Supplementary report on
“Sexual Exploitation of Children in Sri Lanka”
to the initial report of Sri Lanka on the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Submitted by
PEaCE / ECPAT Sri Lanka and ECPAT International

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Launched in 1991, Protecting Environment and Children Everywhere (PEaCE) is a non-profit organization, which is the Sri Lankan counterpart of ECPAT- a global network to end Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Prevention of sexual exploitation of children being its primary focus, PEaCE constantly strives to ensure that children from marginalized and vulnerable backgrounds in Sri Lanka are protected from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Whilst ensuring that the Rights of the children coming from these marginalized communities are safeguarded and upheld, the organization is aiming at creating a safe environment for every child regardless of their race, religion, gender or creed.

In our efforts to build a network of contacts focusing on Child Rights Protection and comprising of State and Non-State actors; PEaCE nurtures collaborations among civil society activists, government officials particularly the law enforcement officers, teachers and various other stakeholders. The focal activities of PEaCE include; awareness raising of children, parents and the public, capacity building of public sector officials through awareness and training, legal case monitoring and counselling, lobbying and advocacy to influence the National Policy, research and data collection.

Maintaining close relations with the grassroots level, we consider, is essential to sustain our work and PEaCE therefore, conducts various programmes for the benefit of the community we are engaged with, from holding medical camps/ monthly medical clinics for children and their families to conducting afternoon classes for vulnerable children from identified localities in order to keep them occupied in an environment free of abuse.

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ECPAT International is a global network of civil society organisations working for the eradication of all forms of sexual exploitation of children. For the past 26 years, ECPAT has acted as the international watchdog, monitoring States’ response to sexual exploitation of children, and advocating for robust international measures to protect children from sexual exploitation. ECPAT International currently has 102 network members operating in 93 countries.
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Context of this supplementary report

1. In 2006, the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) ratified the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC) and thus committed explicitly to combat sexual exploitation of children (SEC). In September 2015, through the adoption of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, the GoSL re-committed explicitly to eliminate all forms of violence against children, including sexual abuse and exploitation.¹

2. The present report is supplementary to the initial report of Sri Lanka on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and is based on ECPAT International’s and PEaCE’s research for the period 2006-2018. In 2016, PEaCE facilitated a consultation process that ultimately allowed 207 Sri Lankan children from all 25 districts to formulate recommendations to the President.² Some of them are included in this submission and marked with the symbol Ç.

3. The scope of this submission is limited to SEC and its different manifestations, including exploitation of children in prostitution,³ online child sexual exploitation (OCSE), child sexual abuse materials (CSAM),⁴ child trafficking for sexual purposes and sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism (SECTT)⁵ and child, early and forced marriage (CEFM).

Status and developments regarding sexual exploitation of children in Sri Lanka

4. Sri Lanka is a semi-presidential unitary republic. Executive power is exercised by the President, who serves as the head of State and of Government; while legislative power is held by a unicameral Parliament. In 2017, the country’s population reached approximately 20.877 million inhabitants,⁶ of which around 6.020 million are under 18.⁷

5. Sri Lanka is the world’s 65th largest economy.⁸ Even though it enjoys a high human development rate (0.766 as of 2015),⁹ 4.1% of the population (843,913 persons) lives below the national poverty line according to the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs.¹⁰ Poverty seems to disproportionately affect young people, as 706,902 persons under 19, 79.2% of which lived in a rural area, were in a situation of poverty in 2012/2013;¹¹ and therefore particularly vulnerable to SEC.

6. Within the country, there were more than 124 mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 people in 2016, and the number of fixed broadband subscriptions increased from 22,895 in 2006 to 892,184 in 2016. Over 32% of the population now uses the internet, compared to around 2.5% in 2006.¹² This rapid rise increases the risks associated with grooming, OSCE and the distribution of CSAM, notably due to the disproportionate number of young mobile phone consumers.¹³ Even though no solid statistical research allows to assess its scope, the production of CSAM continues to occur in the Sri Lankan sex market. Travelling sex offenders are often linked with the production of CSAM for both private and commercial purposes.

