other countries are different and probably inferior, so exploiting them is not the morally repugnant act that it would be at home.²⁸⁶ Domestic and regional travellers also rely on attitudes about ‘different’ people. In China, men from the dominant Han ethnic group reportedly travel in large numbers to areas populated by ethnic minorities such as the Mosuo tribe, widely portrayed as a ‘primitive’ society where women freely engage in extramarital sex and girls start to have sex at 13.²⁸⁷ Local residents are reported to reinforce this portrayal, luring male Han tourists to consume an artificially sexualised local culture since the local economy largely relies on the growth of this ‘ethnic’ tourism.²⁸⁸ Considerable investment has been made in building roads, hotels, casinos and other infrastructure in the town closest to where the Mosuo live.²⁸⁹

Similarly, the town of Hekou, near the Chinese border with Vietnam, has gained fame among Chinese men for the availability of “young, exotic, beautiful and cheap [Vietnamese] women”, including teenagers. Groups of businessmen and tourists travel to Hekou on the weekends in search of “...an exotic and exciting place with *different sets of rules and behaviours* from what could be found in a similar setting in China”.²⁹⁰

As mentioned in the first section of this Chapter, children from indigenous groups and ethnic minorities are also singled out for exploitation in other regions — whether due to their attraction as ‘exotic’ beings or because they are the least empowered people within their country of residence, or a combination of motives.

Just as tourists and travellers are stereotyped by local people as wealthy and powerful, entire cultures and peoples, including children, are viewed by offenders as fair game for exploitation.

Special zones, special privileges

The competition for tourism arrivals has spurred another, related phenomenon: the creation of special economic and tourist zones developed specifically to cater to tourists and travelling businessmen. As noted in the regional report for Southeast Asia, governments in the region have encouraged large-scale foreign investment (mainly from China, Japan and South Korea) to build casinos, clubs, resorts, etc. These zones are generally created through compulsory land acquisitions, land speculation and forced relocations, which impact negatively on local communities.²⁹¹ When this occurs, local residents lose their property and livelihoods, leaving few alternatives other than relocating or accepting low-level jobs linked to tourism. Local children may be formally employed as waiters or maids or engage in informal vending along streets or beachfronts, leaving them vulnerable to intermediaries, individual offenders and traffickers. The same process has occurred elsewhere; for example in the Indian State of Goa.²⁹²

Although little research has been undertaken on the topic, it appears that the threat to children living near, or employed at, these types of enclaves is extremely high. Special zones established in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and the Philippines coincide almost precisely with the locations in Southeast Asia where SECTT is known to be particularly widespread.²⁹³ The creation of these special zones undermines the status of local residents while magnifying the power and status of tourists, creating a perfect storm of opportunity for the sexual exploitation of local children.

Implications for policy and action

Reversing the power imbalances described here is beyond the scope of any single law, policy, institution or country. However, steps can be taken to ensure that the scales tip more advantageously toward the side of vulnerable children by:

- Educating communities near tourism sites and border areas about the dangers of SECTT
- Strengthening child protection laws and policies and enforcing them strictly in and around areas commonly frequented by tourists and travellers
- Empowering children to enhance their resilience to sexual harm
- Placing the reduction of demand for SECTT high on international, regional, national and relevant private-sector agendas
- Ensuring that effective, child-friendly reporting mechanisms are in place and that incident reports are followed up

- Limiting freedom of travel for child sex offenders through better coordination of information and strict maintenance of sex offender registries
- Imposing mandatory and strictly enforced guidelines for the selection and oversight of those seeking to work with or near children; for example in schools, orphanages and during humanitarian emergencies.

THE EXPANSION OF TRAVEL, TOURISM AND RISKS TO CHILDREN

The massive expansion in the numbers of travellers and tourists, the emergence of new and often informal types of travel and tourism, and multiple new ways for people to ‘connect’ worldwide all play a role – often unintentionally – in SECTT. Too often, today’s travel and tourism sectors provide services that can be exploited by offenders and create environments that facilitate access to children. This section looks at how the travel and tourism sectors and their infrastructures can put children in danger. The evidence emerging from the Global Study suggests that there are three key links between these sectors and SECTT: tourist development itself can disrupt local economies and make children more vulnerable to exploitation; child sex is offered to tourists and travellers; and offenders use travel and tourism infrastructures to get access to victims. New forms of tourism and new information and communication technologies (ICTs) have expanded access to potential victims, with offenders increasingly able to share information and make contact with potential victims, with intermediaries and with each other.

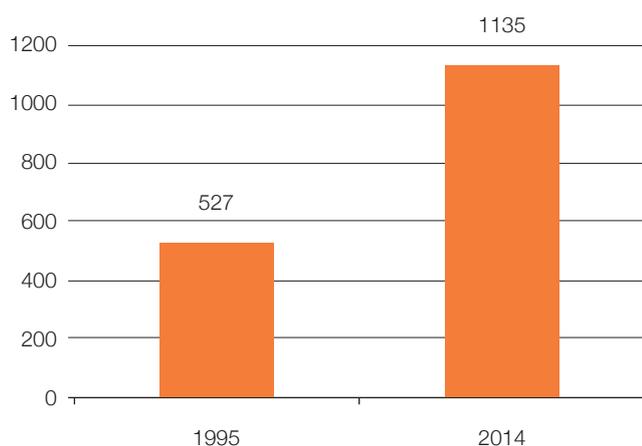
The Sub-Saharan Africa report notes that:

“As the tourism industry itself undergoes dramatic change with the emergence of new and unregulated forms of accommodation such as AirBnB, and transportation such as Uber and SnappCab, children’s vulnerability is also changing. To overlook these manifestations of SECTT risks failure to address new arenas where children are increasingly exposed to potential harm.”²⁹⁴

The pursuit of tourist dollars carries risks for children

Travel and tourism has seen extraordinary growth since the first World Congress on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children back in 1996; with the number of international travellers and tourists arrivals soaring from 527 million in 1995 to 1,135 million in 2014.²⁹⁵

Figure 2: Growth of international travel and tourism (numbers in millions)



The expansion in travel and tourism, whether international or domestic has been staggering, and these sectors play an increasingly dominant role in national economies. In China alone, the travel and tourism sector generated 9.3% of GDP and employed 64.4 million people in 2013.²⁹⁶ In their pursuit of economic development, many countries are now expanding their travel and tourism sectors. While large-scale investment may help to boost local economies, evidence gathered for the Global Study suggests that the rush for tourist dollars has its own risks. While national tourism development schemes often take into account environmental and social considerations, few – if any – include measures to ensure child protection.²⁹⁷

Travel opportunities that were once the preserve of the most privileged people are now open to millions as the costs of travel have fallen. The greater the tourist numbers, the greater the risk that some – at least – are travelling to sexually exploit children. A study of 35 travelling sex offenders from the UK, US and Ireland by Mentor Forensic Services found that some, despite limited financial resources, were able to travel several times a year to other countries to sexually abuse children, thanks to cheap airfares.²⁹⁸

Destinations in emerging economies now account for almost half (46% in 2014) of all international tourist arrivals.²⁹⁹

The Sub-Saharan Africa report that “While empirical data on the sexual exploitation of children are difficult to obtain due to the clandestine nature of this phenomenon, the growth in tourism and other forms of travel, including related to FDI [foreign direct investment] and large infrastructure projects, has also led to an apparent increase in the incidence of sexual exploitation of children.”³⁰⁰

The report on Latin America points out that most communities in areas where tourism infrastructure is being developed suffer from poverty and exclusion, making children even more vulnerable to sexual exploitation.³⁰¹ Families’ financial dependence on tourism creates the conditions for the sexual exploitation of children by people in transit. Resource-scarce regions, including many Latin American countries, where tourism has experienced considerable support from the government, have proven to be fertile areas for the growth of sex tourism. Research indicates that as countries such as Guatemala, Salvador, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua have increased efforts to promote tourism on a wide scale, sex tourism has risen proportionately.³⁰² In addition, there is no guarantee that the benefits of tourist development will ‘trickle down’. Research in the Chorotega Region of Costa Rica found that despite the growth of the tourism sector, 31.6% of the population were living in poverty and 11.5% in extreme poverty, with an unemployment rate of 8.97%.³⁰³

The development of tourism can exacerbate problems that already exist at local level, such as social exclusion, while rising prices and the sudden influx of new arrivals often disrupt traditional activities and may even displace families who rely on such activities. Locals who remain may find work in the tourist industry, but generally at a low level and in poor working conditions, with higher-paid positions often taken by outsiders. Locals excluded from this emerging economy may turn to alternative ways – legal or illegal – to meet their basic needs, including involvement in commercial sexual exploitation.³⁰⁴

The Southeast Asia report finds that many countries in the region have allowed large-scale foreign investment in tourism and other sectors and the proliferation of Special Economic and Free Trade Zones in their push for economic development. These developments, often accompanied by a rapid increase in casinos, bars, restaurants, and brothels, present high risks for SECTT.³⁰⁵

Offenders can exploit new forms of travel and tourism

As law enforcement becomes more robust and corporate social responsibility increases in some countries, offenders are shying away from organised tours and mainstream hotels and gravitating toward home-stays, longer-term rentals, smaller hotels and so-called ‘party hostels’ (often run by foreigners). Research in West Bengal and in Russia suggests that some hotels – whether 5-star or no-star – continue to ignore the crime.

Box 1: “It does not happen in our hotel”: Case studies from West Bengal and Russia

A case study on West Bengal by the Indian NGO Sanlaap looked at the policies and practices of hotels in response to child sex tourism. They found that *“the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism is common, and yet most of the hotels interviewed, seemed really reluctant to address this issue or even talk about it. The general response is, ‘It does not happen in our hotel’.”*

Not one of the 65 hotels surveyed across West Bengal had any relevant policy or preventive measures in place to ensure that children were not being sexually exploited or abused within their premises by the adult guests accompanying them. Sanlaap concluded: *“They do not see the issue of child prostitution as unlawful or a problem and easily absolve themselves of any responsibility [...]. Though the authorities in most of the tourist spots are aware of the prevalence of prostitution in these places, owing to the revenue generated from the tourists, the authorities do not want to really eradicate this social menace.”*³⁰⁶

The case study on Russia by Stellit³⁰⁷ focused on the readiness of the tourism industry to sign and implement the industry Code of Conduct, with 12 representatives of the tourism industry in St. Petersburg included among more than 60 respondents. Most had heard of SECTT, but two believed that the problem was not relevant to Russia. One commented: *“In my opinion, it’s not a problem for St. Petersburg. Frankly speaking, I somehow think that this is not quite true regarding our country... I can imagine it exists in Thailand, but not in Europe, not in Russian cities”.*

Others argued that SECTT on their premises would be impossible, given their tough stance on prostitution: *“We try as much as possible to protect the hotel guests from such practices as there are risks involved, which are not desirable for us as a hotel [...]. The staff of the hotel and external companies, who may have witnessed this and did not comply with the internal rules related to night work, are unequivocally dismissed. This is not something that is welcomed, but that is prohibited and absolutely impossible.”*

However, of the 12 tourism industry representatives participating in the study, only two said that they were ready to sign the Code of Conduct. Three said they would sign, but with some reservations. Three respondents were undecided (wanting more information), and another two said that they were not ready to sign. Some queried specific clauses in the Code of Conduct, such as the need for staff training (*“What do you want to train our staff for?”*); informing guests: (*“Why do we need to scare people by this? This is negative information...”*); and the need to provide reports on implementation: (*“A report to whom? I have no idea why the hotel should be accountable to any NGO...”*).

Sources: Sanlaap (2015), *Report on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism in West Bengal*. Research conducted in the framework of the Global Study. Kolkata: Sanlaap; Stellit (2015) *Sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism in Russia and by Russian citizens abroad: analysis of some cases available and readiness of tourism industry to sign and implement the Code of Conduct*. Research conducted in the framework of the Global Study. St. Petersburg: Regional Public Organization of Social Projects in Sphere of Population’s Well-Being.

Organised sex tours continue, but are more heavily disguised than ever: at the international level, some agents organise package sex tours or provide information about particular resorts where the sexual exploitation of children is commonplace.³⁰⁸ A tourist agency in the United States offered \$4,000 Amazon fishing packages. Once there, the team hired girls, claiming that they were needed to clean and tidy the boats. The girls reported that they were doped and sexually exploited and received between BRL30-100 (\$10-32).³⁰⁹

In Colombia, the emergence of accommodations especially designed for foreign groups has been reported in some cities. These are known as ‘party hostels’ and offer swimming pools, games and discos, among other services. Studies report the sexual exploitation of children and the sale of drugs in these places. According to the same studies, some of these ‘party hostels’ are owned by foreigners.³¹⁰

In Africa, children are also often exploited in rented flats, which offer seclusion for offenders. In some cases, such locations are disguised as venues for legitimate business, such as domestic-help recruitment agencies. In reality, the purpose is to recruit children and women into prostitution. Video halls have also been identified locations linked to SECTT, with

pornography shown to children as part of their grooming for sexual exploitation.³¹¹

Another major new development is the rise of the so-called ‘sharing economy’, with accommodation and car transportation increasingly now being arranged directly with home owners and car drivers via online platforms, such as Airbnb and Uber. These companies are essentially technology platforms that market privately-owned assets or resources such as accommodation or cars on a commercial basis. According to Jason Clampet, co-founder of the USA-based travel industry intelligence company Skift, *“these ‘sharing’ firms also operate in a legal ‘grey area’ and frequently violate housing, labour, tax and other laws.”*³¹² There is, as yet, no solid research on the impact of the ‘sharing economy’ on SECTT – but, as outlined in the next section on legislation and enforcement – offenders are swift to exploit any legal weaknesses, as well as weaknesses within the sector, such as the lack of opportunities (or responsibilities) for the identification of potential SECTT.

Evidence gathered for the Global Study also raises serious issues around the emergence of so-called ‘volun-tourism’ – short-term volunteering experience combined with travel – which has grown in popularity in recent years. At the global level, about 10 million people volunteered abroad in 2011.³¹³ The concern in relation to SECTT is the cynical

manipulation of services that should, in theory, benefit children and communities. Some travelling sex offenders exploit such services to gain unprecedented access to children in the absence of checks and safeguards that are commonplace for volunteers working with children in other parts of the world. Projects where volunteers directly work with children are the most popular form of volun-tourism.

In a paper prepared for the Global Study, Paul Miedema of Calabash tours in South Africa queries the ethics of volunteer tourism, arguing that vulnerable children are treated as commodities that ‘need’ volunteers.³¹⁴ Similarly, research by Antje Monshausen for Bread for the World challenges the entire approach, arguing that it places the interests of paying tourists above the priorities of local communities, unpaid volunteers under-cut the local job market and create a constant risk of sexual exploitation of children. The research also found serious failings in the selection of volunteers: 79% of operators did not ask volunteers for a resume and almost none asked for references; only 16% asked about previous job experience; less than half checked criminal records in a standardised manner. Child protection measures were rare, even though 41 of the 44 projects analysed included work with children. Only one of 23 operators had a child protection policy that could be described as binding and transparent.³¹⁵

Orphanages are of particular concern. Children in residential care are already at high risk of abuse and exploitation,³¹⁶ and are exposed to further risk of harm by unqualified and generally unsupervised international volunteers. Some residential care operators come to see international volunteers and the children in their ‘orphanages’ as a source of income.³¹⁷ Where residential care centres do have child protection policies in place, they are rarely implemented or enforced.³¹⁸ Lack of accountability and regulation in residential care centres means that abuse is commonplace.³¹⁹ The Dutch police found that many Dutch nationals convicted for child abuse abroad were involved in orphanages: in 13 of 85 possible SECTT cases examined, the relation between the victim and the perpetrator was established through humanitarian work. Suspects worked at or managed an orphanage, school or rescue organisation; in one case the suspect worked as a missionary.³²⁰

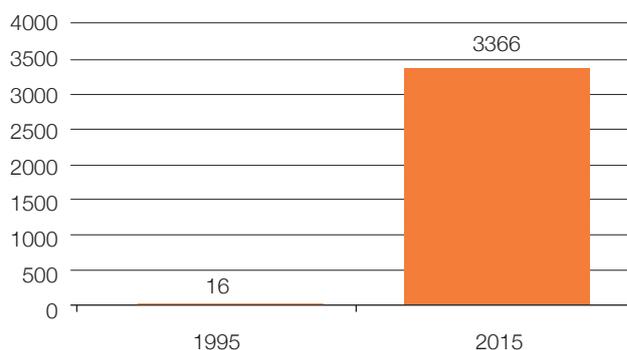
Cambodia has been a particular destination for orphanage tourism from the USA,³²¹ and the country’s increase in orphanages has been linked to the growth in tourism.³²² UNICEF says that even though the number of orphans has fallen in Cambodia, the number of orphanages doubled between 2009 and 2014.³²³ This is because most children in institutional care are not actually orphans, but children who are exploited to raise money, either by performing dance or music or by directly soliciting donations.³²⁴ Many of the more responsible sending organisations have now ceased sponsoring orphanage volunteer programmes.

UNICEF has also noted that the rise in volun-tourism in some African countries has been associated with a boom in unregistered orphanages and concerns have been raised that this lucrative new industry may result in children who are not actually orphans being placed in alternative care.³²⁵

The role of new information and communication technologies (ICTs)

Massive expansion of the use of, and access to, the latest information and communications technologies (ICTs) has spurred the proliferation of SECTT. Online grooming, live streaming of child sexual abuse and risky online behaviour are increasingly associated with SECTT, although more research is needed to understand their links.³²⁶ In addition, new social media channels allow child sex offenders to make direct contact with each other, with those who facilitate sexual exploitation of children, and with children in a way that was impossible 20 years ago. In the face of stronger laws on the commercial sexual exploitation of children, exploiters have turned to digital spaces to promote the sexual abuse of children and to contact victims.³²⁷

Figure 3: Global growth of internet users (in millions)



ICTs are used to facilitate SECTT crimes in four main ways. First, with the click of a button, offenders can have children ‘delivered’ to their hotel room or anywhere else they choose. In 2010, for example, the online classified advertisement company Craigslist was forced to close its adult-services section when research proved that it was being used to purchase sex with children. The website Backpage.com was, in turn, accused of facilitating child prostitution. In 2013, Backpage.com generated more than 82% of the \$45 million revenue from USA online prostitution.³²⁸ While law enforcement regularly traces this crime to Backpage.com, the company has resisted pressure to shut down its adult-services section.³²⁹

In May 2015, a U.S. District Court ruled against three women who alleged that ads on Backpage facilitated their sale for sex as children and found that Backpage’s publication of third party content is protected by federal law. In his ruling on the case, U.S. District Court Judge

Richard Stearns said the law protected the website despite the plaintiffs' "tragic plight" and the "abhorrent evil" of sex trafficking of children. "Putting aside the moral judgment that one might pass on Backpage's business practices, this court has no choice but to adhere to the law that Congress has seen fit to enact," Stearns said.³³⁰

In a 2014 *amicus curiae* brief, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)³³¹ stated that most of the child sex trafficking cases being reported to NCMEC now involve advertisements posted on backpage.com. NCMEC also stated that Backpage had "rejected most proposals to meaningfully reduce the selling and buying of children for unlawful sex through its website".³³²

Second, offenders use ICTs to network among themselves, share information about destinations where children may be available and organise cross-border criminal activity.

Third, many travelling child sex offenders use ICTs to produce pornographic images of children at destination.³³³ Thanks to the increasing use of the so-called 'darknet', predators can securely post, view and exchange child abuse materials produced during their trips through networks that are difficult to detect. They can use cloud computing to store images or videos, avoiding the need to physically transport material through airports and other checkpoints.³³⁴

Fourth, offenders often groom their victims online prior to travelling to meet them,³³⁵ or continue their abusive relationship with the children after they have returned home.³³⁶

In its 2014 threat assessment, Europol notes two major growing trends associated with grooming, i.e. *sexual extortion* and 'sexting'. Through so called sex extortion perpetrators coerce children and young people into continual sexual exploitation by threatening to disseminate existing images or footages of the victims if their demands are not met. Many cases of sexual extortion are the result of 'sexting' – the 'exchange of sexual messages or images' – via mobile phone or the Internet. The sharing of self-produced sexual images usually occurs between 'consenting' peers but may result in the unwanted dissemination of this material, leading to harassment and bullying, online and off-line.³³⁷

Major concerns have emerged around the emergence of sexual exploitation of children via livestreaming.³³⁸ As with any other form of child abuse, such exploitation is hard to investigate (it is hidden and, because it is live, there is rarely any record of the abuse).³³⁹ The Philippines has been highlighted as one country where the pull factors for this form of exploitation are high for many reasons: the chance to earn some income for those living in poverty; a dramatic increase in Internet usage and

access to high-speed and stable Internet connections; limited law enforcement on child sex abuse;³⁴⁰ vast demand for child abusive materials, and the widespread use of spoken English, which makes it easier for Western offenders to communicate what it is they want. Research by the Dutch branch of the NGO Terre des Hommes revealed how serious and widespread this problem has become. By creating a virtual 10-year-old Filipino girl named 'Sweetie' to catch child sex predators, they encountered over 20,000 offenders from 71 countries. Sweetie identified 1,000 men worldwide that were willing to pay to abuse the girl online, most of them from Europe and other Western countries.³⁴¹

A 2014 study by the National Police of the Netherlands found a likely overlap between SECTT and sexual exploitation of children via livestreaming: predators are familiar with countries well-known for SECTT and will target them first, and there is often greater tolerance for child prostitution and abuse in these societies.³⁴² Experts from the National Police of the Netherlands found that livestreaming is a particularly risky form of child sexual exploitation, because it is real and tangible, and may increase the risk of actual contact with children.³⁴³ While not all online sex offenders have or would commit a contact offence,³⁴⁴ webcam child sex tourism goes beyond 'viewing', as the abuse is current or acute, and can be 'customised' by the viewer.

As the importance of the Internet has grown worldwide, so has the number of cybercafés.³⁴⁵ They are today a familiar sight at almost every travel destination. In many developing countries where people cannot easily afford a computer, cybercafés serve the local population and even small towns may have several businesses of this kind. In the absence of effective child protection mechanisms, children and young people using the Internet at cybercafés are vulnerable to risks such as exposure to sexual abusive images of children, online grooming, webcam sex and physical contact with perpetrators. In Moldova, for example, some travelling sex offenders were found to meet children in places where teenagers congregate, including cybercafés.³⁴⁶ However, the rise of smartphones and relatively cheap internet access, together with the spread of free wifi in public places, may all signal the demise of cybercafés in the near future. It may be that parental control over their children's use of the internet becomes even more difficult, if not impossible.³⁴⁷

There is a lack of mechanisms to educate and protect children about the risks. A study carried out in Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay found that the widespread availability of cybercafés is both a "blessing and a curse". Cybercafés in Latin America are often permissive, offering little or no information on the safe use of the Internet. Furthermore, parents interviewed in the five countries did not seem to be concerned

Box 2: The (mis) use of information communication technologies (ICTs) in an emerging tourist destination: Sub-Saharan Africa

The African continent is seeing one of the strongest surges in mobile data use worldwide, with the number of internet users soaring by more than 6,839% since 2000 and mobile internet traffic expected to increase 20-fold by the end of the decade. According to evidence gathered for the Global Study, Increasing access to the internet, smart phones and Wi-Fi spots is making children more vulnerable to sexual exploitation in travel and tourism (SECTT).

In the case of Kenya, the influx of counterfeit goods, especially phones with enabled internet, has made online access cheap and easy, a phenomenon that has reportedly increased children's exposure to pornography. According to the Sub-Saharan Africa report, social media and online chatting are an effective way for offenders to target and recruit children into SECTT. There are reports that chat groups have been formed to recruit girls into sexual exploitation in Kenya. Pimps have been found to recruit girls by disguising themselves as aid workers, encouraging girls to open a social media page to communicate with a 'donor'. Growing communication between the fake aid worker and the child morphs into a pseudo-courtship with the promise of financial stability. Gambian boys meet homosexual men online on dating and social media sites, indicating on their profiles that they are interested in both men and women. Children have identified dating sites as being used to interact with Swedish, British and Belgian travellers.

Victims and perpetrators can communicate from a distance on such social networking apps, facilitating the grooming of victims and allowing perpetrators to organise direct contact. Children may still be virtually involved in such 'relationships' after perpetrators have left and be further exploited through online video and teleconferencing services. Teenagers may also be groomed through social networks and come to have high expectations from older friends about future opportunities. Even children from wealthy families are vulnerable to this type of grooming, especially those who lack regular parental supervision of their internet and social media use. Offenders can communicate directly with children online, avoiding any additional expense or the need for an intermediary.

SECTT intermediaries are, however, reported to use ICTs to establish integrated and complex networks involving both nationals and foreigners within and outside the region. Online platforms allow pimps and intermediaries to 'advertise' children online, while traveller and tourist offenders can get information about where to go and how to access children. These networks often include people who may also be involved in drug smuggling and human trafficking. The technology provides a platform that facilitates contact with potential victims, while protecting the identity and location of those involved.

Source: Crispin and Mann, "Regional Report – Sub-Saharan Africa".

about their children's Internet safety. Few had set rules about computer and cell phone usage.³⁴⁸ This lack of awareness links directly to risky behaviour.

Research by Jonas and Guadamuz confirms that smartphone applications equipped with geospatial location technology have transformed the way in which people can meet each other. Travelling sex offenders looking for child sex partners can now communicate with targets who may welcome contact with foreigners out of curiosity, often combined with the opportunity to practice a foreign language or earn some income as translator or guide. The travelling sex offender can build on such initially innocent contact to ask for increasingly sexualised favours.³⁴⁹

Beyond tourism: the role of travel for work

Evidence gathered for the Global Study builds a picture of heightened risk of SECTT linked to mega-projects, business hubs, transport systems and other areas that attract large numbers of workers who are far from their homes and families, as well as, potentially, preferential child sex offenders.

