



30, Chemin des Corbilletes, 1218 Grand-Saconnex, Genève  
Tel: (41 22) 798 24 85 / 791 85 40 Fax: (41 22) 798 07 24 E-mail: info@vnmission-ge.gov.vn

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## SIDE EVENT

### **Transnational cooperation and corporate social responsibility: enablers for protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism**

*(10h00-11h30, March 06, 2013)*

*Mdm. Special Rapporteur,*

*My colleagues on the Panel,*

*Distinguish representatives,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. Let me first express our Delegation's appreciation for your organizing this Event and your contributions to our common efforts in combating child sex in travel and tourism.

We are happy to see that all stakeholders, including the UN system, individual countries and international organizations, with you as representatives today, have high commitment to solving this issue.

As a destination country, Viet Nam highly appreciates the efforts to eliminate the causes from source countries of tourists and offenders. The Event today is just a vivid example of this much-needed cooperation and coordination.

2. For the update on situation, our representatives of ECPAT/UNICEF and Interpol [have already] shall elaborate further. Last October, Viet Nam organized a series of national seminars on prevention of child sex in travel and tourism. Several important observations were made. I refer just a few, namely: "Child sex abuse cases in Southeast Asian nations have a tendency to increase in recent years with growing complexity"<sup>1</sup> and "Not many such cases have been uncovered"<sup>2</sup> or "Police have encountered many challenges in investigating cases of child abuse tourism, because victims have even been offered bribes to hush up the shameful incidents"<sup>3</sup>.
3. Regarding its impact, child sexual abuse can: (i) result in both short-term in transmitted diseases individually and social health risks in general, and long-term

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<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant General Phan Van Vinh – chief of the Police General Department

<sup>2</sup> Zhuldyz Akisheva, UNODC country director in Vietnam

<sup>3</sup> Ho Sy Tien, chief of the Criminal Police Bureau

harms, including psychopathology in the victims later life; (ii) endanger family and social basis, fine national traditions and cause economic losses and (iii) exacerbate situations relating to adult criminals, gangsters, drug abuse and other transnational crime such as human trafficking and illegal immigration, etc.

4. For the causes, we share the conclusions that:

- (i) Poverty, lack of education, rapid urbanization, rural-to-city migration, booming tourism industry, are among the main causes.
- (ii) At the same time, national legal framework, mechanisms, capability of law enforcement, gaps between national and international standards cooperation and coordination, are among other significant factors.
- (iii) Internet, communication technologies and new types of opportunity abusers, such as tourists, business travellers, expatriates and even the collusion of the victims, make the situation more complex and complicated.

5. As to hot spots in the region, as UNICEF/ Interpol/ECPAT have/shall discuss, many countries in Asia are obvious destinations of the crime.

*Mdm. Special Rapporteur,*

For experience of Viet Nam in combating the child sex in travel and tourism, generally we can put the experience into 5 groups:

***Group 1: The State bears a primary role. It is the political will, judicial and institutional set-up and the determination and mobilization of national resources that help to prevent and combat the crime:***

- Viet Nam recognized the issue rather early. The relevant provisions on combatting child sex can be found in the Penal Code (1999), National Action Plan for Children (2001-2010) and the Action Plan for the period 2011-2020. Because of its cross-sectorial nature, the provisions are also seen in other laws, such as Laws on Education (2005), Law on Gender Equality (2006) and Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (2007). At the same time, in order to eradicate the root causes, protection of children have become parts of other programs, such as National Program on Criminal Prevention (1998-2010), National Plan on Education or Plans on Poverty Reduction (since 2002).
- Viet Nam also has many other mechanism/commissions for children, such as the National Commission for Mother and Child; Commission for Population, Family and Children (from 2001-2007) and now there is an exclusive Commission for Children. For combatting child sex and human trafficking, currently the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Justice are in close coordination in this regard.

***Group 2: Cooperation among neighboring countries, bilaterally country and regionally is of utmost necessity and importance.***

- This is necessary because of geographic, cross-border nature and the similarity of culture and social development. Currently, Viet Nam has concluded a series of agreements with neighboring countries and other countries in the region, such as Bilateral extradition agreement with **Korea** (2003), Agreement on anti-trafficking

women and children with Cambodia (2005), **Laos** (2010), **China** (2010) and **Thailand** (2012).

- In addition, Viet Nam also has cooperation agreement with **Indonesia**, the Philippines and other countries in **ASEAN** for prevention of transnational crime, drug and human trafficking.
- Viet Nam also maintains the dialogues and cooperation with other countries, such as UK, France, Australia, Russia, Canada and Belarus on other issues pertaining to children, and most recently with Sweden on transnational crimes.

***Group 3: Viet Nam attaches great importance to cooperation and support from the United Nations system.***

- Recognizing the importance of protection of rights of children, Viet Nam ratified very early the Convention on Child Rights of 1999 and its two protocols, just being the second country (after Ghana). Viet Nam is also the party to the ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.
- Viet Nam also actively advocates to and follows other mechanisms, documents and guidelines of the UN system, such as the "Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking" of the High Commissioner of Human Rights.
- At the national level, Viet Nam has close coordination and cooperation with Programmes, Funds and Technical Organizations, such as UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, IMO. Since 2005, Viet Nam starts the "One UN" Initiative, aimed at enhancing the cooperation and effectiveness of supports from development partners.

***Group 4: Specific issues need specific mechanisms. For combatting child sex in travel and tourism, Viet Nam highly appreciates the support from and cooperation with Australia, Interpol, UNESCAP and ECPAT.***

- + With Interpol, the 80th Assembly in Hanoi is a good example of cooperation. After 20 years<sup>4</sup>, Viet Nam has captured and extradited more than 200 international criminals.
- Interpol Report March 2012 shows the joint efforts of the Organization and countries in South East Asia. The Operation Infra-SEA has resulted in 60 captures, with criminals on child sex from 21 countries.
- Recently, since January 2012, with the support from the Australian Government, the Childhood Project on combatting child sex has been implemented. Viet Nam, with other 03 countries in lower Mekong Basin (Cambodia, Laos and Thailand) have actively coordinating and working with Interpol, UNDOC and World Vision to combat the crime, with very encouraging preliminary results in each countries.
- + With ECPAT: this could be the biggest and exclusive forum on "Ending Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes", as its name suggests.

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<sup>4</sup> In 20 years of cooperation with the Intepol, there is around 45,000 communication, including around 13,000 on international warrants, 12,000 on transnational crimes, 3,500 on economic charges and 3,000 on drug cases.

- Viet Nam also attaches much importance to its World Congresses and finds the dialogues, information therein useful for inputs of policy making. Viet Nam has actively participated in regional and international meetings of ECPAT. At its last Congress in Rio de Janeiro, the Vietnamese delegation participated in the discussion of the Theme 2, on Legal Framework & Law Enforcement.

***Group 5: This is last but not least. That is the very essential role of family, education system, the mass media, NGOs & civil society, as well as the businesses.***

- + It suffices to reconfirm that, family, functioning as the cell of the society, plays an essential role to educate and support children on daily basis. School and education systems help to equip knowledge and protect further children. That forms an integral part of Vietnam's policy-making process.
- + However, there are domains that the Government cannot cover. That is where social organizations, NGOs and civil society can fit into the picture and play a crucial role and provide valuable supports. Recently, the role of corporations have been highlighted. However, it is still limited, mainly confining to supporting children with difficulties.

I hope that you find the information useful. I also hope that our experience could help us all to boost further the coordination and cooperation in the joint struggle to prevent and combat the child sex in travel and tourism.

Thank you for your kind attention./.