



Combating Child Sex Tourism:

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



ECPAT International is a global network of organisations and individuals working together to end child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. It seeks to encourage the world community to ensure that children everywhere enjoy their fundamental rights free and secure from all forms of exploitation.



Combating Child Sex Tourism: QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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What is Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children?

The commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a grave violation of children's rights and constitutes an affront to our collective dignity. CSEC is defined as the *“sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons,”* in the Declaration and Agenda for Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.¹ It is a process through which *“the child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object”* and *“which constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children, and amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery.”* First identified as a global concern at the Stockholm World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in 1996, CSEC is a complex problem that requires very specific interventions and the full attention of the world community.

CSEC can take many forms, each with equally devastating consequences for children and the communities in which it occurs. The main forms of CSEC are child prostitution, child pornography and trafficking of children for sexual purposes,

while child sex tourism and some instances of child marriage can be considered as specific forms of child prostitution. It occurs for a wide variety of reasons, such as wealth discrepancies, demand for child sex, gender inequalities, armed conflict, social attitudes, or extreme consumerism. No country in the world is immune to the various forms of CSEC, although individual experience and responses may differ.

One form of CSEC that has received considerable media and public attention over the past 15 years is child sex tourism or CST. It is sometimes referred to as sexual exploitation of children in tourism or SECT. Child sex tourism occurs in multiple tourism destinations and even in places which do not have any real tourism infrastructure. It is one of the greatest tests of an increasingly connected world and an important challenge to the ever-expanding travel and tourism industries. The purpose of this booklet is to give the traveller, the tourism professional, the government official, the interested NGO staff member, or simply the concerned individual, an overview of child sex tourism and what can be done to combat it.

What is ECPAT International?



The ECPAT acronym stands for **End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes**

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ECPAT is a network of organisations and individuals working together to eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). At present, ECPAT affiliates and national groups are present in more than 70 countries, undertaking a variety of programmes against CSEC, such as: focusing on advocacy efforts to raise awareness on the different forms of CSEC; engaging in policy formulation with national and international authorities; providing care and protection services for child victims of sexual exploitation; and conducting awareness-raising and sensitisation programmes with vulnerable children or communities. As a united network, ECPAT International seeks to encourage the world community to ensure that children everywhere enjoy their fundamental rights free from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

The issue of child sex tourism has been a central focus of the ECPAT network since its inception in 1990. The ECPAT

network began as a campaign against child sex tourism, following the release of research findings on the issue of child prostitution and Asian tourism in Thailand, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. At a meeting in Chiang Mai, in northern Thailand, concerned individuals and agencies took stock of the dire situation described by the research findings and launched a campaign entitled 'End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism' (ECPAT).

By 1996, ECPAT had extended to other countries in Asia and to countries in Europe and the Americas. Although the acronym remained the same, the full name became End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes. ECPAT as a campaign had successfully expanded and mobilised public attention, while governments around the world began to take notice of the issue and NGOs were becoming involved. The momentum of the movement increased until it was decided

to convene the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, in Stockholm, Sweden in 1996, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This landmark event witnessed the commitment of 122 governments to forming "a global partnership against commercial sexual exploitation of children" and to developing a national plan of action to tackle the issue in their respective countries. This became known as the *Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action*. Crucially, it was also decided to change ECPAT from a campaign to a registered non-governmental organisation whose international secretariat would be located in Bangkok, Thailand.

Five years later, in 2001, the Second World Congress took place in Yokohama, Japan. The number of governments represented (134) was greater than that for the First World Congress, (122) and the number of participants (over 3,000) was almost double that for Stockholm. With particularly strong emphasis on youth representation and participation in efforts against commercial sexual exploitation, the Second World Congress was successful in mobilising partners from different sectors and bringing together multi-stakeholder

partnerships: governments, NGOs, law enforcement, the travel and tourism industry, international development agencies, and representatives of civil society.

Today, the ECPAT International Secretariat and the ECPAT International network continue to work actively against all forms of CSEC. While much of the network works on preventing child sex tourism through campaigns, research, reporting systems, and collaboration with the tourism industry, many ECPAT groups also focus on the other forms of CSEC, namely trafficking of children for sexual purposes, child pornography and child prostitution. The network partners work with appropriate agencies and organisations around the world to ensure that there is continuous and effective protection of children from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

The Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action calls for action from states, all sectors of society, and national, regional, and international organisations, against the commercial sexual exploitation of children. In particular, it calls for action to be undertaken in Cooperation and Coordination, Prevention, Protection, Recovery and Reintegration and Youth Participation.

What is Child Sex Tourism?

Child sex tourism is 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. CST 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.

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Child sex tourism involves the exchange of cash, clothes, food or some other form of consideration to a child or to a third party for sexual contact. CST occurs in multiple venues, from brothels in red-light districts to beaches or five-star hotels and in urban, rural or coastal settings. It can occur over a long period of time, for example, where there is a long 'grooming' process, during which a child sex offender befriends a vulnerable child and obtains his or her trust before exploiting the child sexually. In other cases, the child sex tourist purchases sexual services directly from a third party that is holding the child in a position of exploitation and who then makes the child available to the tourist.

Child sex tourists come from all walks of life: they may be married or single, male or female, wealthy tourists or budget travellers. A frequent misperception is that all child sex tourists are middle-aged or older men, when in fact young tourists have been known to travel for the express purpose of sexually abusing children. Child sex tourists may be foreigners or domestic nationals who are travelling within their own country. Some child sex tourists target children specifically, however, most are situational abusers who do not usually have a sexual preference for children, but take advantage of a situation in which a child is made available to them.