The North America report,³⁵⁰ for example, highlights the impact of the oil boom in North Dakota, which has seen

a growth in human trafficking since a massive influx of oilfield workers, many of whom live in "man camps" – or temporary housing. North Dakota is now considered a "hot spot" for human trafficking and there are alarming reports of the exploitation of minors in prostitution, often arranged through Backpage.com.³⁵¹ The strong response to stings advertising underage girls on websites such as Craigslist and Backpage suggests that, in reality, the victims must include children.³⁵²

The Latin America report³⁵³ highlights research by the Brazilian NGO Childhood among 316 construction workers at different construction sites in five different states: 57% of the workers confirmed that children near big construction works were being sexually exploited, while 25% of them admitted to having sex once or more with adolescents.³⁵⁴ The review also points out that the presence of mega-projects also contributes to the vulnerability of children, as these transient workers establish sexual relationships, especially with teenagers.³⁵⁵

In Africa, services for migrant and travelling workers provide opportunities for offenders (whether preferential or situational) to exploit children. Migrant workers often travel alone or in groups for long periods of time in an atmosphere of relative anonymity and impunity. Locations where large groups of migrant workers come together, such as construction sites, ports and mining zones, are

often hotspots for sex trade and the sexual exploitation of children. In Zambia, for example, the development of a foreign-led mining industry has been linked with a rise in SECTT. Research respondents cited examples of children involved in prostitution travelling to the mining areas from distant provinces, especially at the time employee salaries are paid. The perpetrators appear to be predominantly situational, as children are often mixed up with adults involved in prostitution. The construction of roads and highways by foreigners was also identified as contributing to SECTT in Kenya: young girls are lured to these sites with promises of money and other incentives. These projects are heavily funded by foreign governments and increased numbers of foreigners now work and live in Kenyan communities. Exploitation of young girls is reportedly widespread in construction project sites and in neighbouring towns. There have been reports of young Kenyan girls becoming involved in sexual relationships with, for example, Chinese contractors.³⁵⁶

The growth of business/economic ‘hubs’ is another factor. According to the Latin America report,³⁵⁷ São Paulo in Brazil has become a significant economic hub. Like other cities in Latin America, it attracts visitors that come mainly for business trips or to participate in major trade, cultural and entertainment events. This influx, combined with the socioeconomic marginalisation of local people, has led to increases in the sexual exploitation of children.³⁵⁸ Similarly, a research study in Bogotá, Colombia, reports that the main reason foreign people visit the capital is business.³⁵⁹ The demand for the sex trade from foreigners increases between Monday and Thursday when business travellers are in the city.³⁶⁰ Border areas in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Paraguay have also been identified as risk zones for children. A study by CASACIDN found that truck drivers travelling to and from Brazil and Paraguay contribute to the sexual exploitation of children in this zone.³⁶¹ Similarly, research by Raices in Chile revealed the presence of adolescents around truck stops, involved in hawking, consumption of purchased goods and commercial sexual activity.

There are also concerns around the use of longer-term employment by offenders in foreign destinations. Between 2006 and 2011, the UK’s Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre carried out more than 1,200 investigations into travelling UK sex offenders, finding that one in five were associated with roles that involved access to children. Teaching and schools-related positions were the most represented occupations or voluntary roles associated with cases of offending overseas.³⁶²

The infrastructures of travel and tourism are in a state of constant evolution, with the appearance of new and

increasingly informal means of connecting and moving people worldwide. As the numbers of tourists and travellers continue to soar, and as people increasingly make their travel arrangements informally – one-to-one and online – the protection of children from SECTT needs to be prioritised.

Implications for policy and action

- Child impact assessments should be carried out at an early stage of national and local tourism development plans, and child protection strategies should be embedded from the outset.
- Evolving travel and tourism infrastructures necessitate greater uptake of the industry Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (thecode.org). This commits the tourism industry to combat SECTT, and provides tools to embed child protection within business processes. The Code’s toolkit needs to be adapted to reflect the realities of 21st century travel and tourism. An amended Code could also provide practical tools and indicators to support a future Global Convention on Ethics in Tourism, led by UNWTO.
- Targeted interventions are needed – particularly in the most remote areas off traditional tourist routes – necessitating a greater role for NGOs and other civil society groups with local knowledge and connections to identify at-risk children and educate local communities about SECTT.
- Upper-level hotels and hotel chains, as well as other industry leaders, could help to create or expand a safety through their networks. They could increase the chances of preventing child sexual exploitation by working with other partners (such as local law enforcement units, bars, smaller hotels, small transport companies, and informal tourism service providers, as well as Internet service providers and social media).

LEGAL PROTECTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Laws and treaties that fail to prevent and punish sexual offences against children play a very important role in the proliferation of SECTT. At the same time, lack of enforcement allows offenders to pick and choose among locations where the risks of arrest are minimal and police forces are overwhelmed. The combined result is a failure to prosecute SECTT³⁶³ and a denial of the child victim’s right to access to justice, even though “Governments are responsible for preventing and combating sexual violence against children in every situation...A government’s responsibility does not end at the national borders.”³⁶⁴

Most countries have laws in place that could, in theory, be mobilised to protect children against SECTT, even if these do not target this specific crime. However, these more wide-ranging laws are not being used effectively

Box 3: The Connections: legal frameworks, social norms and law enforcement

Laws influence social norms and define “acceptable behaviour” in any society. When laws do not explicitly criminalise the commercial sexual exploitation of children, offenders remain unpunished and undeterred. Such societies are also less likely to perceive sexually exploited children as victims who need help.

Even in states with solid legal frameworks addressing SECTT, social norms and attitudes may fuel social tolerance of the crime. These include valuing boys and men over girls and women; traditional practices that harm children, especially girls; the belief that domestic violence is a private matter; the normalisation of commercial sex; economic and social discrimination; and widespread corruption.

When all or some of these elements are present, the perception of SECTT as an unfortunate but acceptable practice increases. This undermines the protection mechanisms normally offered by communities, and can lead community members to become complicit in the crime – especially if they benefit from it financially through the tourism economy. Police officers and justice personnel are not immune from the impacts of culture and tradition; their actions and decisions often reflect societal norms and beliefs. If SECTT is tolerated and no specific laws prohibit it – this will inevitably have an impact on the functioning of the public institutions mandated to combat it.

Source: Drawn from Geneviève Proulx (2015) ‘Law enforcement as the entry point to access justice’. Submission to the Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism by the International Bureau for Children’s Rights. Montreal: IBCR.

to tackle SECTT, and the lack of specific legislation on SECTT keeps this crime below the public and policy radar, playing into social norms that belittle its importance.

International and national legal protections

Although SECTT is not a specific crime at the international level, analysis carried out for the Global Study confirms that prohibitions are in place to provide legal grounds for the prosecution of perpetrators and accomplices of SECTT. Existing international conventions and protocols can serve as the basis for the adoption of specific regional and national regulations to fight this crime.³⁶⁵ *“While the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in September 2015 are not legally binding, the achievement of those SDGs and related targets aiming for an end of sexual violence against children necessitates stronger and better regulation related to SECTT.”*³⁶⁶ Between 1973 and 2000 several other international conventions and treaties relevant to combating trafficking and child sexual exploitation were developed and ratified by most countries, including the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and these are outlined in greater detail in Chapter 5 of this report, which looks at the responses to SECTT over the years.³⁶⁷ Perhaps the most relevant to SECTT specifically is the OPSC, *which obliges State Parties to criminalise the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*, whether such offences are committed domestically or transnationally or on an individual or organised basis (Article 3).

While these international agreements are important, none of them are specific to the exploitation of children within travel and tourism. As a result, they fail to

address SECTT as a distinct form of sexual exploitation of children with its own unique contours.³⁶⁸ One key obstacle has been the lack of a clear international agreement on the definition of SECTT, which undermines the development, harmonisation and enforcement of legislation at every level.³⁶⁹

Most countries have national laws that prohibit a range of sexual offences against children; however the crime of SECTT is usually ‘diluted’ across other elements of national legislation. Offenders can be prosecuted for offences such as prostitution and rape, trafficking or the use of children in pornography, but these laws generally do not address SECTT-specific elements, such as the role of sex-tour operators and intermediaries or the mis-use of travel and tourism infrastructures (see previous section). When the links between crimes are diluted in this way, legislation that could and should be applied to criminalise SECTT is compromised by a failure to adequately define, criminalise and penalise sexual offences against children.³⁷⁰ A common criticism of the domestic laws in the Pacific region, for example, is the lack of definition of the infraction.³⁷¹ In the United States, the 50 states use different laws and definitions, making it difficult for law enforcement to pursue offenders across state lines or even to understand what actions constitute an offence. A 2013 assessment by ECPAT Netherlands noted that while The Gambia, Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal and South Africa have progressive laws and policies in place to protect children against sexual exploitation, these laws and policies are considered ‘paper tigers’, as they appear powerful on paper but have little impact, given their lack of practical implementation.³⁷²

Similarly, the South Asia report found that although all countries in the region have laws that *relate* to SECTT,

the impact of law enforcement is undermined by inadequate specification and definition within these laws.

Notable exceptions highlighted in Chapter 2 include the Goa Children's Act 2003 and Rules 2004 (while valid in only one Indian state, they focus on crimes related to tourism, whilst also covering child sexual abuse³⁷³) and the Philippines: the only country in Southeast Asia with specific and robust legal provisions to address SECTT.³⁷⁴ In East Asia, Taiwan is the only state with specific provisions to punish acts related to SECTT.³⁷⁵

Even where domestic laws criminalising SECTT are strong, victims must overcome significant barriers to prosecute offenders and obtain legal remedies. Pursuant to international law, victims of all forms of CSEC, including SECTT, have the right to access to justice for violations committed against them.³⁷⁶ Access to justice means “the ability of sexually exploited children to engage with State justice systems to hold their offenders accountable and obtain legal remedies, including the services and compensation they need to recover and rebuild their lives.”³⁷⁷ Yet, according to the recent ECPAT International study on access to justice for child victims of sexual exploitation (Access to Justice Study) in Thailand, the Philippines and Nepal (publication forthcoming),³⁷⁸ state justice systems are often inaccessible and inhospitable to CSEC victims and it is rare for these child victims to receive any measure of justice at all.

An essential component of the right to access justice is access to compensation. States are obligated to make compensation-seeking procedures available for child victims of SECTT. The OPSC specifically requires State Parties to “ensure that all child victims of the offences described in the present Protocol have access to adequate procedures to seek, without discrimination, compensation for damages from those legally responsible.”³⁷⁹ Simultaneous with the Access to Justice Study, ECPAT International recently undertook a comparative legal study of 14 countries³⁸⁰ on the unique barriers child victims face when seeking compensation.³⁸¹ A paper on the Compensation Study is also forthcoming.³⁸² The barriers to accessing compensation procedures – whether from the perpetrators or through State compensation programmes – are intertwined with protection and legal enforcement issues.

Legislative weaknesses mean that victims can be missed, blamed or punished

As shown in *‘Law enforcement as the entry point to access justice’*, this lack of SECTT-specific legislation and public awareness means that SECTT may not be understood as a crime and its victims may not be perceived as such.³⁸³

The clear risk is that, in the absence of strong, consistent legislation, some children are ‘missed’ because of their age or gender, or even ‘blamed’ for their own exploitation a phenomenon noted in the regional reports for Southeast Asia and the Middle East and North Africa.³⁸⁴

For example, most legislation in South Asia related to the prostitution of children focuses on women and girls, leaving boys open to being considered offenders rather than victims in cases of sexual abuse and exploitation.³⁸⁵ In Zambia, current laws do not criminalise all sexual offences committed against children under the age of 18. A child of 16 is seen as capable of making informed decisions about sex and could, therefore, be prosecuted for engaging in transactional sex.³⁸⁶

The impact of inconsistent legislation around age, gender and consent, coupled with wider social attitudes, can be seen in the China case study. This notes China's Criminal Law, which states that “those who visit young girl prostitutes under 14 years of age are to be sentenced to five years or more in prison in addition to paying a fine”.³⁸⁷ However, “those forcing young girls under the age of 14 into prostitution” are to be sentenced “to 10 years or more in prison or given a life sentence”.³⁸⁸ In other words, the law is more lenient to those who have sex with under-age ‘prostitutes’³⁸⁹ (which constitutes child rape) and the traffickers, pimps and other intermediaries.³⁹⁰ The Law does not refer to the crime of facilitating the prostitution of boys under 18 or girls aged 14 to 18.

ECPAT's Access to Justice Study produced similar findings. Although international law defines a child as anyone under the age of 18, children much younger than that are often legally able to consent to sex and legally responsible for any crimes they commit, including CSEC-related crimes such as prostitution, pornography, immigration violations, and public nuisance offenses. For example, in Thailand and Nepal, children are considered old enough to choose their sex partners at age 16 and in Philippines, at just age 12.³⁹¹ They may be criminally prosecuted starting at age 16 in Thailand and the Philippines and as young as age 10 in Nepal.³⁹² Thus, the age of criminal responsibility and age of sexual consent work together to increase the likelihood that child victims in their teens will be treated as willing sex workers, undocumented migrants or juvenile delinquents and arrested rather than being treated as sexually exploited and trafficked children in need of help.³⁹³ Without laws implemented to treat child victims as victims instead of criminals, many child victims will have no access to justice.

In the USA, while the Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act (2000) considers all children exploited in prostitution as victims of sex trafficking, state laws against prostitution are often used to punish children.³⁹⁴ Minors who are arrested on a sex-related charge may

be placed in juvenile detention facilities with other youth who have committed serious crimes instead of receiving protective services.³⁹⁵ The Latin America report raises concerns about countries such as Costa Rica, where despite the presence of a legal framework to punish SECTT, punishment for promoting the country as a sex tourism destination appears to take priority over punishing the sexual exploitation of children.³⁹⁶

The Compensation Study brought to light an additional example of legislative weakness for child victims seeking compensation. In many States, victims may seek compensation from State compensation programmes established in domestic legislation. In SECTT cases, however, particularly with foreign perpetrators, victims are often barred from seeking compensation through this method from the perpetrator's home country.³⁹⁷ Based on research in the Compensation Study, legislation or administrative rules in France, Japan, Hong Kong, Germany, Romania and the Czech Republic restrict access to State compensation programmes, requiring applicants to have a connection to the country, through nationality, citizenship, residence and/or legal status.³⁹⁸ Thus, when a SECTT perpetrator's home country is a State with such restrictions, a victim located in the destination country cannot seek compensation from the State compensation program where the perpetrator lives.³⁹⁹ Many States in the Compensation Study, including Australia New South Wales, Belgium, Germany, Hong Kong and Romania, also restrict access to State compensation programmes for crimes that occurred in their territory, precluding access to victims of SECTT by foreign perpetrators.⁴⁰⁰

Challenges to extraterritorial legislation

When countries adopt extraterritorial legislation to tackle the sexual exploitation of children, one explicit message is conveyed: people cannot "take a holiday from their own legal systems".⁴⁰¹

A significant number of countries have extraterritorial legislation⁴⁰² enabling them to prosecute their nationals for crimes against children committed abroad. As found in the Compensation Study research, however, the Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern over some States' failures to enact legislation establishing jurisdiction over crimes covered by the OPSC that occur outside of their borders where a national is involved.⁴⁰³ The absence of extraterritorial jurisdiction compromises the capacity of states to address cases of transnational child sex offenders.⁴⁰⁴ As noted in Chapter 5 on responses, extraterritorial legislation appears to be limited or absent in the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia and the Pacific (excluding Australia and New Zealand).

Analysis in Europe revealed that few states or regions collate data on the application of extraterritorial legislation, and available evidence suggests that several obstacles (cost, bureaucratic procedures, absence of bilateral or multilateral agreements etc.) stand in the way of successful prosecutions using these laws. As a result, most SECTT cases rely on the legal and justice systems of the country where the crime occurred.⁴⁰⁵ Even extraterritorial legislation that criminalises SECTT is not necessarily a deterrent, if police are unsure what to investigate and prosecutors lack the capacities to prosecute SECTT crimes— challenges linked to the lack of clear definitions and harmonised legislation.

The UK first enacted extra-territorial jurisdiction legislation in 2003, permitting prosecution of British nationals who commit sex offences abroad.⁴⁰⁶ In the Compensation Study, ECPAT UK reported that despite this extra-territorial legislation, very few criminal cases have been brought against UK nationals who committed CSEC abroad.⁴⁰⁷ As of 2013, only two such cases had been brought.⁴⁰⁸ ECPAT UK highlighted the need for strengthened international cooperation to protect children and ensure access to justice.⁴⁰⁹ The organisation also suggested establishing a specialised police unit in the UK to investigate and prosecute trans-national sex offences, which would assist in training cross border teams.⁴¹⁰ A specialised unit could transform rarely-implemented extra-territorial jurisdiction laws into a real deterrent for potential perpetrators.

Lack of extra-territorial jurisdiction legislation, largely ignored extra-territorial legislation, as well as other gaps and obstacles contribute to a legal environment that provides offenders with immunity for their crimes. This legal environment accordingly prevents victims of SECTT from accessing justice. With their extensive networks, offenders take advantage of gaps and loopholes; they flock to countries or cities known as 'least likely to prosecute', often overwhelming law enforcement efforts that may already be flawed. Travelling sex offenders whose passports are confiscated but who are released on bail can often obtain laissez-passers at their embassies and leave the country, further undermining prosecution in the country where the crime occurred.⁴¹¹

Lack of enforcement

Although laws that could and should protect children from sexual exploitation are in place in most countries, "multiple obstacles exist at all levels of the law enforcement process."⁴¹² While countries have different legal systems, frameworks, traditions and enforcement capacities, the challenges they face are often similar.⁴¹³ These include: under-reporting; failure to understand the nature of child exploitation; corruption; enforcement that does not keep pace with SECTT; weak judicial processes; and lack of capacity, resources

Box 4: Challenges to the enforcement of laws and policies in Kenya

- Lack of allocation of adequate resources to enforce laws and policies
- Victims' fear of speaking up, resulting in offenders not being apprehended
- Corruption of law enforcement officers, enabling offenders to avoid arrest
- Poor prosecution procedures
- Poor legislation and enforcement of the laws.
- Low level of awareness of child rights among adults
- Poor implementation of the Children's Act
- Lack of resources to carry out interventions
- Ineffective child protective units at the community level
- Fear of offender reprisal, especially from those released by the police or judiciary
- Complacency in the legal system
- Poor capacity of service providers, including the police, in handling cases of commercial sexual exploitation
- Lack of cooperation and sustained coordination between different stakeholders
- Reluctance of law enforcement officers in the absence of willing witnesses and proper evidence gathering
- The limited availability of referral hospitals, and those that are available are very far away from slum communities
- Settlement of court cases between offenders and the parents of victims of sexual exploitation.

Source: Aggrey Willis Otieno (2015) *Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism in Kenya: A Case Study of Embakasi, Starehe, Kasarani and Kamukunji Sub Counties in Nairobi*. Research conducted in the framework of the Global Study. Nairobi: African Network for Prevention & Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) Regional Office.

and coordination. The Kenya case study for the Global Study provides an alarmingly long list of the challenges to enforcement and access to justice in just one country.⁴¹⁴

The results of the Access to Justice Study also confirm that local police are not enforcing relevant laws or are not sufficiently trained to enforce them. Police in Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand rarely act pro-actively to find and rescue sexually exploited children and rely heavily on NGOs and INGOs to conduct raid and rescue operations.⁴¹⁵ For example, International Justice Mission operated Project Lantern from 2007-2010 in Cebu, Philippines, a beach destination well-known for sex tourism.⁴¹⁶ It conducted surveillance, stings and investigations to facilitate rescues, leading to a 79% reduction in children available for sex over the three-year period.⁴¹⁷ During that time, 259 sex trafficking victims were rescued, compared to 27 in the three years prior.⁴¹⁸ IJM-initiated operations resulted in the rescue of 114 victims, while IJM-trained police initiated most of the remaining rescues.⁴¹⁹

The Study also revealed some evidence that local police may be more apt to take action in SECTT cases in which the offenders are foreign and the investigation is initiated by foreign law enforcement with greater resources and expertise and less vulnerability to corruption. As reported by an NGO child protection worker in Thailand,

The police doesn't do investigation. Somebody has to collect data. . . . It is foreign investigator teams that meet with the kid or NGOs . . . it could be oversees paedophiles they're tracking. So let's say the [foreign] police would call the [local] police and say, 'we are tracking this guy,' and then usually it's the [local] police who go looking for the guy and they start finding the victims.⁴²⁰

Police inaction was a prominent theme in the Access to Justice Study and is a significant barrier to access to justice.⁴²¹

Under-reporting

Reporting an incident of SECTT is the first step in activating the judicial process and access to justice for victims; when incidents are not reported, no process can take place. There are many reasons for under-reporting of SECTT (also noted in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4), but three key reasons are: social perceptions and cultural beliefs, poverty and structural deficiencies.⁴²²

Social perceptions and cultural beliefs include stigma surrounding sex and sexual abuse, leading to shame and guilt among victims and their families, as well as (often valid) fears about exposure or reprisals. Stigma was also a reason for under-reporting identified in the Access to Justice Study.⁴²³ One child victim in Nepal explained the extent of the social stigma,

Most of the time family does not support [prostituted children]. They say 'you are dirty. You have done this and that so we cannot keep you in the family.' So most of them are kicked out of the home. Not just family but even neighbours, they even tell their own children 'oh don't touch her' or they don't use common source of water. If a girl who has been exploited touches water, nobody else touch that which is wrong. At this point the most difficult [thing] that the survivor faces she knows that it wasn't her fault that she has been wronged but no one understands that it wasn't her fault.⁴²⁴

Fear of retaliation such as threats, harassment and violence also constitute a barrier according to the Access to Justice Study.⁴²⁵ In Nepal, the Philippines

and Thailand, sexually exploited children and their families are routinely subject to exploiters' threats, harassment and violence.⁴²⁶ Respondents reported that sex tourists with money and influence engaged in retaliation to make investigations go away.⁴²⁷ The greatest fear of one child victim in Thailand was that her foreign exploiter would "know that it's me, will see me, and then I might be harmed, get hurt, later on . . . A lot of [exploiters] kill Thai people. A lot of them do that, so that might happen."⁴²⁸

Obstructive social perceptions and cultural beliefs also include the low value placed on women and girls, which trivialises them as sexual objects, fuelling the wider perception that sexual violence against children is simply not a serious problem.⁴²⁹ Poverty may push children to exchange sex for necessities such as food and shelter, and lead their families to condone what is happening, fuelling the myth of the "willing victim", that the victim "has chosen to exchange sexual services for money, and therefore agrees to the transaction and is not a victim who has suffered a human rights violation."⁴³⁰ Among the structural factors contributing to under-reporting are the chronic lack of mechanisms to inform children and other community members about laws protecting children from sexual exploitation. As a result, SECTT may not be perceived as a crime and its victims may not be perceived as such (see Box 3 - Connections). As found in the Access to Justice Study, sexually exploited children often fail to see themselves as victims: many are not aware of their right to live free from sexual exploitation and to pursue justice and remedies for the harms they have suffered.⁴³¹ Many of their families, especially in Nepal and the Philippines, are not aware that permitting or encouraging their children to engage in sexual exploitation is both illegal and harmful.⁴³²

Other factors include: reporting mechanisms that are non-existent, not child-friendly, not well-known or difficult to access due to cost or distance. Finally, the widespread lack of child-sensitive rules and proceedings, inadequate staff specialisation and corruption discourage the reporting of SECTT crimes.⁴³³ For example, it is common in Thailand and the Philippines for child victims to be confined after their rescue in highly restrictive and inadequate shelters for long periods of time, often for the duration of the criminal investigation and prosecution.⁴³⁴ As revealed in the Access to Justice Study, children on the street are known to warn one another to avoid the justice system at all costs because they will be kept in the shelters for years.⁴³⁵

Lack of understanding

One finding emerging from the evidence gathered for the Global Study is that law enforcement officers and the judiciary may not always appreciate the importance of SECTT as a crime, or may misunderstand its nature. A 2013 survey in Southeast Asia by the UNODC found

that police and justice officials lacked understanding of many of the most fundamental issues, such as: the legal definition of a child as anyone under the age of 18; the fact that photographing a child for sexual gratification or exposing a child to pornography constitute child sexual exploitation; that children have the right to be heard in criminal proceedings; and – very importantly – that children in sex establishments should be treated as victims of exploitation, not criminals.⁴³⁶

Some police officials interviewed in West Bengal, India, insisted that under-age girls are not involved in prostitution, but rather: "most go to the hotels with their 'lovers' and not for the purpose of prostitution."⁴³⁷ Analysis from key stakeholder meetings with law enforcement authorities in the Solomon Islands found that, in the absence of shelter or support programmes for child victims, the latter often continue to engage in transactional sex with foreign workers and locals, leading some law enforcement personnel to perceive them as "willing victims".⁴³⁸

Lack of understanding of CSEC as a crime also impedes the ability of sexually exploited children to access justice. Respondents in the Access to Justice Study, from State actors to NGO workers, emphasized a need to distinguish between child victims who entered the sex trade out of poverty from those who entered out of a confused desire for a more glamorous life.⁴³⁹ They felt the latter should be held legally accountable for their actions, failing to appreciate the adult manipulation and child vulnerability at the heart of both scenarios.⁴⁴⁰ As one Thai prosecutor stated,

*"They engage in the business with their will, because they want to buy cars, luxurious stuff. You can find them on XXX Road. The other group of children they do it to survive, and these should be called victims. Maybe they are in the situation of exploitation and abuse already. We should think about the different nature of this group."*⁴⁴¹

Boy victims were particularly disadvantaged, with criminal justice actors viewing males as sexual aggressors rather than sexual victims. As a Nepali child victim from the Access to Justice Study reported, "If they go to the police, the police are totally ignorant and they refuse to believe them that a man can abuse a man."⁴⁴²

Although this misunderstanding of child victims is a barrier throughout the justice process, it manifests in a unique manner apparent at the compensation-seeking stage.⁴⁴³ In the Access to Justice Study, State actors perceived the victims as opportunists seeking additional compensation for work for which they have already been paid.⁴⁴⁴ One NGO lawyer stated, "Police asked me: 'Why are you doing this? Why are you claiming for their compensation? They already received [money] every time they had sex with him. He didn't get any

damage and they got profit.' This is the mentality."⁴⁴⁵ This misapprehension of child victims as offenders ignores clear international law that all victims of any form of sexual exploitation identified in the OPSC who are under the age of 18 must be treated as victims – not criminals – and have access to justice, including seeking compensation.⁴⁴⁶ Such a misunderstanding of the law also results in a failure to protect victims.