7. Sri Lanka is primarily a source and destination, and to a lesser extent, a transit country with regard to trafficking of children for sexual exploitation and exploitation of children in prostitution. However, there is no available and up-to-date data that would allow to assess the exact scope of SEC at the national level. In contrast to other South Asian countries, a distinct
characteristic of SEC in Sri Lanka is that organised crime groups target boys more than girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation, notably in coastal areas in the context of travel and tourism. Girls, on the other hand, are prostituted to the local population, mainly in unregistered hotels, guesthouses, karaoke bars, massage parlours and brothels. PEAeCE notes that reporting of SEC cases remains low largely because of the stigma attached to the victim, reluctance to get involved in court proceedings, and/or pressure from influential people to ignore the offence. In addition, there have been rumours of bribery and corruption involved.

8. Data from the Tourism Development Authority revealed a significant increase in the number of tourists that visited Sri Lanka since the end of the civil war in 2009. Indeed, 2,116,407 tourists had entered the country in 2017, which represents an increase of 3.2% when compared to 2016, and of around 472.5% when compared to 2009. The growth of the tourism industry has led to a growing demand for commercial sex in Sri Lanka, contributing to an increase in SECTT. Even though its scope cannot be assessed due to the lack of updated data, the country continues to be notorious as an easy destination for SECTT, mostly because of the weak enforcement of laws pertaining to SEC. Sixteen stakeholders from the international tourism industry with operations in the country signed ECPAT’s Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism; but no local business did.

9. ECPAT’s Global Study on SECTT confirmed the high influx of paedophiles and/or child sex offenders to Sri Lanka. The strong link between SEC of boys and travelling sex offenders can be seen as an anomaly in a region where local offenders are usually more common. Offenders tend to be male and often relatives or members of the victim’s community, except around tourist destinations where foreign child sex offenders are the main perpetrators. Data shows that the average age of a boy at the time of his first sexual encounter (or abuse) is 14 years old, and that 20% of boys enter the sex industry due to economic reasons, typically from age 11 to 17. On the other hand, one third of them enter it due to peer influence or social pressure. Cases of young boys being sold to adults by their families were also documented, along with cases of parents encouraging their children to enter the sex industry (although this appears to be more prevalent with girls).

10. Data from UNICEF for the period 2010-2016 indicates that CEFM remains a serious issue in the country, as 12% of the women aged 20 to 24 were first married or in union before 18 years old; including 2% before 15 years old. As part of Sri Lankan culture, girls are expected to be subservient to their husband, and actions of independence or autonomy are often met with harsh criticism and harassment. In addition the bride usually leaves her family to live at the groom's house. By displacing children from their places of origin, CEFM creates the conditions for their exposure to various forms of abuse and exploitation, and this is why ECPAT regards CEFM as both a factor enhancing the vulnerability to and a manifestation of SEC.

General measures of implementation

Policy and overall strategy

11. The GoSL did not adopt a specific National Action Plan to address the issue of SEC. However, the Policy Framework and National Plan of Action to address Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016 - 2020 (NPA SGBV) contains several provisions on SEC. It was adopted in June 2016 following a participatory process that involved government agencies, civil society
groups, local and international NGOs, trade unions, stakeholders from the private sector, UN agencies and researchers. The NPA SGBV features specific actions to combat and prevent SEC and child trafficking, as well as CEFM and cyber violence against children. It allocates a specific budget to each action, and establishes timeframes and clear indicators to assess their level of implementation.

12. The National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2017-2021 features several provisions that could benefit SEC victims, such as the establishment of a special unit in the Attorney General’s Department to expedite handling of sexual violence cases. It also provides for the development of guidelines to ensure proper coordination between agencies in conducting investigations/prosecutions of sexual crimes; and in protecting the victim.