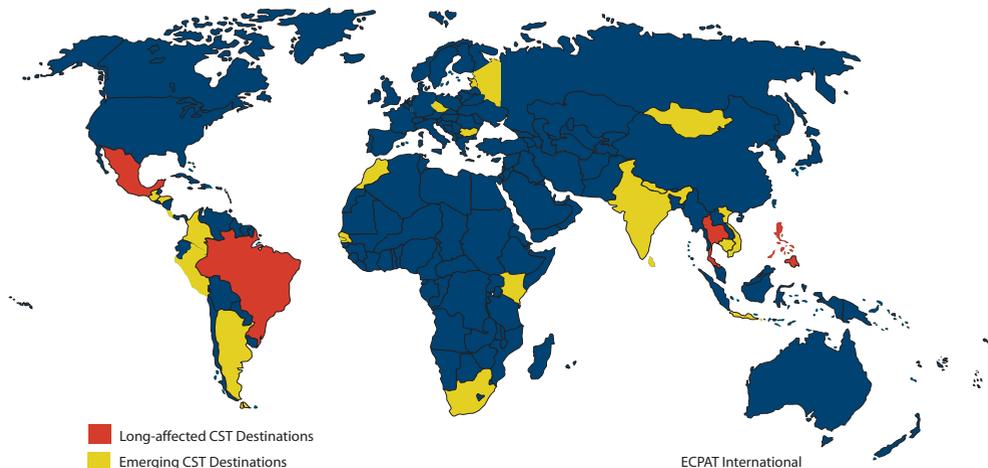
This type of exploitation can occur anywhere in the world and no country or tourism destination is immune. In fact, CST can occur in one destination and then move to another, as prevention efforts in the original destination are stepped up by government authorities, the tourism industry and child rights organisations. As child protection mechanisms increase in certain tourism destinations affected by CST, it is important to remember that neighbouring destinations may also be put at risk.

Often, there are inquiries about statistics and figures for CST from the media or concerned individuals. However, it is difficult to obtain accurate figures for CST, either regarding the number of child victims or the number of child sex tourists. There are many factors that make obtaining accurate data a challenge. Firstly, since child sex tourism is an illegal activity, it is mostly hidden or involves organised criminal groups. Secondly, it is a topic that is still regarded as a taboo subject: in many parts of the world,

key stakeholders deny the existence of the issue or downplay it, fearing that highlighting it will produce a negative image of the destination and hinder tourism development. In addition, there is a general lack of understanding and confusion on the issue by the key actors in law enforcement, government, the media and the community as a whole. Many child sex tourism cases are often incorrectly classified as incidents of sexual abuse of children, prostitution or paedophilia.

Where does it Happen?

Child sex tourism is a developing phenomenon. While it has been recorded as a recurrent problem in several destinations for over 15 years, it is still an emerging trend in other destinations. In this section, 'classic' or long-affected tourism destinations are identified, as are emerging targets for child sex tourists.



Regional Overview of Child Sex Tourism

It is difficult to estimate how many children around the world are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, even more so to disaggregate how many are victimised through child sex tourism. Nevertheless, it is possible to cite statistics regarding child victims of CSEC in tourism destinations as well as the number of vulnerable children in certain destinations. The following regional examples provide information on past and current CST destinations.

Americas

Countries in North, Central and South America have all experienced child sex tourism, albeit in different ways and to varying degrees. Often, CST in this region has followed the industrialised-to-developing-country pattern, with Canadian and American nationals travelling to countries in Central and South America in order to take advantage of their wealth and engage in CSEC. Some destinations have experienced the phenomenon of CST for over 20 years, while others, such as Colombia, have only recently begun to experience it.

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Mexico

Long regarded as a popular sex tourism destination, Mexico continues to face a significant child prostitution problem. A 2005 estimate by the State System of Integral Family Development asserted that more than 20,000 minors were victims of prostitution. The cities where abuse is reportedly most frequent are the major tourist towns of Tijuana, Acapulco, Cancún, and Guadalajara.² Numerous investigations into American child sex tourists have led authorities to crimes committed in Mexico; 18 out of 50 (or 36 per cent)³ American CST cases between 2003 and 2006 involved crimes committed in Mexico.

Colombia

Colombia is not a country usually associated with tourism, as a result of longstanding civil war, kidnappings and a high crime rate. However, this has not prevented foreign tourists from travelling to Colombia and engaging in child sex tourism in the coastal city of Cartagena and in Bogotá, the capital city. NGOs, UNICEF and law enforcement have jointly estimated that there are between 20,000 and 35,000 child victims of CSEC in Colombia.⁴ In Cartagena, a city that attracts tourists from all over the world, due to its Caribbean location, 1,500 boys and girls are estimated to be exploited in the sex industry, with foreign tourists visibly

seeking minors in prostitution.⁵ Authorities in Cartagena have developed a plan to

combat CSEC in the city as the situation worsens.

Africa

Many African countries have encouraged tourism to attract foreign investment and to fund infrastructure development. While this, coupled with a renewed focus on Africa from tourist-sending countries, has sparked tourism growth on the African continent, this growth has, predictably, been accompanied by an increase in CST. While the problem has been associated with several countries in West and North Africa, such as Morocco and Senegal, it seems that other countries and regions of the continent are experiencing an influx of tourists seeking sex with children, including those from within the region, as in the case of Kenya below.

Kenya

A recent UNICEF study provided details of both the scope and manifestations of CST in Kenya. The coastal towns of Malindi, Mombasa, Kilifi and Diani are reported to have 10,000 to 15,000 underage girls exploited by tourists.⁶ Another estimate suggests that 30,000 girls aged from 12 to 14 are sexually exploited in hotels and private villas.⁷ The nationalities involved do not reflect colonial history, as is often the case in other countries, and also include regional tourists. The UNICEF research ranks Italians (18 per cent), Germans (14 per cent), and Swiss (12 per cent) as those most involved in CST, with tourists from Uganda and Tanzania the fifth and sixth most frequent exploiters, respectively.⁸

Ghana

Child sex tourists travelling to Ghana are aware that weak legal and social protection enables them to have greater access to vulnerable children. An interview with a child sex tourist revealed that he exchanged “food, clothes, and other things” with children for sexual contact.⁹ In this case, the respondent in question was an American national, rather than a tourist from a country related in terms of history, geography or economy. Thus, the appeal to the sex tourist is in access to poor and vulnerable children whom the tourist can exploit by virtue of his or her comparative wealth.

Asia

More than any other region, Asia, particularly Southeast Asia and certain countries in South Asia, has long been the target of child sex tourists. Thailand and the Philippines, partly due to their existing 'sex industries', have been frequently associated with child sex tourism. However, other countries have emerged as prime child sex tourist destinations: Cambodia and Vietnam are said to have suffered an influx of child sex tourists as a result of increased efforts to combat the issue in Thailand. Countries such as Mongolia have also witnessed a growth in the abuse of children by tourists, showing that sexual exploitation of children in tourism shifts as political, economic and social development occurs.