Corruption

Corruption is highlighted in the Global Study as a tremendous challenge for enforcement, exacerbated by a lack of understanding of the illegality of SECTT and the tendency to blame the victims. Combined with a general lack of capacity and/or will amongst both law enforcement personnel and the judiciary, corruption perpetuates a permissive environment for child sex offenders, heightening the vulnerability of children."⁴⁴⁷ Similarly, pervasive corruption constitutes a significant barrier to access to justice. Law enforcement agencies in many countries face serious challenges in relation to bribery. In the Access to Justice Study countries, it is a common and accepted practice for perpetrators of SECTT to bribe both State actors and family members of the victims.⁴⁴⁸ One experienced Filipino lawyer reported that perpetrators seek to avoid conviction and high criminal fines, telling families, "Why should I pay the government, when I can pay you now?" Perpetrators are often successful in these endeavours. Parents of victims prefer to settle instead of engaging in the lengthy and complex justice process where neither conviction nor compensation are guaranteed. One NGO worker reported that settlement amounts can be ten times as high as potential compensation from the State.⁴⁴⁹ Bribery and corruption of State actors results in a reluctance to prosecute cases, particularly when the perpetrator is wealthy or influential,⁴⁵⁰ which is sometimes the case for travelling sex offenders, whether national or foreign. In South Africa, for example, police were identified by respondents (including police officers themselves), as being involved in facilitating SECTT.⁴⁵¹

The Access to Justice Study revealed similar findings in Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand.⁴⁵² Corrupt police, prosecutors and judges are alleged to accept bribes from perpetrators and then pressure victims to drop their cases or employ other tactics to interfere with the criminal proceedings.⁴⁵³ In Thailand, CSEC advocates avoid working with local police because they too often tip off owners of brothels, sex clubs and other venues in exchange for bribes. In both Thailand and the Philippines, corruption was reported to be a particularly important factor in the failure to convict foreign CSEC offenders, with respondents expressing frustration at how easily wealthy sex tourists negotiated out of liability and fled the jurisdiction.⁴⁵⁴

The Russia case study highlights the pressures that can be placed on victims and their families, citing a case against a man arrested in 2007 for offences in Cambodia and Russia: "The offender was extremely rich and therefore the offender could influence the criminal proceedings against him. This, of course, had a detrimental effect on the well-being of the victims."⁴⁵⁵

Enforcement that does not keep pace with SECTT

Advances in technology have facilitated and expanded access to children for sexual purposes, including their sexual exploitation in travel and tourism. Despite the best efforts of some law enforcement agencies, perpetrators often seem to be two steps ahead in using technology to do harm. Criminal gangs organised in complex and changing networks are "...skilful at using emergent technology to ensure their trade proliferates and their revenues are protected. [...] As law enforcement improves on the ground in one location, chatroom members inform each other and share tips on avoiding detection and information on other locations in which law enforcement is poor."⁴⁵⁶

Transactions linked to the sexual exploitation of children throughout the world are often made in cryptocurrencies and via money transfers,⁴⁵⁷ and operations in which money is transferred through a series of accounts make it very difficult and time-consuming for law enforcement to track individuals at both ends of these transactions, as well as to locate and rescue child victims. Although law enforcement agencies in a number of countries constantly monitor the 'open' social media as well as the darknet for perpetrators, tracking them down requires time and resources and constitutes a major challenge.⁴⁵⁸

Weaknesses in judicial processes

When a SECTT case is reported to local law enforcement authorities, a process must get underway to investigate the alleged offence and, if a crime has indeed been committed, arrest and prosecute the offender(s). When this does not occur a culture of impunity develops, paving the way for organised crime and continued abuse. In such environments, victims and their loved ones have "a well-reasoned lack of trust" that justice will prevail, even if the exploitation is reported.⁴⁵⁹

In South Africa, according to the Sub-Saharan Africa report, giving testimony requires the child to identify themselves as a victim, which they may not wish to do. Another challenge that the legal system places the responsibility on the child or their family to report the crime – not on the legal institutions that should investigate cases and hold offenders accountable. According to the 2013 ECPAT Germany report, "the light sentences handed to child sex offenders highlights

deficiencies in the South African judicial system, such as lack of awareness, training and resources to properly deal with CSEC cases.⁴⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, perhaps, virtually all respondents felt that South Africa's criminal justice system is failing to fulfil its role in relation to SECTT.⁴⁶¹

This lack of trust is heightened across the research for the Global Study, which cites the many hurdles that victims and their families have to overcome to obtain justice, from the sheer cost of pursuing a case to long delays, as seen in an example from Ghana (Box 5 - Judicial Challenges in Ghana). They may need endless patience and determination in their quest for justice, at a time of great stress.

The Access to Justice Study also identified a wide range of judicial weaknesses in Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand that create distrust and prevent children from pursuing criminal cases against exploiters.⁴⁶² Police inaction, indifference and corruption were common themes in interviews with young survivors, advocates, and even other criminal justice actors.⁴⁶³ When sexually exploited children encountered local police in the Study Countries, they were apt to be treated as criminals – willing sex workers, juvenile delinquents, or in the case of foreign children, immigration violators.⁴⁶⁴ Rather than being brought into the justice system to get help and hold their offender accountable, they risked arrest, deportation or being sent back to the streets.⁴⁶⁵

Another weakness identified in the Access to Justice Study was the failure of states to provide CSEC victim-witnesses with effective adult assistance.⁴⁶⁶ Many sexually exploited children -- including those who have been trafficked to distant locations for exploitation in the travel and tourism industry -- lack family support, having been separated, abandoned, exploited or pressured to settle by the ones they love.⁴⁶⁷ Yet, the Study Countries, as elsewhere, do not guarantee these children a lawyer,

guardian ad litem or other dedicated advocate to provide the support they need to get through a long and difficult criminal case.⁴⁶⁸

State judicial systems also often fail to monitor or restrict the movements of accused exploiters during the pretrial period, which compromises CSEC cases and impedes the ability of victims to access justice.⁴⁶⁹ Indeed, the Access to Justice Study revealed that it is routine in Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand for exploiters to intimidate child victims, or, in cases of foreign defendants, to flee the country to avoid a criminal conviction and order to pay restitution.⁴⁷⁰ Respondents in the Access to Justice Study complained about the ease with which SECTT offenders could negotiate with officials to leave the country, noting that even when passports were confiscated by the host country, they were often able to obtain a replacement from their embassy.⁴⁷¹

In fact, in many judicial systems, such as the Philippines and Thailand, it is common practice to confine CSEC victims, rather than CSEC defendants, during criminal proceedings.⁴⁷² Officials depend heavily on highly-restrictive shelters to provide sexually exploited children with basic care and protection and ensure that they do not run away prior to trial.⁴⁷³ Yet, according to Access to Justice respondents, government-run shelters tend to be more punitive than therapeutic, with one Thai police officer likening them to a “school for criminals.”⁴⁷⁴ The risk of confinement causes sexually exploited children to avoid bringing criminal cases or abandon them before the conclusion.⁴⁷⁵

Another major weakness of the justice systems in Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand is the failure to implement child-friendly procedures that are suited to sexually exploited children.⁴⁷⁶ Because CSEC cases in the Study Countries, as elsewhere, often take place in adult criminal courts, rather than child-specialized courts, many justice

Box 5: Judicial Challenges in Ghana

“One of our projects seeks justice for children through the provision of support for victims of sexual abuse to report to the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit. We have encountered so many challenges with the system and the process can be very frustrating, victims are expected to pay for the medical examination that proves the abuse to support prosecution and the cost is enough to stop victims from reporting. Secondly, victims and their families are sometimes expected to bear the cost of transportation for the arrest of the suspect. This is further compounded by the cost of transportation throughout the investigation and to court as well. It took us almost 18 months of trial before the judgement was passed on one of the cases we supported. You can imagine how many people would be able to afford the cost and time to go through such a process. The reality is that sometimes the victims give up along the way [...]. The laws are there beautifully but cannot be enforced because the institutions with that mandate do not have what it takes to do so effectively.” [NGO Respondent]

Source: *A Report on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism in the Western, Central and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana (2015)*. Ghana NGOs Coalition on the Rights of the Child (GNCRC).

actors are unaware of their international legal obligation to manage the case with the child's best interests in mind, keep the child informed and seek his/her opinions.⁴⁷⁷ Nor are there any judicial mechanisms in place to ensure that this occurs.⁴⁷⁸ As a result, children in the Access to Justice Study often had little understanding of their cases and little opportunity to have their interests and views considered.⁴⁷⁹

Despite the existence of child-friendly procedures for interviews and trials, children in Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand still suffered undue hardships when having to tell the story of their exploitation.⁴⁸⁰ They endured long and repeated interviews, insensitive questioning, inadequate trial preparation, and painful confrontations with the accused during trial testimony or around the courthouse.⁴⁸¹ When special procedures were implemented, they did not always meet the needs of CSEC victims.⁴⁸² In the Philippines, for example, cases of sex crimes against children are heard in judges' chambers, where the atmosphere is more private and informal.⁴⁸³ Yet, this practice often forces children to recount their abuse in even closer proximity to the defendant.⁴⁸⁴

The hardship of participating in CSEC cases is also compounded by the fact that most cases are child-dependent rather than child-supportive, with the prosecution relying almost exclusively on the testimony of the child victim with little corroborative physical evidence or witness testimony and often little attempt to prevent the child from being harmed by negative CSEC stereotypes and attacks on his or her character.⁴⁸⁵

Finally, delays continue to plague CSEC cases. In the Philippines, cases involving any form of sexual exploitation of children take on average more than five years; in Thailand these cases take two to three years; while in Nepal cases are generally resolved in less than one year.⁴⁸⁶ Delays make it impossible for the victims to move on with their lives and they continue to live in fear of their exploiters.⁴⁸⁷ When perpetrators of SECTT are foreign or wealthy, the justice process can be even longer due to necessity of trans-national coordination or obstructive measures taken by the perpetrator and his lawyer.⁴⁸⁸

In a positive development, countries such as Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand have taken steps to expedite CSEC cases through the use of priority tracking and continuous hearings. A Canadian volun-tourism case was recently resolved with great speed in Nepal.⁴⁸⁹ A convicted child sex offender from Canada entered Nepal on a tourist visa in August 2014.⁴⁹⁰ He volunteered frequently at a children's shelter in Lalitpur where he lured a young, disabled boy into a sexual relationship by promising to buy him a prosthetic arm.⁴⁹¹ The case was investigated and the offender was convicted in 49 days.⁴⁹² The perpetrator was sentenced to seven years in prison and ordered to pay one million rupees (approximately \$9,000).⁴⁹³

Lack of capacity, resources and coordination

From a policing standpoint, one common gap in the enforcement of laws related to SECTT is the insufficient capacity of officers. This results, in part, from difficulties facing police and justice training academies in providing adequate training on prevention and investigation techniques, either because they are not mandated to do so (linked to the lack of clear definitions), because the curriculum is weak or because trainers are not adequately prepared.⁴⁹⁴

The Latin America report found that lack of resources and capacity undermined plans drawn up by governments in the region to address commercial sexual exploitation. Nine of 14 countries developed specific plans and created cross-institutional committees or commissions for their implementation. Although several SECTT-prevention initiatives were identified, limited human and financial resources severely hampered implementation.

Similar problems plague transnational police-to-police collaboration, also posing a major challenge to enforcement. In some cases, authorities fail to properly inform foreign counterparts that a registered child sex offender is travelling to their territory, either because they lack a mechanism to collect that information, or to coordinate and communicate the information, or because of a lack of systems and procedures to guide information-sharing with other states. Moreover, authorities in destination countries sometimes fail to take action when informed by a sending country that a child sex offender is travelling to their territory.⁴⁹⁵

Lack of capacity, training and resources also constitutes a barrier to seeking compensation for child victims. Even when courts order convicted exploiters to pay restitution (which is often the case in Nepal, for example), these orders often go unenforced. State authorities fail to identify or recover assets, even when exploiters are solvent.⁴⁹⁶ In trans-national cases, difficulties in enforcing compensation orders issued in destination countries increase due to the complexity of accessing foreigners' bank accounts and other assets. Police and other authorities in destination countries lack the resources and training to follow the trail of foreign perpetrators' assets to satisfy court-ordered compensation.⁴⁹⁷ Lack of international cooperation in trans-national compensation cases also inhibits satisfaction of orders.⁴⁹⁸ Child victims and their families lack the resources and skill to enforce compensation orders.⁴⁹⁹

On the positive side, evidence gathered for the Global Study cites numerous examples of efforts to overcome the lack of coordination, as well as existing measures that could be used more extensively, such as INTERPOL's green notices to successfully prosecute

SECTT offenders. As stressed by the UNODC, “Robust criminal justice frameworks that reflect key international and regional standards and are effectively implemented at the domestic level will bolster law enforcement capacity to prevent and effectively respond to child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism.”⁵⁰⁰

Implications for policy and action

Legislation and Policy

- All countries need to adopt and abide by existing global treaties relevant to SECTT, particularly the OPSC.
- Countries need specific legislation on SECTT that clearly defines the crime and its application to any child under the age of 18, in order to send a clear message to law enforcement bodies, the general public and – importantly – offenders: this crime will not be tolerated.
- There is growing momentum around the Code of Ethics for Tourism created by the UNWTO, which could become a game-changer in the fight against SECTT. Some governments already embed this Code of Ethics into their policies on a voluntary basis. It is time to transform this Code into an enforceable Convention, so that governments can be held fully accountable for its implementation.
- At a minimum, the travel and tourism industries should sign and promote the UNWTO Code of Ethics for Tourism. They should also sign up to the SECTT-specific Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism, initiated by ECPAT.
- Amend legislation making SECTT offenses non-bailable offenses to reduce the frequency of absconding perpetrators and intimidation, harassment and threats by the perpetrator against the victim and victim’s family.
- Enact legislation mandating that courts appoint an advocate for all child victims of SECTT with the primary duty of guarding the child’s best interests.

Enforcement

- Political will to tackle SECTT is paramount for securing the budgets and mechanisms needed to enforce laws against SECTT.
- Law enforcement officers need adequate resources, capacity and coordination to do their job effectively. As well as effective reporting mechanisms, good training and enough ‘boots on the ground’, they also need the support of the general public – recognising that law enforcement cannot tackle this problem alone. That means informing, training and mobilising wider societies, as well as law enforcement officers, and developing formal mechanisms to bolster communication between communities and police forces.⁵⁰¹
- Police and judicial personnel need to know how to apply existing laws in a child-friendly way. This means reinforcing the capacity of the police to receive and investigate SECTT complaints, the capacity of prosecutors to file accusations, and the capacity of judges to comprehend and act on SECTT offences.⁵⁰² A first step is to ensure that law enforcement training centres include SECTT as part of the mandatory curriculum.⁵⁰³
- Address State actors’ misunderstanding of the myth of the willing victim through education and training, clarifying that any victim of SECTT under age 18 is a victim – not a criminal - by law and must be afforded the special protections and procedures granted to child victims.
- Enhancing police-to-police cooperation between countries and with Interpol should be a top priority, as well as international cooperation between immigration authorities, child protection services and other key actors.
- A shared global child sex offender registry would support cooperation by increasing the information available to all and giving law enforcement a tool for stronger collaboration.

Strengthening transnational partnerships between states to increase judicial cooperation and facilitate access to evidence and witnesses by the state pursuing the case will help to bridge law enforcement gaps in cases based on extraterritorial principles.⁵⁰⁴



CHAPTER 4

DATA GAPS AND DILEMMAS



CHAPTER 4

DATA GAPS AND DILEMMAS

“By providing a much clearer and more subtle picture of the prevalence and characteristics of this phenomenon than has been available up to now, the global study will make an invaluable contribution to our collective efforts to prevent and address it.”⁵⁰⁵

*Marta Santos Pais,
Special Representative of the
Secretary-General on
Violence against Children*

The Global Study has pulled together as much available data as possible on the SECTT to build up a picture of a crime that is truly worldwide, and to which no country and no child is completely ‘immune’. It has also generated a much-needed research agenda for future investigation (see Chapter 6). It has not, however, been able to generate precise and accurate data on the global scale and scope of SECTT. The Study has encountered the data gaps that have plagued every attempt to quantify this issue: the hidden nature of SECTT and its victims, chronic under-reporting and a lack of data collection on the links between travel, tourism and the exploitation of children. It has also faced a number of data dilemmas, from the lack of an agreed definition of SECTT to the need to ensure that data collection ‘does no harm’ to children who are already victimised.

The fact is that there are no reliable figures for the number of children who are being sexually exploited worldwide, regionally, or by country, let alone the number who are caught up in SECTT specifically. Equally, there are no reliable figures on the number of offenders, on the precise scale of the crime or its expansion of the crime. The Southeast Asia report notes that: “No data are available to determine how many children are affected by SECTT in Southeast Asia. Similarly, no data exist that can clearly prove that SECTT is increasing or decreasing within the region.” What does seem to emerge from the evidence, however, is the sense of a crime that is on the rise, and a vast gap between the number of cases that are reported and the number thought to take place.

This lack of hard data matters immensely. As the background paper for the Study from the International Justice Mission (IJM) points out:

“Lack of hard data undermines prioritization of scarce anti-trafficking resources, limits identification of effective strategies and threatens the credibility of the global anti-trafficking community. Failure to develop reliable methods to measure and analyze child sex trafficking could even lead to decreased funding for anti-trafficking programs in the future as donors become disillusioned by the inability to evaluate the impact of their funding.”⁵⁰⁶

DATA GAPS

A hidden crime, with hidden victims and offenders

Measuring or quantifying the sexual exploitation of children is difficult because victims and perpetrators constitute a ‘hidden’ population for which there is no obvious sampling frame. The identification of either victims or offenders as part of that population could threaten them socially, physically or legally. Not surprisingly, victims may feel too ashamed or afraid to speak out, and may be manipulated or threatened by their abusers to keep quiet.⁵⁰⁷

Information on victims may also be limited because of who they are: children who have been ‘invisible’ in official data from birth, who may not be registered anywhere. While the evidence shows that not all victims are impoverished, many of them are from the poorest and most marginalized families – families that are often missing from official statistics and too rarely reached or monitored by effective child protection services. Offenders, not surprisingly, choose to be ‘invisible’, staying well below the radar to avoid exposure.⁵⁰⁸

Data available on offenders may also be skewed by a focus on those who are the most ‘visible’ (Western men who are repeat offenders). According to the Europe report, for example:

“some 250,000 people are reported to travel abroad every year to engage in sex with children and adolescents, according to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).⁵⁰⁹ This estimate is, however, problematic as it appears to measure only those individuals who travel outside their country of origin with the specific purpose of abusing children (i.e. preferential offenders), which fails to include both domestic and situational perpetrators.”

Particular research methodologies can also unintentionally bias the results. For example, a survey of Cambodian child sexual exploitation cases over a decade by Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE) found that Westerners accounted for 63.8% of offenders, Cambodians 31%, and other Asian nationals 5.2%.⁵¹⁰ However, an IJM report from 2012 found that most demand for sex with children comes from Asian and Cambodian men.⁵¹¹ There are various reasons for such inconsistent information, including research design. In the public realm, Western offenders create more controversy and their cases are more likely to be highlighted by government and local media. The number of arrests is also likely to be skewed by law enforcement priorities and approaches – such as whether they focus on sex establishments or street-based prostitution.⁵¹²

Under-reporting

Under-reporting is a common theme across the evidence gathered for the Global Study, and a major barrier to effective data collection and, therefore, to targeted responses. The North America report gives three reasons for under-reporting. First, child victims are naturally hesitant to come forward: they may fear reprisals, not understand or realise that they are victims and may well distrust other people, especially law enforcement officers. Second, when they do report what has happened to them, law enforcement does not always follow up, or lacks the evidence to lay charges. Third, law enforcement and court-reported data can be misleading. When data on prosecutions are available, they only reflect cases that have been processed through the courts, which represent a fraction of the problem.⁵¹³

For example, according to official reports from Latin American countries to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on cases of CSEC that had been investigated,⁵¹⁴ all governments supplied insufficient information about the number of cases in their countries, with only a handful being reported. Nicaragua, in its response to the Committee's list of issues, reported that its Supreme Court of Justice was processing just 21 cases of sexual exploitation.⁵¹⁵ Uruguay reported a total of 78 cases of sexual exploitation of children, *to date*.⁵¹⁶ The report from Argentina admitted that no such statistics were available

at all.⁵¹⁷ Civil society organisations have estimated that as many as 2 million children aged 11 to 17 are sexually exploited in Latin America. Whether that particular figure is accurate or not, there is clearly a vast gulf between official and unofficial figures.⁵¹⁸

A similar picture emerges in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), where the Committee on the Rights of the Child found that countries are not adequately collecting data on the sexual exploitation of children in general, or SECTT in particular. This lack of data collection means that the indicators of SECTT, and what drives it, are bound to be speculative.⁵¹⁹

Perhaps this is not so surprising, given that the overwhelming majority of cases are thought to go unreported. The MENA region, like every other region where SECTT is an emerging or recurrent problem, is facing a crisis in incident reporting. In Jordan, for instance, it is estimated that more than half of all adolescent girls who experienced physical and/or sexual abuse have never sought help.⁵²⁰

In even the most advanced economies, with relatively strong law enforcement and judicial processes, not all reports are duly investigated, and not all children are helped. According to a report from the Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, 49% of those found to be perpetrating sexual violence against children in the Netherlands were previously unknown to the criminal justice system.⁵²¹ The Rapporteur estimated that 62,000 children in the Netherlands become first-time victims of sexual violence each year, but only 6,000 actually receive help.⁵²²

Under-reporting is linked to a lack of effective reporting mechanisms. Where and how do people report SECTT if and when they witness it? And if they report it, what happens to the victim? Are child protection mechanisms in place to give them the support they need?⁵²³ Hotlines alone are not enough: the Europe report noted that the number of reports received by European hotlines is limited and it is difficult to access information on how many reports lead to criminal cases, although it appears that the number is small.⁵²⁴

There is a clear need to improve the international sharing of information on the movement of convicted child sex offenders who are likely to reoffend. An information sharing system would provide better protection for children, and far better insight into the scale of the issue. One valuable tool to help law enforcement is INTERPOL's Green Notice system, which aims to share key police intelligence on a global scale and to stop offenders crossing borders unnoticed. Green Notices are international requests for cooperation or alerts that allow police in member countries to share critical crime-related

Table 1: Green notices issued, 2011 to 2015 October, by region

Region	Americas	Asia/Pacific	Europe	North Africa/ Middle East	Total
2011	96	4	23	3	126
2012	396	16	12		424
2013	516	3	5		524
2014	436	5	8		449
2015 ⁵²⁶	385	5	15		405
					1,928

information. They are, however, woefully under-used and participation is voluntary. Table 1 - Green Notices issued, 2011 to 2015 October, by region shows the number of green notices issued on travelling child sex offenders in the years 2011 to 2015 (October), according to INTERPOL.⁵²⁵

The total of green notices in 2014 of 449 needs to be set against the 1.14 billion international arrivals globally in the same year. It seems clear that these numbers bear little or no relation to the true scale of incidence.

Another method to protect children from travelling child sex offenders is bilateral notices where the country of origin of the child sex offender informs the country of destination when a registered child sex offender intends to travel. This method is used by Australia. As their system is mandatory by law, their system gives a better indication of the (incidence of the) issue.

Other countries that work with databases of sex offenders are not providing statistics that demonstrate the incidence of SECTT at present. Canada's High Risk Child Sex Offender Database Act (18 June, 2015) foresees the creation of "a publicly accessible database containing information with respect to persons who are found guilty of sexual offences against children and who pose a high risk of committing crimes of a sexual nature". However, the Act has not yet come into force.⁵⁴² In the UK, the Home Office does not hold separate data on child sex offenders,⁵⁴³ although the country's Violent and Sexual Offender Register (ViSOR) does include data on individuals who have committed sex offences against adults.^{544,545} In the USA, minimum standards for sex offender registration are provided by the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA), which defines

a "sex offender as a person who was "convicted" for a sex offense, both against children and adults.⁵⁴⁶ Again, however, these measures cannot be expected to capture data on situational offenders, many of whom commit offences on the spur of the moment.

Lack of data on the specific crime of SECTT

Given the challenges to effective data collection on the wider crime of sexual exploitation of children, it is not surprising that data are so limited on their exploitation in travel and tourism specifically. The research carried out before the Global Study has tended to provide useful glimpses of the problem at one moment in time – often some time ago – with limited follow-up research to capture changing trends. For example, a 2001 study by Save the Children showed a strong connection between child sexual exploitation in China and the growth of tourism.⁵⁴⁷ Given that China now has the most rapidly expanding tourism source market in the world,⁵⁴⁸ a tourism industry that generated 9.3% of its GDP and employed 64.4 million people in 2013,⁵⁴⁹ it seems only logical to assume that SECTT has also expanded, but more field research is needed.

