

# Evaluation Report on Children's Participation at the East Asia Pacific Regional Consultation for the UN Study on Violence Against Children

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*Margarita Harou, one of seven Under 18 Delegates delivering the keynote presentation at the East Asia Pacific Regional Consultation for the UN Study on Violence Against Children, June 14 2005, Bangkok.*

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## **Glossary A – Z**

**Adult Delegate:** Any participant in the consultation who was over 18 years old.

**Child/Children:** A person below the age of 18 years old.

**Children's Forum:** A preparatory event for Under 18 Delegates to the Regional Consultation, held, in Bangkok, 11-12 June 2005.

**Children's Participation Co-ordinator:** the person who was responsible for the logistics and administration of Under 18 Delegates and their Guardians at the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation.

**Child Protection Focal Person:** The person who had overall responsibility for child protection at the Regional Consultation. The first point of contact for any child protection concerns for the Regional Steering Committee and all participants (both delegates and staff) at the Regional Consultation.

**Consultant on Children's Participation:** The person who had overall responsibility for co-ordinating the meaningful participation of children at the East Asia Pacific Regional Consultation. Responsible for the development and implementation of the Minimum Standards and Protocol on Children's Participation.

**Consultation Media Team:** A team of media professionals who worked at the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation to promote media work.

**Consultation Organisers:** The team of staff (from UNICEF EAPRO) who were responsible for organising the logistics of the Regional Consultation. The team included: Consultation Organiser, Secretary and Videographer (who were specifically employed for the event) and at least six other permanent staff from UNICEF EAPRO (including two media people and a photographer).

**Facilitator:** A person who was responsible for 'facilitating' or making easy, children's capacity to express their views in public using a variety of techniques. Employed or volunteered specifically for the Children's Forum or Regional Consultation.

**Guardian:** Adult accompanying an Under 18 Delegate. Guardians had responsibility for all aspects of the Under 18 Delegate's rights and welfare.

**Lead Facilitator for Under 18 Delegates:** The person who had overall responsibility for the facilitation for Under 18 Delegates. Responsible for ensuring the objectives of the Children's Forum were met and that the objectives for Under 18 Delegates at the Regional Consultation were met.

**Minimum Standards:** Short for Minimum Standards on Consulting with Children, they are statements that described the minimum expectations of the ways in which adults and children should behave and operate in consultations with children.

**National Focal Agency:** A national organisation that has agreed to support and promote children's participation from its country at the Regional Consultation.

**Participation:** In this process, participation is about influencing decision-making and achieving change. Children's participation is an informed and willing involvement of all children, including those who are differently abled and those at risk, in any matter concerning them either directly or indirectly.

**Protocol:** A package of procedures, guidelines, forms and briefing papers annexed to the Minimum Standards for use in implementing the Minimum Standards.

**Regional Consultation:** The East Asia Pacific Regional Consultation for the UN Study on Violence Against Children, held in Bangkok, 14-16 June.

**Steering Committee:** A committee of representatives with responsibility for coordinating and supporting the region's participation in the UN Study on Violence against Children. Member organisations included: UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office, Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNESCO Bangkok, NGO Advisory Panel on the UN Study on Violence Against Children, Save the Children Alliance, Child Workers in Asia, ECPAT International, World Vision International APRO, Plan International, Terre des Hommes Germany and an independent expert.

**Support Team:** The team of staff which specifically supported children's participation at the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation. The team included the Consultant on Children's Participation, the Children's Participation Co-ordinator, the Lead Facilitator for Under 18 Delegates and two Facilitators (who worked mainly at the Children's Forum).

**Under 18 Delegate:** Any participant in the consultation aged under 18 years old.

**Under 18 Delegate Media Team:** Eight Under 18 Delegates were selected for this team and undertook all media activities on behalf of Under 18s at the Regional Consultation.

**UNICEF EAPRO:** UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office, hosts of the Regional Consultation.

## **Executive Summary**

It is clear that implementation of Minimum Standards on Consulting with Children significantly affected the participation of children at the Regional Consultation. Many Delegates stated that children's participation at the event was the best they had experienced and evaluation data shows Under 18 Delegates substantially influenced the content of the Outcome Report from the Consultation. However, it is also clear from evaluation data that the Minimum Standards were not sufficiently monitored or enforced.

Analysis points to a number of **key issues** for effective implementation of the Minimum Standards.

**Implementing Minimum Standards:** Reluctance on behalf of the Steering Committee to appear dictatorial to national partners meant that the Minimum Standards, as a tool, worked more as good practice than 'standards' per se. This was due to a lack of monitoring and clearly stated enforcement mechanisms. Revision of the Minimum Standards and Protocol, based on evaluation data, should ensure that the documents are able to be implemented as minimum standards – stating the lowest level of practice to ensure the meaningful participation of children.

**Comprehensive Guidelines:** A wide-ranging Protocol for the participation of children that included all forms, briefing materials and guidelines for those facilitating children's participation was a valuable tool. In addition, development of a comprehensive budget for children's participation, outlining all possible costs and regularly assessed by organisers considerably facilitated financial management.

**The Role of National Partners:** Building a team of national partners (National Focal Agencies) was crucial to the successful implementation of the standards. It was consequently very important that National Focal Agencies (NFAs) had a common understanding of their role and had an opportunity to discuss and agree on the Minimum Standards and Protocol.

**A Commitment to Participation:** A common and clearly stated commitment to children's participation from all agencies in the Steering Committee contributed to strong multi-agency collaboration for the Regional Consultation. This commitment was particularly noticeable and effective regarding the financial costs for children's participation and enabled relatively smooth management of finances.

**Translation:** As one of the key principles for the Minimum Standards concerned equality of opportunity, the decision not to require Under 18 Delegates to speak English had a huge impact on the participatory processes employed for the Regional Consultation. Although selection guidelines could not force selectors into choosing children from disadvantaged groups it was found that they could open up the selection process by placing fewer restrictions on potential candidates. Consequently by not insisting on English speakers in the criteria for Under 18 Delegates, this considerably widened the potential for the participation of children in non English speaking countries to groups of children who typically suffer discrimination and who are most often excluded. This decision, however, meant that all documents needed to be translated (application forms and consent forms as well as briefing materials) and an interpretation service provided during the Regional Consultation itself, for a potential 18 languages in the region. Provision of an effective translation service at the Regional Consultation therefore became one of the biggest issues in ensuring meaningful participation by children.

**Role of Guardians:** The role of Guardian was closely monitored at the Regional Consultation and it was found that it is multi-faceted, combining the roles of carer, parent, mentor, friend and translator. It was felt that close communication should be instituted between the child protection team and Guardians in general. In addition, it was clear that Under 18 Delegates had a need for 'explainers', someone who could accompany them in all activities and explain the wider context of issues as well as the underlying politics that influenced decision making. Guardians' informal relationships with Under 18 Delegates naturally led them to take on this task.

**Planning:** It was found in general that where proper planning was instituted, Minimum Standards were met, but when activities were hurried, standards tended to be ignored. Designation of time for some activities was underestimated. Insufficient time was allocated for the application period for participation at the Regional Consultation, resulting in some very last minute applications and ineffective monitoring of applications. Further, it was noticeable that where preparatory activities at a national level (particularly selection and briefing) were hurried, the application process for Under 18 Delegates was incomplete. The Children's Forum would have benefited from being three rather than two days long. And the detailed planning of the Regional Consultation as a whole had an impact on children's participation; where it was in place Under 18 Delegates were able to present their views in a professional, succinct and appropriate manner.

### **Strengths**

Production of a comprehensive budget (with relatively few last-minute costs) and a proven commitment from Steering Committee members to cover all costs for children's participation ensured that funding and financial management was a relatively smooth process for children's participation.

An opportunity to discuss and agree on the procedures for children's participation (the Protocol) by National Focal Agencies helped give common ownership and understanding of the Minimum Standards to its main implementers.

The selection processes for Under 18 Delegates were generally of a high standard; transparent and democratic with all Under 18 Delegates able to meet the selection criteria. In many countries Under 18 Delegates were voted and mandated by peers.

Preparation of Under 18 Delegates was well implemented overall. National Consultations took place in ten countries and acted as an important step in the preparation of Under 18 Delegates. In addition comprehensive briefing materials were provided for Under 18 Delegates in children-friendly formats.

The production of a document (during the Children's Forum) outlining recommendations from Under 18 Delegates on the six categories of violence (to be discussed at the Regional Consultation) proved to be an excellent tool. The recommendations were primarily useful as a resource for Under 18 Delegates in their discussions in workshops but also acted as a valuable tool to measure the influence Under 18 Delegates had on the final statement of the Regional Consultation.

Comprehensive staffing (in total 4 paid staff), including the hiring of a consultant to co-ordinate all activities for children's participation, was considered crucial to the successful implementation of the standards.



Child protection procedures were considered comprehensive and effective by participants and organisers. Materials that particularly aided preparation and planning for child protection included the development of an action plan and risk assessment, a children-friendly complaints procedure and the establishment of a strong child protection team.

Media work at the Regional Consultation presented children in an empowering way as experts rather than witnesses; a relatively fundamental change in the way that children are generally represented with the media.

### **Weaknesses**

Collaboration between the regional and national level activities could have been improved. The cancellation of a preparatory meeting for the Regional Consultation was a missed opportunity that would have enabled closer co-ordination and communication, and more clarity on the respective roles at the regional and national level.

Due to time constraints a lack of monitoring of the application process meant that some of the Minimum Standards were not met. In particular, a number of consent forms were not received by the support team which should have constituted a child protection concern. Monitoring mechanisms would have benefited from implementation of a step-by-step application process with deadlines spread over the preceding month to the Regional Consultation.

Enforcement mechanisms for the standards were not clearly stated in the Protocol and resulted in a lack of clarity on whether standards had been met. For instance, no mechanism was in place to check whether Guardians had successfully passed safeguarding checks.

Discussion and planning for follow-up activities at the regional level did not take place until after the Regional Consultation. No follow-up plans were produced before the Regional Consultation and the issue was not discussed at Steering Committee meetings nor with NFAs. Communication with NFAs after the Regional Consultation was weak, resulting in a lack of data to measure follow-up with Under 18 Delegates.

Guidelines for journalists were missing from the Protocol, consequently journalists were given guidelines on media for staff which focused on child protection concerns rather than promoting the voices of children to the media.

### **Recommendations**

#### **The Regional Steering Committee**

- A preparatory meeting should be organised, ideally for all participants.
- A lead-in time of at least two months before the event should be built into the planning process. Application procedures for participation at the event should be closely co-ordinated between consultation staff and those organising logistics for children.
- All staff employed to organise a consultation, but particularly the Consultation Co-ordinator, should receive briefing on children's participation.
- Clear terms of reference for the Steering Committee, Consultation Organisers and various sub-committees (including clear indications of responsibilities for the participation of

children) should be finalised and agreed by all involved before activities of the different groups commence.

### **National Focal Agencies**

- Clear guidelines on the role, responsibilities, benefits and costs for NFAs need to be finalised as early in the preparatory process as possible, including clear information on lines of communication between regional and national partners. Agreement should be reached on all aspects of the role with regional and national partners.
- A preparatory regional event should be organised to bring those organising children' together to agree on the participatory procedures to be used at the Regional Consultation and to develop and commit their organisations to activities at national level to prepare and follow up with children involved in the Regional Consultation.
- The application process should include clear deadlines for National Focal Agencies.

### **Budget**

- Clear and transparent information on how costs will be covered, in particular, the logistics of how reimbursements will be made should be outlined and form part of the discussions at a preparatory meeting with national partners.
- Ideally one agency should have responsibility for holding and administering funds and take-on legal responsibility (recruitment procedures) for any staff employed to support children's participation. However if this is not possible, early agreements should be made between participating agencies on how to manage funds and staff for children's participation.
- A financial report should be made at all Steering Committee Meetings and Advisory Group meetings, the budget should be openly discussed at regular intervals. This will ensure smoother communication between the organising committee(s) and staff.
- A cost benefit analysis should be made of children's participation. New criteria should be developed that look at the quality and impact of children's participation on all stakeholders (for instance government ministers).

### **Selection of Under 18 Delegates**

- A preparatory national event (children-only or adults and children) is highly recommended as a suitable forum for organising the final selection of Under 18 Delegates, in particular, selection by peers.
- Clear criteria should be developed (ideally with children) that promote non-discriminatory practices and democratic procedures. Removing criteria for English speakers significantly widens the potential for the selection of children from groups that are commonly excluded from such events.
- Application forms should be as short as possible to make them easier to translate, complete and return. Information should be requested one time only (address, date of birth etc.) in the application process.
- A step-by-step process for applications should be implemented (with clear deadlines for each step for those submitting applications) so that if an application is not received the next step in the process (i.e. sending out an invitation) is not initiated until a communication between regional and national partners has established the necessity to

proceed. Submissions should be made by email (where a signature is not required for legal reasons).

### **Selection of Guardians**

- The application process should state that Guardians are required to meet Under 18 Delegates at least once before they start their journey – this activity should be monitored in the application process.
- A close working relationship between support staff and NFAs should be developed to help monitor the selection process.
- Monitoring mechanisms should be included into Guardian Application Forms to check gender and age of Guardians.