Philippines

The Philippines has long been a regular target of foreign adults seeking sex with children and is regarded as one of the 'traditional' CST destinations. Estimates of CSEC and CST vary from there being 100,000 child victims of prostitution in the country as a whole, to the nearly 20,000 child victims of prostitution in the Metro Manila area alone.¹⁰ The Philippines has become the focus of media and child rights activists and arrests of foreign tourists for sexual crimes against children take place frequently.

Mongolia

Tourism in Mongolia is increasing rapidly. In 2004, the number of tourists visiting Mongolia increased by 49 per cent.¹¹ While most are law-abiding, the increase has prompted concerns about child sex tourism. A regional gathering of ECPAT groups in 2006 noted the involvement of foreign nationals in running sexually exploitative businesses in Mongolia in an attempt to attract other tourists.¹² ECPAT Mongolia, in collaboration with other child rights agencies and Mongolian tourism agencies, have responded to the situation with the widespread distribution of awareness raising materials – specifically targeting tourists – on the illegality of sexual contact with Mongolian children.

Eastern Europe and the CIS

As a regional bloc, Eastern Europe has seen a high increase in commercial sexual exploitation of minors since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, particularly in the form of trafficking in children for sexual purposes. Countries such as Russia, the Czech Republic and Ukraine were some of the first to experience child trafficking, child pornography and other forms of child sexual exploitation, but were quickly followed by other countries in the region which, with the

rapid increase in tourism, were also exposed to child sex tourism. Child sex tourism is largely regionally-based, with western Europeans travelling to exploit children in eastern European countries. In some cases, nationals of neighbouring countries are involved, as is the case in Estonia (below). South-eastern Europe has also seen a growth in sex tourism, with Bulgaria in particular being identified as a growing child sex tourism destination.¹³

Russia

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has been cited frequently as a source and transit country for children trafficked for sexual purposes, and has also been linked to the mass production of child pornography. However, child sex tourism has also recently featured as a major form of CSEC. Northwestern Russia, with its proximity to the Nordic countries, has been the target of some child sex tourists. The first Finnish national to be tried under extraterritorial law was sentenced for crimes committed in the city of Vyborg.¹⁴ In Moscow, estimates of children victimised in prostitution have reached 20,000 to 30,000 and there have been several cases of Western child sex tourists exploiting children.¹⁵

Estonia

As a result of the closer contact with western European countries and the increase in tourism, Estonia has had to contend with the major problem of human trafficking to the West and with the escalating issue of sexual exploitation of children in tourism. A case in 2004, involving a Finnish citizen who was sentenced in his home country to two years and ten months imprisonment for multiple counts of child sexual exploitation, emphasises the regional nature of child sex tourism.¹⁶ The presence of tourists, mainly from Russia, the UK and other European countries, has also been noted in relation to sex tourism, although the extent of child sex tourism remains unknown.

Offenders and Victims

Who are the Offenders?

Child sex tourists may be married or single, male or female (though the majority are male), foreign or local, wealthy or budget tourists and from a high socio-economic or a disadvantaged background. Although they have no distinguishing physical features, patterns of social behaviour or particular mannerisms, it is possible to separate them into three distinct categories:

1) Situational Child Sex Tourist

The situational child sex offender abuses children by way of experimentation or through the anonymity and impunity afforded by being a tourist. He or she does not have an exclusive sexual inclination for children. Often, the situational offender is an indiscriminate sex tourist who is presented with the opportunity to interact sexually with a person under 18 and takes it. The majority of child sex tourists are situational offenders.

2) Preferential Child Sex Tourist

The preferential child sex tourist displays an active sexual preference for children. He or she may still have the capacity to experience sexual attraction for adults but

will actively seek out minors for sexual contact. The preferential child sex tourist will generally search for pubescent or adolescent children. It is important to distinguish the preferential child sex tourist from the paedophile (see below).

3) Paedophile

The paedophile manifests an exclusive sexual inclination for pre-pubescent children. Usually considered as someone 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. Paedophiles, as well as the 'preferential' abusers described above, are a minority of child sex tourists.¹⁷

Case Studies

Not all child sex tourists fall neatly into the categories described above, however, the following cases display features that help to illustrate each one.

Situational Child Sex Tourist

Very few situational child sex tourists are arrested, tried and sentenced. This may be because they do not usually produce imagery of the abuse carried out nor go to extreme means to engage in child sex tourism, such as contacting paedophile networks or exchanging pornography. As they are often more involved in the sexual exploitation of adolescents rather than young children, they may benefit from a social tolerance in both sending and destination countries around sexual exploitation of minors, which is seen as less of a crime (sometimes not seen as a crime at all) than abusing young children.

Nevertheless, there are cases that illustrate the dynamics of abuse by a situational child sex tourist. Following an investigation into a child pornography ring, French national Amon Chemouil was arrested and tried in 2001 for having sexually abused an 11-year-old girl in Pattaya, Thailand.¹⁸ The abuse was filmed by one of two Swiss men who were with Chemouil. During the trial, Chemouil presented his act as a moment of weakness and apologised for “stealing her childhood”. He also placed

all responsibility on himself, in contrast with statements from preferential child sex offenders and paedophiles, who often place blame on the victim for having seduced the offender. Experts present at the trial did not classify Chemouil as a paedophile. It was the first case in France to be tried under extraterritorial legislation aimed at prosecuting offenders who carry out abuse in a country other than their own.

Regardless of the intent or lack of intent to abuse a child, or whether it was planned or not, sexual contact with a child by a tourist is a criminal act that has grave consequences for the victim.