In Fiji, a 2005 report, also by Save the Children, found that cases of sexual exploitation of children seemed to be increasing, with a high correlation between the commercial sexual exploitation of children and tourists in areas with many hotels and events. Which comes first – the tourism or the exploitation – is not always certain. In Nadi, Fiji, the problem of SECTT seems to be a consequence of tourism. One magistrate reported increased risky sexual behaviour amongst child sex-work victims when the number of tourist arrivals increase in the holiday seasons.⁵⁵⁰ Existing sexual exploitation of children

Box 6: Sex Offenders' Registry in Australia

Each Australian state has developed its own legislation regarding the implementation of the National Child Offender System or NCOS (previously known as ANCOR, Australian National Child Offender Register) and each Australian police agency manages the scheme accordingly.^{527,528} In order to comply with these laws, child sex offenders and other categories of serious offenders against children are required to provide personal details to the police and to keep law-enforcement forces informed of their whereabouts. It should be noted, however, that the definition of 'serious offence' may differ among states. Some offences are registrable in some states only,⁵²⁹ such as the planning or preparation of a sexual offence against a child (Australian Capital Territory,⁵³⁰ South Australia⁵³¹), the murder or manslaughter of a child even if it does not follow or occur in the course of a sexual offence against that child (New South Wales⁵³², Northern Territory⁵³³), rape or attempt to commit rape (Queensland⁵³⁴), bestiality (Victoria⁵³⁵), and stalking (Tasmania⁵³⁶), among others.

The NCOS currently contains data on 16,100⁵³⁷ child sex offenders and other serious offenders (around 7 in every 10,000 of the total Australian population).⁵³⁸ The Australian federal police established a "top 10 NCOS RCOs destination countries" list for the years 2013 and 2014.⁵³⁹ As well as ranking these countries by popularity among NCOS Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs), this list provides the numbers of NCOS-registered visitors country by country, for each quarter during that period.

Table 2: Top 10 NCOS RCOs destination countries" list for the years 2013 and 2014

Country	NCOS-registered Australian visitors April 2013 - March 2014 ⁵⁴⁰	Total Australian visitors April 2013 - March 2014 ⁵⁴¹	Share of CSOs (per 10,000)
Indonesia	225	854,000	2.63
New Zealand	122	1,060,000	1.15
Thailand	118	561,000	2.10
Singapore	100	324,000	3.09
Malaysia	73	256,000	2.85
Philippines	66	164,000	4.02
Vietnam	38	208,000	1.83
New Caledonia/ Vanuatu	53	111,000	4.77
Fiji	48	272,000	1.76
Papua New Guinea	33	80,537	4.10
Total	876	3,890,537	2.25

By comparing these numbers with the number of Australian tourists who visited these countries between April 2013 and March 2014, it is possible to estimate that Australian Child Sex Offenders made up approximately 2.25 per 10,000 of Australian visitors in top ten destinations.

But even the Australian statistics represent only the tip of the iceberg of travelling child sex offenders as:

- domestic travelling child sex offenders are not included
- travels to destinations other than the top ten countries are not included in these statistics
- not every child sex offender is convicted and may not, therefore, be included in the statistics.

can also attract travellers and tourists. The report on the Middle East and North Africa, for example, cites a 2007 study in Morocco by Johns Hopkins University, which concluded that the country was one of the top emerging destinations for SECTT in the region. Two years later in 2009, Morocco had experienced a 6% rise in tourism arrivals, making it one of the top tourist destinations in North Africa.⁵⁵¹

There is also a need to monitor what is happening in expanding tourist markets. Myanmar is a prime example: a country that is now opening its doors to tourists as never before has, almost immediately, attracted offenders. Back in 2013, it was reported that 13 foreigners had been blacklisted from Myanmar for engaging in or attempting to engage in the sexual exploitation of children.⁵⁵² In 2014, Myanmar took pre-emptive action to bar entry to the country by six foreign nationals based on information related to prior sexual offences against children.⁵⁵³ This finding suggests that, on the one hand, offenders are quick to target emerging tourist destinations and, on the other hand, that it is possible for such destinations to stop them in their tracks.

A note of caution on the pursuit of 'big numbers'

An understandable desire to define scale means that any 'big numbers' on SECTT that have been proposed have been seized upon and taken on a life of their own, circulating for years, if not decades. As a result, there is an over-reliance on old figures that may have been wrong from the moment they were calculated and that cannot be verified. This constant recycling of inaccurate and invalid data represents a serious threat to effective advocacy, policy-making and programme planning.

The Pacific report, for example, points out that the challenges to research across such a vast region, with such remote locations, mean that data are rarely updated. As a result, most of the deductions drawn from the partial data collected in the region over the past two decades are assumptions, rather than reliable conclusions. The review notes that: "Because of the rarity of data and figures, when information is available, it is overly used and quoted, looping in reports from a limited group of stakeholders."⁵⁵⁴

A similar problem can be seen in the USA⁵⁵⁵ One of the most cited numbers, dating back to 2001,⁵⁵⁶ states that 326,000 children are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation. Following a review of existing estimates in 2008, the Crimes against Children Research Center concluded that there are no reliable data on the incidence of CSEC in the US and that citing existing figures could be misleading.⁵⁵⁷

Even in Europe, which has relatively better data collection on the sexual exploitation of children and where all the evidence suggests that it is a significant, widespread and probably growing problem, the actual scale of SECTT remains unknown.⁵⁵⁸ What is clear is that, as pointed out by the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography in 2012, SECTT "can occur anywhere in the world and no country or tourism destination is exempt."⁵⁵⁹

DATA DILEMMAS

Five data dilemmas have emerged from the Global Study process, particularly from consultations with key stakeholders. Dilemmas are related to: the lack of an agreed definition against which to measure the scale of the problem and the impact of interventions, the purpose of data collection, the link between data and action, the type of data needed, and the need to 'do no harm'.⁵⁶⁸

First, *the lack of an agreed definition*. The entire foundation for effective data collection on SECTT is undermined by inconsistencies in legal definitions and, therefore, in reporting. As a result, the data collection that is carried out is rarely, if ever, standardised, consistent or comparable. SECTT is usually not listed as a specific crime, and is often addressed under the broader legal umbrella of trafficking or prostitution, or the wider category of commercial sexual exploitation of children. Without one global, consistent and specific legal definition of SECTT that is applied in each and every country, it has proved impossible to compile or compare the numbers.

As well as undermining measurement of the problem, inconsistent terminology can seriously hamper the development and application of legislation. When the links between crimes are not captured by legislation – such as the links between trafficking, prostitution and pornography – current legislation that has the potential to be used to criminalise SECTT could be compromised by the failure to adequately define, criminalise and penalise sexual offences against children. This also weakens legal redress for transnational sexual crimes against children (see Chapters 3 and 5 for more on law enforcement). As stressed in the report on South Asia, children's vulnerability is heightened by "ambiguous and often ineffective legislation, a lack of national and regional consensus around definitions, and the failure to collectively target key issues and characteristics of CSEC, and in particular SECTT".⁵⁶⁹

This report proposes quite a wide definition of SECTT. While this is necessary, in order to convey and capture the nature of this crime across both the travel and tourism spheres, a broader definition may well present further challenges to data collection. Internationally,

Box 7: A snapshot of data from Europe

The European region is regarded as having better information on the sexual exploitation of children than most other regions.⁵⁶⁰ Nevertheless, there is no cross-regional figure on the scale of the problem, and the data that are available tend to be national or local. Even in Europe, only a few victims of commercial sexual exploitation of any kind come to the attention of authorities and receive assistance.

While it is not possible to gauge how many children are being sexually exploited or exploited in travel and tourism specifically, data suggest that countries where children and adolescents are (or may be) targeted by travelling child sex offenders are also affected by significant, and often growing problems of the sexual exploitation of children in prostitution, child sex trafficking and sexual abusive images of children. Once again, effective analysis is undermined by the differing definition of offences across European countries, by statistical information that is highly speculative and that refers to different time periods, and by reporting mechanisms that also vary by country (or even within the same country). Despite these serious limitations, analysis of the available data provides the following observations.

- Most of the figures available refer to child victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, a sign that governments and other actors in Europe are recognising the importance of collecting data on human trafficking, including children and adolescents.
- According to data from the European Commission, over 1,000 child victims were registered as having been trafficked for sexual exploitation in EU member states between 2010 and 2012.⁵⁶¹ The number of identified or presumed victims had increased from 876 in 2010 to 1,376 in 2012.⁵⁶² In several European countries, children and adolescents trafficked for sexual exploitation represent a significant proportion of all victims trafficked for this purpose (e.g. 60% in Albania, 21% in the UK and 20-25% in Moscow, Russia). In countries such as the UK, the Netherlands, Albania and Romania, hundreds of children are trafficked internally for sexual exploitation, including those born in the country.
- While the number of children thought to be sexually exploited in Eastern European countries such as Latvia, Ukraine and Poland may be relatively static, other Western European EU states are experiencing an alarming rise in child sexual exploitation.
- According to criminal statistics and other sources, hundreds of children are exploited in prostitution in European countries such as Belarus (138 in 2007-2010), Bulgaria (256 in 2010-2011), Czech Republic (500 between 1996 and 2003 at the Czech-German border: a hotspot for SECTT), Moldova (178 in 2005-2007), Poland (343 in 2011-2012), Spain (252 in 2002-2006) and Ukraine (540 in 2009-2012).
- Data from INTERPOL show that the number of children identified in child abuse material in Europe ranges from very few victims in Eastern European countries to hundreds in Western European countries, but this may not be an accurate reflection of the scale of the problem. The country with the largest number of identified victims in Eastern Europe is Belarus.⁵⁶³ In terms of dissemination, the EU countries hosting the largest number of URLs suspected of commercial distribution of child abuse materials between October 2012 and June 2014 were: in descending order - Netherlands, Czech Republic, Germany, Luxembourg, UK, Hungary and France.⁵⁶⁴
- Ukraine is witnessing a huge and increasing presence of travelling child sex offenders, with research by La Strada Ukraine finding a thriving though relatively hidden 'SECTT market'⁵⁶⁵ (there are suggestions that every 6th or 7th person involved in prostitution in the country is a child⁵⁶⁶).
- Research by Stellit in Russia has shown that the number of cases of SECTT in Russia has fallen significantly since the early 2000s, as has the number of countries from which offenders are travelling. What is new is the commercial sexual exploitation of Russian children by offenders from other parts of the country.⁵⁶⁷

advocacy must continue to push for more clarity and agreement on the parameters and definition of SECTT. In the meantime, national governments must, as a minimum, collect *disaggregated* data on the sexual exploitation of children. In this way, SECTT information can be analysed comparatively and shared among different sectors and services.

Second, *data collection for what purpose?* The emphasis is often on the lack of data, and on the data that are needed, rather than the actual purpose. Is it to reveal how many children are suffering and where (and is that even possible)? Or is it to prevent the suffering the first place? Is it to protect those at risk or to prevent the risk? As might be expected, the evidence emerging from the Global Study indicates that, to make a difference, data must fulfil a number of roles: to pinpoint the scale of the problem, to identify current victims and those at risk, and to detail the circumstances that pose a threat to children in relation to SECTT. The overall aim: to arm

policy-makers with the information they need to make sound policy decisions that will not only address the immediate problems and protect today's victims, but also prevent the exploitation of children in the future.

Third, *does action have to wait for good data?* One argument put forward during the Global Study process was that we know this problem exists and we don't need to wait to for better data before we take action, even though data is always useful. The findings from the Global Study confirm that action is needed immediately – today if possible – and cannot wait for the best possible data. However, a broader view is needed of what constitutes 'the best possible data' for the purpose. While it is clear that the sexual exploitation of children needs to be monitored more closely via large-scale and traditional survey mechanisms, such as Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and Demographic and Health Surveys, other approaches are needed to generate up-to-the-minute data for specific locations at key moments, such

as locations that are embarking on new tourism and travel development, and to monitor trends over time. These could include rapid assessments and follow-up visits by fieldworkers.

Fourth, *do we actually need quantitative data at all?* Or should we focus on the qualitative evidence that shows the everyday reality of SECTT? The Global Study itself confirms that both types of information are needed and has relied on a mixed methodology approach that combines quantitative and qualitative evidence. It reinforces the value of good-quality quantitative data, which are critical for the planning and resourcing of effective policy and programmatic responses. It also stresses the need for qualitative evidence, particularly where there is an absence of accurate, timely and disaggregated quantitative data. Qualitative evidence – particularly on the experiences and viewpoints of victims and survivors – is crucial for a better understanding of the problem and its drivers.

Finally, *how do we ensure that data collection does not put child victims at even greater risk?* A contribution to the Global Study from the International Justice Mission shows how trained data collectors can systematically observe, quantify and verify that a victim is a child without alerting potential perpetrators or causing further harm by combining traditional sampling methodologies with undercover data collection to minimise the risks

(Box 8 - Measuring prevalence to guide programming: The International Justice Mission). The work by IJM confirms that it is possible to gauge the scale of the problem – particularly at the local level – and to monitor changes over time.⁵⁷⁰

Chapter 6 of this report sets out a full research agenda for SECTT. It stresses the need for data on policies and finance, on links between industry and law enforcement, on the vulnerabilities of children (including, but not limited to, SECTT victims), on the many type of offenders and on the need for speed. It also calls for strong evidence on what works in the fight against SECTT.

The credibility of anti-SECTT initiatives hangs on such evidence: on their impact, on the compliance of stakeholders, on their transparency. Independent evidence is crucial, as self-evaluation may not be robust enough (or have the resources) to provide the reliable monitoring that is needed. Clearly, any serious attempt to tackle SECTT must be backed by investment in good data and rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

This report has, so far, focused on the serious challenges in the fight against SECTT. The next chapter moves us forward to examine – for the first time – proven responses to this crime, reinforcing the need for solid evidence on initiatives that make a real difference to child victims.

Box 8: Measuring prevalence to guide programming: The International Justice Mission

The International Justice Mission has combined undercover data collection with 'snowball sampling' to gauge the scale of child sex trafficking. In 2006, IJM worked with Crime & Justice Analysts, a group of US researchers, criminologists and law enforcement officials, to develop a way to measure the prevalence of child sex trafficking in Metro Cebu, the Philippines. Intermediaries such as taxi drivers, hotel staff and local residents were asked to direct data collectors to locations where trafficked minors could be found, including brothels, bars, hotels and particular streets. After collecting data at these locations, the Crime & Justice Analysts' team collected data at all other commercial sex locations identified in the same area. The team measured the prevalence of child sex trafficking in 2006, 2008 and 2010. They concluded that the prevalence of child sex trafficking fell from 6.6% in 2006 to 1.5% in 2010, meaning that almost 7 in every 100 commercial sex workers identified in 2006 were children, falling to less than 2 in every 100 by 2010.

IJM also uses time-space sampling (TSS), which covers areas where members of the target population congregate. One benefit of TSS is that it approximates probability sampling through the random selection of mapped locations as a proxy for the random selection of members of the target population. This allows inferences to be made about the population through the use of a randomised sampling.⁵⁷¹ IJM has used TSS to measure the prevalence of child sex trafficking in Cambodia, the Philippines and Dominican Republic. There are two phases: the preparation of a list of locations where commercial sex workers can be found, and the random selection of locations to be visited. The sample size is calculated to yield a statistically significant sample, with a 5% margin of error.

IJM used this methodology to measure the prevalence of child sex trafficking in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville, Cambodia in 2012. Data collectors visited 232 locations randomly selected from a list of almost 1,000 in the three cities. Based on the data collected, the study team estimated that the prevalence of child sex trafficking in the three cities was 8.16%. IJM repeated the study in the same cities in early 2015 and the findings will be available shortly.

IJM concludes that while these studies have been challenging and resource-intensive, the resulting data have given their anti-child sex trafficking strategies focus and clarity by replacing myths and opinions with hard data. For example, a 2012 prevalence study by IJM in Angeles City, the Philippines, found that the prevalence of child sex trafficking in locations used by local Filipino sex customers was twice as high as the prevalence in locations used by foreigners. Similarly, a 2014 prevalence study in Dominican Republic indicated a prevalence of 5.8% in establishments such as bars and nightclubs, but almost 25% in parks, beaches and street areas.

The data have helped IJM channel activities to the areas of greatest need, leading directly to the rescue of dozens of sex trafficking victims by local law enforcement officials. It has helped IJM and its partners to measure and evaluate the impact of past anti-trafficking efforts and guide future initiatives.

Source: IJM (2015) "MONITORING & EVALUATION: How to Measure Child Sex Trafficking Prevalence." Washington D.C.: International Justice Mission. Expert Paper submitted to the Global Study. Washington, D.C.: International Justice Mission.



CHAPTER 5

OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES TO PREVENT SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN TRAVEL AND TOURISM



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“There are many examples of companies and individuals in the travel and tourism sectors taking a stand against this crime.

A strong focus on prevention could be a game changer for these sectors, positioning them as key players in the solution, rather than being seen as fuelling the problem.”

*Carol Bellamy,
Chair of the UNWTO World Tourism
Network on Child Protection*

INTRODUCTION

Recognition that children were being sexually exploited by tourists and efforts to formulate an effective response stem back to the late 1980s and early 1990s when the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism, a faith-based organisation in Thailand, conducted research in Asia and found a high level of demand by foreign tourists for children in prostitution.⁵⁷² This sparked the mobilisation of several Asian-based NGOs, academics and others to undertake an advocacy campaign, ‘*End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism*’ (ECPAT), which later became the NGO ECPAT International.

In 1993 ECPAT hosted the first international consultation on child sexual exploitation in Germany, with participation by European NGOs and international organisations, including INTERPOL, the World Tourism Organization⁵⁷³ (WTO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). As a result of this consultation and subsequent reports and advocacy during the early 1990s, awareness grew within the global travel and tourism sector. In 1995 the WTO adopted a “Statement on the Prevention of Organised Sex Tourism”, pointing out that child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism violates Article 34 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This helped to place the issue on the agenda of the tourism sector, while governments were urged by the WTO General Assembly to establish and enforce legal and administrative

measures to prevent and combat what was then known as ‘child sex tourism’.

The following year, the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children was hosted by the Government of Sweden, in collaboration with ECPAT, UNICEF and the NGO Group for the Rights of the Child. The outcome document – the Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action – called upon governments, societies and national, regional and international organisations to urgently take action to protect children from sexual exploitation. It specifically called for the mobilisation of the business sector – including the tourism industry – against the use of its networks and establishments for the sexual exploitation of children. Subsequent World Congresses also stressed that SECTT is a phenomenon of global dimensions that demands a global response by all concerned actors, including the travel and tourism industry.

As a result of these efforts, over the past 20 years governments, civil society actors, the private sector, international organisations and UN agencies have increasingly acknowledged the problem and taken action to address it. Drawing on material produced for the Global Study and other available research, this chapter provides an overview of the many efforts to respond to SECTT. The review of available material, however, revealed several shortcomings: (i) information tends to be scattered; few reports offer a comprehensive view of the response to child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism; (ii) available information differs sharply by region; information is especially scarce for Eastern Europe, the Middle East/ North Africa and the Pacific (except for Australia and New Zealand); (iii) little effort has been devoted to measuring the impact of policies and programmes, and few interventions have been evaluated.⁵⁷⁴ However, in recent years the importance of establishing baselines and monitoring and evaluating programmes to track progress has been increasingly recognised, and more project evaluations are now becoming available.

INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

A number of international human rights standards and political commitments have been adopted over the past decades to protect children from sexual exploitation, including in the context of travel and tourism. This includes international and regional human rights treaties and political commitments as well as policies and commitments by the global travel and tourism sector. These standards and commitments guide action that governments, civil society and the private sector are taking to address SECTT, and thus establish an important framework for action for all stakeholders.

International human rights standards

Together, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) and its OPSC,⁵⁷⁵ provide a solid legal framework for protecting children against all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation, including in the context of travel and tourism.

Article 34 of the CRC calls upon state parties to adopt “all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- (a) *The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;*
- (b) *The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;*
- (c) *The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.*⁵⁷⁶

The OPSC⁵⁷⁷ further refines the protections offered under the CRC and provides detailed definitions of terminology related to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. As mentioned in Chapter 3 it requires state parties to criminalise these child rights violations as offences and to provide adequate support to child victims for their physical and psychological recovery, social reintegration and repatriation.

In Article 4, the OPSC introduces the principle of extraterritoriality, extending the jurisdiction over any offence under Article 3 committed abroad by a state’s citizen. This allows for the prosecution of alleged offenders – in their country of nationality under national law – for offences committed abroad. This is critical for bringing travelling offenders to justice in cases of sexual exploitation of children, especially when the offender has fled the jurisdiction where the crime occurred.

Article 5 also makes it possible for the Protocol to serve as a legal basis for extradition between countries that have signed the OPSC, but not entered into cooperation agreements.

Articles 6 and 10 of the OPSC call for cooperation among state parties to prevent and address crimes related to sexual exploitation of children, including on investigations and criminal or extradition proceedings. They recognise the need to involve multiple actors to prevent and address SECTT crimes, and call for international cooperation to address the root causes that contribute to children’s vulnerability to these forms of sexual exploitation.

Other important international standards relevant to protecting children from SECTT include ILO Convention No. 182, concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999), and the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

Global political commitments

Parallel to the adoption of international and regional human rights treaties, governments, with the involvement of civil society and the private sector, have taken on several global political commitments applicable to protecting children from SECTT.

Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

Following its 1995 “Statement on the Prevention of Organised Sex Tourism” the WTO (now UNWTO) in 1999 adopted the “Global Code of Ethics for Tourism” (ratified at the time by 139 states, and in 2001 adopted by the United Nations). The Global Code provided a frame of reference for sustainable and responsible tourism, with a set of 10 principles designed to guide key players in tourism development, including governments, the travel industry, communities and tourists, with the aim of maximising the sector’s benefits while minimising its potentially negative impact on the environment, cultural heritage and societies across the globe.

Since that time the UNWTO has promoted actions to ensure that the services, facilities and infrastructure of the travel and tourism sector are not used for the purpose of sexual exploitation of children. It has launched various initiatives to this effect through the World Tourism Network on Child Protection,⁵⁷⁸ including sharing existing local campaigns to raise awareness of the problem in tourism networks. In 2008, the WTO “*Don’t Let Child Abuse Travel*” campaign was launched in collaboration with various partners including ECPAT International, ILO and UNICEF and a series of tourism stakeholders from different sectors, stressing that it is unacceptable for the industry and the travelling public to tolerate any form of sexual exploitation of children.⁵⁷⁹

World Congresses against Sexual Exploitation of Children

The First World Congress helped to focus global attention on child sexual exploitation and place the issue on public agendas. At the Congress, 122 countries adopted the ‘Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action’, and committed to adopting national plans of action to protect children from sexual exploitation.⁵⁸⁰

The Stockholm Declaration outlines the responsibilities of governments, civil society, the private sector and international organisations and UN agencies to address sexual exploitation of children. It specifically calls for the mobilisation of private businesses, including the tourism industry, against the use of its networks and establishments for the sexual exploitation of children.⁵⁸¹

At two subsequent World Congresses held in Yokohama and Rio de Janeiro – which took stock of new developments and trends, progress made, lessons learned and challenges ahead – governments recommitted to the Stockholm Agenda through the Yokohama Global Commitment (2001) and the Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents (2008).⁵⁸²

At both of these Congresses, SECTT was recognised as a phenomenon of global dimensions, requiring a global response by all concerned actors. The importance of involving the travel and tourism sector in prevention and response was explicitly recognised.

The Rio de Janeiro Declaration welcomed increased support by companies operating in tourism and travel to address this issue by signing the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (described further below). At the same time, it expressed concern at the continuing high level of sexual exploitation of children, in part due to increased global travel. Those gathered in Rio de Janeiro called upon all stakeholders to take a series of steps to prevent and respond to SECTT, several of which demanded action by the tourism industry.⁵⁸³

The two World Congresses were preceded by consultations in all regions, where representatives of governments, civil society, children and young people, international non-governmental organisations, UN and other multilateral agencies shared experiences and assessed progress in efforts to prevent SECTT. These consultations led to greater understanding and momentum at the regional level, and to the adoption of regional action plans aimed at addressing the sexual exploitation of children in all contexts, including travel and tourism.⁵⁸⁴

UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

Governments are aware that the private sector has enormous power to improve children’s lives through the way it operates facilities, develops and markets products, provides services and exerts influence on economic and social development. At the same time, the private sector has the power to disregard or even imperil the interests of children. In relation to private sector responsibilities, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has evolved as a common denominator for all stakeholders. Several governments have undertaken initiatives to make sure that human rights and children’s rights are a core element of corporate social responsibility (CSR).⁵⁸⁵

With the Universal Declaration on Human Rights as a framework, in 2011 the United Nations Human Rights Council unanimously adopted the “United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights” (UNGPs).⁵⁸⁶ The UNGPs have become widely regarded by governments and businesses as the international framework of standards on the responsibility of business to take pro-active actions to ensure their policies and activities do not infringe on human rights. The UNGPs encompass three main pillars:⁵⁸⁷

- Governments’ duty to *protect* human rights
- Corporate responsibility to *respect* human rights
- Access to *remedy* for victims of business-related abuses.

The UNGPs hold that companies have the power to influence virtually all internationally recognised rights. Therefore, both governments and the private sector are responsible for upholding and protecting human rights. With respect to the second pillar, the Principles declare that businesses must act with due diligence to avoid infringing on the rights of others and to address negative impacts for which they are responsible, through measures such as: formally assessing actual and potential human rights impacts, public commitments to respect rights and to integrate human rights principles across relevant internal functions and processes, ensuring that human rights are respected throughout the value chain and that violations can be effectively prevented.

The UNGPs could play an important role in tourism destinations where the vulnerability of children is related to weak governance. Principle 23 requires that – particularly in areas where a state only poorly protects human rights, or even violates them – businesses must not benefit by reducing standards, but rather seek ways to comply with international standards on human rights. To meet their responsibility to respect human rights, businesses should consult independent experts from civil society and human rights organisations.

The UNGP build on efforts of the UN Global Compact, an initiative which invites companies to align their strategies and operations with universal principles of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption and take actions that advance societal goals.⁵⁸⁸ When companies join this initiative, they are expected to change their business operations and public communications in accordance with 10 principles of universal sustainability.