13. The National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) is currently developing, with the cooperation of civil society, a National Child Protection Policy that could potentially enhance protection for SEC victims. Even though the final draft had not been made available at the time of drafting, it should focus on the prevention of and protection from child abuse, as well as on providing assistance and rehabilitation services to victims. In February 2018, the National Child Protection Authority informed that the final version of the NCPP was almost ready and expected to be submitted to the Cabinet by June 2018. However, with the end of June in sight, there has been no news regarding this as of yet.

Coordination and evaluation

14. The NCPA, which is under the purview of Ministry of Child Development and Women’s Affairs, is the agency responsible for the prevention of child abuse and the protection and rehabilitation of victims. It is therefore competent to coordinate and monitor actions against all manifestations of SEC. It also serves as an advisor to the government for matters pertaining to children’s rights and maintains a database of cases of violence against children. Even though its mandate and staff have enabled it to play a proactive role in responding to some problems linked to SEC, a general lack of resources and capacity to coordinate with other stakeholders have significantly limited its impact. In February 2018, a spokesperson from the NCPA Association of Employees informed that three executive committee meetings for 2018 had not been held. As a result, the treasury was unable to allocate funds for NCPA projects, which affected the payment of employees, the investigations of child abuse complaints and other important activities.

15. The Ministry of Justice is the lead government agency responsible for the coordination, implementation and monitoring of all the initiatives taken to tackle human trafficking, notably for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In 2010, it established an Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force to improve interagency coordination and oversee anti-trafficking efforts. However, governmental coordination on human trafficking-related issues remains weak, and it has been reported that the members of the Task Force do not meet regularly.

16. Article 40 of the Charter on the Rights of the Child establishes a dedicated Committee to monitor its implementation, raise awareness about its provisions, and promote legislative reforms regarding children’s rights. It is composed of six persons appointed by the President, of the Secretaries of seven ministries with competences in the area of children’s rights, and of
the Commissioner of Probation and Child Care Services. No information regarding the Committee’s activities and impact were available at the time of drafting.

Prevention of the sale of the children, child prostitution and child pornography (art.9 (par. 1 and 2))

Measures adopted to prevent offences prohibited under the Optional Protocol

17. Although the Sri Lankan government and civil society have taken steps to prevent and raise awareness about SEC, these efforts have not been coordinated and have been neither systematic nor sustainable. PEAaCE pointed out the need to cooperate with the private sector, particularly from the tourism and IT industries, in order to involve their resources, expertise and influence in the design and implementation of prevention strategies. In December 2017, PEAaCE conducted a National Consultation on Advancing Responsible Business Practices on Child Protection from SECTT, which brought together 59 stakeholders representing leading hotels and travel organisations, government authorities and international NGOs or organisations such as the ILO. In January 2018, PEAaCE conducted a Follow-Up and Action-Planning workshop that was attended by 28 stakeholders to discuss concrete actions to effectively prevent SECTT.31 As a result a Steering Committee of 7 voluntary representatives was formed. The GoSL is expected to step up efforts regarding this matter, since the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority committed to eradicate SECTT by 2020.32

18. More efforts are needed to effectively prevent OCSE and the production, distribution, sale, and possession of CSAM. Some small interventions have taken place, such as cyber safety programmes for kids, as well as the organisation of a yearly Cyber Security Week (CSW) by the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA).33 Other steps have included bans on several “child pornography” websites and a general ban on accessing pornographic material from a mobile phone in 2010. In addition, internet service providers were asked to control the distribution of CSAM in 2009. However, these measures proved to be unsuccessful, as most “child pornography” websites remain accessible, providing pictures, videos and sometimes even contact information of girls.

19. The GoSL does not have a sex offender registry that could help preventing repeat offences by well-known child sex offenders. In 2013, the National Child Protection Agency declared that it was making arrangements to create a database with the names of the persons convicted of sexual abuse,34 but nothing indicates that it has done so. A 2013 draft version of the National Child Protection Policy pointed out the need to create a Child Offender’s Registry,35 but this recommendation has been deleted from the 2017 draft.

