

**Recommendations from the Arab-African Conference  
against the Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Abuse of Children  
Rabat, 14-16 December 2004**

**Who must act? How and when to act?**

It is crucially important to have qualitative and quantitative knowledge of the phenomenon to be able to provide appropriate answers. This requires the mobilization of all national players and development aid bodies in order to reinforce the States' capacities to set up the right process and the right mechanisms.

The interventions and reflections developed during the meeting allowed to highlight the actions to be taken in order to consolidate the achievements made so far.

**Identify accurately situations of sexual exploitation, violence, ill-treatment and abuse**

- Define clearly and accurately the different dimensions of the phenomenon;
- Design and elaborate specific approaches in response to each contributing or triggering factor;
- Take into account, while conducting the conceptual and factual analysis, the specific dimensions: religion, culture, practices, etc
- Assess the phenomenon in terms of vulnerability and impact, making sure to include the gender approach.

**Generalize the ratifications and harmonize the legislations**

- Work for a generalized ratification of the conventions by the three regions (the optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ILO Convention 182, United Nations Convention against Organized Transnational Crime Optional Protocol on trafficking in persons, especially women and children);
- Define the phenomenon in all legal instruments as belonging to the general register of violence and ill-treatment and specifically pertaining to the sexual exploitation of children.
- Set up monitoring mechanisms and legal control bodies to assess the compatibility of the national legal systems with the international norms and the effective implementation of the laws.

**Develop national action plans as part of the general policy and the specific handling of SEC issue.**

- Take into account, while designing the general and specific national plans of action, all the dimensions and aspects of the phenomenon, articulate them over precise calendars in a continuous process of action and response to this blight;
- Include the protection of children as a priority of sustainable development (integrate it to the strategic plans of poverty reduction and inclusiveness programmes)

**Analyze the situation and assess the priority intervention measures:**

- Reinforce the countries capacities to develop situation analysis indicators;
- Involve university and research centers for qualitative and quantitative analysis/assessment;
- Develop processes of information and experiences exchanges, allowing the follow-up and control of the evolution of the phenomenon both nationally and across the borders.

**Inform children and raise their awareness:**

- Improve the child's access to information in order to reinforce his/her self-defense capacity.
- Give credit, in legal instances, to the child's testimony and words, and use listening techniques adapted to the child's status;
- Set up monitoring structures devoted to the child in high risk situations (disabled, war children, street children, etc.);
- Accord importance to child-child relation.

**Work for the reduction of the phenomenon and punish the offenders:**

- Develop more identification and control instruments to monitor the child sexual exploitation networks;
- Criminalize all offences and sexual aggressions against the child (qualify each type of offence)
- Penalize the offences with severe and dissuasive sanctions;

- Make sure the States honor their international commitments, in particular, with regards to the application of extraterritoriality principle in child crimes cases;
- Identify and target risk zones, the most vulnerable groups of children and the profiles of potential offenders.

#### **Reinforce the capacities and resources**

- Involve the media in protection strategies: support, awareness raising, code of conduct, etc.
- Reinforce the information and communication means at proximity structures level (schools, youth clubs, community spaces, etc.)
- Adopt and implement intensive actions of interdisciplinary trainings, especially in listening techniques and care to victims. These trainings have to target all the actors in charge of children protection (judges, lawyers, educators and social workers, teachers, security agents, warders, customs officers, etc.)

#### **Enlarge and reinforce partnership**

- Act locally and regionally;
- Reinforce partnership between public authorities and civil society by the reinforcement of NGOs' capacities against SEC.
- Develop multi-sectoral and multidimensional partnerships: inter and intra public administration: police, justice, teaching staff, social workers, medical profession, and between groups of population/associations of students' parents, media, professional bodies, elected, etc.