Children's Rights and Business Principles

The Children's Rights and Business Principles⁵⁸⁹ (CRBP) emerged in 2013 through a process led by UNICEF, the UN Global Compact and Save the Children. They provide a spotlight on the human rights of children as a supplement to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The initiative builds on existing standards for business (such as the UNGPs) and calls on the private sector to take action to protect and support children's rights throughout all business activities and relationships.

The first principle of the CRBP states that all businesses should meet their responsibility to respect and support the human rights of children. It outlines a management process that businesses can follow to help translate this responsibility into practice, and calls on businesses not only to avoid infringing on children's rights, but also to do good for children, advancing their rights through philanthropy, investment and advocacy.

The CRBPs offer an additional framework for addressing the responsibilities of the tourism industry when the development of tourism facilities puts children at risk.

Initiatives by the travel and tourism industry

With the advent of these UN principles and guidelines – and the many changes taking place within the industry, especially due to new forms of travel and Internet-based travel arrangements – travel and tourism businesses have shifted from a 'campaign' approach, to one that addresses core business and due diligence actions. Major companies appear to be moving away from traditional CSR initiatives, centred on corporate philanthropy, towards an approach more focused on incorporating CSR into their core business.

Policy statements

Several private sector umbrella organisations representing the international tourism industry have issued policy documents condemning SECTT and promoting awareness-raising, distribution of information, capacity building of staff in relation to SECTT and the establishment of codes of conducts.

In the early 1990s private travel and tourism entities began to take action against the sexual exploitation of children, largely in response to reports of SECTT in Asia.⁵⁹⁰ In 1994

the Universal Federation of Travel Agents' Associations (UFTAA) adopted 'The Child and Travel Agents' Charter', becoming the first tourism industry association to address the issue.⁵⁹¹ The Charter required members to assist organisations that provide recovery services to victims of sexual exploitation. Other policy documents and codes of conducts of tourism industry organisations and unions affiliated with the travel and tourism industry were also adopted following the UFTAA and UNWTO statements and the First World Congress, including:

- Code of Conduct against the Sexual Exploitation of Children of the International Federation of Tour Operators
- Resolution against the sexual exploitation of children of the International Hotel and Restaurants Association
- Final Resolution condemning commercial sexual exploitation of children of the International Air Transport Association
- Resolution against Sex Tourism of the International Federation of Women's Travel Organisations
- Resolution to combat Child Sex Tourism of the Federation of International Youth Travel Organisations
- Declaration against Child Sex Tourism of the Group of National Tour Operators' Associations within the European Union (ECTAA); in which groups committed themselves to excluding "without delay" any member proven to be engaged in sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism
- Declaration against the Sexual Exploitation of Children of the Confederation of the National Associations of Hotels, Restaurants, Cafés and Similar Establishments of the European Union and the European Economic Area
- Resolution on Prostitution Tourism and Standard Agreement of the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association.⁵⁹²

Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism

The best known industry-driven initiative to address SECTT is *The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism*, also known as "The Code" (theCode.org).

The Code was established by ECPAT Sweden in collaboration with Scandinavian tourism companies and the WTO, following the Stockholm World Congress. Funded by the European Union, and later by UNICEF and the Swiss Government, the Code became operational in 1998, and was later adopted by the ECPAT International network. Since 2004, the Code has been operating as an independent organisation, currently hosted by ECPAT International in Bangkok. Between 2006 and 2011, the Code introduced a

number of changes regarding membership fees and reporting, and is currently reviewing its business strategy. The Board of Directors consists of a majority of representatives from the tourism industry (five representatives of each sector within the tourism industry) and a minority of NGO representatives.⁵⁹³ UNICEF and UNWTO serve as advisory members.⁵⁹⁴

The Code was one of the first initiatives to define the role and obligations of tourism companies regarding child protection. It invites membership from any type of tourism businesses, formal or informal, as long as they commit to six criteria:

1. Establish a policy and procedures against sexual exploitation of children
2. Train employees in children's rights, prevention of sexual exploitation and reporting suspected cases
3. Include a clause in contracts throughout the value chain repudiating and stating a zero-tolerance policy of sexual exploitation of children
4. Provide relevant information to travellers
5. Support, collaborate and engage with stakeholders to prevent sexual exploitation of children
6. Report annually on Code implementation.

The Code has had success in raising awareness of SECTT globally, despite limited human and financial resources.⁵⁹⁵ The Code has been awarded many prizes for its innovative approach to CSR and children's rights, including the Ashoka Changemakers Ending Global Slavery Award, WTTC Tourism for Tomorrow Award, The Ethical Corporation Award, the BIRD Express Travel Award, PATA Gold Award, Travel and Leisure Magazine's Human Rights Leadership Award and the SKAL Sustainable Development in Tourism Award.⁵⁹⁶ One of the factors behind its success is that the six Code criteria help to make it straightforward, and thus easy to understand and implement.⁵⁹⁷

While the Code has increased awareness of SECTT within the international travel and tourism sector, ultimately the value of its work can only be assessed at the national level in tourism destinations where the sexual exploitation of children takes place.

REGIONAL POLITICAL STANDARDS AND COMMITMENTS

At the regional level political bodies and organisations have adopted human rights treaties relevant to protecting children from sexual exploitation, although most do not specifically address this offense in the context of travel and tourism. These initiatives include:

- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990)

- Inter-American Convention on International Traffic in Minors (1994)
- Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (1994)
- Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime (2001)
- SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution (2002)
- SAARC Convention on Regional Agreements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia (2002)
- League of Arab States' Arab Charter on Human Rights (2004)
- Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005)
- CoE Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007), also known as the Lanzarote Convention
- ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Person, Especially Women and Children (2015).

Most of these initiatives were described in Chapter 2 on the regional trends, thus only the main standards will be described here.

Lanzarote Convention

Of the regional treaties, the Lanzarote Convention⁵⁹⁸ constitutes the most comprehensive legal tool for protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation. It is the first international human rights treaty to provide a definition of sexual abuse and to introduce provisions to protect children from "grooming" by sexual offenders. The Convention is open for ratification by the 47 CoE member states as well as other, non-member countries, thus setting standards for regions outside Europe and providing an important framework for international action.

The Lanzarote Convention addresses SECTT from different perspectives, as part of an overall strategy to prevent and respond to sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

Article 9 requires countries to encourage the private sector – in particular the information and communication technology, tourism and travel and banking and financial industries – as well as civil society to participate in the elaboration and implementation of policies to prevent sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and to implement internal norms through self-regulation or co-regulation.

Article 25 introduces a specific provision on *jurisdiction*, making it possible to prosecute perpetrators who commit sexual offences against children in countries where such conduct is not criminalised.

A major advance is that for the most serious offences in the Convention, the principle of *double criminality*⁵⁹⁹ no longer applies. This means that perpetrators can be

prosecuted once they return to their country of nationality for offences contained in the Convention that they committed abroad, even though the offence was not prohibited in both the perpetrator's country of origin and in the country where the offence was committed.

Article 26 addresses *corporate liability*, with the intention that commercial companies, associations and similar legal entities be liable for criminal actions performed on their behalf by anyone in a leadership position, such as a director. It also covers liability in cases where someone in a leadership position fails to supervise or check on an employee or agent of the company, enabling the latter to commit offences of sexual exploitation or abuse. The corporation's liability may be criminal, civil or administrative, as long as the sanction or measure is "effective, proportionate and dissuasive", and may also include monetary sanctions. Importantly, it does not exclude individual liability (Article 27).⁶⁰⁰

Lastly, Article 38 addresses the importance of international cooperation, stressing that state parties are obligated to cooperate widely to prevent and combat sexual abuse and exploitation of children (including in investigations and procedures tied to criminal offences established in the Convention), as well as to protect and provide assistance to victims.

As outlined in Chapter 2 the CoE followed up in 2013 with a *Resolution against Sex Tourism* that provides clear guidance to member states on how to stem and counteract child sexual abuse and exploitation by travelling sex offenders.

Other regional commitments

Regional political bodies and organisations in Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, have also made political commitments aimed at mobilising action in member countries to protect children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, as described below.

Western Europe has long been recognised as a major source of travelling sex offenders, and since the 1990s significant efforts have been made by the European Union (EU) to address child sexual exploitation, including in the context of travel and tourism. Following 1996 EU Commission statement on this topic, '*Communication from the Commission on Combating Child Sex Tourism*', the European Commission, European Parliament and European Council have all adopted communications, resolutions, framework decisions and international policy documents intended to urge member governments and the tourism industry to take concrete action to protect children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism.⁶⁰¹

These documents urge countries to: enact and enforce legislation to punish offenders for crimes committed against children abroad; strengthen cross-border judicial cooperation; and take preventative measures, in

collaboration with national tourism authorities such as coordinated public information and awareness-raising campaigns, staff training, self-regulatory mechanisms and codes of conducts. Member states are also urged to take criminal and administrative measures (withdrawal of license, fines etc.) against travel agencies and tour operators to prevent the promotion of travel for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

In 2011 the EU adopted a 'Directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography', which urges member states to prevent and prohibit the dissemination of materials advertising the opportunity to commit any of the offences listed under the Directive, as well as the organisation of travel arrangements with the purpose of committing any offences referred to in the Directive. Member states are also urged to consider reinforcing codes of conduct and self-regulatory mechanisms in the tourism industry, and establishing explicit policies to tackle this problem. In 2011, the EU also endorsed the UNGPs on Business and Human Rights in its corporate social responsibility strategy, and committed to supporting their implementation through the development of country action plans.⁶⁰²

Latin America: As outlined in Chapter 2 regional political institutions and policy-making bodies in the Americas have adopted a series of political commitments to protect children from sexual exploitation, including in travel and tourism. For example, the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN), a specialised technical agency of the Organisation of American States (OAS),⁶⁰³ developed a regional strategy to address sexual exploitation and established the ANNAObserve website (www.annaobserve.org), offering a platform for the exchange of good practices in the region.

Over the past decade, tourism authorities in Central and South America were also mobilised to address this issue.

In 2004 a *Regional Declaration on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation in Tourism in Central America and the Dominican Republic* was adopted by ministers of tourism from six Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama) and the Dominican Republic and Federation of Chambers of Tourism of Central America (FEDECATUR), at a regional meeting convened in El Salvador by the Central America Integration System, FEDECATUR and UNICEF.⁶⁰⁴ The Declaration commits actors to developing a regional action plan to prevent sexual exploitation of children in the travel and tourism sector. This resulted in two consecutive regional plans of action, agreed in 2005-2006 and 2007-2008, with corresponding national road maps in the six countries concerned. (Implementation of regional and country road maps is addressed below.)

The first meeting of South American tourism ministers and high-level authorities, held in 2005, formed the

Regional Task Force of the Americas (GARA) to develop a regional action plan and corresponding national road maps. The countries meet annually to follow up on actions defined in the regional plan. Participating countries are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Surinam, Uruguay and Venezuela. Mexico, Cuba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica; the UNWTO and UNICEF participate as observers.⁶⁰⁵ The Andean Community of Tourism Authorities (comprising Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) also developed activities to prevent sexual exploitation of children, including in the context of travel and tourism, in coordination with GARA.

Asia is another region with a long-standing commitment to addressing SECTT, reaching back to the 1990s when the high level of demand by foreign tourists for children in prostitution was first recognised. ASEAN has taken action to prevent sexual exploitation of children in tourism through various regional efforts. In 2002, member states (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) adopted the ASEAN Tourism Agreement, reaffirming their adherence to the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. In 2004 the ASEAN regional task force to prevent child sex tourism, established with the support of the Australian Government and the NGO Child Wise, developed a regional strategy and action plan to improve coordination among member states in preventing SECTT. The Task Force meets annually; one of its achievements was a joint ASEAN Regional Education Campaign launched in 2005 and implemented in all 10 countries.⁶⁰⁶ To further strengthen the sustainability of responses ASEAN adopted a five-year plan, the South East Asian Plan, for preventing the sexual exploitation of children in tourism destinations (2009-2013), which also involved the private sector.

Finally, in 2005 SAARC established 'South Asian Initiative to Prevent Violence against Children' (SAIEVAC), one priority of which is to address sexual abuse and exploitation. As noted in Chapter 2, the regional work plan for 2010-2015 singles out SECTT as a pervasive violation of children's rights in South Asia.⁶⁰⁷

NATIONAL RESPONSES TO SECTT PREVENTION

The adoption of international human rights treaties, political commitments and pledges by the travel and tourism sector has inspired and mobilised stakeholders in individual countries to take action, resulting in combined government/ private sector/civil society approaches. Initiatives were developed to deal with the responsibilities of each sector separately, but many are cross-sectoral, with multi-stakeholder involvement.

Experience from these efforts has shown that many initiatives flourish when different stakeholders participate,

but that it is essential to have clarity about who is ultimately responsible for obtaining results and impact, as well as for sustainability and continuity (especially in relation to financing).⁶⁰⁸

Legislative measures

With the near universal adoption of the CRC and the OPSC and the adoption of regional human rights treaties, significant progress has been made over the past two decades in achieving universal legal protections for children against sexual abuse and exploitation. As a result, an increasing number of countries are aligning their national laws with international human rights standards, criminalising all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse of children and ensuring that child victims receive appropriate support services. In 2013, 96% of government responses to the global survey on violence against children by the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, indicated that sexual exploitation of children, including in prostitution, is prohibited in their country.⁶⁰⁹

More and more countries are also passing laws to protect children from new and evolving forms of sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by advances in information and communication technologies. For example South Korea, Philippines, Singapore and New Zealand have legislation protecting children from grooming. Countries' adoption of extraterritorial jurisdiction is another important step in protecting children from SECTT, since it allows for prosecution of offenders under national laws in their home country. The 172 state parties to the OPSC have agreed to this principle, and many have adopted separate extraterritorial legislation.

Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and most countries in Europe and Latin America have extraterritorial legislation. In other regions, such as Middle East and North Africa, South Asia and the Pacific Island nations, extraterritorial legislation appears to be limited or largely absent.⁶¹⁰ An obstacle in many countries is that the victim, or the country of origin, are required to file a complaint on the crime before extraterritorial jurisdiction can be applied. Another obstacle is the double criminality requirement for offences concerning child sexual exploitation, which, as described earlier, means that the offence must be prohibited both in the perpetrator's country of origin and in the country where the offence was committed. With the Lanzarote Convention this obstacle has now been removed, constituting a positive step for countries that ratified that Convention.

A number of countries regulate or restrict the movements of convicted sex offenders, with the aim of protecting children from sexual exploitation in destination countries. Such efforts mainly target preferential offenders, who are more likely to be known to authorities. In South Korea,

the Passport Act allows the restriction or confiscation of passports of nationals who have committed offences abroad.⁶¹¹ This practice is also implemented in Australia, which requires seven days' notification for foreign travel by convicted sex offenders.⁶¹² In the UK, the Sexual Harm Prevention Orders and Sexual Risk Orders, which came into force in 2014, regulate the restriction of movement for convicted sex offenders. The Dutch Criminal Code allows for restrictions on the movement of convicted child sex offenders with a high risk of recidivism (determined on a case-by-case basis) and the Dutch Passport Act makes it possible to refuse a passport to a person convicted for child sexual exploitation within the previous 10 years, or to cancel his or her existing passport.⁶¹³

An increasing number of countries have also adopted provisions for holding the travel and tourism sector, including corporations, accountable for the protection of children against SECTT.⁶¹⁴ For example, provisions of Australia's Criminal Code on sexual offences against children committed outside the country are also applicable to companies. Australia's legislation also criminalises activities that promote or advertise sexual exploitation in travel and tourism.⁶¹⁵ In New Zealand, travel arrangements or transportation related to sex tours involving children is criminalised. This includes the purchase or reservation of tickets for travelling outside the country or accommodation in a country outside New Zealand.⁶¹⁶

In Europe, the Lanzarote Convention and EU Directive 2011/92 make corporations subject to liability when involved in the crime directly or due to lack of supervision, including operational sanctions for the companies and extraterritorial measures to punish offenses committed abroad by a company or for its benefit.⁶¹⁷ Malta criminalises the promotion of child sexual exploitation in the travel and tourism industry, and calls for two-to-five years of imprisonment for those convicted of publicising or organising travel linked to child sexual exploitation. In Italy, anyone who organises or promotes travel abroad that promotes child sexual exploitation, or encourages such activity, is liable to imprisonment and a fine under national criminal laws. The Criminal Code also provides penalties for those who promote tourist initiatives aimed at child sexual exploitation, with sanctions such as confiscation of goods, closure of business and revocation of business permits, as well as a perpetual ban from work in any establishment mainly attended by minors. Legislation even makes it mandatory for tour operators to repudiate sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism in their promotional materials, and for tour operators organising group or individual travel outside the country to insert a warning in printed materials and advertising, itineraries and other travel documents that it is a crime punished by law, even if committed abroad.⁶¹⁸

In the UK, legislation allows the police to require tourism establishments to provide information about guests when there is reasonable suspicion that child sexual exploitation is taking place. In 2015, new legislation was passed mandating all companies (above a defined turnover) to publish an annual statement about measures taken to ensure that no human trafficking is occurring in their business and supply chains, or to prepare a statement that the organisation has taken no such steps.⁶¹⁹ In the USA, many individual states have laws against promoting prostitution that can be used to prosecute sex tour operators.⁶²⁰

India does not have specific national legislation addressing SECTT, but the 'Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012' includes provisions for mandatory reporting by any person who learns of a suspected case of child abuse or child sexual exploitation, including personnel at media, hotel, lodge, hospital, club, studio or photographic facilities.⁶²¹ As noted in Chapter 2 and 3, at the state level the Goa Children Act 2003 and Rule 2004 explicitly address crimes related to tourism and child sexual abuse.

At least nine Latin American countries (Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru) have criminal laws prohibiting sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism.⁶²² In Costa Rica, 2013 legislation punishing the act of depicting the country as a destination for sex tourism was passed, and tour operators are prohibited from promoting or facilitating the sexual exploitation of children. Peru's General Tourism Law of 2009 makes tourism service providers responsible for preventing child sexual exploitation by communicating, disseminating and publishing the law against sexual exploitation. Panamanian law punishes the intent to promote, direct, organise, publicise, invite, facilitate or manage child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism.

Colombia's Penal Code criminalises SECTT and various laws establish liability of the travel and tourism industry supply chain (including airlines, hotels, or other accommodation) and set out administrative punishments such as fines and suspension of national tourism licenses. The law also makes it compulsory for companies to sign a Code of Conduct in order to receive their operating licenses.

Despite advances such as these, major challenges remain in providing children with adequate legal protection against SECTT. In at least one-third of all countries worldwide, legal provisions for protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation are inadequate. Either they fail to protect children from all

forms of sexual exploitation or they do not adequately protect all children up to age 18, treat child victims as offenders or fail to provide adequate protections for boys.⁶²³ In addition, many countries do not have extraterritorial laws or face obstacles in their application. Many countries also lack laws on corporate liability.

Law enforcement

As noted in Chapter 3, enforcing laws governing SECTT continues to pose a major challenge. Some progress toward putting in place mechanisms and capacity to enforce legislation and prosecute child sex offenders has nonetheless been made.

Extraterritorial legislation is an important mechanism to bring offenders to justice in cases of child sexual exploitation in the context of travel and tourism (see Chapter 3). However the effective use of extra territorial legislation varies between countries. While the USA convicted more than 200 child sex offenders who committed crimes overseas between 2003-2013, Canada only had seven successful prosecutions by 2015.⁶²⁴

A number of countries have regulations that restrict movement for convicted or charged sex offenders, with the aim of protecting children in destination countries. In the USA, under “Operation Angel Watch” individuals travelling to foreign countries who have been convicted of a sexual crime against children are registered and can be denied the entry to a high-risk country or be subjected to closer scrutiny in the country at the border. However the successful implementation of this strategy depends on the cooperation between authorities in the USA and authorities in the country of destination of the offender.⁶²⁵

As detailed in Chapter 3, in Australia both convicted child sex offenders and those charged with offenses, but not yet convicted, are registered in the National Child Offense System. A person registered in the system cannot travel without informing the authorities about the intended plans, and the person’s passport can be cancelled upon suspicion that the person will cause harm overseas.⁶²⁶ To implement this strategy the Australian Federal Police has liaison officers in key regional locations, who work with local authorities, NGOs, partners and the tourism sector to exchange relevant information.⁶²⁷

Europol, as part of the project ‘Halting European Abusing Victims in Every Nation’ Project (HAVEN), has established a European travel notification system to deter travelling sex offenders originating from EU countries from committing offenses inside or outside Europe. In 2013, Operation RAVEN (Recording Europeans Abusing Victims in Every Nation) was launched, focusing on gathering intelligence on persons with a sexual interest in children

in the EU. In 2012, the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS) was also established to connect criminal records databases and exchange information promptly and uniformly on convictions by EU countries by electronic means.⁶²⁸ INTERPOL also issues “green notices” to provide warnings and intelligence about persons who have committed child sexual abuse in the past and are likely to reoffend.⁶²⁹

Efforts have also been made to improve the capacity of law enforcement agencies to effectively investigate crimes, and to enhance cooperation among law enforcement agencies in the countries concerned. In the UK the national police Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre has developed an International Child Protection Network, which supports frontline child protection partners in overseas jurisdictions. It includes advisory panels, which are stakeholder groups that collaborate to enhance intelligence flows and support the strategic and tactical work among countries to combat SECTT. Advisory panels are established in Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Spain, Thailand, Ukraine and Vietnam.⁶³⁰

In Asia, Thai authorities collaborate with the New Zealand police department to support the work of a liaison officer to improve the flow of information regarding offenders from New Zealand. Australia, together with UNODC and INTERPOL, has supported capacity building and cooperation among law enforcement in relation to SECTT.⁶³¹ In 2013, Japan’s National Police Agency hosted the 12th Conference of Investigators on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Southeast Asia to exchange information between Japanese police and their counterparts in Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines and Indonesia – countries that receive highest numbers of Japanese child sex offenders.⁶³²

In Latin American and other destination countries, UNICEF, ILO-IPEC, IOM, ICMEC and other international organisations have supported capacity building of law enforcement and the justice sector on the effective investigation and prosecution of SECTT offenses, without re-victimising the child in the process.

Cooperation was also established at the judiciary level through Eurojust, the EU Judicial Cooperation Unit, which was established in 2002 to provide judicial cooperation among countries in different crimes, including child trafficking, child abuse on the internet and sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism. In 2007 a “Contact Point for Child Protection Issues” was established to work closely with national law enforcement agencies, as well as with Europol, Interpol and other partners, in child protection.⁶³³

While progress has been made in criminalising all forms of sexual exploitation of children, and establishing mechanisms and capacity of law enforcement authorities and the justice sector to prosecute crimes related to SECTT, challenges remain. Most of the examples provided are from high-income countries, and capacity still remain weak in many low- and middle-income countries in relation to investigation and prosecution of crimes of sexual exploitation of children. Further investment is required to bring offenders to justice and end impunity. Moreover most efforts seem to focus on apprehending preferential sex offenders, with less focus on situational offenders, although many of the children exploited by travellers and tourists are also victimised by situational offenders.

National Plans of Action

Countries that signed on to the Stockholm Agenda for Action committed to developing national plans of action (NPAs) to address sexual exploitation of children. The existence of an NPA with strategic and timely goals in line with the country context, and the efforts made to implement the plan, has often been used as a basis for evaluating and assessing the depth of countries' commitment to addressing child sexual exploitation.

Overall, the regions most active in developing action plans are Western Europe, Latin America, East and Southeast Asia and to some extent sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.⁶³⁴ In Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa and the Pacific, fewer countries seem to have developed such plans.⁶³⁵

NPAs differ in relation to content and to the level of involvement of different stakeholders. In Latin America, Europe, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa⁶³⁶ some countries have developed stand-alone action plans specifically addressing sexual exploitation of children. For example, in 2001, Japan adopted such a plan⁶³⁷ and Chile implemented a second plan of action during 2012-2014. While some of these plans specifically address the role of travel and tourism, others do not. For example, in Europe and South Asia, it appears that countries that developed action plans to protect children from sexual exploitation rarely included measures related to travel and tourism.⁶³⁸

However, a few countries have specific plans targeting the travel and tourism sector. Sri Lanka adopted a National Plan on Eradication of Child Sex Tourism in 2006.⁶³⁹ The plan emphasises the need for community awareness and capacity building of stakeholders in the travel and tourism industry such as hoteliers, tour operators, airports, police councils and hotels. However, it appears to insufficiently address child protection and the need for collaboration between government and other stakeholders such as NGOs, civil society and private sector.⁶⁴⁰ In Cambodia, a Strategic Plan (2007-2009) to prevent trafficking in children

and women for labour and sexual exploitation in the tourism industry was developed, but it is unclear if the plan has been implemented.⁶⁴¹ In the Netherlands, an Action Plan against Child Sex Tourism was adopted in 2013. It focuses on prevention, prosecution and cooperation with NGOs and the travel sector, and includes an awareness-raising campaign to warn Dutch nationals that child sexual abuse is a criminal offence and provide information to the general public about how to report suspicious activities. Colombia has a national strategy for the prevention of sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism, which is implemented by the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, in coordination with the Social Welfare Ministry, as part of a broader policy on responsible tourism.⁶⁴²

Many countries in East Asia and South Asia, Latin America, Europe and sub-Saharan Africa have addressed the issue of sexual exploitation of children within the broader context of trafficking in human beings and/or worst forms of child labour,⁶⁴³ some of these plans address SECTT while others do not. In 2009 Indonesia launched a National Action Plan for the Eradication of Human Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation, involving several ministries and the National Police. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy also developed a Tourism Awareness Programme, involving hotels, travel agencies and stakeholders in an awareness-raising campaign for tourists and the tourism industry.⁶⁴⁴

An increasing number of countries in Europe, East and Southeast Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa appear to address the sexual exploitation of children within broader policy frameworks on violence against children, child protection and children's rights – as opposed to through specific plans or policies, as was the case in the past.⁶⁴⁵ In the Philippines, the Framework for Action on sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children was connected to the National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children for 2000-2015. In Costa Rica, the National Plan against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents 2008-2010 was integrated into the national development plan. In Peru, the annual plan of action against commercial sexual exploitation is implemented within the framework of the National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents 2012-2021. The Brazilian Government, NGO community and UN agencies based in the country developed the "Convergence Agenda of Promotion, Protection and Defence of the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Great Events" before mega-sporting events.⁶⁴⁶ In Africa, Angola and Burkina Faso have adopted plans to address violence against children, which also intend to deter child sexual exploitation.⁶⁴⁷

While the integration of measures to address child sexual exploitation into broader child protection and

violence strategies is a welcome move, it is important that specific measures and budget are allocated to prevent and respond to sexual abuse and exploitation in all contexts, including in travel and tourism.