### **Preparation**

- National consultations should be organised that give children opportunities to discuss the issue of violence against children and to mandate Under 18 Delegates on these issues.
- All briefing materials for Under 18 Delegates should be translated into appropriate languages. Consideration for these costs should be included in budget estimations and ample time allowed for making translation.
- Briefing materials should be concise and avoid repetition and preferably produced as one document that Under 18 Delegates are required to sign (for instance in a participation agreement).
- Prior to departure at least one meeting with Under 18 Delegates and Guardians (and ideally other delegates attending the Regional Consultation from the country) should be organised to help prepare Under 18 Delegates – the meeting should include discussions on violence against children as well as logistical issues.
- Within the Protocol, tools should be provided that allow children who are not able to attend the Consultation, to input their opinions on the subject. For instance guidelines for submitting recommendations to the Consultation or for focus group discussions with children. This will help Under 18 Delegates to be mandated by peers, it could also help particular groups of children who may find it difficult to attend an international meeting, to have their opinions represented through Under 18 Delegates.

### **Consent**

- Consent forms should be prioritised for bi-lingual translation and NFAs should be informed of this requirement.
- The existing consent form should be edited to omit any information that is requested in other application documents but should continue to include enough information in order that parents and children understand what they sign up to.
- Close monitoring of consent forms should be instituted so that an application for an Under 18 Delegate does not proceed without the receipt of a signed consent form from each delegate.
- The lack of a consent form should constitute a child protection concern and trigger the application of appropriate child protection procedures. It should be clearly stated in the

protocol that no child can participate in the event without the receipt of a fully completed and signed consent form.

### **The Children's Forum**

- If participants have not previously met, three days should be allowed for a preparatory meeting with children.
- Communication and co-ordination between all facilitators, support staff and consultation organisers should start at least one month before the preparatory meeting and the facilitation plan should be discussed by all to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear.
- Meeting room facilities should include computers (with internet access) which should be accessible by Under 18 Delegates after hours (appropriate IT safety considerations should also be made).
- If participants are dividing into working groups it may be useful to place restrictions on the number of participants in each group – particularly if participants speak many different languages.
- Organisers should ensure that plenty of time is allocated for Under 18 Delegates to choose, from amongst themselves, who will take on specific tasks. This activity should be well planned in order that Under 18 Delegates understand any limitations for the process (i.e. limitation from organisers such as requirement of an English speaker only) and different options for decision making (setting criteria, deciding on structure - voting, presentations etc.)
- A minimum of two administrative support staff should be on hand at the meeting who speak the local language and enough facilitators available to be able to facilitate participants when they break into working groups.

### **The Regional Consultation**

- In a formal, international meeting the use of professional translators for Under 18 Delegates should be seriously considered. Translators should have an understanding of the field and be able to make simultaneous translation on a one-to-one basis with an Under 18 Delegate.
- Training of translators on participatory techniques should be instituted prior to the start of their work. Translators should be given background information on the issue of the consultation in order to prepare them for the content (and jargon) of discussions. Time for this training and preparation should be included in translators' contracts. Translation should be monitored closely by facilitators during the Regional Consultation.
- Recruitment of staff for the consultation – particularly for the lead organiser – should consider the understanding and commitment to children's participation and child protection of candidates. All staff specifically recruited for the consultation should receive briefing/workshop on children's participation and the specific procedures developed for the consultation.
- Clear demarcations of roles and responsibilities should be outlined for the different bodies organising the consultation (for instance between consultation hosts and the Regional Steering Committee).
- Consideration of access to microphones should be paramount in organising seating arrangements for Under 18 Delegates. Ideally Under 18 Delegates should be consulted

on seating arrangements, however it is worth noting that Under 18 Delegates tend to want to sit together.

- A room should be allocated for use by Under 18 Delegates and their support team (including guardians, translators, facilitators, admin staff). The room should be large enough to hold briefing meetings with all Under 18s and the support team and should include suitable equipment (computers with internet access, printers, notice boards, comfortable chairs).

## **Guardians**

- A preparatory workshop should be organised for Guardians before the start of the Children's Forum (where expectations of Guardians, logistics and child protection procedures are explained). In addition, mandatory daily de-briefing meetings with Guardians and the Child Protection Focal Person should be scheduled.
- The Child Protection Focal Person should be the main point of contact for Guardians and should take a pro-active stance in seeking comments from Guardians on child protection issues.
- The role of Guardian should be integrated into a wider vision of the child protection team so that Guardians are well informed of child protection procedures at the Regional Consultation and liaise regularly with child protection officers.
- Guardians should be able to act as translators in a preparatory children's forum and act as observers at the main consultation (accompanying Under 18 Delegates to workshops/plenary etc.). Clear guidance should be given to Guardians to ensure that their presence as observers does not affect children's discussion and opinions and this aspect of the Guardian role should be closely monitored.

## **Child Protection**

- The risk assessment (developed before the Regional Consultation) should be continually updated and serve as a 'living document' during the consultation, as new risks and weaknesses in protection rules become apparent.
- A member of the media team should become one of the members of the Child Protection Team to ensure regular communication and daily assessments of media activities.
- Communication with Guardians via e-mail should occur at least one month prior to the consultation. This would assist with conveying protection rules (particularly concerning travel); familiarizing Guardians with the Child Protection Focal Person and his/her contact details; and also to identify skills (e.g. counselling experience, expertise on child participation methods) which the Guardians may be able to lend during the consultation.
- Open dialogue and agreement on reasonable repercussions for breaking protection rules should occur between the Child Protection Focal Person and Under 18 Delegates. Under 18 Delegates should take the lead in deciding what such consequences could consist of, with the Child Protection Focal Person guiding this process.
- In order to minimize risk, all Guardians should ideally carry mobile phones, either their own or ones that are rented by the Support Team for them. This is especially important when Guardians take the Under 18 Delegates under their care on trips or in separate vehicles to the consultation venue.

- To better ensure appropriate health insurance is organised for Under 18 Delegates, information on the insurance papers organised for Under 18 Delegates by NFAs should be requested in the application form.

### **Media Activities**

- In addition to media guidelines for staff and Under 18 Delegates, guidelines for media professionals should be produced that reflect more of the positive aspects of media work for Under 18 Delegates and give examples of creative ways to engage the media.
- Risk assessments: in addition to general risk assessments made in advance by Under 18 Delegates (in collaboration with their Guardians), risk should be assessed by the Consultation Media Team on a case-by-case basis with Under 18 Delegates, where possible risks are explained for each interview.
- Artwork and texts: Under 18 Delegates should be briefed on this issue so that they are aware that as soon as their opinion, text or artwork becomes public it is not always possible to control where it goes.
- The Steering Committee and Consultation Media Team should agree on how best to package the voices of Under 18 Delegates for the Consultation (i.e. through video, photography and written work) and the subsequent resources and preparation required to ensure Under 18 Delegates voices have impact on the media.

### **Voicing Opinions**

- All opportunities for Under 18 Delegates to voice their opinions (through presentations, or taking on tasks at the Consultation such as Chair) should be well planned by organisers and clearly communicated to Under 18s in order that Under 18 Delegates have ample opportunity to prepare.
- A balance should be kept in plenary sessions with time for questions to ensure equal time for questions from Adult and Under 18 Delegates.
- Small, facilitated, working group sessions allow Under 18 Delegates the best opportunity to voice their opinions and should form the basis of discussions and decision making at the Consultation.
- All decision making processes should be transparent and participatory (including how Under 18 Delegates are chosen for specific tasks).

### **Influencing Decisions**

- The production of a document clearly listing recommendations from Under 18 Delegates (agreed at a preparatory event) is an excellent tool for Under 18 Delegates to use to measure their influence during discussions at the Regional Consultation and with any final recommendations from the event.
- This document should be translated in all languages spoken by Under 18 Delegates and made available to consultation organisers as a resource.

### **Follow-up**

- Planning for follow-up should be discussed prior to the Consultation with the Steering Committee and dates set for further discussion after the event.

- A meeting with NFAs to discuss follow-up should be organised during the Regional Consultation where short term and long term activities are discussed.
- If no regional follow-up event is planned, communication between Under 18 Delegates, NFAs and the organisers of the Regional Consultation should be continued through a follow-up project of some description (which does not have to be too ambitious but encourages NFAs and Under 18 Delegates to communicate with each other).





## **Introduction**

This report provides an evaluation of the Minimum Standards on Children's Participation and Protocol, piloted at the East Asia Pacific Regional Consultation for the UN Study on Violence Against Children between January – August 2005. The evaluation report has been produced for members of the East Asia Pacific Regional Steering Committee. The report is structured in line with the Minimum Standards, in a rough chronological order, before, during and after the Regional Consultation. With findings, analysis conclusions and recommendations made for each of the 16 sections. An executive summary outlines the main findings and recommendations from the evaluation.

Evaluation was made through analysis of the following data from a number of questionnaires completed by Under 18 Delegates, Guardians and NFAs, various protocol documents (application forms, consent forms, participation agreements), minutes from workshops and meetings (Regional Steering Committee Meetings, De-briefing Meetings with Under 18 Delegates) and from evaluation reports made by staff. (See Annex 1)

## **Background**

In 2002 the United Nations General Assembly requested the Secretary General to conduct an in-depth global study on the issue of violence against children after growing awareness that violence is a common and pervasive experience in the daily lives of many children.

The UN Study on Violence Against Children had specific goals:

- 1 To raise international visibility of all forms of violence against children.
- 2 To better understand the causes of violence and its impact on children, adults and societies.
- 3 To assess existing mechanisms to address violence against children.
- 4 To identify an international action plan to effectively end these abuses.

The process for the UN Study included Government reports based on an official questionnaire. In addition Consultations at the regional, sub-regional and national levels involving Governments, Non Government Organisations (NGOs) and all parts of civil society were organised and formed an integral part of the UN Study. A Secretariat based in Geneva, co-ordinated activities for the UN Study.

In the preparations for the UN Study, the right of children to participate in and be consulted on the UN Study was acknowledged and recognised; not least by the Independent Expert for the UN Study, Professor Paulo Pinheiro, as a key priority area.

Each region had its own interpretation and approach towards strengthening the involvement of children in the work around the UN Study. In the East Asia Pacific Region, a steering committee was established to promote and coordinate regional input to the global study and organise the regional consultation. From its inception in October 2003, members of the Regional Steering Committee for the UN Study on Violence Against Children (Steering Committee) placed a high priority on children's participation and a sub-group of the Steering Committee was established to ensure that children's participation at the Regional Consultation became a reality.

### **The Minimum Standards Evaluation Project**

Minimum Standards on Consulting with Children were approved by the Steering Committee in December 2005 for use at the Regional Consultation. They consisted of 27 statements that described the minimum expectations of the ways in which adults and children should behave and operate in consultations with children (see separate package). Based on lessons learned and analysis from previous experience it was felt that the Regional Consultation planned for East Asia Pacific presented an opportunity to produce and implement standards rather than guidelines. The standards were therefore a statement of the lowest level of practice acceptable to the Steering Committee to ensure meaningful children's participation.

The Minimum Standards, acting as a policy document, could not be implemented without appropriate procedures. Therefore a protocol was developed for the Minimum Standards consisting of 17 documents which acted as the working tools for the Minimum Standards (see separate package).

In December 2005, the Steering Committee approved a draft of the Minimum Standards as well as plans to start an eight month evaluation project to pilot the implementation of the Minimum Standards at the forthcoming Regional Consultation. (See Annex 2 for a timeline for the project).

An external consultant was employed to co-ordinate the project and an Advisory Group on Children's Participation (a sub-group of the Steering Committee) was set up help manage the evaluation project. The Advisory Group reported to the Regional Steering Committee which had final decision-making authority on the evaluation project.

## Implementing Minimum Standards

### Background

During the development of the Minimum Standards the issue of the exact nature of standards (as opposed to good practice) was raised in discussion by the Steering Committee which concluded that minimum standards have five characteristics:

**Enforced:** they have enforcement mechanisms and a penalty if they are not all met (which is ultimately that children will not participate);

**Non negotiable:** they draw a line to show what is acceptable or not acceptable and represent a starting point;

**Transparent:** they have criteria and enforcement mechanisms that make decision making more obvious;

**Permanent:** they are fixed, and as they outline the 'bottom line' the only way they should move is up;

**Agreed:** one organization or group is accountable for them (the Steering Committee).

### Analysis

**Enforced:** this characteristic was not comprehensively implemented, in part, due to reluctance on behalf of the Steering Committee to appear dictatorial to national partners regarding the standards, but also due to time constraints during the final preparations which prevented adequate monitoring.

**Non-negotiable and Permanent:** The implementation of an evaluation project for the Minimum Standards and subsequent revision of the Minimum Standards and Protocol (through feedback from all stakeholders) should help to ensure the revised Minimum Standards will represent non-negotiable, permanent and workable statements on children's participation in the East Asia Pacific region.