Preferential Child Sex Tourist

An example of a preferential child sex tourist profile is that of Singaporean national Darwis Rianto Lim, 31, who taught at Temasek Polytechnic’s School of Applied Science. He was arrested by Thai police in a hotel room on 24 April 2005 for allegedly trying to buy sex with underage boys over the Internet.¹⁹

Following tip-offs from United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement special agents and Australian Interpol officers who had monitored the teacher's attempts to buy sex with Thai boys over the Internet, undercover police officers from Thailand's Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) posed as sex agents to entrap the teacher.²⁰

Shortly after arriving in Bangkok, Lim allegedly posted messages on the Internet offering US\$ 200 for sex with boys between 12 and 16 years old.²¹ After being told about the availability of three boys, Lim allegedly picked a 16-year-old and was arrested when he paid the undercover police officer 8,000 Thai baht (US\$ 235).²²

In June 2005, Lim's lawyer appeared in Bangkok Criminal Court and said Lim could not be located, despite several attempts.²³ Lim also failed to show up in court on 18 July 2005. A warrant has been issued for his arrest and the 300,000 baht (US\$ 8,800) bail placed by his mother has been forfeited. Lim has his passport and it is not known whether he has left Thailand.²⁴

In this case, Lim actively sought sexual contact with adolescent minors but not with pre-pubescent children, thereby placing him in the category of preferential child sex tourist. This case also underlines the

importance of carefully following and monitoring the actions of those who have been arrested for sexual crimes against children. If the accused is released on bail, he or she may find a way to disappear, thereby leaving more children at risk of sexual exploitation by that person.

Paedophiles

Paedophiles often exchange and share information on where and how to exploit children. In a case of organised child sex tourism from the United States to Mexico, both this trend and the features often displayed by paedophiles are revealed.

Stefan Irving was arrested and tried as part of a wider investigation into sexual exploitation at the Castillo Vista Del Mar resort in Acapulco, Mexico. The resort was run by several American nationals and was used to facilitate the exploitation of Mexican boys, some as young as eight years old.²⁵ The operators and guests of the resort would lure vulnerable and impoverished boys from the street and beach to the hotel, in exchange for food, shelter, clothes and money. Eight American men were arrested for using the resort to exploit children.

Stefan Irving, a former paediatrician by profession, used Castillo Vista Del Mar

to abuse young boys and make images/ videos of the abuse. When written records and journals kept by Irving were examined, they revealed that he had a particular sexual interest in boys aged from six to twelve years-old – prepubescent minors – as is often the case with offenders classified as paedophiles.²⁶ Irving had already been convicted of sexual offences against children, demonstrating a recidivism that is also characteristic of child sex tourists classified as paedophiles.

Despite an appeal, a sentence of 21 years in prison was upheld for Stefan Irving in 2006.

Who are the Victims?

Victims of CST often come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. However, this is not their only characteristic: many come from ethnic minorities, displaced communities and other marginalised social groups. Victims are both girls and boys, some of whom may also have been victims of domestic abuse and neglect. Working children, especially those involved in the tourism industry and who are dependent on seasonal income, can easily fall victim to child sex tourism. Sometimes, simply being born in a tourism destination characterised by major wealth discrepancies between incoming tourists and local inhabitants can be enough for a child to become exploited in CST.

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Victims of CST are often:

- *Caught in poverty*
- *From minority groups*
- *Dependent on seasonal economies*
- *Working children*
- *Children living on the street*
- *Children abused or neglected in the home*
- *AIDS orphans*

Consequences

Regardless of the background of child victims of sex tourism, they all experience severe emotional, psychological and physical consequences as a result of their exploitation. The physical violence involved in the sexual exploitation of a child results in injury, pain and fear, while the acute psychological distress of sexual exploitation results in guilt, low self-esteem, depression and, in some instances, suicide. Children are also more vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections (STI), including HIV/AIDS.

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Child victims of CST are often stigmatised by their communities and have difficulty obtaining formal or informal education. They do not receive community support, nor do they experience the same social interaction, or develop as members of the community in the same way as other children do. For these reasons, it is more difficult for victims of CSEC to support themselves financially or to live independently as adults later in life. The consequences of CST on children are severe and their health, well-being and future opportunities are all jeopardised by the exploitation to which they have been subjected. No tourist should ever think that

sexual contact of any kind with a child does not gravely affect the child or that it is acceptable if money or some other form of consideration is exchanged with the child.

Different Faces of Child Sex Tourism

The stereotypical view of the process by which a child is exploited is that a male tourist arrives at a tourism destination, obtains information from a local about a brothel in which children are available, goes there, buys sexual contact with a child and exploits him or her in the brothel itself, potentially on several occasions over a period of time, until the tourist returns to his home country. While such a scenario is not uncommon, it is not the only one.

Among the numerous variables are the venue for exploitation, presence and type of facilitator, length of stay, size of destination, living situation of the child, and accommodation situation of the tourist. For instance, the perpetrator may be a long-term visitor or a foreign resident, who has more time to engage in a long grooming process with a child or children that he/she intends to abuse. As is being increasingly observed in certain tourism destinations, tourists can rent or own property, thereby providing themselves with access to a venue in which to exploit children. This reduces the risk of being detected by hotel staff, other tourists or concerned locals.

Many such long-term tourists or foreign

residents have greater proximity or access to children. In several recent cases, foreign residents employed as teachers, working as volunteers or running their own businesses, have taken advantage of their comparative wealth in relation to the local population, to purchase sexual contact with children.

There is a debate among concerned agencies about whether a foreign resident who sexually exploits children can be classified as a child sex tourist since the word 'tourist'²⁷ implies that the offending individual passes through the destination only briefly. ECPAT International chooses to include such resident expatriates under the umbrella-term child sex tourist, as the intent of the travel involves a change of socio-economic, cultural and political environments, which reduces the individual's usual external inhibitors and in this way facilitates the sexual exploitation of children.

Organised Exploitation vs. Independent Travel

There have been instances of tours organised specifically for the purpose of child abuse, but these are relatively uncommon. Child sex tourists do not

usually travel together as part of a tour, with guides, or use registered facilities in the same way as many groups of tourists do. However, there can be a collective organisation and structure in child sex tourism, particularly in situations where preferential child sex offenders communicate with one another and make arrangements. For example, preparations for travel to a specific destination may be made over the Internet; or a guesthouse in a popular tourism destination may be established and run for the purpose of receiving tourists who want to sexually abuse children. In other cases, once a tourist has arrived in a country, he or she may participate in tours, excursions or trips that are thinly-veiled child sex tours.