Prohibition of the sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution and related matters (arts. 3, 4(2) and (3), 5 and 7)

Existing criminal or penal laws and regulations

20. The provisions contained within the Sri Lankan Penal Code and legislation are reasonably comprehensive in addressing SEC. In 1992, the GoSL adopted a Charter on the Rights of the Child. Its article 34 states that the State shall take measures to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation, and in particular to prevent the exploitative use of children in prostitution or pornographic performances. Since then, several amendments have been made to the existing legislation to align laws with the principles and provisions laid down in the CRC and its
Optional Protocols. However, the biggest obstacle in the fight against SEC is not the legal framework *per se*, but its weak enforcement.

21. Section 360A (1) punishes whoever procures, or attempts to procure, any person, whether male or female of whatever age (whether with or without the consent of such person), to become a prostitute within or outside Sri Lanka with prison sentences from two to ten years. In addition, sections 360A (2) and 360A (4) specifically punish the procurement of any children under 16 for the purpose of illicit sexual intercourse, respectively outside and within Sri Lanka, with the same prison sentence.

22. Section 360B (1) of the Penal Code defines and punishes the offence of SEC with prison sentences from five to twenty years; while 360B (2) explicitly defines the term “child” as a person under 18 for the purpose of section 360B. Its provisions are quite comprehensive, as they apply to whoever (a) knowingly permits any child to remain in any premises to participate in any form of sexual activity or in any obscene or indecent exhibition; (b) acts as a procurer of a child for the purposes of any form of sexual abuse; (c) induces a person to be a client of a child for any form of sexual abuse; (d) takes advantage of his/her influence over a child to procure him/her for any form of sexual abuse; (e) threatens or uses violence towards a child to procure him/her for any form of sexual abuse; and (d) gives benefits to a child or his parents with intent to procure him/her for any form of sexual abuse.

23. Section 360C (1) (c) of the Penal Code defines the offence of *child trafficking for sexual exploitation*; while section 360C (2) punishes it with prison sentences from three to twenty years. Its provisions apply to whoever recruits, transports, transfers, harbours or receives a child, or does any other act whether with or without the consent of such child for the purpose of prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, or any other act which constitutes an offence under any law. The term “child” is defined as a person under 18 for the purpose of this whole section (360C (3)).

24. Section 360E (1) of the Penal Code provides for the criminalisation of clients, as it punishes whoever, whether within Sri Lanka or from outside Sri Lanka, solicits by whatever means a person under 18 for the purpose of sexual abuse with prison sentences up to ten years. In addition, section 363(e) qualify as rape any sexual activity with a girl under 16. The penalty for rape ranges from seven to twenty years in prison (section 364 (1)). It is the view of PEAЕE and ECPAT International that this age of consent for sexual activity is too low to effectively protect children against SEC. Moreover, the provisions of section 363(e) do not apply to boys, even though they are the primary victims of SEC in the country.

25. Even though section 286A (1) of the Penal Code *de facto* criminalises “child pornography” and CSAM-related offences quite comprehensively, it does not provide a definition that incorporates all the elements laid down in the OPSC. Indeed, it punishes whoever hires, employs, assists, persuades, uses, induces or coerces any child to appear or perform in any obscene or indecent photograph or film; or sells, distributes, publishes or has in his possession any such photograph or film with prison sentences from two to ten years. The same penalty also applies to parents or legal guardians that allow their child to be employed for the above-mentioned purposes; and to persons who take or assist in taking any indecent photograph of a child. The term “child” is also defined as a person under 18 for the purposes of this whole
section (286A (4)). These provisions do not apply to “virtual child pornography”, as section 286A specifically requires the participation of children for CSAM to be regarded as such.