**Transparent:** although most of the criteria in the Protocol were clearly stated (for instance with the selection of Guardians), enforcement mechanisms such as deadlines for forms were not stated in either the Minimum Standards document or the Protocol.

**Agreed:** Although one 'body' was accountable for the standards (the Steering Committee) it was clear that in addition the main implementing groups (National Focal Agencies) needed to feel 'ownership' of the standards, in particular to agree on the detail of the Protocol. This agreement was reached at the National Focal Agency meeting.

### Summary and Conclusion

During the course of the evaluation period the Minimum Standards worked more as good practice than standards as there was insufficient monitoring and a lack of enforcement mechanisms or a clearly stated penalty. This was, in part, due to reluctance on behalf of the Steering Committee to appear dictatorial to national partners regarding the standards. It was important that National Focal Agencies, in addition to the Steering Committee discussed and agreed on the standards. Revision of the Minimum Standards and Protocol, based on evaluation data and outlined in the recommendations of this evaluation report – should ensure that all characteristics of the Minimum Standards are implemented.

# BEFORE THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION

## The Regional Steering Committee

### **Background**

The overall objective of the Steering Committee was to coordinate and support the region's participation in the UN Study on Violence against Children. Within this context, the Committee's specific objectives included facilitating the sharing of information on the UN Study, mobilising funds for the event, supporting and monitoring national level activities, organising the Regional Consultation and assisting in compilation and assessment of regional data and inputs for the UN Study.

Meetings of the Steering Committee were convened every one to two months and were co-ordinated by UNICEF EAPRO. In the interim, communication between Steering Committee Members was via email. In line with the commencement of the minimum standards evaluation project an Advisory Group on Children's Participation (a sub-group of the Steering Committee) was established in January 2005 to give technical advice on the implementation of children's participation at the Regional Consultation and the content of materials produced by the Consultant on Children's Participation.

### **Analysis**

**Multi-agency collaboration:** The establishment of a Steering Committee, an Advisory Group on Children's Participation and the employment of a consultant to take on the work for the participation of children were all seen as strengths of a multi-agency collaboration. This was bolstered by the shared commitment and common values of the Steering Committee which positively affected all the work on children's participation at the Regional Consultation.

**National and Regional Collaboration:** Although it was recognised by the Steering Committee that planning for the Regional Consultation could have been improved, some of the issues concerning planning stemmed from delays at the highest level of the UN Study – the Secretariat based in Geneva and UNICEF Head Quarters in New York as well as changes in key staff at UNICEF at the regional level. Planning of the Regional Consultation started early in October 2003 but was slow to gain momentum. One of the key weaknesses, commented on by the Steering Committee, was communication between the UNICEF regional level and national level and a lack of emphasis at the national level. In addition, the cancellation (due to a lack of funds) of a preparatory meeting, to be held in January 2005, had a negative impact on national/regional communications, although this was countered in part by the organisation of a preparatory meeting for National Focal Agencies (held in April).

**Planning:** In much of the evaluation data a lack of time is mentioned as the cause of inadequate preparation and a general lack of monitoring of the Minimum Standards. This is particularly strongly stated in relation to the preceding six weeks of the Regional Consultation where preparations were significantly affected by poor planning (and consequently a delayed start to the final preparations) and a lack of experience on participatory processes in some of the staff employed to organise the Regional Consultation. Further, a temporary breakdown in the collaborative spirit of the Steering Committee members added to the pressures already placed on the support team.

**Children's Participation:** Although an attempt was made to set up an email consultation group with children in the region in order that they could be involved in the planning processes, logistical and cost considerations prevented this from continuing.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The establishment of a Steering Committee, an Advisory Group on Children's Participation and the employment of a consultant to take on the work for the participation of children were indicators of a strong multi-agency collaboration with shared commitment and common values on children's participation. This collaboration positively affected all the work on children's participation at the Regional Consultation. However, co-ordination between regional and national levels was weak and would have benefited from the organisation of a regional preparatory meeting, stronger collaboration between Consultation Organisers, the Steering Committee and national partners, and more clarity on respective roles and responsibilities.

### **Recommendations**

- A preparatory meeting should be organised, ideally for all participants.
- A lead-in time of at least two months before the event should be built into the planning process. Application procedures for participation at the event should be closely co-ordinated between consultation staff and those organising logistics for children.
- All staff employed to organise a consultation, but particularly the Consultation Co-ordinator, should receive briefing on children's participation.
- Clear terms of reference for the Steering Committee, Consultation Organisers and various sub-committees (including clear indications of responsibilities for the participation of children) should be finalised and agreed by all involved before activities of the different groups commence.

## **National Focal Agencies**

### **Background**

Most of the preparatory work in facilitating children's participation at the Regional Consultation (selecting children and their adult guardians, briefing children and organising visas, flights etc.) was undertaken by national partners. However, there were no obvious national partner organisations to facilitate children's participation from the national level. Consequently, organisations needed to be identified that would take responsibility for organising children's participation from their respective countries. These national partners were named National Focal Agencies on Children's Participation (NFAs).

### **Analysis**

**Nomination process:** Between January to March 2005 NFAs were identified through distribution of a registration form and detailed information on the role of NFAs (NFA Guidelines) to Steering Committee member organisations. Nominations for the role of NFA were received from national organisations already working on the issue of violence. In some countries national steering committees for the UN Study had been set up (precise figures for the number of these are unknown) and nominated NFAs. UNICEF Country Offices, being responsible for national processes for the UN Study in many of the countries in the region, played a significant role in the nomination process for NFAs. In total, 14 NFAs were identified, only one NFA was unable to organise the participation of children from their country and this was for political reasons rather than logistical concerns or a lack of commitment. NFAs ranged in nature from government departments (3), and coalitions of government and non-government agencies (1) to national NGOs (10) although seven of these were connected to Steering Committee members (for instance they were national branches of a Steering Committee member).

**Background of NFA Representatives:** All NFA Representatives mentioned in registration forms that they had experience of children's participation. From evaluation data, NFAs overwhelmingly agreed that children's participation was a right not a privilege and saw child protection as a key issue.

**National Focal Agency Meeting:** In April 2005, a meeting of National Focal Agencies from twelve countries in the region took place. The meeting was due to take place in January 2005 immediately before a preparatory meeting for the Regional Consultation. As the preparatory meeting was cancelled, the NFA Meeting was postponed until after a Regional Ministerial Consultation in March, eventually taking place on 19-20 April. The NFA Meeting successfully achieve all its objectives: to facilitate a common agreement on the role of NFAs, to receive comments from NFAs on the proposed protocol documents and for NFAs to develop and commit their organisations to activities at national level to prepare children for the Regional Consultation.

During the meeting, NFAs agreed to take on enforcement of many of the Minimum Standards (selection, safeguarding checks etc.) at the national level. NFAs agreed on the need to create a national 'team' (of Under 18 Delegates, Guardians and Adult Delegates from their country) and that at least one meeting of the national team should be organised before the Regional Consultation began.

The event helped to galvanise support at a national level for children's participation at the Regional Consultation and built capacity on participatory processes. There were no major disagreements with the Protocol although a number of gaps were identified. The first was a

general confusion about the structure of UN Study itself (which was rectified by an extra workshop at the meeting). The second was a lack of detailed information on how to address the content of the Regional Consultation with children at a national level (the issue of violence against children). To answer this need, guidelines for submitting recommendations from children were drafted and appended to the revised Protocol, they focused in particular, on how recommendations should be formulated for input into the Regional Consultation.

**Communication with NFAs:** The Consultant on Children’s Participation communicated via email with NFAs, providing regular updates on progress. NFAs were asked to return a total of nine documents as part of the application process to the Support Team (based in Bangkok):

Form	Number Expected	Number Received
2 x Consent Forms (signed)	26	19
2 x Under 18 Delegate Application Forms	26	24
1 x Guardian Application Form	13	9
2 x Under 18 Delegate Participation Agreement (signed)	26	19
1 x Guardian Participation Agreement (signed)	13	5
1 x NFA Checklist	13	0

Communication with NFAs was a little inconsistent. Deadlines for receiving the documents were not initially made by the Support Team consequently many of the above documents were only received in the preceding two weeks to the Children’s Forum (see section on selection).

**The role of NFAs:** As NFAs were the primary users of all the protocol documents they were asked to comment on the usefulness of the documents through a questionnaire distributed after the Regional Consultation, however, these were returned by just four of the 13 NFAs. This fact alone indicates that communication between NFAs and the Support Team was poor after the Regional Consultation. Nevertheless, from the four questionnaires returned NFA Guidelines were reported as very useful, answering many questions from NFAs. The only area of concern regarded information in the document on how costs of NFAs, Guardians and Under 18 Delegates would be covered – which was reported as confusing and this issue caused tension between Consultation Organisers, the Consultant on Children’s Participation and NFAs during the final preparations for the Consultation.

The NFA checklist and step-by-step guide were also seen as useful by NFAs but parts of the documents were quickly out of date having been superseded by events, for instance many national consultations on violence had already been organised before NFAs met in April – in some cases children had already been selected.

**National Consultations:** Ten of the twelve representatives at the NFA Meeting indicated their country would be holding national consultations on violence, with children participating in most of these consultations. Data from Under 18 Delegates indicates that 13 of 24 respondents attended national consultations or workshops on violence against children. In some countries provincial consultations with children preceded national level discussions. (For example, in Indonesia and Thailand provincial consultations with children took place with results feeding into a national consultation).

### **Summary and conclusions**

Committed and competent NFAs were crucial to the successful implementation of the Minimum Standards. Therefore the NFA meeting was an important first step in preparatory processes and helped to galvanise support for children's participation at the national level, building capacity for individual NFAs on participatory processes and identifying gaps in the preparations for the Regional Consultation. Without a detailed discussion of the Protocol with its key implementers the guidelines in the Protocol are unlikely to have been followed at the national level and consequently many of the Minimum Standards would not have been met.

In general, NFAs appeared to have performed their tasks well but would have benefited from clear deadlines for the application process and more pro-active communication from the Support Team who, through time constraints, were unable to monitor the application process sufficiently. In addition, communication between NFAs and the support team during and after the Regional Consultation could have been strengthened and should have focussed on follow-up activities.

### **Recommendations**

- Clear guidelines on the role, responsibilities, benefits and costs for NFAs need to be finalised as early in the preparatory process as possible, including clear information on lines of communication between regional and national partners. Agreement should be reached on all aspects of the role with regional and national partners.
- A preparatory regional event should be organised to bring those organising children' together to agree on the participatory procedures to be used at the Regional Consultation and to develop and commit their organisations to activities at national level to prepare and follow up with children involved in the Regional Consultation.
- The application process should include clear deadlines for National Focal Agencies.



## Budget

### **Developing a Budget**

Three budget options were presented to the Regional Steering Committee, they ranged in total cost from option one at \$317,760 decreasing in cost to option three at \$120,250. The difference in total cost was determined by different quotations for the same activities (i.e. costs for translation using UN rates were \$21,600 in the first option and were \$3600 in the second option, using NGO rates). The final budget was approved by the Steering Committee in December 2004 (see diagram below for a list of activities included in the budget). In January 2005, an integrated budget was produced that incorporated costs for children's participation into the overall budget for the organisation of the Regional Consultation (prepared by UNICEF EAPRO). In addition, Budget Guidelines were included in the Protocol giving guidance on the possible costs to be encountered for children's participation in a regional or national event.

<b>INCOME</b>		
Oak Foundation Funds	25000	
Plan International	21300	
Terre des Hommes	368	
World Vision	368	
UNICEF EAPRO	18573	
All Steering Committee Members	2400	
	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>68009</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Preparatory Meeting with National Focal Agencies</b>		
Air tickets for 1 NGO/agency per country	6992	
DSA including airport tax/allowance	4230	
Fee for Trainer/Lead Facilitator @ \$300 per day (10 days)	1800	
Expenses for Trainer (flights and accommodation)	388	
	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>13410</b>
<b>Children's Forum and Regional Consultation</b>		
<b>Facilitation</b>		
Fee for Trainer/Lead Facilitator @ \$300 per day (10 days)	3000	
Expenses for Trainer (flights and accommodation x 10 nights)	1384	
	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>4384</b>
<b>Interpretation</b>		
Training for 18 interpreters for one day @ \$50 person/day	700	
Interpretation costs @ \$50 Interpreter x 18 languages x 6 days	3500	
Misc. expenses for interpreters	192	
	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>4392</b>
<b>Co-ordination for meeting</b>		
Children's Participation Co-ordinator (admin) @ \$200 day x 32 days	4000	
Children's Forum Costs (admin/accommodation x 2 staff)	1662	
	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>5662</b>
<b>Child Protection</b>		
Doctor/Nurse x 14 days (24 hour service)*	720	
Child Protection Focal Person @ \$100 p/day x 15 days (24 hour service)	1500	
Child Protection Materials and expenses (incl. accommodation)	197	
	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>2417</b>
<b>Resource Materials</b>		
Children Friendly briefing document	2400	

Written translation of U18D recommendations	350
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>2750</b>
<b>Extra-curricular activities for U18 delegates</b>	
Field trip (transportation & entrance fee) @ \$25 person x 2 buses	400
End of conference party @ \$30 person	1100
Children's Forum Reception	735
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>2235</b>
<b>Follow-up Activities</b>	
Production of children-friendly summary of Outcome Report	8000
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>8000</b>
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>43250</b>
Contingency (accommodation/flights)	1600
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>44850</b>
<b>Minimum Standards Evaluation Project</b>	
Project Manager (Jan-Aug, 4 days p/week for 30 weeks @ \$150 per/day)	18000
Admin costs	500
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>18500</b>
<b>OVERALL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>63350</b>

\*accommodation for nurse was complimentary

It should be noted that the above spreadsheet does not include costs for flights and accommodation for U18 Delegates or their Guardians, which (using costs for the NFA meeting) work out at approximately \$20,000 for accommodation and \$28,000 for flights, for 26 Under 18 Delegates and 13 Guardians. Thus, the total cost for children's participation would have been in the region of \$93,000 (not including the costs of the Minimum Standards Evaluation Project @ \$18,500).