More and more countries are also developing national action plans to implement the UNGPs for Business and Human Rights. In 2011 the EU endorsed the UNGPs in its CSR strategy and committed to supporting their implementation through action plans developed in individual countries. A number of EU countries have done so, including Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK. In the Netherlands, the House of Representatives requested that the Dutch government translate the UNGPs into an action plan, and created an inter-ministerial working group to oversee its development and implementation. The group compared the UNGPs to current national policy and, following broad-based consultations, identified the most important viewpoints and ideas on the action plan. A 'National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights' was finalised in 2013, and the Dutch Government began to make specific arrangements (the so-called IMVO covenants) with a number of economic sectors, especially those where there is a high risk of human rights violations.⁶⁴⁸ A number of countries in other regions have also started the preparations and drafting of such action plans[CS2].⁶⁴⁹ For example in the USA, the Government is developing a *National Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct*.⁶⁵⁰ (see Chapter 2 on regional efforts)

Coordinating stakeholder involvement

To develop NPAs, coordinate action and monitor implementation, some countries have established multi-stakeholder committees, representing an expression of Government commitment to address the issue in a sustainable manner through a formal institutional structure with multiple stakeholders. The committees established normally have representatives from different branches of government/the public sector including justice, social welfare, education, tourism, international trade, transport as well as civil society and the private tourism sector, including tourism associations, as well as from international organisations such as UNICEF, ILO and ECPAT International among others.⁶⁵¹

In Latin America, many of the initiatives to prevent sexual exploitation of children emerged from the work of these committees and most countries have national programmes or projects aiming to prevent SECTT, mainly focused on training and awareness-raising strategies.⁶⁵² In countries where the national tourism body has demonstrated strong commitment to address the issue, and where there is a specific plan to address sexual exploitation of children, initiatives seem to have increased significantly.⁶⁵³ Moreover, in Latin America national chambers of tourism and regional tourism associations have been involved in mobilising individual companies to raise awareness of and adopt national Codes of Conduct.⁶⁵⁴

In South Asia, few mechanisms have been established to directly tackle sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism, but every country has a national action group to coordinate efforts to end violence against women and children. Yet it is unclear to what extent these mechanisms are functioning.⁶⁵⁵ For example, in New Zealand, an NPA known as "Protecting Our Innocence", which addressed SECTT, was finalised in 2001. But subsequent research by the Ministry of Justice and ECPAT Child Alert revealed that the plan was not widely implemented and that inter-agency coordination was minimal among the 15 government agencies and four NGOs involved.⁶⁵⁶

In Europe, while most countries have mechanisms to monitor CRC implementation and/or government agencies dealing with child protection or children's issues, no country appears to have a specific body in charge of coordinating and monitoring policies and initiatives addressing sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism. However, in the Netherlands the Ministry of Security and Justice established a working group in 2013, including stakeholders from the tourist industry, the public prosecutors' office and relevant NGOs to oversee and contribute to the implementation of the national plan of action against child sex tourism. In Austria, a Roundtable on Ethics in Tourism was set up in 2005, bringing together NGOs, the tourism industry and ministry representatives. In Germany, child trafficking and child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism are addressed by a working group involving federal ministries, representatives of the Federal Council, the German Cities Council and NGOs.⁶⁵⁷

While coordination at the national level is critical, similar coordination needs to take place at the local level – in the communities where sexual exploitation of children takes place. There needs to be a clear division of responsibilities among different agencies and stakeholders involved, and between central government agencies and local administrations.

The literature points to a number of challenges in the implementation of action plans and in achieving sustained multi-stakeholder collaboration. One major obstacle is the lack of coherence among different policy frameworks and duplication of efforts. Other challenges include: insufficient allocation of financial resources; limited capacities; unclear division of responsibilities and poor coordination among agencies, including between local administrations and central government agencies; scarce participation by key actors, including civil society, the private sector and organisations working with affected children and adolescents; and a lack of evaluations to assess the impact of steps taken.

National Codes of Conduct

The 1996 Stockholm Declaration called upon both public authorities and the private sector to take action to address

the sexual exploitation of children. As a result, The Code was developed as an innovative (but voluntary) CSR initiative for the tourism industry. Over the years – with growing awareness of The Code – companies in more and more countries have adopted The Code and many have also adopted national versions with similar criteria but with their own monitoring and implementation mechanisms. In Latin America, at least eight countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua) have adopted codes of conduct (at the national or state level), spurred by regional advocacy and mobilisation of the private and public travel and tourism sector and promotion of The Code.

In a number of countries, however, governments did not want to leave implementation of The Code to the private sector. Instead they adopted national versions and implemented them through laws and regulations, often with very similar criteria and formulations, and called upon the industry to comply. In a number of those countries, however, from its origins as a voluntary, industry-driven instrument working throughout the value chain, signing the code has become, to some extent, obligatory. In some countries (see examples below) signing The Code became a necessary requirement for all businesses in need of a license to operate in the tourism sector. Whether or not an obligatory Code is more effective than a voluntary Code depends on a number of factors, such as the cultural context, available resources and the ability of civil society organisations, ministries of tourism and national chambers of tourism to provide capacity-building and monitor implementation, as well as the prevailing culture of stakeholder cooperation.⁶⁵⁸

When ECPAT's representative in the Gambia approached the Gambian Tourism Authority (GTA) in 2003 for cooperation on implementing The Code, the GTA immediately saw the potential for building more responsible and sustainable tourism in a country that was (and is) plagued by sex tourism. Evaluations show that awareness of the problem, both in general and in the tourism industry, is high. However, although children are rarely found in areas known for tourism, it is not uncommon to see Western men with young girls in the surrounding suburbs. One of the underlying problems is that since the Code is state-owned and obligatory for tourism businesses, the private sector relies on the state for its implementation, without assuming its own responsibility.⁶⁵⁹

In Brazil, as a follow-up to the First World Congress in Stockholm, the federal government and some states have implemented codes of conduct. As a result the country has a set of national directives, as well as state-driven obligatory codes (in Pernambuco and Rio Grande do Norte), and even local codes (such as that of Arraial da Cabo in the state of Rio de Janeiro).⁶⁶⁰

In Nicaragua, as a result of companies' non-compliance with the national code of conduct, which initially was voluntary, the National Chamber of Tourism and Ministry of Tourism made adherence to the national code and attendance at awareness-raising sessions obligatory for companies to be registered with the Ministry of Tourism and receive an operating license in the tourism sector.⁶⁶¹

The voluntary "industry-driven" code in Colombia, implemented through Renacer Foundation, has been very successful, partly because it also involves an obligatory "government-driven" code of conduct. Within its policy on responsible tourism, Colombia has a national strategy for preventing SECTT;⁶⁶² within this framework there is a legally binding code of conduct for the tourism industry. It was inspired by The Code but is more elaborate. In compliance with Colombian legislation, hotels have 11 legal obligations,⁶⁶³ most of which coincide with elements of the Code.⁶⁶⁴

However, in an era of liberalisation and deregulation many governments choose policies of incentives, stimulating businesses to take responsibility, rather than regulating them. In areas where criminal law applies, involving violations of human rights and children's rights, this approach is still rather new, but The Code and the UNGPs are showing the way. Monitoring and evaluation of new approaches is urgently needed to assess their results in different country contexts.

In Honduras, the Ministry of Tourism, together with the National Chamber of Tourism, UNICEF, UNWTO and ECPAT has promoted a national code of conduct as a voluntary initiative for companies, with implementation support from the National Chamber of Tourism, the Ministry of Tourism and UNICEF.⁶⁶⁵

The Indian Ministry of Tourism developed in 2010 a Code of Conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism in collaboration with the UNODC, Pacific Asia Travel Association and Save the Children India.⁶⁶⁶ The Indian Code provides guidelines for the tourism industry, and key messages for awareness-building and dissemination.

In Costa Rica, awareness-raising on the issue of sexual exploitation of children has led to a shift in the way the government approaches the issue.⁶⁶⁷ The Code was integrated into the Costa Rican Institute of Tourism's certificate of sustainable tourism, and the Institute plays an important role in promoting The Code within the tourism industry.

Madagascar's national government, the ILO, UNICEF and the National Tourism Office signed an agreement in May 2015 to disseminate and implement a code of conduct for all stakeholders in the tourism sector, with actions designed to prevent the sexual exploitation of children.

Building capacity in the travel and tourism sector

Training of staff in how to prevent sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism is a key element of The Code. With more and more countries adopting national codes of conducts and companies in more and more countries adopting The Code, capacity building of staff has been a key strategy pursued by ministries of tourism and the private travel and tourism industry. Some of these initiatives have been government-led (usually by the ministry of tourism), others were spearheaded by the private sector and national chambers of tourism, in collaboration with civil society. Many have been joint government/private sector initiatives, often supported by international organisations such as ECPAT International and UNICEF.

Government and civil society led initiatives

Governments have a direct responsibility for formal education, through setting criteria for the curriculum development at tourism schools and universities. Over the past decades, attention to sustainable and responsible tourism has found its way into the curricula of formal education for tourism. Given the critical role to be played by employees in the travel and tourism sector in preventing child sexual exploitation, this topic should be addressed in tourism education curricula.

For 20 years Dutch educational institutes have cooperated with ECPAT Netherlands to include attention to the potential for SECTT in their programmes at all levels of education, including universities and vocational training. Competitions have been held amongst tourism academies to come up with new instruments to fight SECTT. As part of the recent 'Don't Look Away' project, other European countries replicated this initiative, resulting in the training of more than 6,000 tourism students in nine countries.⁶⁶⁸

In the UK, Sheffield Hallam University delivers training on SECTT prevention to university students studying for management degrees in the international tourism, hospitality and events industry, as part of their core studies. Recently, a module on the 'Geography of Sex Tourism' was delivered by officers from the South Yorkshire Police, including a 'Hotel Awareness Training Package to Prevent the Sexual Exploitation of Children'. The students have helped to translate the training package into different languages and undertaken pilot evaluation work to improve the training.⁶⁶⁹

In several countries in Latin America, ministries of tourism and national chambers of tourism, have actively sought to include components on prevention of sexual exploitation of children in the curricula of tourism schools and universities, often with support from international organisations such as

ECPAT and UNICEF.⁶⁷⁰ In the Dominican Republic, UNICEF and national authorities, Plan International, the local NGO MAIS and local communities developed a two-year strategy (2014-2016) to prevent sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism. In 2014, three new hotel associations and tour operators and six tourism companies signed The Code and about 7,500 hotel staff were trained on SECTT prevention.⁶⁷¹ With the University of Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, MAIS has a commitment to train students in the tourism faculty on how to contribute to the eradication of sexual exploitation of children from tourism.⁶⁷² In Peru, as part of a national campaign carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism, a trainer's guide and a guide for suppliers of tourism services were published, and training workshops were held in major tourism areas such as Cusco, Trujillo and Iquitos aimed at local tourism students, hotel staff, travel agencies, guide, taxi and motor taxi drivers.⁶⁷³ In Costa Rica, the national plan of action to eradicate sexual exploitation of children (2008-2010) included adoption of The Code as a pre-condition established by the Costa Rica Tourism Board for companies to qualify for the Sustainable Tourism Certification. As a result, almost 300 companies adopted The Code during this period, and over 6,000 employees were trained.⁶⁷⁴

As noted in Chapter 2, the 'Offenders Beware' project brought together five European ECPAT groups and six southern partners to increase awareness and knowledge about SECTT and build capacity for preventive actions among tourism professionals, students and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., law enforcement and governmental authorities).

Travel industry capacity-building initiatives

After signing The Code the travel and tourism industry has invested considerable efforts in building the capacity of its personnel to prevent services and facilities from being used to exploit children. This includes training in how to identify and report suspicious cases to relevant authorities.⁶⁷⁵ An evaluation of awareness-raising and education of tourism personnel by MAIS in the Dominican Republic showed that trained employees not only deal with child sexual exploitation in a more professional way, but are more aware of its negative impact on children and youth than colleagues who have not been trained.⁶⁷⁶

Since signing The Code, AccorHotels has promoted training programmes for its personnel, in cooperation with ECPAT groups worldwide. In 2012 Accor developed a procedures manual dedicated to preventing child sexual exploitation, in partnership with ECPAT France and two French Interior Ministry organisations, which was pilot-tested in Brazil, Poland, Senegal and Thailand. In Africa, training-of-trainers programmes were carried out in Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Senegal, in which key

personnel from AccorHotels in Ghana, Equatorial Guinea, Benin, Togo and the Democratic Republic of Congo also participated. Evaluations of the trainings showed they contributed to raising the awareness of AccorHotels's personnel. In 2014 AccorHotels decided to increase the visibility of its commitment to child protection by naming its programme WATCH - "We Act Together for Children". The WATCH programme provides hotels with employee training and customer awareness tools, such as videos, training modules and practical guidelines to help them identify and deal with situations of abuse.⁶⁷⁷

In Cambodia, Thailand, Lao PDR and Indonesia, the ChildSafe Network⁶⁷⁸ works with the tourism industry to prevent sexual exploitation and other forms of violence against children by travellers and tourists.⁶⁷⁹ Taxi drivers, hotel and guesthouse staff, restaurant staff, travel and tourism operators, tourists and volunteers, government officials and communities are trained to recognise exploitative situations and take appropriate prevention action. The Network provides accreditation to those trained, and the companies are endorsed as a 'child safe business'.

Beyond Borders/ECPAT Canada has established alliances with Air Canada, Transat and West Jet for the development of awareness-raising materials displayed by the companies and training of their employees to prevent child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism.

Bus and rail transport firms have also engaged in prevention activities. In 2012, the U.S. Department of Transportation, Homeland Security and Amtrak joined forces to train frontline transportation employees and Amtrak police officers to identify and report suspicions of human trafficking.⁶⁸⁰ This led to the creation of the 'Transportation Leaders against Human Trafficking' coalition, which trains employees of the transportation industry and the general public to recognise and report human trafficking.⁶⁸¹ "Truckers against trafficking" is another USA initiative, providing training to truckers so they can identify and report instances of human trafficking.⁶⁸²

Awareness-raising in the travel and tourism sector

Numerous awareness-raising campaigns have been carried out by the travel and tourism sector, targeting tourists, travellers and the public at large. By definition, initiatives aimed at the general public will also reach tourism employees, tourists and travellers. Often they target these subgroups specifically. Some initiatives were Government-led, and most were carried out in coordination with civil society and the private sector, as multi-stakeholder campaigns.

Tourist-sending countries

The tourism industry can play an important role in distributing information to travellers and tourists,⁶⁸³ an important element of The Code. For instance, one interesting opportunity to contact the tourists in general and offenders in particular is on the airplane. Therefore campaigners have worked with airlines to show informational videos during flights to 'high-risk' destinations, and a number of companies have responded positively, particularly Air France, AirCanada, *Luftransport-Unternehmen GmbH* (LTU), Austrian Airlines and Luxair.

Public awareness of SECTT in the EU was first assessed in 1998 by the Eurobarometer survey commissioned by the European Commission. The survey revealed that most citizens were aware of the problem and strongly condemned it. Since then, to sustain attention to the issue, numerous successful public awareness-raising campaigns were carried out by governments and civil society groups, often with support by ECPAT, in Western European countries.⁶⁸⁴

Since 2004 ECPAT Belgium's "Stop child prostitution" campaign has targeted all Belgians travelling abroad: tourists, businessmen, soldiers on foreign missions, embassy personnel, development/aid workers and bus and truck drivers. The campaign is a result of a broad, multi-stakeholder partnership involving government and civil society (including ECPAT, Child Focus, Plan Belgium, Belgium's National Railway Company, the Federation of Belgian Carriers, the Federation of the Tourism Industry, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice and Defence, and the Federal Police). Each partner distributed leaflets and posters; materials were placed in train stations, international train lines such as the Thalys and Eurostar, national and regional airports, Belgian embassies, police offices, tour operators and army barracks. A trilingual website was created to inform the public and encourage them to report any abuse they witness. The campaign is now continuing through the "I Say Stop" initiative, implemented as part of the EU "Don't look away" campaign.⁶⁸⁵

In Australia, the Attorney-General's Office launched a campaign against SECTT when introducing tougher laws against child sex offenders.⁶⁸⁶ A similar public education initiative was carried out in New Zealand, funded by the Ministry of Justice, to inform travellers about laws relating to extra-territorial child sex offences.

Destination countries

In popular tourism destinations, initiatives have been launched in major tourist venues targeting both foreign and domestic travellers, and thus reach both preferential and potential situational offenders.

International airports worldwide – especially in high-risk destinations such as Thailand, the Gambia, the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica – inform tourists about the existence of the problem, the consequences for children and the legal consequences for perpetrators in messages that vary from a positive approach to explicit warnings. In some cases small-scale entrepreneurs in the transportation sector offer their cooperation. For example, many tricycle drivers in Palawan in the Philippines have a sticker on board showing their support for the ECPAT campaign against commercial sexual exploitation of children.

In México, the campaign “No + Trata” (No more trafficking) targeted national and international tourists visiting popular destinations such as Veracruz, Cancún, Quintana Roo, Oaxaca and Acapulco. Tourists received an information kit with images of children and the message ‘Mexico, a country where my rights are protected’. At the local level, zero-tolerance and other campaigns was carried out in the state of Quintana Roo; in the state of Jalisco, a campaign for a “Vallarta Free of Sexual Exploitation of Children” was conducted.⁶⁸⁷

Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic have a long-standing commitment to addressing SECTT. Both countries have implemented several awareness-raising campaigns in the past decade. In the Dominican Republic, the “Protect our treasures” campaign was launched in the early 2000s by the Inter-institutional Commission against Sexual Exploitation of Children, the Hotel Association and UNICEF.⁶⁸⁸ In 2003 in Costa Rica the “We meant it” campaign was launched by the Costa Rican Tourism Industry with support of from prominent NGOs and industry associations to promote the national code of conduct. A second campaign was carried out in 2008-2009, to expand the reach of The Code to a broader sector of the tourism industry, among other goals,⁶⁸⁹ and in 2013 a binational project between Canada and Costa Rica was developed to prevent and reduce SECTT. Finally, in 2015 the Institute of Costa Rican Tourism, Paniamor and the National Code of Conduct launched yet another campaign “Unforgettable Costa Rica” with the aim to prevent SECTT.

In Peru, as part of a National Campaign to prevent sexual exploitation of children and youth implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism, with UNICEF support, awareness was raised among travellers through in-flight videos, as well as brochures and posters displayed at airports and by travel agencies.⁶⁹⁰

Chile’s National Children’s Agency, National Tourism Service, and ministries of Justice, Education and Health, along with the Chilean Investigative Police and the ILO, implemented the “No Excuses” (No Hay Excusas) campaign at the Santiago airport, three border areas and in the northern region of Tarapacá. The campaign challenged traditional attitudes and norms about girls and the prostitution of children (such as: ‘She’s old

enough to know what she’s doing’; ‘I’m not doing anything wrong I pay what they ask for’; ‘If she doesn’t do it with me she’ll do it with someone else’). Messaging in English and Spanish informed tourists that paying for sex with children under 18 years old is a crime, and that there are no excuses for this behaviour. Following this campaign, the Ministry of Interior implemented a second phase, including a message in the migration card given to visitors arriving in the country: “In Chile, sexual exploitation is a crime”,

As part of Asia’s strategy to address SECTT, a regional education campaign was launched by ASEAN in 2005, aimed at promoting child-safe tourism at leading destinations in all 10 ASEAN countries.⁶⁹¹ The objective was to mobilise responsible travellers and local citizens to report suspicious behaviour, deter child sex offenders and create a culture of intolerance for child sexual abuse. Through this campaign, ASEAN countries have adopted a unified approach to preventing SECTT, firmly stating that child sexual offenders are not welcome in the region. Different countries have adapted the campaign to local contexts. In Myanmar, campaign materials were displayed in hotels and in airport taxis. In Lao PDR materials were distributed to tourism operators in emerging destinations such as Luan Prabang and Vientiane. In the Philippines, training workshops were conducted involving hotel resort managers, tour operators, airlines, shipping companies and tour guides. In Thailand the campaign was supported by the Thai tourism police, while in Cambodia materials were distributed to child-safe tourism commission officials in provinces.⁶⁹²

Indonesia and Sri Lanka have also long recognised the existence of SECTT and implemented public awareness-raising campaigns. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Tourism has launched several campaigns involving the tourism industry, regional tourism authorities and NGOs, and also regulates employment of children under 18 in tourism business such as karaoke clubs, massage and spa parlours, restaurants, bars and hotels. UNICEF supported Sri Lanka’s Ministry of Tourism to undertake a project designed to increase community awareness in areas affected by SECTT, using local languages.⁶⁹³

Cleaning the value chain

The private sector involved in the tourism value chain is very diverse, ranging from multinational corporations with 180,000 employees worldwide to beach vendors whose operating capital consists of three mangos. Although international travel and tourism is dominated by large multinational corporations, the focus must remain on local initiatives at tourism destinations, where actions should generate results. As a representative of the Dominican tourism sector stated: “For us it is not relevant whether the CEO of a hotel chain commits to action, if its local branch does not cooperate”.⁶⁹⁴

One of the core issues of CSR is responsible sourcing. If throughout the value chain every business were only to buy from responsible suppliers that respect human rights, the value chain would become “clean”. In principle, those businesses that adhere to Children’s Rights and Business Principles and/or sign The Code, pledge to do so. Unfortunately the tourism value chain is quite extensive and complex (it might be more appropriate to refer to a “value network”). Because of its complexity and deep reach into communities over an extended period of time, the network affects the vulnerability of children in a number of ways.

Tourism is a process that starts when planners and project developers arrive in a virgin area. From that point on, there are implications for children’s vulnerability. But tourism has a life cycle and is subject to a number of external influences (e.g. political unrest, natural disasters, etc.). When a region loses its attraction, the resulting unemployment leads to worsening conditions, raising new threats for children. The debate on how deeply the responsibility of a private company extends into its value chain is still developing.⁶⁹⁵ Instruments such as The Code now interpret the responsibility of the value chain in a rather narrow way, and most signatories focus only on their direct suppliers. But even so, the network is quite extensive, reaching into local economies and including small enterprises and informal entrepreneurs, such as taxi drivers, guides and street- and beach-vendors.

The service provider to the travel industry Kuoni has developed a “supplier code of conduct”, including a clause specifying intolerance for SECTT. About 90% of Kuoni’s contracts with suppliers include this code of conduct. As with any large international company, there are different levels of commitment for actions against child sexual exploitation among different subsidiaries within the Kuoni Group. With more than 25,000 suppliers around the world, Kuoni adopts a risk-based approach to determine the extent to which they will perform verification checks on policy and implementation of actions where child sex exploitation is concerned and the frequency with which these checks are made.⁶⁹⁶

As part of the “I am the wall” project in Colombia, Renacer Foundation worked with two local universities to design a Diploma course that includes tourism topics, such as the history of the tourism sector, customer service, social responsibility and sustainable tourism. Participants in the first graduating class created a network of informal tourist service providers dedicated to preventing SECTT, composed of street vendors, artisans, sellers of cell phone credit, people who rent out beach tents and taxi drivers – all of whom engaged actively in prevention strategies. As a result, 64 companies committed to preventing sexual exploitation in travel and tourism as part of their CSR strategy.⁶⁹⁷

In the Gambia, according to recent research carried out by ECPAT Netherlands and the Child Protection Alliance/ ECPAT Gambia, the sexual exploitation of children in tourism is closely related to the so-called “friendship business”, involving small-scale formal or informal entrepreneurs (taxi drivers, tourist guides, craft market vendors, fruit vendors, juice pressers etc.) or brokerage and pimping. Such middlemen often commit these crimes (knowingly or unknowingly) while carrying out their work as suppliers to the tourism industry. Taxi drivers, guides and others admit that they know of colleagues who play a role in SECTT. The Gambian Tourism Board, in cooperation with the Child Protection Alliance, organised training and awareness-raising activities on child rights, tourism ethics and other relevant issues for taxi drivers, guides and others. Hotels that work with these suppliers were actively involved in supporting the training. As a result, those in direct contact with tourists are aware of The Code and discuss it amongst themselves during meetings and at public gatherings, and spread the message in their own communities.⁶⁹⁸ From evaluations it is clear that involving these small-scale entrepreneurs through the value chain has an impact on the prevention of sexual exploitation of children in Gambian tourism.⁶⁹⁹

Business policies

To embed protection measures into core activities, tourism businesses should establish a company policy against sexual exploitation of children. This policy must be integrated into their CSR and human rights policies. It should also be elaborated through explicit company procedures, to facilitate reporting and create a protective framework in which employees feel free and safe to report. A final element of a business policy relating to human rights should be transparency, and results should be included in annual reporting on CSR performance.

For a good and coherent company policy it is imperative to understand why it is necessary for the company to have one. Kuoni describes the basis for its policy under the heading: *It’s about taking responsibility, not about being asked*. The moral obligation to protect society’s weakest members, managing risk and reputation, ensuring legal compliance and protecting the brand are drivers behind Kuoni’s efforts against child sex exploitation. While customers generally do not ask about the protective measures taken against child sex exploitation, Kuoni’s work in this area provides quality experiences for its customers, which the company believes is an unspoken expectation from customers to provide them with hotels that have responsible business practices.