26. PEaCE and ECPAT International remain particularly concerned by sections 365 and 365A of the Penal Code, which punish consensual same-sex sexual relations (described as “carnal intercourse against the order of nature”) and the vaguely-defined offence of “acts of gross indecency” with prison sentences up to respectively. These sections feature heavier penalties if these offences are committed by an adult against a child under 16 (from ten to twenty years in prison), in which case the latter is regarded as a victim. Therefore, even though these sections can theoretically be used to combat certain forms of SEC, children aged 16 to 18 remain at risk of being treated as offenders instead of victims.

27. Sri Lanka’s General Marriages Ordinance and Kandyan Law set 18 as the legal age of marriage for both male and female, but their provisions do not apply to the Muslim community. The 1951 Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA) does not specify any minimum age for marriage, but its section 23 states that a special permission from an Islamic magistrate is required if the girl involved is under 12. In 2009, The GoSL appointed a committee consisting of 18 members to work on amending the MMDA. However, its first report, which was released in January 2018, was only signed by half of its members due to a lack of consensus on several key issues. Even though all the members agreed on the necessity to set a minimum age of marriage, they could not choose between the following options:

- Setting 18 as the minimum age of marriage for both males and females while allowing Islamic magistrates to authorise marriages of children above 16 (selected proposal endorsed by the nine members who signed the report).
- Setting 18 as the minimum age of marriage for males and 16 for females while allowing Islamic magistrates to authorise marriages of girls under 16.

Regardless of the outcome of the revision process (if any), none of these propositions would ensure a satisfactory protection against CEFM for Sri Lankan Muslim girls. This is particularly concerning in the light of the fact that marital rape is not a crime in Sri Lanka, and that section 363(e) of the Penal Code still retains 12 as the legal age of consent for married girls. The GoSL was expected to criminalise marital rape in the first half of 2018, but it failed to do so.

Extraterritorial jurisdiction and extradition

28. Section 2 (2) of the Penal Code provides for systematic extraterritorial jurisdiction over SEC-related offences. It states that nationals of Sri Lanka shall be liable to punishment under the Penal Code and not otherwise, for any act or omission contrary to its provisions committed outside Sri Lanka, whether or not they enjoy diplomatic immunity. However, these provisions do not apply to permanent residents.

29. Extradition is governed by Extradition Law No. of 1977, as amended by Act 48 of 1999, and by the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act of 2002. Under these instruments, extradition may be provided without a treaty to Commonwealth countries, whereas a treaty is required for the others. The provisions laid down in bilateral extradition treaties to which Sri Lanka is a party are relatively standard when it comes to the definition of extraditable offences. For instance, the 1999 Extradition treaty between Sri Lanka and the United States defines them as
offences that are punishable with prison sentences of at least one year under the laws of both parties. A specific SEC manifestation can therefore only qualify as extraditable if it is duly criminalised in both States. As for Commonwealth countries the offence must be specifically listed in the Schedule to the law and also respect the requirements of double criminality and minimum gravity. However, even though the Schedule includes some SEC-related crimes, it does not cover all its manifestations.

Protection of the rights of child victims (art. 8 and 9(3) and (4))

Measures adopted to protect the rights and interests of child victims of offences prohibited under the Optional Protocol

30. The Police Unit of the NCPA, composed of 25 officers, is competent to investigate SEC-related crimes, while its Cyber Watch Unit (CWU) handles complaints related to OCSE. The CWU has the power to block porn sites, provide counselling to the victims and trigger legal proceedings. Overall, the NCPA received 8,548 complaints of child abuse from January to 8th December 2017, including 481 cases of sexual molestation, 284 cases of serious sexual abuse and 322 cases of rape of girls. The NCPA also operates a 24-hour helpline (1929) that can be used to report instances of SEC. Despite these mechanisms, reporting and prosecution rates remain low due notably to social stigma and official complicity. Furthermore, the Sri Lankan National Police lacks the technical expertise and resources to properly investigate SEC-related crimes. Even though the Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force adopted Standard Operating Procedures for the Identification, Protection and Referral of victims of human trafficking to protection services in 2015, the GoSL failed to take the appropriate steps to ensure their implementation.