### **Funding and administration of funds**

Funding for children's participation was received from a number of member organisations of the Steering Committee with Plan International making the most substantial contribution, at \$21,000 by covering costs for many of the salaries for staff, UNICEF EAPRO contributed \$8000 for children's participation and also covered many of the specific costs for the Regional Consultation (facilitation, interpretation and the meeting package for the Children's Forum). Contributions were made from other Steering Committee members, who also contributed towards the cost of a children-friendly briefing booklet (total costs \$2400). In addition, funding proposals were developed and submitted to various sources and \$25,000 was received from the Oak Foundation, a grant making trust. As children's participation was collaboratively organised, no one organisation was responsible for administering funds. This was shared between Plan International, Save the Children UK and UNICEF EAPRO who each took legal responsibility for one or two of the staff employed specifically to support children's participation; issuing contracts and administering fees.

UNICEF Country Offices covered the costs for the participation of their country delegations (including Under 18 Delegates, Guardians and NFAs), costs were not inconsiderable as they included flights and accommodation for the event as well as national level activities. This funding was obtained either by country offices applying for grants from UNICEF in New York or by National Offices allocating existing funds from their national budget.

## Analysis

**Comprehensive budget:** The budget for children's participation was prepared in relation to lessons learned from previous conferences involving children, consequently a comprehensive budget was produced including all possible costs. Only in translation was a conservative approach taken, where student translators were employed instead of professional UN translators (see section on children's forum). This brought a substantial saving of \$18,000 to the budget but was not considered cost effective in the long-run as the translation service provided was criticised by Guardians, staff and Consultation Organisers. In an evaluation workshop with Steering Committee members it appears that the inclusion of comprehensive budgetary considerations in the Minimum Standards and Protocol was considered a positive aspect of collaboration. At this workshop opinion was relatively evenly spread on the financial cost of children's participation in international meetings. Just over one fifth of participants agreed that costs outweighed benefits, one third of participants disagreed and another third stated that it depended on cost effectiveness.

**Funding constraints:** Pressure to find adequate funds (for the total costs for organising the Regional Consultation of which children's participation was a part) caused frustrations with Steering Committee members who were not able to progress activities at national level until funding issues had been resolved at the global and regional level by UNICEF. Funding constraints caused the cancellation of a preparatory meeting for the Regional Consultation which was considered to contribute to one of the main weaknesses of the Regional Consultation: a lack of co-ordination between activities at the national level and the regional level. Although it should be added that funds were still prioritised for a regional preparatory meeting for NFAs – consequently children's participation was not significantly affected by the cancellation.

**Complex administration:** Of more concern than the actual costs were the complex arrangements for administering and managing funds related to children's participation. The Steering Committee, as an ad-hoc body with no legal status, could not take on administration tasks itself, therefore its member organisations were required to share the financial management and responsibility. Tension between NFAs and Consultation Organisers arose at a very late stage in the preparatory process from a lack of clarity on the part of the Consultation Organisers on how funds for the flights and accommodation of Under 18 Delegates and Guardians would be funded and administered. In addition, as many of the costs for the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation needed to be administered with short notice the flexibility of an NGO processing system (Save the Children) was used in preference to the bureaucratic procedures for reimbursement within UNICEF. However, the management of finances was made easier by the flexibility of donors in how funds could be administered (i.e. that funds were not restricted to particular budgetary items).

## Summary and Conclusions

A clear commitment from the Steering Committee to develop a comprehensive budget for children's participation, and in particular to provide funds to cover the costs outlined in the budget, had a positive impact on children's participation. The approximate cost for 26 Under 18 Delegates to attend the Regional Consultation was \$93000 (not including the Minimum Standards Evaluation Project). An attempt to make savings for translation costs was not deemed cost effective concluding that higher costs should have been estimated for this activity. In addition, closer communication and more clarity from Consultation Organisers on funding from UNICEF (for the flights and accommodation of Under 18 Delegates and Guardians) would have improved collaboration between regional and national partners.

Although administration of funding was complex, flexible donors and a transparent and open discussion of costs helped to make budgetary issues and the financial management of the project a relatively smooth process.

### **Recommendations**

- Clear and transparent information on how costs will be covered, in particular, the logistics of how reimbursements will be made should be outlined and form part of the discussions at a preparatory meeting with national partners.
- Ideally one agency should have responsibility for holding and administering funds and take-on legal responsibility (recruitment procedures) for any staff employed to support children's participation. However if this is not possible, early agreements should be made between participating agencies on how to manage funds and staff for children's participation.
- A financial report should be made at all Steering Committee Meetings and Advisory Group meetings, the budget should be openly discussed at regular intervals. This will ensure smoother communication between the organising committee(s) and staff.
- A cost benefit analysis should be made of children's participation. New criteria should be developed that look at the quality and impact of children's participation on all stakeholders (for instance government ministers).

## **Selection of Under 18 Delegates**

### **Background**

In total 26 children were selected as Under 18 Delegates at the Regional Consultation from the following countries: Cambodia, China (where an additional 2 girls from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region were also selected), Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pacific (Fiji), the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam.

Two essential criteria were outlined in selection guidelines, life experience and age, other selection criteria were seen as preferential.

### **Analysis**

**Life experience:** The vast majority of Under 18 Delegates had a connection to the issue of violence against children. In evaluation forms 22 of 23 responses from Under 18 Delegates stated that they knew about the issue of violence before they came (one respondent wasn't sure). In application forms many Under 18 Delegates mentioned their experience in advocacy on children's rights. All were connected to organisations involved in work on violence. No Under 18 Delegate stated they had personal experience of violence (although they were not specifically asked for this information).

**Age:** All under 18 Delegates were under the age of 18 years old, the majority of children were 16 years old (10 children), the second largest group were 17 years old (6 children) and the youngest was 12 years old.

**Gender:** Except in one country (where two girls were chosen) a boy and a girl were selected from each country.

**Selection by peers:** Despite not being an essential criterion for selection, the overwhelming majority of children were selected by their peers through a voting system, either at a national consultation or a children's meeting (the smallest meeting mentioned consisted of 10 children). From 24 applications received, 18 children mentioned being selected by peers, two by individuals, two by exam and a selection committee, one by written application and one application form had no answer to this question. However, many of the children were first selected by their organisations to attend a children's forum or national consultation, where they were then selected by peers. Also many children were asked to demonstrate their skills/knowledge through an exam or presentation.

**Fair and transparent process:** Under 18 Delegates felt the selection process was fair and non-discriminatory: 19 of 23 responses from Under 18s felt they were chosen in a fair way, one of the two delegates who felt it was unfair stated that their situation was special as they were chosen in a hurry. Sixteen of 23 delegates felt there was no discrimination in the way they were chosen, however, four delegates stated that they didn't know. Information in application forms indicated that a variety of processes were used to select children (as above), it is difficult to say whether these were fair and transparent but many involved children in setting selection criteria and/or in the final decision.

**Mandated by peers:** Although the majority of delegates stated that they knew what other children in their country wanted them to say about violence at the Regional Consultation, they expressed concern that the number of children they had spoken to was low: 'about 20 delegates in my country', 'some children, not all'. Information in application forms on

selection indicated that where a national consultation took place, the likelihood rose that Under 18 Delegates were mandated by peers.

**Protocol Documents:** Steering Committee members considered the Minimum Standards and Protocol to have contributed considerably to establish processes and promote principles for the selection of children. The Guidelines for Selecting Under 18 Delegates were used and seen as useful by NFAs although in one country existing systems and processes were used and children produced their own criteria for selection. In addition, application forms were seen as very useful by NFAs but felt to be too long and repetitive (asking for some of the same information as consent forms for instance).

**Language Skills:** A conscious decision by the Steering Committee not to require Under 18 Delegates to speak English was a result of lessons learned from previous conferences with children. In previous consultations, by insisting on English speakers, organisers effectively prevented the participation of the majority of children in non English speaking countries, this group typically consists of children who suffer discrimination and who are most often excluded (girls, working children, children with disabilities or from rural communities). Therefore, it was decided that Under 18 Delegates would not be required to speak English. Sixteen of the 26 Under 18 Delegates were not English speakers.

**Monitoring of selection:** Mechanisms for monitoring selection were included in the application forms for Under 18 Delegates but monitoring activities were severely hampered by a poorly planned registration/application procedure imposed by Consultation Organisers (for places at the Regional Consultation). Contributing to this was a delay in the start of application activities and the lack of a step-by-step application process. Poor monitoring by the Support Team resulted in instances whereby invitations were sent to Under 18 Delegates and Guardians before application forms had been received, in one case, no action was taken concerning one country that did not send in application forms for its Under 18 Delegates. Time constraints resulted in travel registration forms (asking for data on flight details and accommodation arrangements) taking precedence over application forms. Another inhibiting factor was the length of the documents to be faxed by NFAs (and consequently the cost of the fax) and the fact that there was only one fax machine available to receive or send documentation for a potential 300 delegates.

**Funding for Under 18 Delegates:** It should be noted that although there were places for 40 Under 18 Delegates at the Regional Consultation only 26 were filled. The structure of funding may have influenced the lack of participation from the 8 countries that did not send an Under 18 Delegate as funding was only available for UNICEF supported countries. Hence, Non-Programme Countries (such as Australia, New Zealand and Japan) had to find their own funds to support the participation of Under 18 Delegates.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Selection of Under 18 Delegates appears to have been well implemented and followed the selection criteria outlined in the Protocol. Consequently all Under 18 Delegates met the essential criteria and most Under 18 Delegates met the preferential criteria. The Selection Guidelines for Under 18 Delegates were considered useful and appropriate by users. Steering Committee members concluded that the selection processes for the Regional Consultation were an improvement on previous practice, and the importance of developing criteria to widen the scope of selection (i.e. to non English speakers) was recognised. Selection processes were varied and appeared to use principles of democracy, but were less likely to be fair when the processes were hurried or last minute. However, monitoring of applications was not fully implemented and would have benefited from implementation of a

step-by-step application process with deadlines spread over the preceding month to the Regional Consultation.

### **Recommendations**

- A preparatory national event (children-only or adults and children) is highly recommended as a suitable forum for organising the final selection of Under 18 Delegates, in particular, selection by peers.
- Clear criteria should be developed (ideally with children) that promote non-discriminatory practices and democratic procedures. Removing criteria for English speakers significantly widens the potential for the selection of children from groups that are commonly excluded from such events.
- Application forms should be as short as possible to make them easier to translate, complete and return. Information should be requested one time only (address, date of birth etc.) in the application process.
- A step-by-step process for applications should be implemented (with clear deadlines for each step for those submitting applications) so that if an application is not received the next step in the process (i.e. sending out an invitation) is not initiated until a communication between regional and national partners has established the necessity to proceed. Submissions should be made by email (where a signature is not required for legal reasons).

## **Selection of Guardians**

### **Background**

One Guardian was selected (by NFAs), responsible for two Under 18 Delegates from their country. Selection Guidelines for Guardians included five essential criteria (outlined below).

### **Analysis**

**Selection Process:** Guardians were all selected by National Focal Agencies although one Guardian mentions that Under 18 Delegates made the final decision on their selection and another that they were selected by vote at a National Consultation.

**Positive relationship:** As it was not workable to ask a direct question to Guardians on whether they had positive relationship with the Under 18 Delegates a number of other mechanisms were included in the application form that attempted to address this issue. Under 18 Delegates were asked in their application form whether they agreed with the choice of their Guardian, 18 delegates replied positively and two delegates (from the same country) gave no indication. In addition, Guardians were asked in their application forms to explain their relationship to the Under 18 Delegates in their care. Out of nine application forms received, four Guardians did not answer this question. Of those that did, Guardians seemed either to know the Under 18 Delegates through their work with an NGO (over a period of years) or through a national consultation on violence (over a period of months). In de-briefing with Guardians it was clear that Under 18 Delegates who had met their Guardians prior to the Regional Consultation – even if it was just a few weeks before – had a more positive relationship.

**Direct experience:** a number of Guardians were teachers, others worked with Scout or Guide groups. Six out of seven responses in Guardian evaluation questionnaires mentioned direct experience with children, however, in Guardian Application Forms it was more difficult to clarify, from the information supplied, whether a Guardian had direct or in-direct experience with children.