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One example of organised exploitation comes from research conducted in The

Gambia on the involvement of Dutch tourists in CST. A tourist reported that she observed young girls and boys entering and leaving the rooms of male guests from the Netherlands in the hotel where she was staying.²⁸ The hotel in question seemed to be organising the exploitation.²⁹

In contrast, other groups of tourists seeking sexual contact with children have done so independently and without the help of unofficial or hidden networks. Using the numerous tourism services that have increasingly opened up travel destinations around the world (for example, budget accommodation, local travel agencies, online booking services and low-cost carriers), tourists can easily gain access to destinations and locations where they are able to have direct contact with vulnerable children.

Child Sex Tourism and other forms of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

The commercial sexual exploitation of children takes many forms and there are often distinct links between the different manifestations. In fact, it is difficult to separate some forms from others and it is useful to bear in mind that one form of CSEC can result in another. This is particularly true of child sex tourism, which is often linked to multiple forms of CSEC, such as trafficking in children for sexual purposes, child pornography, and in some cases, to early child marriage.

Child Sex Tourism and Trafficking

Children exploited in CST destinations are often locally based. However, children are also trafficked internally or across borders to service sex tourists. There are multiple cases of minors trafficked to other countries for prostitution and in particular to service tourists who are wealthier than locals. Cambodia, for instance, has long struggled with the issue of Vietnamese girls who are trafficked into Cambodia for sexual exploitation by both Cambodian clientele and foreign visitors. In Guatemala, minors from several surrounding countries (El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Belize) were discovered in brothels,³⁰ underlining the fact that CST is not a phenomenon that affects only local children. Furthermore, CST can be the end purpose of domestic

trafficking of children. Recent research in Kenya revealed the extent of CST in the coastal areas and that it is particularly minors from within the country who are affected by it.³¹

The existence of a relationship between trafficking in children and CST is common: trafficked children are particularly vulnerable as they are removed from their communities, cultural context and have a fragile legal status that forces even greater dependency on those profiting from child sexual exploitation (pimps, brothel owners or even clients). Furthermore, tourism destinations are often economic magnets, making both adults and children more vulnerable to false promises of employment or other forms of trickery and coercion employed by traffickers. It is also possible that children are trafficked for reasons other than sexual exploitation, such as child labour in the

Trafficking of Vietnamese girls to Svay Pak, Cambodia

The example of one of Cambodia's most notorious red-light districts, known as Svay Pak, (located 11 km from Phnom Penh) typifies the relationship between trafficking and child sex tourism. It was officially closed down in late 2004,³² but recent reports indicate that prostitution in women and children, many of whom are from Vietnam, continues largely unabated.³³

The extent of sexual exploitation in Cambodia in the past half decade is disturbing. The UN estimates that, out of a population of one million in Phnom Penh, there are between 15,000 and 20,000 people affected by commercial sexual exploitation, 25 per cent of whom are children.³⁴ However, this figure is much lower than a recent estimate given by Cambodia's Minister of Women's Affairs, who estimated in 2006, that approximately 30,000 children have been forced into prostitution in Cambodia.³⁵ Svay Pak was known to offer easy access to children for exploitation,³⁶ thus catering to local demand as well as regional and Western tourists. An AIDéTouS survey carried out in 2002 showed that, of the 4,214 recorded visits for sexual purposes in December 2002, 36 per cent of the clients were Khmers, 42 per cent East Asians (Chinese, Vietnamese and Japanese) and 22 per cent Westerners or men of unknown nationalities.³⁷

Svay Pak was noted to have a large number of prostituted Vietnamese girls.³⁸ According to some reports, Vietnamese pimps trick village girls, promising to find them a foreign husband, or kidnap and sell them to brothels.³⁹ Many of the girls trafficked from Vietnam are bound by contracts which last from six months to over a year.⁴⁰ Vietnamese girls are trafficked into Cambodia for sexual exploitation by tourists and Cambodians, suggesting strong direct links between these two forms of CSEC. Vietnamese girls are often trafficked across the border from the Southwestern provinces of Vietnam (Long An, An Giang, Song Be, Kien Giang, Dong Thap, Can Tho and Ho Chi Minh City).⁴¹ Khmer girls from the impoverished rural precincts of Kompong Cham, Battambang, Svey Rieng, Prey Veng, Kandal or Takeo⁴² are also victims of prostitution in and around Phnom Penh, further demonstrating a direct link between trafficking and CST.

informal tourism market or for begging purposes, only to end up in sexually exploitative situations. It has been observed that some Khmer children on the streets of Bangkok and Pattaya, in Thailand, may have been trafficked for begging purposes, only to become the targets of child sex tourists who are able to approach them directly, without the need for a third party or intermediary.

Finally, it should be noted that traffickers and their victims may be users of the same transportation services as tourists. Indeed, with taxis, buses, boats and planes being used to transport tourists and travellers to numerous destinations at increasingly

inexpensive costs, it is not surprising that these same services can be used to bring children to places where they can be exploited by tourists. It is important that tourists and tourism professionals are aware that tourism services can be used by both child sex offenders and child traffickers and that children utilising transportation or accommodation services may be trafficking victims. Accommodation venues and transportation companies must have child protection policies and procedures in place which allow them to recognise, report and act on a situation in which a child is being trafficked or sexually exploited.

Child Sex Tourism and Child Pornography

A striking feature of child sex tourists, especially preferential child sex tourists and paedophiles, is the frequency with which they produce, collect and exchange images of abuse. In many CST cases, the offending adult films or records the abuse inflicted upon the child at the tourism destination, linking CST with the production of child pornography. The offender may keep the images for his or her own consumption or may share them with other child pornography consumers. The child pornography can also be used for commercial gain, with the tourist who produced it sharing it or placing it on the Internet in exchange for money or some other consideration. Child pornography can thus lead to additional child sex tourists being attracted to a tourism destination.