31. Impunity for SEC-related crimes remains a serious issue, as most of the perpetrators never face consequences; and those who do are generally condemned to sentences below the legal minimum. The majority of suspects are usually send away on bail due to the critical backlog in the justice system. A UN study conducted in September 2013 showed that almost 96.5% of Sri Lankan male rapists had not suffered any legal consequences: only 3.2% of them had been arrested and 2.2% convicted. Even though 2036 cases of rape were reported in 2016, including 49 instances of SEC, not a single suspect was convicted. Further measures are therefore urgently needed to improve the efficiency of the justice system, as well as specific training to make sure that judge and prosecutors understand the complexity and characteristics of SEC.

32. In March 2015, the GoSL adopted the Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act. Its section 25 allows courts to adopt all the necessary measures to protect the rights of children and to ensure the best interests of child victims of crime or witnesses. Furthermore, its section 11 established a National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses to, inter alia, provide necessary assistance to victims of crime and witnesses, including appropriate measures for their treatment, reparation, restitution and rehabilitation (section 13(1) (e)). Despite these developments, victim protection remains inadequate, and some SEC victims were reportedly arrested and held alongside criminals in government detention centres. However, the GoSL commenced a survey to identify them and refer them to rehabilitation services.
33. In September 2014, the Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians and Plan Sri Lanka developed, in cooperation with several government agencies, a “National Guideline for the Management of Child Abuse and Neglect”. It aims at providing a systematic, well integrated and well directed management and follow up plan for the victims of child abuse, in order to minimise its short and long term adverse effects. It also helps health practitioners to detect victims of exploitation by listing warning signs. In November 2016, the GoSL reportedly drafted national guidelines for treatment, reparation, restitution and rehabilitation of all crime victims, but ECPAT International was unable to access their content. Despite these important developments, efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate SEC victims have so far been insufficient, and nothing indicates that governmental child-specific rehabilitation centres provide tailored services to SEC victims.

34. In early 2007, sixteen local banks launched the B3CPI campaign to eradicate child pornography in cooperation with the Sri Lanka Banks’ Association and the Central Bank. The coalition pledged to cut off the funding of pornographic websites that exploit children by tracking them through credit card payments, denying them access to their financial services and reporting them to international credit card companies. It also launched a dedicated hotline (2480500) to provide information about and receive reports of “child pornography”. In April 2007, the Central Bank’s Financial Intelligence Unit issued a circular to inform all commercial banks of their obligation to report any customer, transaction or merchant involved in offences against children. However, there is no updated information on the actual impact of this initiative.

35. Section 365C of the Penal Code protects the right to privacy of SEC victims. It punishes whoever prints or publishes the name, or any matter which may make known the identity of any person against whom an offence under sections 345, 360A, 360B, 363, 364A, 365, 365A and 365B of the Penal Code is alleged or found to have been committed with prison sentences up to two years.

36. Several provisions laid down in the Penal Code make it mandatory to report SEC-related offences. Sections 286A (2) and 286A (3) punish photograph or film developers who do not report CSAM to the authorities with prison sentences up to two years. The same penalty applies to persons who, despite knowing that premises under their responsibility are used for the commission of child abuse, fail to report it to the police (section 286C). In addition, section 286B states that persons who provide a service by means of a computer shall take all such steps as are necessary to ensure that such computer facility is not used for the commission of child sexual abuse; and report all corresponding offences that they know of. Any person that breaches these obligations can face up to two years in prison (section 286B (3)). It is also mandatory for internet service providers to report suspected CSAM to the authorities.