**Age:** two Guardians (aged 22 and 24) were under the age requested in the criteria for Guardians (25 years old). In these two cases NFAs responsible did not inform the support team that the Guardians met 'exceptional circumstances' and should therefore be able to take up the role (as requested in the Selection Guidelines for Guardians). It is worth noting that concerns were later reported regarding one of these under age Guardians who, it was felt, lacked the experience and confidence to be able to carry out her role effectively.

**Gender:** Statements in the Selection Guidelines for Guardians mentioned the special vulnerability of girls and the need for female guardians to accompany girl delegates. As all delegations of Under 18 Delegates included at least one girl, it follows that none of the Guardians should have been male. However two of the nine Guardians were male.

**Provision of translation:** Guardians were all expected to speak the main languages of the children under their care as well as competent English. As a monitoring mechanism for English competency Guardians were asked to translate personal statements by Under 18 Delegates (part of the application form for Under 18 Delegates), a few of the translations indicated that English language skills were poor and one Guardian stated in the Guardian Application Form that they were unable to speak English. Poor English competency proved problematic for communications with the Under 18 Delegates during the course of the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation. Another impact of poor or no English was that



Guardians could not communicate with other Guardians during the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation and therefore failed to feel part of what became quite a strong Guardian 'team'.

**Safeguarding checks:** From the 3 (out of 13) evaluation forms returned from NFAs all three stated that they used the safeguarding check forms but one respondent asked that this form be distributed earlier in order for those making the checks to have enough time. Participation Agreements for Guardians were seen as a useful tool by NFAs to provide a sense of commitment between the Guardian and NFA and to ensure Guardians were aware of their specific functions. During the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation there were no serious concerns raised about Guardians' suitability for their role.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Evaluation data validates the need for all of the selection criteria for Guardians outlined in the Selection Guidelines. It is clear that Guardians did not meet the criteria as closely as Under 18 Delegates (although there were more criteria to meet for Guardians) and that monitoring mechanisms for selection were insufficient. However, limited feedback from NFAs made it very difficult to gauge whether the selection guidelines for Guardians were followed, particularly whether safeguarding checks were made. The criteria for Guardians to have a positive relationship with Under 18s was difficult to monitor and would have benefited from a requirement that Under 18 Delegates and Guardians meet (at least once) before travelling together. In general, monitoring of the selection of Guardians was poor and could have been improved by ensuring a closer working relationship between NFAs and the Support Team.

### **Recommendations**

- The application process should state that Guardians are required to meet Under 18 Delegates at least once before they start their journey – this activity should be monitored in the application process.
- A close working relationship between support staff and NFAs should be developed to help monitor the selection process.
- Monitoring mechanisms should be included into Guardian Application Forms to check gender and age of Guardians.

## Preparation

### **Background**

NFAs were asked to prepare Under 18 Delegates and Guardians using the following Protocol Documents:

- **Children-friendly briefing booklet on the Regional Consultation:** explaining the different roles and responsibilities of participants at the Consultation, the rights and responsibilities of being an Under 18 Delegate and the Rules of Behaviour;
- **Under 18 Delegate Participation Agreement:** highlighting specific information for Under 18 Delegates on what to expect (in terms of getting to know others, respecting differences, laws in Thailand and child protection procedures);
- **Guidelines for Submitting Recommendations from Children:** asking for recommendations and solutions from children on the seven working group themes on violence that were used in the Consultation.

**General Preparation:** Data from evaluation forms at the Children's Forum indicates that, in general, Under 18 Delegates felt well prepared for the event. Thirteen Under 18s stated that they attended a national consultation (on violence) in their country, all stated that they read information, in their own language, about the Regional Consultation and in 17 of the 23 forms received Under 18 Delegates stated that they were aware of the child protection policy for the Consultation. This data is substantiated by Guardians who report preparation periods of, on average, three months and preparation activities that included meetings with Under 18 Delegates, NFAs and Guardians, national consultations and discussions with children to determine recommendations on violence. Only a few responses indicated preparation was last minute and rushed.

**Use of Briefing Materials:** The Participation Agreement was signed and returned to the support team by 15 of the 26 Under 18 Delegates. NFAs mentioned that they used the document as part of a step-by-step briefing. The Children-Friendly Briefing Booklet was very well received by NFAs as a preparation tool. Despite a lack of data from NFAs on its use, Under 18 Delegates appeared to recognise the document at the Children's Forum.

**Mandated by peers:** Monitoring the requirement that Under 18 Delegates are knowledgeable and informed on the issue of violence proved to be problematic. In addition, it was particularly difficult to monitor whether Under 18s had been mandated by peers. This standard was relevant to both the selection process and preparation process and it appears that if selection of Under 18 Delegates took place at a national consultation, the event gave Under 18s an opportunity to be mandated by peers. In six countries, guidelines for submitting recommendations from children on violence were used to discuss the issue of violence with children at a national level, these discussions ranged from groups of ten young people in Fiji to a group of over 400 in the Philippines. In total 601 children were consulted and gave recommendations that informed discussion by Under 18 Delegates at the Children's Forum. As the guidelines were not finalised until late April they were unable to be used in some countries (who had already held national consultations). Mechanisms to check whether Under 18 Delegates were mandated by these processes were not instituted.

**Translation:** A barrier for effective and wide-ranging distribution of briefing materials was the need for translation of key briefing documents. The cost, both in terms of time and money, to translate all the briefing materials was a concern to many NFAs who appear to have translated documents seen as crucial to the application process as a priority (i.e the Participation Agreement rather than the briefing booklet).

## **Summary and Conclusion**

Although difficult to monitor effectively most Under 18 Delegates seem to have been adequately prepared for the Regional Consultation. The organisation of a national consultation with children appears to have significantly helped prepare children for their role as an Under 18 Delegate; allowing them an opportunity to gain a wider understanding of the issue of violence in their country and be mandated by their peers. Translation of briefing materials, which was sometimes affected by a lack of time to make translations, was also a key factor for the appropriate preparation of many Under 18 Delegates. Effective preparation of Under 18 Delegates was hampered in countries where the time allocated for selection and preparation was less than one month before the Regional Consultation.

## **Recommendations**

- National consultations should be organised that give children opportunities to discuss the issue of violence against children and to mandate Under 18 Delegates on these issues.
- All briefing materials for Under 18 Delegates should be translated into appropriate languages. Consideration for these costs should be included in budget estimations and ample time allowed for making translation.
- Briefing materials should be concise and avoid repetition and preferably produced as one document that Under 18 Delegates are required to sign (for instance in a participation agreement).
- Prior to departure at least one meeting with Under 18 Delegates and Guardians (and ideally other delegates attending the Regional Consultation from the country) should be organised to help prepare Under 18 Delegates – the meeting should include discussions on violence against children as well as logistical issues.
- Within the Protocol, tools should be provided that allow children who are not able to attend the Consultation, to input their opinions on the subject. For instance guidelines for submitting recommendations to the Consultation or for focus group discussions with children. This will help Under 18 Delegates to be mandated by peers, it could also help particular groups of children who may find it difficult to attend an international meeting, to have their opinions represented through Under 18 Delegates.

## Consent

### **Background**

The Consent Form in the Protocol included three sections, one for Under 18 Delegates, one for parents/carers and an acknowledgement section for Guardians and NFAs.

### **Analysis**

**General:** Nineteen consent forms were returned to the Support Team out of a total of 26, one was not signed by parents although they appear to have completed other sections of the form and a number of NFAs or Guardians did not sign the forms. Monitoring the receipt of consent was severely hampered by time constraints and the lack of a step-by-step application process. The five missing consent forms constituted a serious matter (with implications for legal and child protection concerns) but no follow-up was made on the cases by the Support Team and consequently no action was taken. In these five cases children should not have travelled to the Regional Consultation. However, in general, NFAs reported that the consent form was used, was informative and created a strong binding agreement between the child, parents and NFAs. Under 18 Delegates reported overwhelmingly that they understood why they were asked to sign the Consent Form and that they were given enough time to decide if they wanted to come to the Regional Consultation.

**Informed consent:** From the eight evaluation forms returned by Guardians, all indicated that they were involved in the process of obtaining signatures for consent forms and that Under 18 Delegates and their parents were fully informed. In general, informed consent appears to have taken place through a meeting with parents and children where the consent form was explained (by NFAs) and then signed.

**Translation:** Translation of consent forms was a pertinent issue discussed at length at the NFA preparatory meeting in April. The consent form was seen as the most important document to translate as both parents and Under 18 Delegates would sign it. Discussion concluded that where possible an official translation should be made as a bi-lingual document in order that parents/Under 18 delegates and the Support Team could read the document. Out of a total of 16 consent forms that would have needed translation (given the number of children who needed a translator), only 2 were received that were bi-lingual translations (in Vietnamese), all the other consent forms were in English. It is worth noting that for the three countries that did not send in consent forms translation would have been necessary.

### **Summary and conclusion**

Through prioritising translation of the consent form and the organisation of meetings with parents and Under 18 Delegates, NFAs felt they were able to obtain informed consent. The consent form appears to have been understood, signed and returned by the majority of Under 18 Delegates. However, the fact that several children were allowed to travel and participate without the signed informed consent of their parents was a very serious matter that was not given due weight in the application process by the Support Team. In five cases where consent forms were not received, the issue should have constituted a child protection concern, so that appropriate action could have been taken. Children should not have been allowed to travel without a signed consent form being received.

## **Recommendations**

- Consent forms should be prioritised for bi-lingual translation and NFAs should be informed of this requirement.
- The existing consent form should be edited to omit any information that is requested in other application documents but should continue to include enough information in order that parents and children understand what they are signed up to.
- A system should be in place for monitoring the receipt of consent forms and so that an application for an Under 18 Delegate does not proceed without the receipt of a signed consent form for each delegate.
- The lack of a consent form should constitute a child protection concern and trigger the application of appropriate child protection procedures. It should be clearly stated in the protocol that no child can participate in the event without the receipt of a fully completed and signed consent form.

# DURING THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION

## Children's Forum

### **Background**

Twenty six Under 18 Delegates attended a Children's Forum from 11-12 June. Sixteen translators, five facilitators and two admin staff supported Under 18 Delegates in their activities at the Forum however Guardians did not accompany Under 18s in activities. The overall objective of the Children's Forum was to prepare Under 18 Delegates for their participation at the Regional Consultation.

### **Objectives for Under 18 Delegates at the Children's Forum**

- to agree on priority areas and recommendations from Under 18 Delegates on Violence Against Children
- to build a team: to agree on the tasks that U18 Delegates will undertake at the Regional Consultation and for Under 18 Delegates to choose suitable delegates from amongst themselves to take on these tasks
- for each Under 18 Delegate to receive briefing or training to prepare themselves for their tasks at the Regional Consultation

### **Analysis**

#### **Objectives**

The first two of the objectives for the Children's Forum were met. Not all Under 18 Delegates were able to receive briefing or training to prepare themselves for their tasks at the Regional Consultation – this was an opportunity only the media team were able to take up. Under 18 Delegates all reported that they felt they were properly prepared for the Regional Consultation, the only aspect they expressed concern about was a lack of clarity on the final agenda for the Regional Consultation (the agenda was only finalised by the Consultation Organisers while the Children's Forum was in progress).

**Decision making:** Under 18 Delegates reported that they were happy with the decision making processes at the Forum, one delegate explaining: 'because the decisions are made by us (vote etc.)' although the process was criticised for being a little unorganised. All Under 18 Delegates reported that they were happy with discussions on the recommendations from children on violence. In general the Support Team were a little more critical than Under 18s of the Children's Forum and felt that too much time was spent prioritising recommendations resulting in a lack of in-depth discussion by Under 18s on thematic issues. The Support Team also recognised that there had been an underestimation of the time needed to organise decision making (to select Under 18 Delegates for specific tasks).

**Meeting room facilities:** The space for the meeting room consisted of three adjoining rooms; one large and two small rooms. Guardians were not allowed in the large room (where the majority of activities took place) but were allocated one of the smaller rooms, the other smaller room housed four computers and the secretariat. Many Under 18s made use of the computers (for professional and personal use). Under 18 Delegates had few concerns regarding the facilities for the Forum (commenting only that the room was too small and that halal food was not initially provided by the hotel). The Support Team was appreciative of a flexible approach from the hotel concerning after hours use of the meeting room (for access to computers) which was particularly useful for the keynote speech team who worked very late. The meeting room would not have been able to accommodate a wheelchair user.

**Translation:** The majority of translators were international students, studying in Bangkok who spoke their native tongue and had a good command of English. Translators were employed for the duration of the Children's Forum and the Regional Consultation. Sixteen Under 18 Delegates required translation for eight languages, 14 student translators were employed, two translators came with their country delegation (Timor Leste and Vietnam) and one translator was also a Guardian (for Timor Leste as there were no Tetum speaking students). In addition a sign language translator who also acted as a Guardian came with her country delegation. All student translators attended a half day preparation and training workshop (where participative techniques for translation were explained).