Based on the idea that protecting children is part of the 'people' component of sustainable development, AccorHotels integrated the Code into its CSR and combines it with other sustainability programmes. AccorHotels' actions are based on research confirming that CSR and performance are related. These findings show that: CSR has a positive effect on guest satisfaction and a positive effect on hotel profitability. Integration takes place into the basic element of AccorHotels' CSR programme, which has seven pillars, 21 commitments and objectives in 92 countries. One of the commitments is to protect children from abuse through informing and training employees, raising awareness among customers and suppliers, developing relations with public authorities and facilitating the reintegration of child victims of SECTT.⁷⁰⁰

Many small and medium-sized companies also have a modern approach to CSR. One example of many is Abang Africa in South Africa, where the Code is implemented on the basis of a responsible tourism policy and company profile. The Code is integrated into its policies on responsible tourism, partners are selected carefully, monitoring is carried out and information is given to clients. Abang Africa cooperates with destinations that: contribute to the conservation of Africa's wildlife, habitats and natural resources; inform and educate tourists on sustainable tourism practices; and contribute to positive impacts within the communities and environments of impact.

The Hilton Hotel group has taken the important step of incorporating their policy into procedures and a Code of Conduct for its personnel, elaborating their rights and obligations. Because of the delicate nature of this work and problematic situations that can rise when action is undertaken, employees have to be instructed carefully and assured that by acting to protect children they do not risk losing their job and can count on management support. Hilton's Code of Conduct includes a procedure for reporting that includes protection for the reporting employee. If an employee has reason to believe that anyone acting on behalf of Hilton has violated this Code of Conduct, behaved unethically (or exposed Hilton to legal or reputational risks), he/she is required to report such potential violations immediately.⁷⁰¹

Working with stakeholders in local communities

The success of all these initiatives very much depends on the support they receive from the communities where tourism and the related sexual exploitation takes place. Local authorities, civil society and the local private sector are all critical for creating a multi-stakeholder commitment to address this issue. In the context of The Code, "key people" are considered to be those at travel destination with whom the tourism company co-operates without having a signed contract. These people could be

individuals or businesses that have substantial contact with customers (e.g. restaurant owners, bar owners, taxi drivers), as well as people likely to exert influence within local communities (e.g., the police, decision-makers, mayors, representative of local NGOs, etc.). Important key people could also include those engaged in labour unions or customs officers.

In Colombia, Renacer Foundation teamed up with the tourism industry and local government to create a series of images of touristic highlights Bogotá and Cartagena, integrating The Code into wider campaigns. In Bogotá it is an integral part of a wider promotion campaign called "Tourist Capital, Protector of Children", supported by the District Tourism Institute.⁷⁰² In Cartagena the images are part of the "I am the Wall" initiative (referring to the ancient wall surrounding the city of Cartagena de Indias, a major tourist attraction). The effort is designed to protect children and adolescents, inviting citizens to construct a safe environment and prevent and combat SECTT. "I Am the Wall" is a joint initiative of the National Tourism Corporation, Renacer Foundation and UNICEF. These and other similar campaigns seek to promote more responsible tourism that involves all stakeholders, including the general public, using broader themes.

Europe's TUI travel and tourism group works with PLAN Netherlands and PLAN International to empower youth in its destinations. Realising that SECTT is silently growing in northeast Brazil, TUI Netherlands and its partners launched a campaign to say 'NO' to SECTT in the coastal towns of Tibau do Sul, Pipa and the city of Natal in north-eastern Brazil.⁷⁰³ In cooperation with PLAN, the project trained youth mobilisers to assist their communities to be vigilant about child sexual exploitation. Another goal was to help vulnerable youth to find employment in tourism.⁷⁰⁴

In Mombasa, where SECTT is an acknowledged problem, Kuoni supports Kenya's Child Welfare Society in the 'Children at Risk' project, with the intent of expanding the range of options available to people in the local villages and ensuring that children are better protected against sexual exploitation. The Child Welfare Society is building a counselling centre for children and adolescents, with Kuoni's financial support. Kuoni also provides financial support to its Indian partner, Children's Rights in Goa (CRG), which aims to improve children's awareness of their rights and protect them from exploitation. Kuoni has supported CRG to establish a Child Resource Centre that is now a refuge for children working in local markets, offering them literacy courses, counselling and livelihood training.⁷⁰⁵

The International Tourism Partnership (ITP), a programme of Business in the Community, brings together the world's leading international hotel companies around issues of social and environmental responsibility in the industry. ITP

manages a Youth Career Initiative (YCI), which originated in Bangkok in 1995 as an initiative of the Pan Pacific Hotels Group and has expanded globally. The programme consists of six-months of education and training that provides disadvantaged young people with life and work skills, improving their employability, enhancing their long-term social and economic opportunities – and thereby reducing their vulnerability to SECTT. Youth Career Initiative works in partnership with the hotel industry, which provides the human, operational and training resources to deliver the programme. Since 2010, Youth Career Initiative began to include rehabilitated child victims of sexual exploitation in their programmes, with support from the US Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Human Trafficking, which has made it possible to implement the programme in Mexico City and Hanoi.⁷⁰⁶

One of the stakeholder groups often overlooked is youth. Increasingly, however, initiatives are including youth participation as an integral element. The success of this approach can be seen in a number of campaigns where youth were consulted about the most pressing issues and assisted with the dissemination of information to local stakeholders and tourists. On the beaches of Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, youth groups regularly organise a day to contact tourists and beach vendors to discuss their concerns about sexual exploitation and hand out leaflets.

Reporting systems

One of the crucial elements for eradicating SECTT is the prosecution of perpetrators. It is essential that mechanisms for the reporting of suspected cases are in place and supported. Reporting systems have been set up and are being improved every year. Tourism workers, tourists and the public in general have to be made aware that reporting is necessary and possible.

In 2009 the Austrian Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, together with Germany and Switzerland, launched the "Gegen das Wegsehen" ("Don't look away") campaign to send a coordinated message against SECTT and motivate travellers to report suspicious cases. The campaign was also implemented in Poland, the Netherlands, Luxemburg and France. Based on this campaign, in 2011, ECPAT partners in Europe designed the current EU-wide "Don't Look Away" project,⁷⁰⁷ which calls upon all stakeholders to take action to address sexual exploitation of children.⁷⁰⁸ The objective is to prevent SECTT by reducing social tolerance for these behaviours and increasing responsible behaviour through: a) awareness-raising campaigns (including sports event); b) a study of reporting mechanism; c) reinforcement of online reporting mechanisms in the EU; and (d) capacity building and lobbying.⁷⁰⁹ A major achievement was the development of one European wide, on-line reporting platform for suspected cases of sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism.⁷¹⁰ Following an awareness-raising campaign, a number

of suspected child abuse cases were reported throughout Europe, which in some cases led to arrests. Stakeholders involved in the process included ministries of justice, the tourism industry and police.

In Canada, the International Bureau of Children's Rights, One Child, Plan Canada and UNICEF Canada developed a campaign to promote reporting of SECTT to the national hotline, Cybertip.ca. The campaign was supported by Air Canada, and related materials were displayed in airports and by travel agencies and tour operators.⁷¹¹

In the Netherlands in 2013 TUI teamed up with the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice, the Dutch border police, national police, the Dutch tourism association, ECPAT and Plan Netherlands to launch a poster campaign in Dutch airports to inform tourists about SECTT and encourage them to report suspected offenders by gathering good-quality information.

Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina implemented a three-way border awareness-raising campaign in 2013 called "Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children"⁷¹² to inform the general public about the problem and encourage them to report it. Materials in Portuguese, Spanish and Guarani were disseminated and professionals in the education, tourism, hotel and transport sectors were trained on how to identify and report child sexual exploitation. The campaign had a broad base of support, including Paraguay's Secretariat of Childhood and Adolescence, the Misiones provincial government and Ministry of Human Rights (for Argentina), the Foz de Iguazú Municipal Secretariat for Social Assistance and Tourism and the Xuxa Meneghel Foundation and Itaipú Binacional from Brazil, as well as the ILO.⁷¹³

CONCLUSION

Ever since the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in 1996, it has been widely recognised that the travel and tourism sector is not the cause of child sexual exploitation, but that its services, facilities and infrastructure, including transportation networks and accommodation facilities, can be misused for the sexual exploitation of children.

The three World Congresses placed the issue of sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism on political agendas worldwide. Over the past two decades, many countries have taken action to address it, as a critical dimension of a broader societal response to sexual exploitation of children in general. The Stockholm Agenda for Action, together with international human rights frameworks, provide a solid framework for action, outlining the roles and responsibilities of key actors.

Various countries have approached the problem from a law enforcement perspective, enacting and enforcing legal reforms to criminalise all forms of sexual

exploitation, increasingly regulating corporate liability, and supporting judicial cooperation among countries to bring perpetrators to justice. Many countries have also adopted national action plans to protect children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism, within a broader agenda of prevention and response to child sexual exploitation in other settings. Several countries have launched public information and education campaigns to raise awareness of the problem and encourage reporting of suspected cases. The co-responsibility of the public and private travel and tourism sector –Ministries of Tourism, private companies, industry associations and Chambers of Tourism- has been essential for the mobilisation of the sector in the prevention of child sexual exploitation and the promotion of corporate social responsibility. More and more countries have adopted national codes of conducts promoting corporate social responsibility within the tourism sector, simultaneously as industry driven codes have been adopted by individual companies. Major efforts have been made to train and raise awareness among the travel and tourism sector and travellers and tourists of the problem and how to report it. The focus on prevention, and the role of the sector in preventing that its services or facilities are misused for the purpose of sexual exploitation of children, has helped avoid stigmatization of the sector as facilitating or promoting such practices.

In all countries a multi-stakeholder approach has been required to effectively protect children from SECTT, involving different government ministries and institutions as well as civil society and the private sector. The involvement of both the public and private travel and tourism sector (i.e., tourism ministries, private companies, trade associations, etc.) has been essential to mobilising the sector as a whole. Countries that have addressed SECTT as part of a broader response to child sexual exploitation, with a focus on both prevention and response, seem to have been most successful in addressing the problem.

The town of Cabarete in the Dominican Republic offers a good example of the success of multi-sectoral initiatives. Through joint action between the local government, a local NGO and the regional tourism association, awareness of SECTT among tourists, hotels, restaurants, taxi drivers, beach vendors, tourism employees, local communities,

government officials, law enforcement – and above all young people – has increased enormously. Reduced tolerance and acceptance of SECTT in Cabarete has led to a decrease in the number of girls exploited in prostitution, and Cabarete seems to have become much more attractive for travelling families, building a stronger foundation for sustainable tourism.⁷¹⁴

While many efforts have received support from bilateral and multilateral agencies and international organisations and networks (such as UNICEF, ILO-IPEC, ECPAT and UNWTO), ownership by national governments, civil society and private sectors is critical to ensure sustainability and long-term commitment to addressing this often sensitive issue in national strategies and plans.

International and regional cooperation has been fundamental to achieving progress. Many countries that were initially reluctant to address SECTT, fearing that it would have a negative impact on tourism, have eventually taken action within broader regional approaches. In Latin America, as a result of mobilisation of the travel and tourism sector at the regional level and the adoption of declarations and regional action plans, country road maps were developed to promote co-responsibility of the public and private tourism sector - through joint actions by tourism ministries and national tourism associations to promote corporate social responsibility and the adoption of the Code of Conduct.

Efforts to prevent SECTT have focused heavily on tourists, and how to prevent them from engaging in sexual exploitation of children. Over the past two decades new approaches to human rights and children's rights, to CSR and to social impact assessments, have led to new interpretations of businesses' responsibility for their value chain, which in turn raise questions about how the tourism sector value chain affects the vulnerability of children. The way tourism is developed and how it manifests itself in communities has an effect on children and adolescents. In debates on sustainable tourism and human rights, the sector is being challenged to take responsibility for the whole chain of tourism development, which in the case of children's vulnerability, begins when project developers first arrive and start to create tourism infrastructure.



CHAPTER 6

NEXT STEPS



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“As actors involved directly or indirectly in child rights protection, we jointly, share the burden to end sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism. Let’s fulfil this moral obligation and act now to effectively protect all children from this shocking crime.”

*Dr. Najat Maalla M’jid,
Chair of the Taskforce*

This report describes what is known – and what still needs to be learned – about SECTT, drawing on the wealth of research gathered for the Global Study across the world. Chapter 2 provided a picture of trends in each region, confirming that no place is untouched, and no country immune from SECTT. Chapter 3 outlined the contexts of the victims and offenders and the dangerous power imbalances between them; examined the ability of offenders to exploit rapidly changing modes of travel and tourism to gain access to their victims; and reviewed the legislation and enforcement that is in place – at least in theory – to protect children. Data gaps and dilemmas were highlighted in Chapter 4, which noted the vital importance of current, timely and accurate evidence to guide policies and programmes to combat SECTT. Chapter 5 examined the response: what works in the fight against this crime.

This sixth and final chapter looks ahead to identify the critical next steps in this fight. After summarising the key findings from all the research, the chapter provides recommendations for immediate action by all key players. Specific tasks should be carried out by those who have direct responsibility for the overall well-being of children: regional bodies, international organisations and national governments, as well as the non-governmental organisations working to protect children on the ground. Recommendations are also made for a wide swathe of the private sector, including not only companies involved in travel, tourism and transportation, but also those working in information communications technology and companies whose staff travel for business). Cross-sectoral recommendations point to the importance of coordinated approaches for effective SECTT prevention and intervention.

The very last section of this chapter puts forward a research agenda to be pursued in the coming years – in recognition that despite the valuable information gathered for this Global Study, there is a desperate need for far more – and far better – information on this appalling crime.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE GLOBAL STUDY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESPONSES TO SECTT

In a fast evolving, increasingly mobile, interconnected and globalised world, the crime of SECTT cannot be addressed without **an updated definition**, which recognises all relevant categories of offenders, victims and stakeholders. The new definition of SECTT proposed as a result of the Global Study is:

Acts of sexual exploitation of children embedded in the context of travel, tourism or both.

This definition includes not just tourists, but also business travellers, expatriates, voluntourists or pseudo-caregivers abroad. It does not focus solely on Western offenders, instead taking a broader view to include local and regional travellers and tourists.

The vulnerability of children to SECTT has increased dramatically in the past 20 years as travel, tourism and the pathways available for offenders have soared. Although the precise scope of SECTT is not yet

measurable, there are alarming indicators that this crime is persistent and widespread. The Global Study has also demonstrated, undeniably, that the increasing use of the Internet has enabled offenders to groom children online, exchange information and advice on how to abuse children and avoid detection, and in some cases ‘book’ children in advance. Emerging new forms of tourism can aggravate the vulnerability for children. Regulation and social protection are lagging far behind fast-changing phenomena, such as online booking sites, peer-to-peer services, volun-tourism, orphanage tourism, slum tourism and eco-stays. The unregulated development of travel and tourism can disrupt local economies and make children more vulnerable to exploitation. However, it is also clear from the analysis of responses to SECTT that the travel and tourism sectors can – and often do – play a critical role in the prevention of sexual exploitation of children.

No country is immune. SECTT is not limited to developing countries or countries with few resources. It is found everywhere, including the world's richest countries as demonstrated by research in North America and Europe. Offenders are continually looking for and targeting emerging travel and tourist destinations, such as Moldova, Myanmar and Peru. As countries act to tackle the crime, offenders look for new destinations where the risks of arrest are lower. The global 'map' of SECTT has become blurred, and it is increasingly difficult to categorise countries as countries of origin, countries of destination, countries of transit, or countries of victimisation. Countries can be any – or all – of these.

There is no typical offender. Twenty years ago the offender was seen as a white, wealthy, middle-aged male paedophile from a developed country vacationing in a developing country with the intention of having sex with a child. Now we understand that more children are being abused by tourists and travellers from their own country or region than by people who have travelled from other parts of the world. The typical offender is not a tourist, but could very easily be a traveller, such as a business traveller, a driver, a humanitarian aid worker, an expatriate, a member of a peace mission, a retiree, or a volunteer. The evidence also shows that there are more 'situational' offenders, who travel with no intention of abusing a child, yet find themselves in an environment where SECTT is seen as normal, and where the risk of arrest – or of any consequence – is perceived as non-existent. It seems that most offenders offend because they are given the chance to do so and know they can get away with it. And finally, some offenders are women or children themselves.

There is no typical child victim. Children across the world are increasingly on the move, and increasingly connected through the Internet and social media networks. Changing social norms among children and peer pressure have also contributed to a perceived 'normalisation' of sex in childhood, combined with growing pressure to obtain consumer goods. Although all children are vulnerable and easy targets for adults, some children are more vulnerable than others, such as children in dysfunctional families, children living in poverty, orphans, members of minorities, children living and working on the street, child labourers or LGBT children.

The number of convictions remains alarmingly low. A large number of criminals offend or facilitate the crime and get away with it because of a chronic lack of reporting by all stakeholders (witnesses, victims and their families), coupled with weak legislation and law enforcement – often the result of limited cooperation among national law enforcement agencies. One of the most appalling aspects of SECTT is the ability of offenders to bribe their way out of investigation

or prosecution. There has been relatively little public outcry about this crime and there is a sense of 'social distancing' with the general public feeling little empathy for the victims, especially those who are adolescents. As a result, there has been little pressure on governments to end the impunity enjoyed by offenders. This situation has been exacerbated by a chronic lack of data and other evidence on the scale, scope and nature of the crime.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR RESPONSES

The key findings from the Global Study suggest the need for priority interventions to guide policy, legislation and programme development.

Awareness raising

Whether intentionally or not, decision makers and the general public tend to turn away from the realities of SECTT. The low level of awareness about this crime relates to its sinister and hidden nature, but also the lack of reliable, current and accessible information.

Governments, policy makers and the general remain largely unaware of the extent of SECTT and there is a need for more information. There is also a need to further sensitise the private sector (in particular the travel, tourism and ICT sectors), as well as companies that send their staff abroad on business trips. Many offenders avoid using services from the higher end of the travel and tourism markets or the more established service providers, so specific awareness raising campaigns that target small and medium size businesses or individuals are needed. Given the anonymity provided to offenders by the Internet, the ICT sector must be part of the solution. Finally, the general public needs to be more aware of the issue and of its responsibility to protect children and report cases of SECTT.

Awareness raising helps to build a sense of local ownership of this issue by governments, civil society and the private sector – ownership that is critical to ensure a sustainable and long-term commitment to address this crime. Raising awareness requires solid evidence, and the Global Study has reinforced the need for investment in data gathering and robust monitoring and evaluation, as set out in the final section of this report on a future research agenda. One effective way to engage policy makers and the public is to gather and document what works in the fight against SECTT

Prevention

Public and private stakeholders in travel and tourism have a key role to play in the prevention of SECTT, and there are many examples of good practice within these sectors. A strong industry focus on prevention will help to avoid the stigmatization of the sector as facilitating or promoting the sexual exploitation of children. Currently, voluntary self-regulation is the best available option

to protect children. This is insufficient and further to awareness raising, there should be some mandatory state-imposed measures. Efforts to mobilise these sectors to prevent SECTT must be part of broader national efforts to address child sexual abuse and exploitation across all settings and sectors.

The conversion of the UNWTO Code of Ethics into an international convention could be a major step forward towards ensuring that companies adopt and implement specific child protection regulations.

There is also a need for further self-regulation by the travel and tourism sectors, including the informal parts of these industries. The Code is an effective instrument and companies can - at the very least - adopt their own child protection policies. Finally, companies that send their staff away on business should act responsibly, requiring those staff to sign codes of conduct and making their travel arrangements with 'child safe' organisations.

Reporting

Members of the public are usually willing to report SECTT if there are adequate reporting platforms easily available to them.

Governments should not only provide adequate resources for reporting platforms such as telephone hotlines and online reporting mechanisms, they should also tell the public about them and encourage their use. Key stakeholders should have explicit and legally binding duties to report cases of SECTT, including the travel and tourism sectors, employers of business travellers, and Internet service providers. Government agencies should liaise with each other to establish effective linkages between law enforcement agencies, the justice system, social services and the travel and tourism sectors.

Ending impunity

The Global Study shows that persistent impunity reinforces offenders' sense of entitlement and victims' disempowerment. Power imbalances and anonymity serve to fuel impunity. Corruption and release on bail are two major risks that lead to offenders escaping justice and thus putting more children at risk.

Governments should reinforce their legal systems and ratify all international instruments (as detailed in the roadmap to end SECTT that follows), including those related to the introduction or reinforcement of extraterritorial laws. Corruption within the justice sector and beyond should be tackled as a matter of urgency. Governments should also increase transnational collaboration between law enforcement agencies and justice systems to enable successful cross-border investigations and prosecutions, and should exchange information on travelling child sex offenders.

Access to justice, care and recovery

Even if victims are able to overcome their (often well-founded) fear of stigma and shame, those who speak out still have to many challenges to face before they can feel safe. Law enforcement, justice systems and social services are seldom adapted to the individual needs of child victims of sexual exploitation.

Survivors of SECTT have a primary role to play in helping policy makers design or select appropriate responses. Victims should be empowered to report and be aware of their rights to protection, justice, care and recovery. Governments, therefore, need to invest far more heavily in their child protection systems to keep up with the pace of changes that heighten the risks of SECTT, especially in travel and tourism and in relation to the Internet.

ENDING SECTT IN OUR GENERATION: A ROADMAP

Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - the outcome document adopted by all Heads of States at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit of September 2015 - articulates a vision of a world with just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence.⁷¹⁵ It includes the elimination of all forms of violence against children as a distinct priority, including sexual abuse and exploitation and trafficking.

More specifically, the following targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5, 8 and 16 are of direct relevance to combating SECTT.

SDG Target 5. 2: *“Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation”*

SDG Target 8.7: *“Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour...”* (Note: the exploitation of children through prostitution is recognised in ILO Convention 182 as one of the worst forms of child labour)

SDG Target 16.2: *“End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children”*

Targets 5.2 and 16.2 set out a global aspiration of ending SECTT by 2030 and Target 8.7 by 2025.

Ending the abuse, neglect and exploitation of children is also mainstreamed across the Sustainable Development Goals (“SDGs”). The implementation framework of goals

and targets is integrated and indivisible. Consequently, the following two SDG targets regarding sustainable tourism and engagement with the private sector are also relevant in addressing SECTT:

SDG Target 8.9: “...devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products”

SDG Target 12.b: “Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism...”

Agenda 2030 and its Implementation Framework provide a strategic opportunity for stakeholders to place SECTT on political agendas, highlighting where and how deficits in the protection of children from SECTT could be remedied. They support the mobilisation of the necessary actions and resources at the national, regional and international levels that will contribute to ending the sexual violence perpetrated against children by travellers and tourists. Moreover, they encourage multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral national and regional and global responses to end SECTT.

The central UN platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the High-Level Political Forum (“the Forum”). The Forum’s mandate is to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations on the Agenda’s implementation and follow-up; keep track of progress; spur coherent policies informed by evidence, science and country experiences;

and address new and emerging issues. The Forum is also mandated to conduct national reviews and thematic reviews of the implementation of the Agenda, with inputs from other intergovernmental bodies and forums, relevant UN entities, regional processes, and other stakeholders, including the private sector.

As noted in the Secretary-General’s report on follow-up to the adoption of the SDGs, review processes at the global level must complement and support national and regional reviews. Hence processes to monitor the implementation of national and regional responses to SECTT are required.

Twenty years after the Stockholm World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Agenda 2030 presents decision makers across the world and across sectors with a unique opportunity and incentive to accelerate progress and finally end SECTT in our generation. Based on the key findings of the Global Study and all evidence collected in the Global Study research, the following set of recommendations is presented to help them achieve this goal.

While the recommendations that follow are grouped by stakeholder, one key finding is that the most effective responses are always cross-sectoral. Multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approaches are essential, spanning different government authorities, non-governmental organisations, the travel and tourism sectors (including both public and private companies), the ICT industry and any company that sends its staff away on business.

Recommendations for international and regional intergovernmental bodies

Regional and international bodies must position the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism on their political agendas, to ensure that international and regional commitments can be met.

- for the UNWTO to advocate for the conversion of the Code of Ethics for Tourism into an international convention and its ratification by member states
- for UN and regional Human Rights Monitoring Mechanisms to systematically review the situation of SECTT in member states and measures taken to protect children from SECTT and ensure access to justice of victims
- for the issue of SECTT to be specifically recognised and monitored as part of scope of action of international and regional human rights mechanisms including the Human Rights Council, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Lanzarote Committee and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, etc.
- for the issue of SECTT to be explicitly acknowledged and addressed by regional entities such as the European Union, the Association of South East Asian States (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the African Union, the Council of Baltic Sea States, the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Pacific Islands Forum, etc.
- for SECTT to be included in the implementation, monitoring and reporting on the UN Sustainable Development Goals targets that address the sexual exploitation of children, i.e. Targets 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2.
- for the UN General Assembly to ensure implementation of the recommendations and to strengthen the UN's response to sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations Personnel in the areas of prevention, enforcement and remedial action, as presented in the Report to the UN Secretary General of 16 February 2016.

Recommendations for non-governmental organisations

NGOs can play a key role by monitoring SECTT and bridging gaps left by national governments in the areas described below.

- Expose companies that advertise commercial sex with minors with a particular focus on online advertisement
- Raise public awareness about SECTT and the role citizens, including children can play in its prevention
- Identify and document best practice models in SECTT prevention and care
- Provide high-quality recovery and rehabilitation services for SECTT victims where governments do not provide such services
- Build partnerships and capacity within the tourism industry to recognise and address incidents of SECTT
- Develop codes of conduct and child protection policies for (national and international) employees and volunteers who come into contact with children and ensure police clearances
- Undertake more research on SECTT to inform policy and action

Recommendations for national governments

National governments have a direct responsibility to protect children from SECTT, whether they are countries of country of demand, supply or victimisation.

