



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN



PRESS RELEASE

8th High-Level Cross-Regional Round Table

- **What and Why:**

Bhutan is hosting the Eighth United Nations High-Level Cross-Regional Round Table on the role of regional organizations in protecting children from violence and advancing progress towards the elimination of all forms of violence against children, as called for by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This meeting is being convened in Thimphu, organized by the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (UN SRSG-VAC) and the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) Regional Secretariat, hosted by the National Commission for Women and Children, Royal Government of Bhutan supported by the NACG Bhutan (SAIEVAC National Mechanisms). The meeting will provide a strategic platform to explore how regional organizations and institutions can build on their existing work and use the framework provided by the 2030 Agenda to accelerate progress in children's protection from all forms of violence and promote the abandonment of harmful practices.

Strengthening regional commitments, processes and initiatives, and enhancing cross-regional and South-South cooperation, are priorities for the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children. By convening an annual meeting of regional organizations and institutions for advancing the protection of children from violence, the Special Representative provides a platform to share knowledge and good practices, facilitate cross-fertilization of experience, and contribute to accelerating progress in children's protection from violence.

Regional inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations play a key role in the promotion of enhanced accountability for children's rights, including their right to freedom from violence. The efforts at the regional level to ensure effective follow-up to the UN Study on Violence against Children have translated into legal standards, public policies, research, monitoring tools and campaigns that are supporting, stimulating and reviewing States' efforts to prevent and respond to violence against children.

The Eighth High Level Cross Regional Round Table being held in Thimphu from 9-11 May 2018, will provide an opportunity to place a special focus on protection of children from harmful practices like child marriage and the role of community and religious leaders in addressing social norms that condone violence against children. It will also identify positive practices in the region that nurture and protect children. As such, participants will discuss initiatives taken to implement or develop regional strategies on violence against children, and respective regional contributions to joint actions on the related SDGs and global and regional follow up and review processes.

In 2016, the theme of the Sixth Cross-Regional Round Table hosted in Stockholm by the Council of Baltic Sea States was "Ending violence against children: The vision and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development." The Conclusions and Recommendations that emerged from the Round Table stressed the historic nature of the inclusion of violence against children as a distinct and cross-cutting priority in the 2030 Agenda and highlighted the crucial role of regional organizations and institutions in supporting efforts to meet the violence-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2017, the Seventh Cross-Regional Round Table provided an opportunity to reflect on the progress that has been achieved on protecting children from violence, and addressing child poverty and social exclusion and on how efforts within and between regions can be further enhanced to support accelerated progress towards reaching SDG target 16.2 and the other targets related to violence against children. The Seventh Cross-Regional Round Table was hosted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Manila, the Philippines.

The Eighth Cross-Regional Round Table will build on the recommendations from previous meetings, to advance progress towards reaching the violence against children related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Within the overall framework of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Cross-Regional Round Table will provide an opportunity to place a special emphasis on children's protection from harmful practices, including child marriage, and on the invaluable role that community and religious leaders can play in addressing social norms that condone violence against children. It will also address positive practices that nurture and protect children.

Sessions will cover global initiatives on violence against children and harmful and positive practices covering: standards and commitments to prevent, respond to and promote the abandonment of harmful practices; regional action plans and policy initiatives; the role of religious leaders in enhancing children's protection from violence; and government and non-government action and support. National Child Focal Points and relevant stakeholders will be attending the open session.

In particular, participants will have the opportunity to share information on and discuss:

- Steps undertaken in their respective regions to develop and implement a regional strategy on violence against children aligned with the 2030 Agenda;
- Initiatives to support countries in their respective regions to promote the mainstreaming of the SDG violence-related targets in national and sub-national plans and strategies, including in budget frameworks;
- Examples of support to peer learning and assessment of progress among governments to take stock of overall trends, lessons learned, good practices, persisting and emerging challenges specific to the region, as well as on ways to increase cross-regional cooperation and partnerships;
- Cooperation with other regional entities on the 2030 Agenda, on the promotion of joint actions and on the development of regional SDG monitoring tools to assess progress in children's protection from violence
- Plans to contribute to the SDGs' global and regional follow-up and review processes, including the role of regional organizations and institutions in mobilising member states to address violence against children in their voluntary national reviews to the annual United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York.
- Plans to mobilize support within and across regions to inform the 2019 HLPF which will review progress towards SDG target 16.2, as well as the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- **Who:**

Organized by: The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children in collaboration with the Regional Secretariat of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)

Hosted by: The National Commission for Women and Children, Royal Government of Bhutan supported by the NACG Bhutan (SAIEVAC National Mechanisms)

Tentative List /Category of Participants:

1. UN SRSG and VaC Thematic Team leaders

2. African Child Policy Forum (ACPF)
3. African Union- Special Rapporteur on Ending Child Marriage
4. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat
5. Central American Social Integration Secretariat (SICA)
6. Council of Baltic Sea States
7. Council of Europe
8. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
9. Inter-American Children's Institute of the Organization of American States (IIN-OAS)
10. MERCOSUR – Institute for Public Policies on Human Rights
11. MMI-LAC (Global Movement for Children Latin America Section)
12. South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC)
13. UNICEF, UNFPA
14. Regional INGO Representatives
15. Violence against children Thematic Experts
16. Special Invitees relevant to the theme

- **When:**

Time: 9-11 May 2018

- **Where:**

Royal Convention Centre, Thimphu

For more information, please contact:

Contact No.	Mobile No.	Email
Ms. Kunzang Lhamu Executive Director, NCWC	+975-17602650	klhamu@ncwc.gov.bt
Dr. Rinchen Chopel Director General, SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat	+977-9810049235 +975-17600127	rinchen.chophel@saievac.org
Ms. Marta Santos Pais UNSRSG-VAC		
Ms. Sanna Kaki Child Protection Specialist Office of UNSRSG VAC	+1 917 200 8632	kaki@un.org
Mr. Kent Page Communications Specialist Office of UNSRSG VAC	+1 917 302 1735	kent.page@un.org