Overall, translation at the Children's Forum worked well. The Support Team and Guardians recognised that relationships between Under 18 Delegates and their translators were generally strong. However, de-briefings with Guardians highlighted a number of concerns with translators - that they needed to be more forceful in asking those talking to slow down for translation, and that translators should not answer for Under 18 Delegates. Twenty of 23 responses by Under 18 Delegates reported that they were happy with translation at the Forum, although it was recognised that it slowed down discussions a little.

**Facilitation and Planning:** The facilitation team at the Children's Forum was lead by a Lead Facilitator for Under 18 Delegates who was employed for the duration of the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation. In addition, two full-time facilitators, one from the Regional Steering Committee and one NFA, volunteered their services. The Consultant on Children's Participation acted as a facilitator but was also involved in organisational duties which often conflicted with facilitation tasks. Two members of the Regional Steering Committee facilitated specific workshops and a media team (consisting of a media co-ordinator, a writer, a photographer and videographer) were present during the Forum also running two workshops on media.

Under 18 Delegates were very appreciative of facilitators in evaluation forms, 21 of 23 stating that facilitators helped them to express themselves with just one respondent disagreeing with this statement. However, facilitators felt hampered by the last minute finalisation of the agenda for the Regional Consultation – which, it was felt, affected the depth of discussion on thematic issues. In addition poor planning by the Consultation Media Team – notably in briefing staff that would act as facilitators at the Children's Forum, meant that media guidelines were not strictly adhered to during the Forum. In hindsight, the Support Team recognised that it would have been useful, when participants were dividing themselves into thematic working groups, to ensure groups were of equal size (groups ranged from two participants to six – the largest group found progress slow, mainly because of translation).

Under 18 Delegates appreciated being able to visit the consultation venue (a UN Conference Centre with a very formal set-up) a day before the event to familiarise themselves with the venue and its facilities.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Although the Children's Forum did serve to prepare Under 18 Delegates for the Regional Consultation, aspects of their preparation were not undertaken. In particular, Under 18 Delegates were not fully prepared for the different tasks they would undertake at the Regional Consultation and were a little confused about the agenda and logistics for the event. Closer co-ordination between the Support Team and Consultation Organisers would have improved planning – particularly in relation to media activities. In addition, although a three day forum would have helped implement what was perhaps an over ambitious

schedule, more facilitators and a clear division of roles between the Support Team would have allowed deeper discussion of some of the issues by Under 18 Delegates. In hindsight, use of one large room instead of three smaller rooms would have been more effective for group work. However, the hotel facilities were on the whole, excellent, and the flexible arrangements much appreciated by Under 18 Delegates and adults alike.

At the end of the Forum bonding between Under 18 Delegates (and translators) was strong, Under 18 Delegates were clear on their recommendations for respective thematic working groups and some (but not all) of the tasks they would undertake at the Regional Consultation. An important output from the Forum was a document outlining the agreed recommendations from Under 18s for each of the thematic working groups (which was translated into all the languages spoken by Under 18s).

### **Recommendations**

- If participants have not previously met, three days should be allowed for a preparatory meeting with Under 18 Delegates.
- Communication and co-ordination between all facilitators, support staff and consultation organisers should start at least one month before the preparatory meeting and the facilitation plan should be discussed by all to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear.
- Meeting room facilities should include computers (with internet access) which should be accessible by Under 18 Delegates after hours (appropriate IT safety considerations should also be made).
- If participants are dividing into working groups it may be useful to place restrictions on the number of participants in each group – particularly if participants speak many different languages.
- Organisers should ensure that plenty of time is allocated for Under 18 Delegates to choose, from amongst themselves, who will take on specific tasks. This activity should be well planned in order that Under 18 Delegates understand any limitations for the process (i.e. limitation from organisers such as requirement of an English speaker only) and different options for decision making (setting criteria, deciding on structure - voting, presentations etc.)
- A minimum of two administrative support staff should be on hand at the meeting who speak the local language and enough facilitators to be able to work effectively when participants break into working groups.



## **Regional Consultation**

### **Background**

The Regional Consultation brought together 289 participants from Government, Non Government Organisations and academia in 24 countries, Under 18 Delegates constituted 10 per cent of participants. The event lasted for three days and was co-ordinated by the Regional Steering Committee and hosted by UNICEF EAPRO.

The agenda for the Regional Consultation was developed to allow discussion to take place in thematic working group sessions (approximately 30 people per working group, dividing into two smaller sub-groups) rather than in plenary. Consequently participants' time at the Regional Consultation was equally split between plenary and working group discussion. Working groups were divided into six themes of violence, participants stayed in the same thematic working group throughout the Consultation.

**Planning:** Although Steering Committee members had co-ordinated planning of the Regional Consultation for more than a year before the event, Consultation Organisers (UNICEF EAPRO lead by a Consultation Co-ordinator specifically employed for the event) took on the detailed planning for the last six weeks. Steering Committee members and the Support Team reported that a lack of co-ordination and communication between the Steering Committee and Consultation Organisers was a cause of tension and resulted in inadequate logistical planning of the event and hurried preparations for those taking on some key roles at the Consultation.

Guardians reported that the agenda was confusing for Under 18s and that some of the logistical issues were not explained to participants (time working groups would start and finish etc.). Under 18 Delegates reported being confused by different instructions from support staff at the consultation.

Although no comments were received from Under 18 Delegates, adults expressed concern that the closing ceremony was poorly planned particularly regarding children's involvement (singing was badly organised, final speech was too long) and that this detracted from the extent of the overall contribution from children. For many of the planning issues a lack of commitment to children's participation, on the part of some of the Consultation Organisers, was felt to jeopardise previous plans made by the Steering Committee. For instance, plans to employ a Children's Participation Co-ordinator (responsible for all admin and logistics for children) were questioned by Consultation Organisers during the recruitment process for the post. The Consultant on Children's Participation had to argue for the need for this position.

**Adult sensitivity and behaviour:** Adult Delegates to the Regional Consultation received information on children's participation in their conference kits, in addition a 15 minute presentation on children's participation was made in the opening session of the Consultation, which attempted to sensitise adults on participation and build capacity.

Adult Delegates received both criticism and praise from Under 18 Delegates. Overall, Under 18 Delegates felt they were listened to by adults, however comments that adults intimidated Under 18s by bombarding them with questions, or that adults were indifferent were also made. The strongest area of criticism was that adults didn't pay attention to meeting rules (that they spoke without raising hands, that there were delays in start times for working group sessions). In data from follow-up evaluations made after the event, it appears that when Under 18 Delegates looked back on the Consultation they were more aware of patterns of behaviour by adults – that adults 'mean business' and that they 'just focussed on

their interest'. Although, it didn't go unnoticed by Under 18s that, in contrast, some adults fell asleep during discussions!

Steering Committee members commented that some Adult Delegates became more conscious of considering how to ensure that voices of children were heard as the Consultation progressed.

**Under 18 Delegates' behaviour:** Overall, Under 18 Delegates' opinions of their own behaviour was higher than that of adult delegates. In particular they rated the questions made by Under 18s more highly than those of adults, commenting that in workshops, questions from adults to Under 18s were intimidating or too long. Under 18 Delegates were unanimous in their opinion of how well they listened to each other. Speeches by Under 18s were rated highly by almost all Under 18 Delegate respondents, whereas comments on the adult speeches indicated that a number of communication barriers prevented them from understanding the content (that adults spoke too fast, that speeches were too formal).

Although Under 18 Delegates rated their own knowledge of the issues higher than that of adults, they did recognise some limitations, stating Under 18 Delegates had 'not enough experiences especially for other countries'. Steering Committee members commented that Adult Delegates seemed to value children's active presence in the meeting and that Under 18 Delegates became more assertive and confident as the Consultation progressed. In addition, Steering Committee members commented that Under 18 Delegates were knowledgeable, had obviously been working on the topic for some time and made valuable contributions to thematic working group sessions. A minority of adults commented on a defensive attitude by some Under 18 Delegates. More generally, it was felt that Under 18 Delegates expectations of their role and the contributions they could make to discussions were too high and that Under 18s could have been better prepared so that their expectations were more realistic. For instance, it was felt that Under 18 Delegates should not expect that they will always have a chance to be heard or they can always expect a response to questions.

**Meeting Room Facilities:** Under 18 Delegates complained that the conference rooms were too cold and formal. Guardians and the Steering Committee members were not happy with eating arrangements at the Consultation (which required delegates to queue for a long time and halal food was not provided), in addition they commented that the seating arrangements on the first day were not conducive to participation. Seating was arranged by country - Under 18 Delegates were placed with their country delegates (Government and NGO) but did not have access to microphones. Prompted by a complaint from an Adult Delegate and discussion in de-briefing with Under 18 Delegates, seating arrangements were changed on the second day so that all Under 18 Delegates had access to a microphone and were seated together in one row across the middle of the conference hall. Under 18 Delegates expressed satisfaction with this arrangement as it allowed them to be with each other and continued the sense of solidarity built in the Children's Forum between them.

**Under 18 Delegate Room:** A room set aside for the use of Under 18 Delegates at the Regional Consultation housed four computers (with internet access for at least two) and one printer. Notice boards for Translators, Guardians and Under 18 Delegates were set up and well used (in particular a magazine rack for copies of speeches – as briefing material for translators). Initially this room was supposed to be for Under 18s only but as it became the main briefing and de-briefing room, so Translators, Guardians and support staff were admitted. It was recognised that some of the support staff and Guardians made too much use of the computers, at times limiting access for Under 18s. However, in general, the room

was an excellent space for Under 18s and their Support Team, it was in constant use and was much appreciated.

**Facilitation:** A team of 12 facilitators worked during thematic working groups at the Regional Consultation, the team was managed and monitored by a Lead Facilitator, with support from the Facilitator for Under 18 Delegates. All facilitators were volunteers (participants at the Regional Consultation who volunteered to take on the role). Facilitators participated in a half day preparatory workshop, the day before the start of the Regional Consultation.

Under 18 Delegates reported overwhelmingly that they were happy with the facilitation provided at the Regional Consultation. Although in comments from de-briefing with Under 18s, facilitation in working groups was not ranked as highly as in the Children's Forum. When asked if they were able to carry out their tasks easily at the Regional Consultation, Under 18 Delegates overwhelmingly stated that they were. Their comments to this question indicated language and time constraints were the main barriers for effective participation and that support from facilitators, Guardians and other Under 18 Delegates was appreciated. The Steering Committee was more critical of facilitation stating that preparation for facilitators was rushed and that some facilitators needed too much prompting to focus on the needs of Under 18 Delegates. The Support Team felt there was a lack of co-ordination between the Chair, Rapporteur and Facilitators and a confusion of the roles at working groups. Adults weren't necessarily aware of the role of Under 18 Delegates in working groups (there was much confusion over the presentation Under 18 Delegates were asked to make in working groups).

**Translation:** For adults, translation was reported as the biggest area of concern at the Regional Consultation and a barrier to participation. Translation was recognised as relatively effective and appropriate in the more informal setting of the Children's Forum where translators quickly developed a good rapport with their respective Under 18 Delegates. However, at the Regional Consultation, where the level of discussion became much more in-depth and detailed, translators struggled with both the pace of the discussions and the technical language used. Translators were not able to provide simultaneous translation, so slowed the pace of discussions considerably, they were also unfamiliar with some of the concepts and jargon used in the meeting which sometimes prevented them from making a translation – frustrating both Under 18 and Adult Delegates.

Criticism from Under 18 Delegates of the translation service grew in time. At the Children's Forum translation was reported as slow but satisfactory (only 1 of 23 Under 18 Delegates was unhappy with translation), by the end of the Regional Consultation 4 of 22 Under 18 Delegates were unsure whether they were happy but by the time Under 18 Delegates had returned home they were commenting that translators had poor English and had given their opinions rather than those for whom they were translating. In addition, criticism of adult speeches by Under 18 Delegates focused on problems for translators (use of technical words, speaking too fast) rather than issues of content.

**Evaluation by Participants:** Although Under 18 Delegates had a number of opportunities to evaluate their participation at the Regional Consultation, evaluation for Adult Delegates was given very little priority and was consequently poorly planned and administered. A total of 24 evaluation forms (distributed during the Consultation) were received from 289 delegates, no questions on children's participation were included in the forms.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

Overall, the participation of children at the Regional Consultation was considered a success by participants, with comments from many adults that it was the best they had experienced. In particular the keynote speech by Under 18 Delegates was felt to be one of the best, if not the best, ever presented by children. There were, however, a number of areas for improvement, the biggest of which was translation which presented a communication barrier for many of the Under 18 Delegates. The more formal, technical and detailed discussions at the Regional Consultation required the use of professional experienced translators. Probably the second biggest concern was poor planning – which was a result of a lack of communication between the different bodies responsible for organisation, an underestimation of the preparatory time needed to make final arrangements and a lack of commitment to children's participation from some of the key staff involved in organising the Consultation. Allowing more time for the final preparations (and recruiting staff earlier) and organising a workshop on children's participation for the Consultation Co-ordinator and his team would have helped to ensure preparations were adequate.

