



CONCEPT NOTE

Building on the findings and recommendations from the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children Report to the UN General Assembly on Child Protection in Travel and Tourism.



12 October 2023 | 9.00 am - 1.00 pm New York Time

Roundtable with three thematic panels

Registration and coffee break: from 8.30 am, sandwiches after the event

Registration: to attend the event online or in-person, register [here](#).

Conveners: ECPAT International, PACT and the office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (OSRSG VAC).

Background: The series of panel discussions are organised to unpack the OSRSG VAC's Report on Child Protection in Travel and Tourism that will be presented to the UN General Assembly in October 2023, while [taking stock](#) of the joint efforts and the progress that has been made over the recent years since the launch of the first Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism.

Objectives: To step-up collective action by intergovernmental bodies, governments, businesses, and civil society organisations to protect children in travel and tourism based on the OSRSG VAC's report.

Setting the stage and closing the event: Dr Najat Maalla M'jid, the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (OSRSG VAC).

The event is composed of three thematic panels:

1. Children's perspectives on how tourism delivers its promises of sustainable development.

2. The role of the travel and transportation industry in preventing and addressing child exploitation.
3. The financial sector's role in addressing child sexual exploitation.

Speakers will cover key thematic topics through knowledge, experience and idea-sharing. The online moderator will involve those attending online to ensure an effective hybrid experience.

PANEL 1 - CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON HOW TOURISM DELIVERS ITS PROMISES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Objective: To step-up collective action by intergovernmental bodies, governments, businesses, and civil society organisations in bringing in perspectives of children and young people on how tourism delivers its promises of sustainable development and to encourage adoption of child participation models in development of sustainable destinations.

Background:

In Latin America, as part of the project "Building sustainable tourism destinations that protect children from sexual exploitation"¹ ECPAT International in cooperation with Fundación Paniamor (Costa Rica), and Fundación Quito Raymi (Ecuador), through a series of workshops led with and by children and young adults developed a child participation model for application by governments and the private sector. Participatory, inclusive, and child rights-based approaches are key to influencing the discourse on sustainability, which tends to limit the perspectives and perceptions of those directly affected by tourism developments.

In Thailand, the project "Together to End Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel & Tourism in Phang-Nga"² empowers children and youth to defend themselves against sexual exploitation, report cases and access services. Implemented in partnership with ECPAT Foundation, Phang-Nga Children's Home, and DISAC Surathani, this vital collaboration engages with the local community and children from vulnerable groups. Simultaneously, the project works to socially and economically empower disadvantaged youth through the TUI Academy.

The speakers, including children's representatives, will share their perspectives on how sustainable tourism should be developed with child protection at the core, and present child participation models and practices for replication at scale.

PANEL 2 - THE ROLE OF THE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY IN PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING CHILD EXPLOITATION

Objective: To step up action and the role of the travel and transportation industry in preventing and addressing the sexual exploitation of children, while showcasing promising practices for adaptation, use, and replication at scale.

Background: The issue of sexual exploitation of children linked to travel and transport contexts is not sufficiently recognised, documented, and understood, although promising practices exist across countries and regions. ECPAT International refers to "travel and transport" as the movement of persons

¹ The project "Building sustainable tourism destinations that protect children from sexual exploitation" is implemented with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

² The project "Together to End Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel & Tourism in Phang-Nga" is funded by the Government of the Netherlands and TUI Care Foundation through DCI-ECPAT Netherlands. The TUI Academy Thailand is co-financed by Fund against Child Labour, commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is implemented together with TUI Care Foundation, Plan International, Defence for Children ECPAT and ROBINSON Khao Lak.

from place to place and the various means by which such movement is accomplished, without taking into consideration the length and purpose of the journey. The focus is beyond longer trips for leisure purposes, in contexts associated with the movement of persons such as trucks, buses, trains, transport hubs, taxis, private transport, and other transportation-related services managed also through online platforms. Transportation networks can be misused by both domestic and foreign travelling sex offenders and those who take the arising opportunity to exploit children. In these environments, at every stage of the journey, children are exposed to a heightened risk of violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse – also online and through the use of digital technologies, trafficking, child marriage, forced labor, or recruitment by criminal and armed groups. Children may also go missing, or end up on the streets, where they are at heightened risk of violence and exploitation with no protective environments.

The speakers will present the risk to children in travel and transportation and the ways of making the industry safe for children. They will share promising practices and actionable models from the transport industry from across regions including Latin America³, USA, Europe ([Norway](#)) and West Africa⁴.

PANEL 3. THE FINANCIAL SECTOR'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Objective: Drawing on expert voices from around the world the roundtable aims to identify existing good practice as well as challenges and opportunities for more assertive action by the financial sector to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA), and draw lessons learned from the investor community in influencing technology and financial companies for due diligence and the upholding of human rights and children's rights principles.

Background: The financial sector has a critical role to play in identifying and responding to CSEA. This includes but is not limited to the context of travel and tourism and human trafficking, as well as various forms of online CSEA such as the production and sale of child sexual abuse material, the monetised live streaming of child sexual abuse, grooming for sexual purposes, and financial sexual extortion. Financial institutions are gatekeepers to vital intelligence which can be shared with national financial regulators and other relevant authorities for action. Data held by the financial sector can also identify trends and patterns emerging in relation to CSEA crimes and the types of digital payment modalities being used to carry them out. This is underpinned by existing policy initiatives and standards, including but not limited to [Sustainable Development Goals](#), the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) and the [Child Rights and Business Principles](#). It is further driven by legislative developments such as the European Union Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD).

For its part, civil society can provide vital insights and contextual knowledge of the issues to assist financial institutions, including for the development of 'red flag' indicators to identify instances of this crime type. Civil society can also play a key convening role in bringing together the necessary stakeholder groups and advocate for more assertive action to address this issue. Such action needs to be adapted for the specific legal and policy environment in the focus country. Notable within the ECPAT network, ECPAT Sweden and ECPAT USA have been active for many years in national financial coalitions to tackle monetised or commercialised sexual exploitation of children. In 2022, ECPAT International initiated

³ The good practices from Latin America feature the experiences of Volaris, Mexico - Top Member 2023 of The Code www.thecode.org implementing child protection standards in cooperation with ECPAT Mexico.

⁴ Information shared at this event from West Africa was collected and processed with funding support from the Civil Society Fund of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ireland as part of the project "Ensemble" that is a 3-year (2022-2024) joint initiative of ECPAT International, ECPAT France and national partners namely SOS Violence Sexuelles-Côte d'Ivoire, Communauté Abel-Côte d'Ivoire, Keoogo-Burkina Faso, ABSE-Burkina Faso, ANTD-Niger, and MDE-Guinea. ECPAT France is a technical partner. The geographic focus of the programme is Francophone West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Niger, Guinea).

collaboration between Scotiabank and CHS Alternativo in Peru to develop and deploy indicators of payment for activity related to CSEA. This pilot sought to learn from and adapt the successful deployment of indicators in Canada under Project Shadow and Project Protect. Furthermore, investor and shareholder groups of investors are also stepping up the demand for accountability among key financial and technology institutions to ensure that child protection is duly and holistically considered in the business model.

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RESOURCES and BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: <https://ecpat.org/global-events-in-new-york/>

For more information about the events please reach out to the Head of Programme, Child Protection in Travel and Tourism at gabrielak@ecpat.org