Recommendations to the GoSL

General measures of implementation

- Conduct a nationwide assessment on all SEC manifestations to develop evidence based policies and strategies;
- Make sure that the final draft of the National Child Protection Policy provides for concrete measures to effectively prevent SEC, including through the creation of a Child Offender’s Registry, and to provide tailored assistance and rehabilitation service to victims; and take the appropriate steps to speed up its adoption by the Cabinet and allocate enough resources to allow
for its full implementation;

• Allocate enough resources to allow the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) to fulfil its mandate.

• Establish a dedicated interagency working group on SEC and on the implementation of the OPSC.

• Adopt a specific national action plan to tackle all the manifestations of SEC; or at least make sure that all the offences covered by the OPSC are addressed by the National Action Plans on Sexual and Gender-based violence and for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights.

• Allocate sufficient budget and resources for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Action Plans on Sexual and Gender-based violence and for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights.

Prevention

• Include awareness raising of children through schools and strengthen their coping mechanisms for SEC situations.

• Invest in child empowering prevention programmes to address the root causes and multiple vulnerabilities that place children, families and communities at risk;

• Allocate enough funding to raise public awareness about SEC, specifically among vulnerable groups, citizens and visitors;

• Conduct nationwide awareness-raising campaigns on the dangers of the internet for children at the school and community level; and cooperate with the private sector to block, remove and report online child sexual exploitation and abuse content;

• Put in place mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of awareness-raising and prevention operations;

• Establish government-regulated child protection standards for the tourism industry and promote ECPAT's Code of Conduct actively among companies.

• Create a child sex offender registry that complies with international standards on confidentiality and privacy to help preventing SEC.

Prohibition

• Amend the Penal Code to expand extraterritorial jurisdiction to SEC offences committed abroad by permanent residents;

• Amend the legal framework pertaining to extradition to explicitly recognise all SEC manifestations as extraditable offences and remove the dual criminality requirement;

• Abolish articles 365 and 365A of the Penal Code to prevent boy victims of SEC from being treated as offenders instead of victims;

• Establish 18 as the legal age of sexual consent for both boys and girls.

• Amend the Penal Code to include a legal definition of ‘child pornography’ in line with the provisions of the OPSC;

• Amend the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act to set 18 as the legal age of marriage without any possible exception; and take the appropriate steps to criminalise marital rape.

Protection

• Fund and properly staff the child helpline to report SEC cases 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, as well as promote the helpline among the public;

• Establish shelters for SEC victims where children – boys and girls – are provided with
rehabilitation and social reintegration services;

- Allow children to testify outside the courtroom, or at least not in the courtroom where the accused is present;
- Prioritise capacity building of the justice sector in victim and witness protection;
- Deny bail for an accused when the Medical Certificate shows sexual abuse of the victim, especially if it is a minor;
- Build capacity and provide resources for the justice sector to investigate and prosecute all SEC-related crimes and fast track SGBV and/or SEC cases in the justice system to end impunity and provide access to justice for the victims;
- Take the appropriate measures to make sure that SEC victims are not treated as criminals and systematically referred to protection services; and make sure that all SEC victims currently held in governmental detention facilities are freed and referred to protection services;
- Establish dedicated police units to investigate SEC-related crimes; and make sure that they have enough resources to fulfil their mission;
- Allocate enough resources to ensure the full implementation of the Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act.

1 Sustainable Development Goal Targets 5.2.8.7 and 16.2
2 The handing over of the Declaration “The World We Want” to the President took place at PEaCE’s 25th Anniversary Celebration on 20 November 2016. With the approval of the Department of Probation and Child Care Services, PEaCE communicated with Children’s Councils in all 25 Administrative Districts to generate ideas from 207 children for the Declaration.
8 The World Bank, GDP (current US$); All countries and Economies, accessed on 7 June 2018, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD.
15 *Idem*. According to the TIP report police officers reportedly accept bribes to permit brothels to operate.


21 *Idem*.


23 *Idem*.

24 *Idem*.