- Develop and promote reporting systems that allow children and citizens to report incidents without fear
- Ensure that child-sensitive services are available and regulated by quality standards, implemented by knowledgeable, well-trained staff with adequate resources and easily accessible to all children
- Ratify and implement all relevant international child rights instruments and revise national laws accordingly:
 - o Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 2000, and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, 2002
 - o Optional Protocol to the CRC on a Communications Procedure (OP3 CRC), 2014
 - o Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, 2000
 - o ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour No.182
 - o The following Council of Europe Conventions:
 - a. Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, CETS No.201, 2007
 - b. Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, CETS No. 197, 2005
 - c. Convention on Cybercrime, CETS No. 185, 2001.
- Ensure that national legal frameworks address SECTT adequately by:
 - o formulating SECTT as separately identifiable crime in national laws
 - o enacting progressive extraterritorial legislation and unconditional extradition laws and defining reoffending as an aggravating circumstance, regardless of whether the crimes were perpetrated abroad or in-country
 - o ensuring that statutory limitations do not apply to child victims of CSEC
 - o adopting an age of consent of 18 years, or ensuring that offences committed against children aged 15 to 18 years old are criminalised when the sexual acts are exploitative (such as prostitution or pornography) or where there has been abuse of a relationship of trust, authority or dependency
 - o criminalising grooming and attempts to procure sex with a minor
 - o excluding SECTT crimes from bail
 - o regulating the obligations of employers to obtain police clearances and implement codes of conduct for national and international employees and volunteers who have direct contact with children
 - o increasing maximum penalties for SECTT-related offences, given their serious impact on child victims
 - o imposing more severe sentences for recidivists who commit sexual offences against children
 - o providing criteria to determine sexual consent between peers, to avoid misunderstanding and clarify non-exploitative situations
 - o making it obligatory to report any suspected sexual exploitation of a child, with strong sanctions for non-compliance; developing protection mechanisms for those who report the crime; accepting reasonable anonymous complaints as sufficient evidence to open an investigation
- Strengthen law enforcement and international cooperation to combat SECTT by:
 - o ensuring that law enforcement agencies have the resources and skills to identify, investigate and respond to SECTT and are able to use child-friendly methods when dealing with child victims and witnesses, and that enforcement is not undermined by corruption or social tolerance for SECTT
 - o enhancing the regular exchange of up to date information about travelling child sex offenders among law enforcement agencies across jurisdictions of countries of demand, supply and victimisation, including greater use of the following tools:
 - INTERPOL 'Green Notice' for convicted sex offenders who are likely to reoffend in other countries
 - denying entry to convicted child sex offenders who are likely to reoffend
 - the development of sex offender registries that comply with international standards on confidentiality and privacy
 - INTERPOL's planned international police clearance system (under development)
 - o investing in the development of analytical tools and new investigative techniques to enable law enforcement to identify perpetrators and rescue victims
 - o deploying police liaison officers in destinations that are popular with travelling child sex offenders, with destination countries facilitating the work of these professionals
 - o cooperation across agencies and borders among the police and judiciary to allow exchange of information for investigations and prosecution of every case where a person is suspected or accused of having sexually exploited a child in another country
- Invest in quality rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for child victims of SECTT

- Collect national data and/or build national capacity to develop disaggregated data-gathering and monitoring systems to inform policy and action on SECTT
- Adopt mandatory policies to protect children in new public or private tourism developments, including the obligation to conduct thorough human-rights impact assessments
- Establish government-regulated child protection standards for the tourism industry
- Ensure that the use of volunteers in institutions where children are present is closely regulated through, for example, international police clearances and codes of conduct
- Raise public awareness about SECTT and the sanctions on the crime
- Ensure that law enforcement and justice system personnel understand the importance of SECTT and the particular needs of child victims
- Recognise children as agents of change and encourage their involvement in planning and policy-making related to SECTT
- Invest in child empowering prevention programmes to address the root causes and multiple vulnerabilities that place children, families and communities at risk
- Promoting child protective social norms through community development projects, and the media, including social media
- Create incentives for companies that prioritise child protection
- Fight corruption

Recommendations for private sector companies

Companies active in sectors that play a role in SECTT are in a unique position: they can have a direct impact on protecting children from this crime. They cannot be passive bystanders, but should be actively involved in the protection of children's rights.

Travel, tourism and transportation companies (spanning both the public and private sectors)

- Sign the UNWTO *Code of Ethics*
- Ensure compliance with *Human Rights and Business Principles and Children's Rights and Business Principles*
- Sign the *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism* or - at a minimum - adopt and enforce explicit corporate policies against SECTT and prioritise training on SECTT prevention and response for travel and tourism professionals
- Seek to ensure that small- and medium-size firms and the informal travel and tourism sector are aware of the issue and adhere to a code of conduct to prevent SECTT
- Build the awareness and understanding of other sectors, such as businesses with travelling staff and the extractive industries
- Ensure that organisations that receive volunteers have adequate child protection systems in place to guarantee the safety of children, including international police clearances, reporting mechanisms and a code of conduct. Similarly, develop codes of conduct for national and international employees and volunteers in contact with children and ensure police clearances
- Raise awareness about SECTT among travellers and tourists
- Cooperate with, and report to, law enforcement

ICT industry

- Engage and mobilise industry leaders to develop technology-based solutions to combat SECTT such as blocking payment for SECTT-related offences and developing new techniques to 'follow the money' and undermine the business model of SECTT offenders and their intermediaries
- Collaborate with other ICT companies and law enforcement agencies to disrupt financial gains for offenders, criminal networks and intermediaries and to develop analytical tools and new investigative techniques to enable law enforcement to identify perpetrators and rescue victims
- Ensure compliance with *Human Rights and Business Principles and Children's Rights and Business Principles*
- Adopt and enforce explicit corporate policies against SECTT

Companies whose staff members travel for business

All companies sending employees on business travel have a role to play in educating their employees on conduct that is acceptable or unacceptable and the importance of protecting children against SECTT.

- Undertake travel with child safe travel and tourism businesses, preferably members of the *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism* or - at a minimum - with business that have adopted and enforce explicit corporate policies against SECTT and prioritise training on SECTT prevention and response for travel and tourism professionals
- Ensure compliance with *Human Rights and Business Principles and Children's Rights and Business Principles*
- Adopt and implement a code of conduct for travelling employees
- Ensure police clearances if staff are going to be in contact with children during their business travel

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW: A FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA FOR SECTT

“We are becoming increasingly more expert at engaging across sectors to gather the hard data to support our global effort to end this grand challenge that threatens the world’s children. Together we will do what no one of us can do alone.”

*Marilyn Carlson Nelson,
former CEO and Chairman of Carlson
and member of the Taskforce*

The mass of research carried out for the Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism confirms fears that SECTT remains a significant problem, and that this problem is likely to grow as travel and tourism increase and evolve.

This final section of the report attempts to group together and prioritise the myriad research needs identified during the course of the Global Study. It also highlights the *types of evidence* that are required and the need to ensure that evidence has a real impact on policies and programmes to protect children.

Scale and scope: the need for baseline data and for mixed methodologies

The Global Study highlights the lack of reliable figures on the scale of SECTT, particularly on the number of children being sexually exploited in the context of travel and tourism. Logic dictates that a vast expansion in the numbers of people taking part in a particular activity – such as travel and tourism – is likely to be accompanied by a similarly vast expansion in the numbers abusing that activity for their own ends. However, while the clear sense throughout the research for the Global Study is that SECTT is rising, hard data are lacking. The lack of baseline data was flagged up repeatedly in the regional reports.⁷¹⁶ Baseline data could make it possible to track trends and answer a key question raised by the research: which comes first ... the tourism or the sexual exploitation of children?

In addition to the lack of baseline data, the Global Study has revealed a chronic lack of data that are timely or current. The Europe report, for example, notes the need for initial research in both countries of origin and destination “to identify potential target groups and design effective interventions tailored to the needs of specific groups”.⁷¹⁷ The East Asia report cites evidence of a connection between child exploitation in China and the rise in tourism, but this dates back 15 years.⁷¹⁸ In Southeast Asia the data that are available quickly

become out-dated, given the rapid changes in the crime and limited amount of new research.⁷¹⁹

The difficulties of gathering data on the scale of SECTT were stressed repeatedly across the research, but some solid examples emerging from the Study – such as the work of the International Justice Mission (IJM) cited in Chapter 4, show what can be achieved by using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. As the IJM example shows, it is possible to gather quantitative data – at least locally – on the numbers of children likely to be caught up in SECTT by, for example, combining undercover data collection with ‘snowball sampling’.

Specific aspects of the scope of SECTT also require further analysis, with repeated calls for closer scrutiny of the impact of sharply increased domestic and business travel on the likely growth of SECTT. The Southeast Asia report, for example, noted the urgent need for research into the threat of SECTT posed by domestic and intraregional tourism and the nature of the nexus between domestic and international demand for SECTT.⁷²⁰ The Pacific report recommended closer study of the links between travel, tourism and the sexual exploitation of children at the domestic level.⁷²¹ The Africa report, meanwhile, found that SECTT may be a serious problem in rural areas, as well as urban, and that this is an area in need of further research.⁷²²

Quantitative evidence should be enriched with qualitative evidence that looks more closely at how child victims come to be exploited, who is exploiting them, what services are available for their support and, very importantly, what works in the areas of prevention and response. Evidence from the Global Study, therefore, reinforces the need for mixed methodologies to establish the scale and scope of SECTT, particularly where it is difficult to gather solid quantitative data. It also indicates the need for more emphasis on data from the local level, where the exploitation takes place, to provide a picture of what is happening that is more nuanced (and perhaps more actionable) than data reflecting national averages. The Latin America report recommends that “Participatory Action Research⁷²³ methodologies and techniques (such as participant observation, focus groups and case studies) be used to understand the perceptions and relationship dynamics, to complement the quantitative data.”⁷²⁴ Indeed, this was the methodology used for the Africa report, and yielded a great deal of valuable information.⁷²⁵

The context of children

The Global Study reinforces concerns about the lack of research and evidence on children who are sexually exploited by travellers and tourists and, indeed, on vulnerable children in general. As outlined in Chapter

3, while not all child victims of SECTT come from the poorest and most marginalised families, it appears that some children are ‘invisible’ in the data because of their poverty and exclusion. According to the regional reports, those at significant risk of SECTT include children who live and work on the street, children who migrate, children who stay at home when their parents migrate, refugee and internally displaced children, stateless children and indigenous children – groups that barely covered by current research.

Given evidence that working children can also be at risk of sexual exploitation, there is a need for more research on the link between child labour and SECTT (a problem cited in the Europe report),⁷²⁶ as well as the possible over-representation of indigenous children among victims of sexual exploitation of all kinds (an issue raised in the North America report and in the Pacific report specifically in relation to Australia and New Zealand).⁷²⁷

The children affected by SECTT are often girls, but evidence from the Global Study suggests that the sexual exploitation of boys is more prevalent than once thought and that boys may be more susceptible to SECTT than girls in particular countries or travel and tourism hubs – suspected trends that require more analysis. There is also a need for more research on migration patterns and the specific risks to migrant children, and on other children exposed to SECTT who have, to date, been overlooked in the research (such as transgender young people).⁷²⁸ The Global Study also flagged up the need for more research on the evolving dynamics of SECTT in relation to its links to the adult sex sector. Most commercial sexual exploitation of children occurs within or on the fringes of adult commercial sex, so SECTT is likely to be a bigger problem in areas with a large adult sex sector. This link needs to be studied further, particularly in relation to destinations where adult sex industries act as a lure for travellers and tourists.

In short, there is a pressing need for more information on every aspect of the lives of vulnerable children, particularly the factors that expose them to the risk of SECTT and the connections between this specific crime and other forms of abuse. The Southeast Asia report argues that such research should be illuminated by child victims themselves, examining “...victims’ pathways into SECTT, victim profiles, victims’ experiences, their own insights into child sex offenders, and possible pathways out of SECTT.”⁷²⁹

The context of offenders

A clear need has emerged from the Global Study for more in-depth analysis of situational abusers and the intermediaries who facilitate SECTT. Most individuals who engage in commercial sex with children during their trips are situational offenders and,

as the Europe report notes: “More attention should be paid to understanding the role of situational offenders in SECTT and factors that may discourage them from engaging in criminal activity when the opportunity arises.”⁷³⁰ However, most research and data, including that of law enforcement agencies, focuses on international preferential abusers – perhaps because they constitute the majority of travelling child sex offenders who are actually arrested. Unlike situational abusers, they may be well-known to law enforcement agencies in their countries of origin and destination, making them easier to identify and arrest. The challenge ahead is to learn more about situational offenders and domestic travellers, who constitute the vast majority of child sex offenders, as well as about the role played by intermediaries. According to the Africa report, “By continuing to narrowly frame research and analysis on the basis of out-dated modalities, such as the older European male sex tourist from a first world country travelling to impoverished locations to exploit very young children living in poverty, new and growing forms of this phenomenon may be overlooked and left unaddressed.”⁷³¹

Key issues that require further research include the correlation between domestic and international demand (do they fuel each other?) and between situational and preferential offenders (do the former become the latter? Is there a continuum of offending?). There is also a need for more evidence on ‘neglected’ areas of offending, such as: the role of female perpetrators and expatriates in destination countries; volun-tourism; exploitation by migrant or transient workers; and the prevalence of SECTT at specific locations, such as pilgrimage sites, transport and business hubs and mega-projects.

The importance of research into the different types of offenders and where they offend was stressed in the Southeast Asia report, which noted that “Western men are more commonly implicated in the street-based solicitation of children for the purposes of sexual exploitation than Asian men [...] Asian men have been more commonly implicated in establishment-based sexual exploitation of children [...] to better understand the veracity of these claims and to target interventions accordingly, more comprehensive research is required.”⁷³²

Power imbalances

Research into power imbalances and the impact of social norms is vital for the design of interventions at community level to prevent SECTT.⁷³³ As stressed in Chapter 3, travelling child sex offenders rely on their power and status to achieve their aims: they tend to be better off than their victims (even if only marginally) and more highly ‘valued’ as countries and communities pursue tourist dollars. In environments where the ‘client is king’, offenders may feel entitled to abuse children.

Evidence from the Global Study paints a picture of attitudes towards child victims that merit far more nuanced research. These include the sense of power and anonymity among offenders and their use of ‘social distancing’ – justifying their actions through racist stereotyping that labels their victims as ‘different’. There is also a need to understand how power imbalances shape the attitudes of child victims, who may see their exploiters as an escape route from a life of poverty and deprivation.

Further research is also needed on the impact of social and cultural norms: their nature, the way they shape children’s vulnerability and how they differ from place to place within countries. In addition to the need for further research on gender stereotypes mentioned above, other key areas of research related to social constructs include the impact of *harmful practices* (such as child marriage and the phenomenon of virgin-seeking⁷³⁴), and the growing pressures of consumerism on children and adolescents.

Every regional report carried out for the Global Study highlighted the need for far more research on the impact of gender stereotyping and its links to SECTT, with girls often victimised as a result of their low status and powerlessness, boys seemingly less willing or able to speak out, and both girls and boys subjected to social and cultural norms that allow this crime to thrive (issues covered in Chapter 3). And every regional report stressed the need for more research on the evolving dynamics of SECTT in relation to age-related transitions and responsibilities (such as the differing risks faced by young children and those in their teens, including assumptions that teenage children are not ‘victims’).⁷³⁵ In addition, the Southeast Asia report underlined the need to examine the social and cultural factors that have an impact on the reintegration of former child victims into their family and/or community.⁷³⁶ It is also worth noting an interesting argument from the Africa report: “rather than assuming that all practices are harmful, qualitative research is needed to identify opportunities to build on the strengths of existing approaches and responses and community dynamics to enhance the protection of children from SECTT).”⁷³⁷

Travel and tourism

As mentioned above, more research on the links between the massive growth of travel and tourism and the sexual exploitation of children is urgently required. One key finding from the Global Study is the critical need for child impact assessments in areas targeted for tourism development, which need to be based upon robust research. As noted in Chapter 3, the unfettered and unregulated growth of tourism can have devastating consequences for local communities, but these are not inevitable. An early assessment of the likely impact on family incomes, livelihoods and employment

opportunities, as well as the impact of large-scale immigration, could help to ease, or even avert, the most negative outcomes.

The Global Study also points to the emergence of new forms of travel and tourism, noting that they are increasingly side-stepping traditional providers of travel and tourism services. There is a growing shift to online and informal travel arrangements and, at the same time tourists are looking for more exotic and ‘authentic’ experiences that bring them closer to communities and families. As a result of this growing informality and complexity, the impact of travel and tourism on children is becoming increasingly hard to monitor and police, requiring research on informal and small-scale travel and tourism operations to ensure that they become a vital source of evidence and, therefore, part of the solution to SECTT.

Research is also needed on specific aspects of travel and tourism that put children at risk, including links to the entertainment sector, volun-tourism, business travel and ‘slum tourism’, and on the types of locations that appear repeatedly in the evidence gathered for the Global Study, such as border areas, major transport hubs and special economic zones. These zones, which often include casinos, bars and brothels, represent high-risk locales for SECTT but, as the Southeast Asia report points out, “there has been very little research on the situation for vulnerable and/or exploited children in these locations.”⁷³⁸

The Global Study has confirmed the urgent need for far more research on the use (or rather mis-use) of information communication technologies (ICTs) related to travel and tourism. The North America report notes that the use of ICTs “adds a new layer of complexity to the understanding of offending. The specific category of “solicitation offenders” who groom their victim online and in some cases, travel to meet them in real life, remains under-researched.⁷³⁹ Again, this is an area where almost every aspect needs further analysis, including: the overall scale and nature of the online environment for abuse – from online grooming and solicitation to direct SECTT – and the growing impact of ICTs on social norms, given the rise of social media and the massive growth in access to the internet in even remote parts of the world. In addition, efforts to end SECTT would benefit from more research on the specific ways in which offenders gather and share information (and who provides it in the first place) and how different kinds of offending feed into and fuel each other, such as child abuse imagery and pornography, live webcam sex and SECTT. As the Europe report notes: “more research is needed to understand the correlation between these phenomena.”⁷⁴⁰

Finally, to bolster a more proactive approach, research could shed light on how the channels used by offenders

can be turned against them, such as the impact of efforts to ‘follow the money’ and disrupt online financial transactions destined for SECTT intermediaries.

Legal protection and law enforcement

Global Study research suggests that offenders’ assumption of impunity for their actions underlies many instances of SECTT. While Chapter 3 confirms that commitments and laws are in place at both the international and national levels that should, in theory, offer some protection to children at risk of SECTT, what is less clear is whether and how well these pledges and laws protect children in reality. This is a major area for future research.

Case studies describing successful efforts to translate legislation into law enforcement would be helpful, as would studies of failed efforts, pinpointing practical and other obstacles that hamper effective implementation of laws, exchange of vital information, under-reporting, corruption and the lack of cooperation across different agencies and jurisdictions.

The response: show what works

There is a pressing need to identify and share examples of what works to combat SECTT, whether it is a particular trend (such as the abuse of volun-tourism) or prevalence in a specific location. It is also important to have some idea of what success looks like, through the development of criteria and indicators that make it possible to measure the impact of interventions.

As the Europe report notes, however, “existing good practices continue to be often derived from anecdotal assessments rather than on accurate data, longitudinal studies, or what children consider effective. The monitoring and evaluation of interventions, based on research that can help in baseline setting and identification of concrete indicators and targets, should therefore be enhanced so that the success or failure of interventions against SECTT and the number of children victimised or helped can be transparently and reliably measured.”⁷⁴¹

According to the South Asia report, “evaluations should be used to investigate the effectiveness of a programme to achieve what the project design set out to do. Adequate monitoring and evaluation efforts will enhance the quality of programmes addressing SECTT. It will further aid in decisions of whether or not to replicate projects. [...] To comprehensively address SECTT, programmes need to be designed and implemented with research components such as evaluations and monitoring already built in. To do so effectively adequate funding is essential, and needs to be incorporated into the programme design from the beginning.”⁷⁴²

The Global Study has provided many examples of responses to SECTT over the years, from the international frameworks that have emerged since the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in 1996, to the frontline interventions by grassroots organisations and the travel and tourism sectors that are having an impact today.

In short, what seems to work is a comprehensive approach that mobilises a wide range of stakeholders – from government ministries to the general public – backed by solid evidence, awareness raising and adequate resources. Countries that have addressed SECTT as part of a broader response to child sexual exploitation, with a focus on both prevention and response, seem to have had the greatest success. Efforts supported by bilateral and multilateral organisations and networks have been crucial, and international and regional cooperation has helped to overcome a reluctance to acknowledge the problem. But local ownership of the fight against SECTT is also vital: it is impossible to overstate the importance of local prevention, local reporting and local responses.

There has also been an increased focus on the situational and domestic offenders who account for most cases of SECTT, and on business travellers as well as tourists – a welcome shift from traditional approaches that focused solely on international preferential offenders.

Research partners

When looking at who is engaging in research, it is clear “... that civil society organisations and international NGOs have been the main contributors to knowledge building on the issue.”⁷⁴³ The bulk of research over the past decade undertaken outside peer-reviewed academic circles, and is often, therefore, unscientific. Research collaboration with key partners (academia, NGOs, private sector, government and UN agencies) would strengthen methodology and add value, providing a stronger evidence base and more scientific/justifiable analysis. Importantly, the involvement of children in research would lead to more accurate findings and recommendations and reflect their absolute right to genuine participation.

According to the South Asia report, support to build the research capacity of NGOs (including collaboration between professional researchers and NGO research teams) could help to generate the better-quality data needed by policymakers.⁷⁴⁴ The Pacific report proposed key areas for partnership, including a mapping of the different organisations working on child rights and joint qualitative and quantitative research by relevant UN agencies and NGOs on child protection in travel and tourism.⁷⁴⁵ At the very least, the potential research partnerships need to be identified.

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the existence of a bilateral treaty. Committee on the Rights of the Child – OPSC, “Concluding Observations: Thailand”, CRC/C/OPSC/THA/CO/1, 21 February 2012, paras. 29-30.

Germany: The Committee regrets that the State party’s legislation does not explicitly allow extraterritorial jurisdiction for all the cases referred to in article 4, paragraph 2, of the Optional Protocol. The Committee also regrets that jurisdiction over the offences under the Optional Protocol necessitates double criminality. . . . The Committee recommends that the State party take steps to ensure that its domestic legislation enables it to establish and exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction, including extraterritorial jurisdiction without the criterion of double criminality, over the crimes under the Optional Protocol, and where necessary, to use the Optional Protocol as a legal basis for extradition, in conformity with article 5 of the Optional Protocol. CRC-OPSC, “Concluding Observations: Germany,” CRC/C/OPSC/DEU/CO/1, 24 February 2014, paras. 29-30.

Australia: The Committee notes with satisfaction that the State party exercises extraterritorial jurisdiction in cases where Australian citizens engage in child sex tourism abroad. However, the Committee notes with concern that extraterritorial jurisdiction only extends to crimes where Australian citizens or permanent residents engage in, facilitate or benefit from sexual activity with children under 16 years of age, while for children between the ages of 16 and 18, extraterritorial jurisdiction is applied only in cases where the defendant is in a position of trust or authority. . . . The Committee recommends that the State party revise its legislation to ensure jurisdiction over all offences covered by the Optional protocol, including sex tourism where child victims are between 16 and 18 years of age.” CRC-OPSC, “Concluding Observations: Australia”, CRC/C/OPSC/AUS/CO/1, 24 September 2012, paras. 30-31.

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- ⁷⁰⁶ UNWTO, “15 Years of the UNWTO World Tourism Network”.
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- ⁷⁰⁸ Partners from different sectors participated in several European countries (Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Austria, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Spain, France, Italy) and six countries in the global South (Brazil, Gambia, Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal and South Africa).
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⁷¹⁸ Pruneda and Yeo, “Regional Report – East Asia”.

⁷¹⁹ Farrington, “Regional Report – Southeast Asia”.

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⁷²³ PAR is a methodology in which the researcher and participants study situations to understand them better and then change the situation. In this sense, it is not simply an exercise in gathering knowledge, but also in immediately using that knowledge to instigate positive changes, at the same time empowering those who participate.

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⁷²⁸ Altamura, “Regional Report – Europe”.

⁷²⁹ Farrington, “Regional Report – Southeast Asia”.

⁷³⁰ Altamura, “Regional Report – Europe”.

⁷³¹ Crispin and Mann, “Regional Report – Sub-Saharan Africa”.

⁷³² Farrington, “Regional Report – Southeast Asia”.

⁷³³ Altamura, “Regional Report – Europe”.

⁷³⁴ Farrington “Regional Report - Southeast Asia” and Pruneda and Yeo “Regional Report - East Asia”

⁷³⁵ See, for example, Altamura, “Regional Report – Europe”.

⁷³⁶ Farrington, “Regional Report – Southeast Asia”.

⁷³⁷ Crispin and Mann, “Regional Report – Sub-Saharan Africa”.

⁷³⁸ Farrington, “Regional Report – Southeast Asia”.

⁷³⁹ Beaulieu, “Regional Report – North America”.

⁷⁴⁰ Altamura, “Regional Report – Europe”.

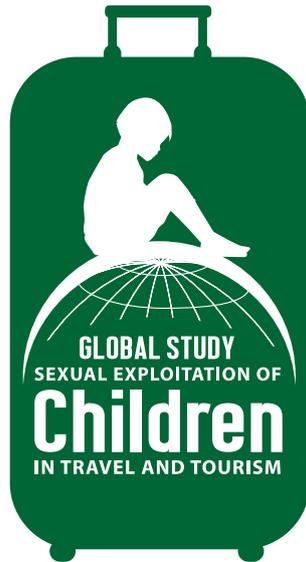
⁷⁴¹ Ibid.

⁷⁴² Wallin, “Regional Report – South Asia”.

⁷⁴³ Altamura, “Regional Report – Europe”.

⁷⁴⁴ Wallin, “Regional Report – South Asia”.

⁷⁴⁵ Pesquer, “Regional Report – Pacific”.



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