In January 2007, a man was arrested in the Peruvian capital, Lima, on charges of facilitating child sex tourism through a travel agency. The man in question would make contact with and groom minors through a chat forum. He would offer the minors large sums of money in exchange for nude pictures of them, which he would then use to extort from them sexual relations with incoming tourists.⁴³ The exploitation of these children did not end there: the man was a member of a paedophile network and distributed the child pornography to members of the network who would then be able to engage in CST with one of the minors selected. At the time of his arrest, the man was found in possession of CDs containing child pornography.⁴⁴

This case exemplifies the links between CST and child pornography and further demonstrates how child pornography generated in one tourism location can be used to attract tourists who wish to obtain sexual contact with children.

Child Sex Tourism and Child Marriage

Child marriage or early marriage (the marriage of children below the age of 18) can be considered a form of commercial sexual exploitation of children when the married child is used as an object of sexual gratification in exchange for money or another form of payment. Accordingly, child marriage can also be a thinly-veiled form of CST. There are instances where a national from one country travels to another country to marry a minor (in this case always girls) in exchange for money or other forms of consideration to the parents, spends a week with the girl, but then abandons her and returns to his home country, never to interact with the girl or the family again. Such occurrences have been noted in the Middle East and South Asia, where early marriage is still a common practice.

It can also happen that a tourist arrives in a country, marries or promises to marry a minor, and brings the minor back to his country. The victim is then used for continual sexual exploitation and as a result of being young and away from home,

is dependent upon her exploiter. This type of sex tourism has been noted in South Asia and the Middle East, but also observed in countries in South America. In this particular instance, the link between CST and child marriage clearly takes on elements that are typical of trafficking once the child victim is removed from the place where the “marriage” has been arranged. As CST can assume the form of early marriage, interventions and projects aimed at protecting children must not only focus on working with the tourism industry but also with those communities that may be vulnerable to exploitative marriages.

Child marriage as a form of child sex tourism, has often been associated with travellers from the Gulf States; men travel to Hyderabad in India with the excuse of tourism or medical treatment but then find and marry young girls.⁴⁵ The girls are sexually exploited and then abandoned or divorced, revealing the marriage to be a temporary sham in order to abuse children. Law enforcement authorities in Hyderabad estimate that there are 35 marriages of this kind taking place every month, although numbers are difficult to establish. The process has become known as “Sheikh” marriages.⁴⁶

Child Rights, Child Protection and Tourism

Child rights and human rights are universal legal guarantees that protect individuals and groups from actions and omissions (lack of action) that affect their freedom and human dignity. However, while human rights are a recurring theme in the national and international development debate, children's rights do not receive the same amount of attention despite the fact that these rights recognise the special needs and vulnerabilities of children, which must be disaggregated from the situation of adults. Furthermore, tourism is sometimes associated with human rights but not often associated with the issue of child rights when, in fact, the industry has a tremendous impact on children's lives all over the world. Duty bearers such as governments or tourism companies have key responsibilities in protecting children's basic rights and, if they do not, there are ways in which they can be held accountable.

24 **Tourism Development Affects Children**

A rights-based approach to development is now being seen as able to make a major contribution to issues such as good governance, ethical development, sustainability and equitable poverty eradication. Tourism development affects the health and wealth of communities in which it operates, meaning that tourism directly affects children in those communities. However, this impact can be both positive and negative. For example, while a growing tourism-based economy can help improve the economic conditions in which children live, it can also expose children to potential child sex offenders, as booming tourism means travellers can

access locations where children and families may be poorer than the visiting tourist. Rapid tourism development or unregulated tourist arrivals can mean that children end up unsupervised in the presence of foreign and domestic tourists. Furthermore, unregulated tourism development can mean the destruction of traditional livelihoods, thereby pushing children into poverty and increasing their likelihood of becoming victims of exploitation. Employment of children in the tourism sector also means that children may be exposed to tourists seeking sexual contact with children. Overall, rapidly increasing tourist arrivals mean that there are simply many adults in the presence of children who may be

poorer and more vulnerable than children in the tourists' home countries. It is this impact of tourism on local communities that highlights the relationship between the tourism development and the need for child protection mechanisms in tourism destinations.

Governments and the private sector have legal and moral obligations to ensure that child protection becomes fully incorporated into the tourism development agenda. Without this, tourism cannot be a force for

good in children's lives and ill-intentioned tourists will continue to sexually exploit children with impunity. ECPAT International and other concerned agencies encourage all tourists to choose and use the services of travel and tourism companies that have socially responsible tourism policies. Ask representatives of the companies you use, whether a hotel, airline, bus line, tour operator or travel agency, if they have an official policy on the prevention of child sex tourism.

The Framework for Addressing Tourism and Child Rights

When discussing the issue of child rights and child protection in relation to tourism development and expansion, two international agreements are particularly pertinent. They are the provisions agreed in relation to children as enshrined in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) as well as the internationally-agreed definition of sustainable tourism which encompasses a rights-based approach. Tourism development decision makers and child protection and welfare policy formulators need to recognise that their interests and responsibilities are mutually intertwined and therefore they need to consult with each other as tourism development continues to expand.

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The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Children, like adults, enjoy basic human and legal rights which all states are bound to protect. They enjoy rights to education, food, shelter, physical safety and health. All these rights are enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is legally binding and has been ratified by 191 countries. The CRC is the world's foremost multilateral document on children's issues and it has many provisions that protect a child from exploitation. In particular, Articles 32, 34 and 35 protect against sexual exploitation, sale and trafficking. Other specific rights include ensuring the child's physical and psychological well-being (Articles 19 and 27) and the psychosocial, emotional and spiritual development of the child (Articles 31 and 32).

The internationally agreed definition of Sustainable Development in Tourism

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.⁴⁷

Tourism is the world's largest industry. Incorporating many cross-cutting sectors such as the hospitality industry, catering and automobile rental, tourism employs over 8 per cent of the world's workforce and generates more money than any other industry in the global economy.⁴⁸ In 2005, international tourists exceeded 800 million, setting a new record. In the same year, international tourism generated over US\$ 2 billion per day.⁴⁹ Many countries pursue tourism as a major means of foreign investment, cash generation and domestic development. As such, tourism is closely linked with multiple issues of a social nature.

What is being done to Combat Child Sex Tourism?