The behaviour of both Adult and Under 18 Delegates was, on the whole, conducive to participation; a mutual respect seemed to be evident on both sides. As Under 18 Delegates grew in confidence the longer the Consultation was in session, so too, adults became more conscious of considering how to ensure the voices of children were heard. Facilitation could have been improved and better planned but in general helped Under 18 Delegates to express themselves in working groups.

## **Recommendations**

- In a formal, international meeting the use of professional translators for Under 18 Delegates should be seriously considered. Translators should have an understanding of the field and be able to make simultaneous translation on a one-to-one basis with an Under 18 Delegate.
- Training of translators on participatory techniques should be instituted prior to the start of their work. Translators should be given background information on the issue of the consultation in order to prepare them for the content (and jargon) of discussions. Time for this training and preparation should be included in translators' contracts. Translation should be monitored closely by facilitators during the Regional Consultation.
- Recruitment of staff for the consultation – particularly for the lead organiser – should consider the understanding and commitment to children's participation and child protection of candidates. All staff specifically recruited for the consultation should receive briefing/workshop on children's participation and the specific procedures developed for the consultation.
- Clear demarcations of roles and responsibilities should be outlined for the different bodies organising the consultation (for instance between consultation hosts and the Regional Steering Committee).
- Consideration of access to microphones should be paramount in organising seating arrangements for Under 18 Delegates. Ideally Under 18 Delegates should be consulted on seating arrangements, however it is worth noting that Under 18 Delegates tend to want to sit together.
- A room should be allocated for use by Under 18 Delegates and their support team (including guardians, translators, facilitators, admin staff). The room should be large enough to hold briefing meetings with all Under 18s and the support team and should include suitable equipment (computers with internet access, printers, notice boards, comfortable chairs).

## Guardians

### **Background**

In total, 14 Guardians accompanied children to the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation (an 'extra' Guardian who was also a sign language translator accompanied one Under 18 Delegate). Guardians accompanied two Under 18 Delegates from their country acting as their primary carer and responsible for their safety and welfare. Guardians were not participants at the Children's Forum or Regional Consultation as they were not required to translate for Under 18 Delegates during these times.

### **Analysis**

**Role of Guardian:** The role of the Guardian was criticised as not being clearly defined, however, in previous consultations the role of Guardian as primary carer for children had often included translation. The Regional Steering Committee agreed that the two roles should be divided at this event but would be closely monitored and evaluated. Guardians were consequently asked to give feedback on their role through daily de-briefing meetings with the Support Team and completion of an evaluation form.

**Observer:** Feedback from support staff and Guardians on the role of Guardian concluded that Under 18 Delegates would benefit from the physical presence of their Guardians, particularly in working group sessions at the Regional Consultation. This was, in part, because of the difficulties translators were facing in explaining some of the more technical language and concepts. It was clear that many Under 18 Delegates needed their Guardians to act as 'explainers' for some of the concepts and jargon being used in discussion but also the underlying politics that was influencing decision making. In taking on this role Guardians were conscious of a need for impartiality in their explanations, although this was difficult to monitor. Consequently, although Guardians were not involved in activities with Under 18 Delegates at the Children's Forum, at the Regional Consultation they became observers, accompanying their Under 18 Delegates to thematic working group sessions and in plenary discussion.

**Multi-faceted:** Guardians saw their role as multi-faceted; combining guardian, parent and mentor with friend and translator. Guardians recommended that part of their role was to help Under 18s see different perspectives, 'that equality was being strived for and that children are not 'superior' or their views more important than adults, they are equal.' There were mixed views from the Support Team on whether the roles of Guardian and Translator should be divided. The combined role was seen as too exhausting for one person to take on, however the problems with translation at the Regional Consultation may not have arisen had Guardians taken on this task.

**Developing a positive relationship:** Bonding between Guardians and Under 18 Delegates was a key issue for Guardians who recommended that they should meet Under 18s at least once before the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation (i.e. in their home country). Under 18 Delegates did not report any concerns with their Guardians in evaluation data, at the Children's Forum, 23 of 24 stated they were happy with their Guardian (one delegate couldn't say), at the Regional Consultation and in de-briefing meetings the response was unanimously positive. However, there were two occasions when child protection issues were relevant to Guardians (see child protection section) both concerned a lack of the physical presence of Guardians (i.e. that Guardians were not present at appropriate times).

**Daily De-briefing:** Guardians appreciated having a daily meeting with the Child Protection Focal Person and Consultant on Children's Participation to share experiences, it was recognised that these meetings helped to build collaboration between the Support Team and Guardians. Guardians felt the Support Team should have informed Guardians of the tasks their children would be undertaking so that they could offer support. (This was due, in part, to the fact that Guardians were not included in the activities of the Children's Forum).

**Personal specification:** Guardians were asked for their views on the skills and experience necessary to carry out their role effectively:

- Good English: to help children understand what's going on (and to be able to communicate on behalf of their Under 18s)
- Supportive attitude to ALL Under 18s not just ones in their care.
- Accommodating and flexible and able to encourage Under 18s to be the same.
- Able to monitor translation
- Mature (in age and in attitude)
- Multi-skilled
- A frequent traveller – in order to make the journey less stressful for Under 18s and Guardians
- A positive thinker, open minded and sensitive

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The role of Guardian was closely monitored during the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation. Conclusions were reached that the role is multi-faceted, combining the roles of carer, parent, mentor, friend and translator. In particular, it was concluded that Guardians should act as observers to children's participation, accompanying them in all activities and explaining the wider context of issues as well as the underlying politics that influences decision making. It was recognised that as observers, Guardians presence and attitude should not influence Under 18s opinions and that this aspect of the role should be closely monitored. Also that, as observers, Guardians would need to possess a certain maturity and experience.

### **Recommendations**

- A preparatory workshop should be organised for Guardians before the start of the Children's Forum (where expectations of Guardians, logistics and child protection procedures are explained). In addition, mandatory daily de-briefing meetings with Guardians and the Child Protection Focal Person should be scheduled.
- The Child Protection Focal Person should be the main point of contact for Guardians and should take a pro-active stance in seeking comments from Guardians on child protection issues.
- The role of Guardian should be integrated into a wider vision of the child protection team so that Guardians are well informed of child protection procedures at the Regional Consultation and liaise regularly with child protection officers.
- Guardians should be able to act as translators in a preparatory children's forum and act as observers at the main consultation (accompanying Under 18 Delegates to workshops/plenary etc.). Clear guidance should be given to Guardians to ensure that their presence as observers does not affect children's discussion and opinions and this aspect of the Guardian role should be closely monitored.

## **Child Protection**

### **Background**

Child Protection is highlighted as one of the four principles of participation, underlying the Minimum Standards with four standards directly relating to the need for child protection procedures. Correspondingly, the Protocol included a child protection policy, rules of behaviour, a complaints procedure, a complaints form and an implementation plan. The child protection policy for the Regional Consultation was largely derived from Save the Children's Child Protection Policy and was approved by the Regional Steering Committee in December 2004. After discussions at the National Focal Agency meeting in April 2005, the Child Protection Policy was revised (albeit only moderately). The main change was to allow Under 18 Delegates to sleep in the same room as their Guardians as this was felt by NFAs to be appropriate for the context of the East Asia Pacific region.

In May 2005 a Child Protection Focal Person was appointed who had overall responsibility for child protection at the Regional Consultation. The Child Protection Focal Person (Focal Person) was tasked with developing appropriate preparatory measures for child protection, these included identifying in advance local systems and resources for child protection and ensuring that responses would be in line with these (external reporting systems, access to health). Making a risk assessment of all activities Under 18s Delegates would undertake and developing an appropriate plan of action for response. The Focal Person was also tasked to ensure all staff and delegates were briefed and aware of their child protection responsibilities and the specific arrangements that had been made for child protection at the consultation. In total, 12 documents were produced by the Focal Person in consultation with a child protection team.

In addition a five person Child Protection Team was established, co-ordinated by the Focal Person, including the Consultant on Children's Participation and three members of the Steering Committee. On the first day of the Children's Forum Under 18 Delegates took part in a two hour child protection workshop where the policy and rules of behaviour were outlined and discussed.

### **Analysis**

Overall, child protection was rated very highly by all participants and organisers at the Regional Consultation. Steering Committee members were unanimous in stating that the implementation of child protection plans was a substantial improvement in practice. In addition, they recognised the importance of establishing and implementing a children-friendly complaints procedure.

**Child Protection Team:** The Steering Committee and the Child Protection Team felt that the recruitment of a separate consultant specifically on child protection was beneficial to the process, considering the amount of preparation required and the need to allocate responsibility to a point person. In addition the creation of a Child Protection Team, was deemed essential to proper implementation of child protection procedures and monitoring. The sharing of responsibilities and the capitalization of the various skills represented by the different members, were seen as the main benefits of this collaboration.

**Briefing on Child Protection:** Despite the provision of children-friendly child protection materials and the return of 15 signed Participation Agreements by Under 18 Delegates (which includes a number of child protection issues), briefing of Under 18s on child protection was felt lacking by the Child Protection Team.

In Children's Forum Evaluation Forms, 17 of 23 Under 18 Delegates stated that they were aware of the Child Protection Policy before they arrived (only 3 respondents maintaining that they did not know). By the end of the Regional Consultation 21 of 22 Under 18 Delegates responded that they knew the name of the Child Protection Focal Person. However, comments from Under 18 Delegates on child protection tended to be on the negative side, stating that the rules of behaviour were a little strict and that Under 18 Delegates of the opposite sex should be able to stay in each other's rooms (for chatting). One Under 18 Delegate commented that they knew there was a child protection team but didn't know how to reach them. The most critical of the comments from Under 18 Delegates came from one older participant who stated the following in their evaluation form:

'Most of the rules were pathetic and were totally just common sense and did not need to be brought up e.g. not being loud at night, hello! Common sense. A curfew? Maybe OK, but for 17 year olds? No alcohol? In the right context and with permission from your parents back home, there shouldn't be a problem.'

The above comment concerned the Rules of Behaviour (a part of the policy), which were discussed at the Children's Forum by Under 18 Delegates and the comment was seen, in part, as a reaction to the lack of a deeper analysis by Under 18s on the repercussions should such rules be broken. As the age range of Under 18 Delegates was relatively broad (12 years old to almost 18 years old) the implementation of standard child protection procedures and rules for all Under 18 Delegates was not necessarily suitable for all, tending to be more relevant to younger children.

**Child Protection Mechanisms:** The creation of a comprehensive Action Plan for Incidents and Emergencies Involving Under 18 Delegates was an important component of the child protection preparatory process. As was the daily meetings with Guardians which were seen as an important means of facilitating communication and identifying potential risks to the Under 18 delegates.

The provision of 'protection boxes' at three areas in the hotel and conference centre were important for providing opportunities for Under 18 Delegates, Guardians and Adult Delegates to input on child protection issues or to raise concerns. Although only one complaint was received, which was handed to a member of the Child Protection Team rather than placed in the protection box.

The creation of a strong action plan and the provision of briefings for UN security personnel and hotel staff were made possible through a commitment to child protection from the head of the UN Security Section and the manager of the hotel. The provision of tailored briefing materials to both the UN Security Section and the hotel, who then respectively briefed their own staff, was an important part of this process.

The Child Protection Team identified a number of areas for improvement:

**Follow-up with National Focal Agencies (NFAs):** Responsibility for identifying Guardians, ensuring their suitability through safeguarding checks, and briefing them on the Child Protection Policy and related issues lay mainly with NFAs at the country level. However, follow-up on the completion of safeguarding checks with the NFAs was not conducted and the process by which such Guardians were selected was not monitored by the support team.

**Coordination with the Media Team:** Lack of coordination between the Child Protection Team and the Consultation Media Team was a concern, leading to lack of clarity on child protection procedures and rules. Inappropriate questioning and conduct by journalists at the



Forum and the Consultation constituted a major concern. Appropriate coordination and planning may have prevented their occurrence.

**The role of Guardians:** Communication with Guardians on child protection issues prior to their arrival was considered weak by the Child Protection Team, despite the provision of a number of child protection documents. In addition, plans for the capitalisation on the skills and experiences of Guardians during the implementation of the child protection procedures was not considered.

Guardians themselves unanimously stated that they were happy with child protection procedures in place at the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation. One Guardian who was also acting as a translator suggested that child protection should not be passive, that the Focal Person should approach children informally to find out their needs and to reach out to those from 'more passive' cultures and backgrounds.

**Duty of care:** Despite clear statements in Protocol documents Guardians did not always adhere to the requirement to be physically near Under 18 Delegates and aware of their whereabouts at all times. One Guardian was reported to have left the vicinity of the Children's Forum for a number of hours which resulted in the Under 18 Delegate missing lunch (because the Guardian had taken lunch vouchers with her) and a feeling of abandonment. In addition, a number of Guardians were not available at the end of the both days of the Children's Forum for hand-over from translators. This situation would not have arisen, however, if Guardians had been involved in the activities of the Children's Forum.

**Room Sharing:** Despite clear statements in the Child Protection Policy there was lack of clarity on the rooming of female Under 18 Delegates with their male Guardians as conveyed by hotel staff, leading to risks concerning Under 18 safety and well-being.