Like all forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children, combating child sex tourism is a complex problem that requires responses at several levels. The process of CST, whether it occurs in an organised or unstructured manner, involves many different actors and therefore many opportunities to intervene or prevent it from occurring. Among those involved in preventing a tourist from sexually exploiting a child are: ECPAT groups; other NGOs; local law enforcement; tour operators; hotels; law enforcement posted abroad; tourism authorities; local transport operators (taxi drivers, bus drivers) and other tourism professionals. Working together, members of these different sectors can present a united front against those who would abuse children while travelling. The ECPAT International network has been at the forefront of this struggle for many years and has developed enormous experience in establishing and sustaining action against CSEC.

Action taken in the tourism industry in collaboration with ECPAT groups against CST can be divided into measures developed in tourist-sending countries and those undertaken in tourist-receiving countries. These measures promote awareness raising and sensitisation to ensure that both travellers and tourism professionals are aware of the issue and are able to formulate a response when they encounter the problem.

Awareness Raising and Sensitisation

In sending countries, tour operators, travel agencies, airlines and other travel and tourism companies have developed information materials to inform their customers that CST is a problem that not only exists in multiple tourism destinations, but is illegal and has dire consequences for children. Information

materials include travel brochures, ticket folders, luggage tags, video spots, public service announcements, and other methods to convey messages to travellers concerning CST. Many such materials have been compiled on a CD-ROM by ECPAT International and are available by contacting ECPAT International directly (www.ecpat.net).

Why is awareness raising important?

It is crucial that tourists are informed that commercial sexual exploitation of children is illegal. Many countries have developed extraterritorial legislation to prosecute nationals for sexual offences against children. Thus, a tourist can be held accountable for his or her actions either in the destination country or in their home country. When a country adopts such legislation, there is no destination that provides immunity for an exploiter of children.

However, it is not enough that tourists be warned of the legal consequences of child sex tourism, it is also important that they are aware of the channels that exist for reporting offences by other tourists. Tourists are most likely to witness inappropriate and illegal behaviour conducted by their fellow travellers, thus, reporting through e-mail and telephone hotlines operated by ECPAT groups and other concerned agencies can also be undertaken anonymously.*

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Training and Capacity Building

Tourism professionals are a critical resource in combating CST. As individuals who are in direct contact with the tourist, they are in a unique position to actively promote responsible tourism, caution the ill-intentioned tourist against CST, receive reports from other tourists, distribute information materials to customers and report incidents to local police, ECPAT groups or ECPAT International. Furthermore, some in the tourism industry, such as hotel receptionists, tour guides or booking agents, may have access to the name, passport details or other important identifying information concerning an offending tourist.

In light of this unique position, some travel and tourism companies have conducted training for their staff on the issue of CST. Training covers definitions of CSEC, the legal framework, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, profiles of victims and offenders, concepts of corporate social responsibility, the sociological background to sexual exploitation of children,

* For further information on hotlines, please contact ECPAT International (info@ecpat.net or www.ecpat.net) or look at the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) website (http://www.unwto.org/protect_children/).



case studies, role play exercises and other components. Having completed such training, tourism employees are better equipped to recognise CST and to take action against it.

A travel or tourism company may develop its training package on the issue of CST as part of its commitment following its signature to the *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism*. This major international child protection programme is described in greater depth in the following chapter.

Industry associations and organisations have been increasingly taking public stances against CST. Organisations such as the International Hotel and Restaurant Association or Sk&I have made public declarations condemning sexual exploitation of children in tourism and promoting action by NGOs and travel companies to ensure that tourists are not involved in such exploitation. Further examples of public declarations include the *Final Resolution Condemning Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children* of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the *Resolution to Combat Child Sex Tourism* of the Federation of International Youth Travel Organisations (FIYTO) and the *Declaration against Child Sex Tourism* of the Group of National Tour Operators' Associations within the European Union (ECTAA).

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

The Code of Conduct is an instrument of self-regulation and corporate social responsibility, initiated by the ECPAT network and providing increased protection to children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism. It is regarded as one of the world's major tools for combating child sex tourism and comprises a set of six criteria which travel and tourism companies follow in order to provide protection to vulnerable children in tourism destinations. Signatory companies must implement the six criteria according to a set of minimum standards, a timeframe and reporting requirements.

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The criteria are:

1. To establish an ethical policy regarding commercial sexual exploitation of children;
2. To train the personnel in the country of origin and travel destinations;
3. To introduce a clause in contracts with suppliers, stating a common repudiation of commercial sexual exploitation of children;
4. To provide information to travellers by means of catalogues, brochures, in-flight films, ticket slips, homepages, etc.;
5. To provide information to local key persons at the destinations; and
6. To report annually.

The Code of Conduct was first developed by ECPAT Sweden in collaboration with Scandinavian tour operators and the WTO in 1998. The Code rapidly became a major ECPAT International network project, promoted and implemented in both tourist-sending and tourist-receiving countries.

Following its launch in North America in April 2004, The Code was registered in Sweden as an international non-profit organisation led by a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee, with the Secretariat based in New York (housed at ECPAT-USA), funded by UNICEF and supported by the UNWTO. In March 2005, the Code was launched in Japan at a ceremony hosted by the Japan Committee for UNICEF,

where several Japanese tour operators and travel agents, including JTB and JATA made a commitment to implement the Code into their operations. In March 2007, a new strategy for its expansion and development was approved by the Code's highest decision-making body, the Annual General Meeting.

As of late 2007, the Code of Conduct had been signed globally by nearly 600 tour operators, hotels, travel agents and their associations and tourism workers unions from 26 countries in Europe, Asia, North America, and Central and Latin America. Additional information on the Code can be found at www.thecode.org.

Extraterritorial Legislation and Enforcement of Domestic Legislation

Developing and enforcing legislation to prosecute tourists and travellers for sexual crimes against children is crucial in combating child sex tourism. As a general rule, a child sex tourist can be prosecuted in two ways: firstly, the tourist can be arrested, tried and sentenced by the legal authorities of the country in which the crime was committed; or they can be tried in their own country for a crime committed abroad.

Domestic Legislation

Although some countries have legal systems in which sexual crimes against children are often defined differently, the use of domestic legislation is appropriate in ensuring that certain countries do not remain or become havens for child sex tourists. In some countries, the existing legal arsenal for prosecuting child sex offenders is not particularly well defined, contains numerous gaps and may not take into consideration the specific vulnerabilities of child victims of sexual exploitation. However, ECPAT International advocates for the use of domestic legislation above extradition agreements or the use of extraterritorial legislation for several reasons: its use ensures that witnesses and forensic evidence do not need to travel potentially long distances to the home country of the tourist, while child victims who may be required to testify are spared the additional distress and discomfort resulting from such travel; there

are fewer bureaucratic steps to undertake when prosecuting a tourist in the country where the crime was committed, thereby helping to ensure that a time lapse does not prevent successful prosecution; and issues such as communication between the various stakeholders as well as the cultural frame of reference are also less complicated when dealing with only one jurisdiction rather than that of the tourist and of the country in which the crime was committed.

Nevertheless, as human resources in some tourist destinations are often limited and because factors such as corruption, lack of technical expertise and/or political will often jeopardise cases against child sex tourists, the use of domestic legislation and the domestic legal system may result in the failure to bring a tourist to justice and thereby fail to prevent further children from being exploited.

In 2006, a Belgian national who had previously been convicted of sexual crimes against children in his own country was convicted of child sexual abuse in Cambodia. The man was found naked in a Phnom Penh guesthouse with a 13-year-old boy whom he had been sexually abusing for close to three years in exchange for financial support to the boy's family.⁵⁰ The case could have been tried in Belgium but was tried in Cambodia under the domestic debauchery law, thereby sending out a clear message that Cambodia is stepping up enforcement of its domestic legislation against sexual exploitation of children. The man received a prison sentence of 18 years – the longest received for such an offence.

Extraterritorial Legislation

Extraterritorial legislation is the extension of a country's legislative reach to include crimes committed by a national of that country beyond the borders of that country. It is one of the most important tools in fighting CST, as it allows legal authorities to hold tourists accountable for their behaviour abroad, thereby reducing the probability that a traveller can escape legal punishment after committing a crime in a country where there may be few resources to bring anyone, let alone tourists, to justice for crimes against children. Thus, it sends a signal to all potential child sex tourists that they may be the focus of more than one legal system.

By the most recent count, 44 countries have legislation that enables them to prosecute their nationals for crimes against children committed abroad, although

each body of extraterritorial legislation may vary considerably from one to the other. Double criminality, which is the requirement that the offense committed be legally considered a crime in the country where it took place, in addition to the country which is prosecuting its national, may or may not exist as part of a country's extraterritorial legislation. The use of extraterritorial legislation can be quite labour-intensive, as it often requires police to travel to the country where the crime occurred. In addition, evidence and witnesses must then travel to the tourist's country to be a part of the legal process and to secure the conviction of a travelling child sex offender.

Unfortunately, not all countries with extraterritorial legislation actually use it to stop their citizens from exploiting children abroad. In fact, there are very few

countries that have invoked extraterritorial legislation frequently. In the future, as opportunities for travel continue to grow, with the expansion of the travel industry, it

is of paramount importance that all major tourist-sending countries enact and employ extraterritorial legislation to hold tourists accountable for CST.

In a case that exemplifies how child sex tourists carefully plan their exploitation of children, the 2005 conviction of American national Lester Christian Weber resulted in one of the longest sentences passed under American legislation. Weber travelled to Kenya with the intent to abuse a child and create pornography during his trip. Authorities found child pornography videos and still images of the abuse when Weber returned to the United States. After investigation by American authorities in collaboration with Kenyan counterparts, Weber was arrested, prosecuted and eventually sentenced to 25 years in prison.⁵¹

What Can You Do?

Child sex tourism is a serious violation of children's rights. Whether you are a traveller, tourist, tourism professional or simply a concerned individual, there are steps you can take to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourism.

1. Choose travel and tourism companies that have a policy against child sex tourism, such as those that have signed and implemented the Code of Conduct.
2. If your regular travel agents or tour operators do not have such a policy, encourage them to develop one.
3. Consult the ECPAT website to find out more about the situation of children in certain tourism destinations (www.ecpat.net).
4. Speak out against child sex tourism to your peers.
5. Contribute to local organisations working against commercial sexual exploitation of children.
6. When travelling, do not hesitate to report any suspicion of sexual exploitation to local authorities (a list of hotlines is available at http://www.unwto.org/protect_children/). If this is not possible, please report to a local NGO or to ECPAT International (protect@ecpat.net).

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What to report:

a. A tourist sexually abusing a child

This includes an adult touching a child in an inappropriate manner or forcing the child to touch the tourist inappropriately. It can also be a tourist engaging in non-contact sexual abuse, such as exposing him or herself to a child, asking a child to undress, forcing children to touch one another or photographing a child in some of the above situations.

b. A person selling a child

This may be someone in a bar, hotel, club or even in a brothel who is asking tourists if they are interested in having sex with a minor. Often, it is the go-betweens working in the tourism industry (taxi drivers, waiters, etc.) that offer sex with children to tourists. Such a person may suggest tourists visit a red-light district to meet young girls or boys.

c. A tourist trying to buy a child for sexual exploitation

A tourist who approaches locals, hotel staff, other tourism professionals, or even other tourists asking where he or she can pay for sex with young children should be reported to authorities. Such a tourist may be seen walking into a brothel, club or massage parlour known for selling sex with minors.

d. A hotel or travel company allowing exploitation of children

If hotel staff do not check the age of boys and girls who enter a hotel with a guest and who are clearly not family relations, the hotel may be facilitating child sex tourism and should be reported. Similarly, if hotel staff approach guests with offers of sex with minors, they and the hotel should be reported. It can also happen that a tour operator, tour guide or other travel company (trekking, adventure tourism, cruises) may bring tourists to places where they can have free access to children. Such companies are engaging in child sex tourism and should be reported to local or international authorities.

If possible, provide:

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- a. Name of offender
- b. Country of origin or even passport number
- c. Physical description of offender
- d. Date and location of exploitation
- e. Hotel or other type of accomodation

When you see child sex tourism, report it.

Unless everyone takes an active stance against child sex tourism, children will continue to be victims of sexual exploitation by tourists.

Endnotes

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