**Health insurance:** Although NFAs were required to ensure that all U18 Delegates had health insurance coverage during their travel and also while they were in Bangkok, details of the policy coverage were not collected beforehand by the Support Team. In the event of a medical emergency, this could have created confusion concerning which hospitals the Under 18 Delegates were permitted treatment under their respective policies.

**U18 Delegate medical history forms:** Shortly before the U18 Delegates departed from their home countries, the NFAs were requested to gather brief medical history profiles on all U18s and provide this information to the Focal Person. Few NFAs followed through with this request (only six completed forms were received).

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The development and implementation of child protection procedures at the Regional Consultation was considered comprehensive and effective by participants and organisers. Materials that aided preparation and planning for child protection included the development of an action plan and risk assessment, a children-friendly complaints procedure and the establishment of a strong child protection team. Monitoring of child protection could have been improved through a wider interpretation of the Child Protection Team that allowed stronger co-ordination with key staff (Support Team, NFAs, Guardians and the Media Team).

### **Recommendations**

- The risk assessment (developed before the Regional Consultation) should be continually updated and serve as a 'living document' during the consultation, as new risks and weaknesses in protection rules become apparent.

- A member of the media team should become one of the members of the Child Protection Team to ensure regular communication and daily assessments of media activities.
- Communication with Guardians via e-mail should occur at least one month prior to the consultation. This would assist with conveying protection rules (particularly concerning travel); familiarizing Guardians with the Child Protection Focal Person and his/her contact details; and also to identify skills (e.g. counselling experience, expertise on child participation methods) which the Guardians may be able to lend during the consultation.
- Open dialogue and agreement on reasonable repercussions for breaking protection rules should occur between the Child Protection Focal Person and Under 18 Delegates. Under 18 Delegates should take the lead in deciding what such consequences could consist of, with the Child Protection Focal Person guiding this process.
- In order to minimize risk, all Guardians should ideally carry mobile phones, either their own or ones that are rented by the Support Team for them. This is especially important when Guardians take the Under 18 Delegates under their care on trips or in separate vehicles to the consultation venue.
- To better ensure appropriate health insurance is organised for Under 18 Delegates, information on the insurance papers organised for Under 18 Delegates by NFAs should be requested in the application form.

## **Media Activities**

### **Background**

A team of media professionals worked at the Children's Forum and Regional Consultation to promote media work (Consultation Media Team). A freelance writer, videographer and photographer were employed by the Consultation Organisers to help promote the opinions of Under 18 Delegates and acted as observers at the Children's Forum (also running the media workshops) and the Regional Consultation. All Under 18 Delegates received a half-hour briefing on media at the Children's Forum. Eight Under 18 Delegates were selected to form an Under 18 Delegate media team – which undertook all media activities on behalf of Under 18s. A press conference was organised on the last day of the Regional Consultation at which two Under 18 Delegates participated.

Media turnout at the Regional Consultation was very limited, as is often the case with 'meetings' which on the whole, generate little interest from the media. Approximately six journalists were interested in media interviews (radio or press) with Under 18 Delegates during the Regional Consultation.

### **Analysis**

**Consent:** Of the 19 Consent Forms returned, all parents/carers except one gave consent for their child to take part in media activities. All Under 18 Delegates signed Media Release Forms (allowing for any photos, video or interviews to be taken by the Consultation Media Team or any media to be used for advocacy, news stories, and human interest stories on the internet, television or print publications).

**Preparation:** Time constraints at the Children's Forum prevented comprehensive preparation of Under 18 Delegates for media work at the Regional Consultation. However, the inclusion of TV role play interviews were judged to be a good opportunity for Under 18 Delegates to think about their messages and to enhance their skills in media work. The agenda for media training was felt to be over ambitious and focused too heavily on the negative impacts of media work rather than the positive, allowing less time for Under 18 Delegates to develop their own messages to the media (and make them interesting to journalists).

**Under 18 Delegate Media Team:** The identification of a small group of Under 18 Delegates to form a 'media team' allowed for more intense preparation work but also created higher expectations from Under 18 Delegates of demand (opportunities to do media interviews) and limited the scope for identifying the right delegate to pitch or fit with a journalist's angle. When asked if they were able to carry out their tasks easily 5 of the 8 Under 18 Delegates on the media team responded positively, one negatively. One respondent stated that at first they were scared and worried about media work but that thanks to the help of Under 18s and adults they were fine, others responded that they enjoyed media work very much.

**Consultation Media Team:** In general the Consultation Media Team was very supportive and instructive to Under 18 Delegates. The five minute video package was felt to successfully promote the work of the Forum to adult delegates at the Regional Consultation (the video was relayed during the Consultation on the UN Conference Centre's TV network). In addition the production of a CD of photographs and DVD of footage of the whole event was a valuable tool for media work. However, a lack of communication between the Consultation Media Team and the Support Team resulted in Under 18 Delegates being

interviewed during activities at the Children's Forum by a member of the Consultation Media Team (contravening the media guidelines). Clearer co-ordination between Consultation Organisers (including the media team), the Regional Steering Committee and the Child Protection Team regarding preparatory activities and, in particular, how best to package the voices of Under 18 Delegates for the Regional Consultation (i.e. through video, photography and written work) would have ensured the full impact of Under 18 Delegates voices with the media.

**Media Guidelines:** In general, the media guidelines were followed by the Consultation Media Team. The development of Media Profiles with Under 18 Delegates helped to support the pitching to journalists of Under 18 Delegates. All journalists received copies of the Media Guidelines and were briefed verbally before the start of each interview. All but one journalist respected the media guidelines, this journalist was removed from the Consultation by the members of the media and child protection team.

The Media Guidelines were not adhered to in the following areas:

**Risk Assessment:** The Consultation Media Team was unable to verify whether risk assessments were made for all eight Under 18 Delegates undertaking media work. The team recommended that risk assessment should be handled on a case by case basis depending on the media request made and the type of interview. No reports were received from Under 18s to the Consultation Media Team of feeling uncomfortable while being interviewed by journalists. It was felt by Consultation Media Team that, as Under 18 Delegates were pitched as experts not witnesses, this brought some built-in protection measures for Under 18s in that they were far less likely to be asked about personal experiences by journalists.

**One-to-one interviews:** Although many interviews were held during coffee breaks, it was not always possible to conduct one-to-one interviews outside the consultation sessions.

**Artwork and text:** it was felt that the guidelines on artwork and text (that Under 18 Delegates should be told of the intended use of their artwork or text and their consent sought for this use) was an unrealistic expectation as journalists never show copy before an interview. It was felt Under 18 Delegates should be briefed on this issue so that they are aware that as soon as their opinion, text or artwork becomes public it is not always possible to control where it goes.

**Guidelines for Journalists:** Specific guidelines for journalists, based on the media guidelines, but focused on how to use children's voices in the media (less heavily focused on child protection issues) were not produced and would have countered criticism from the Consultation Media Team that the media guidelines set too many conditions and hurdles for media interviews with Under 18 delegates and acted as a deterrent to journalists.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Media guidelines were adhered to in general and it was seen as a positive step that media work at the Consultation presented children as experts rather than witnesses. In the main, Under 18 Delegates enjoyed their media work. However, it was felt by the Consultation Media Team that the media guidelines were too heavily focussed on a culture of fear about the media, created unrealistic expectations of coverage for Under 18 Delegates and acted as a deterrent for journalists. This could have been solved through the development of separate guidelines for journalists which focus on finding more creative ways to promote the voices of Under 18 Delegates in the debate and how to get attention and engagement from the media on the issues. It is clear that a balance needs to be met between the child

protection aspects of media work and the promotion of media as a participative tool (for children's voices to be heard). Through clearer lines of communication between the Consultation Media Team, journalists and the Child Protection Team this issue could be resolved.

### **Recommendations**

- In addition to media guidelines for staff and Under 18 Delegates, guidelines for media professionals should be produced that reflect more of the positive aspects of media work for Under 18 Delegates and give examples of creative ways to engage the media.
- Risk assessments: in addition to general risk assessments made in advance by Under 18 Delegates (in collaboration with their Guardians), risk should be assessed by the Consultation Media Team on a case-by-case basis with Under 18 Delegates, where possible risks are explained for each interview.
- Artwork and texts: Under 18 Delegates should be briefed on this issue so that they are aware that as soon as their opinion, text or artwork becomes public it is not always possible to control where it goes.
- The Steering Committee and Consultation Media Team should agree on how best to package the voices of Under 18 Delegates for the Consultation (i.e. through video, photography and written work) and the subsequent resources and preparation required to ensure Under 18 Delegates voices have impact on the media.

## Voicing Opinions

### **Background**

The agenda for the Regional Consultation was designed to be as participative as possible, given the various requirements of United Nations protocol for such an event. Under 18 Delegates were given the following opportunities to voice their opinions during the Regional Consultation:

- A 30 minute keynote speech in the opening session
- A space for one Under 18 Delegate on the Drafting Committee for the Concluding Statement from the Regional Consultation
- A 20 minute closing presentation on the last day.
- Two spaces at the press conference

These four opportunities for Under 18 Delegates to voice their opinions were planned in advance (although only very sketchy planning of the closing session was made by Consultation Organisers). At the Children's Forum, Under 18 Delegates had the opportunity to discuss their participation for the keynote address and press conference and to choose who from amongst them would take on these tasks. In addition the following opportunities for Under 18 Delegates were put forward by consultation organisers either during the Children's Forum or the Regional Consultation:

- A 10 minute presentation during working group sessions on the second day for all working groups;
- A space for one Under 18 Delegate to take up the role of Chair for the closing session.

### **Analysis**

**Plenary:** The keynote presentation by Under 18 Delegates was highlighted by all respondents in evaluation as a high point of children's participation at the Regional Consultation with some stating it was the best they had ever seen presented. In de-briefing meetings Under 18 Delegates said they were moved by the presentation, support team stated that it was powerful and Guardians reported many positive remarks on the presentation from other Adult Delegates at the Consultation. During question time in plenary sessions, Under 18 Delegates put forward many questions which were generally considered good points. Although there was some criticism by Under 18 Delegates that their questions were not answered well by adults. In addition, it was recognised by Guardians and the Support Team that Under 18 Delegates were given a disproportionate amount of time to ask questions during the plenary (in comparison to adults in the plenary). The opportunity for an Under 18 Delegate to Chair the closing session was taken up by an Under 18 Delegate from Indonesia, who with minimal briefing, performed the task very successfully. However, children's participation in the closing session was considered to be poorly planned (singing was badly organised, final speeches were too long) and Steering Committee members felt this detracted from the extent of the overall contribution from children.

**Thematic Working Group Sessions:** In general Under 18 Delegates expressed that their opinions were listened to in working groups although one comment in de-briefing indicates that Under 18 Delegates were untrusting of the weight their opinions were given by adults; that adults accepted their opinions but changed the words 'as if we don't understand'. Although Under 18 Delegates valued the opportunity to be able to make a presentation in working groups, the late notice of the request hampered effective preparation for Under 18 Delegates as no time during the Children's Forum could be allocated for this task. Consequently Under 18 Delegates prepared for this task 'after hours'.

**Drafting Committee:** an English speaker was requested for this task which limited the scope of possible participants and some Under 18 Delegates expressed confusion over why this limitation existed. No data is available to measure the extent to which the Under 18 Delegate felt the process was participatory but, in evaluation data, the Under 18 Delegate expressed that it was a learning experience. Steering Committee members felt that the planning for the drafting committee was poor and that the process was not transparent or participatory enough. The Guardian for the Under 18 Delegate felt that, as a Guardian, she should have been better prepared in order to give adequate support to the delegate.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Where proper planning was instituted Under 18 Delegates were able to present their views in a professional, succinct and appropriate manner. Correspondingly, participation was much less effective when opportunities for children to take an active part in the Regional Consultation were presented at the last moment – allowing insufficient preparation time. Under 18 Delegates felt that their opinions were listened to but suspected that they weren't given as much weight as adult opinion.

### **Recommendations**

- All opportunities for Under 18 Delegates to voice their opinions (through presentations, or taking on tasks at the Consultation such as Chair) should be well planned by organisers and clearly communicated to Under 18s in order that Under 18 Delegates have ample opportunity to prepare.
- A balance should be kept in plenary sessions with time for questions to ensure equal time for questions from Adult and Under 18 Delegates.
- Small, facilitated, working group sessions allow Under 18 Delegates the best opportunity to voice their opinions and should form the basis of discussions and decision making at the Consultation.
- All decision making processes should be transparent and participatory (including how Under 18 Delegates are chosen for specific tasks).

## **Influencing Decisions**

### **Background**

The decisions made at the Regional Consultation contributed to the development of a Concluding Statement from the Regional Consultation – the main output from the event - summarising key points and recommendations and forming the basis of an Outcome Report from the Regional Consultation submitted to the UN Study. Decisions at the Regional Consultation were made at two levels. The first was in working group sessions where key points and recommendations were agreed over two days of discussion and then presented during plenary on the third day. The second was through a drafting committee of approximately five members which summarised the key points and recommendations outlined in plenary into a Concluding Statement from the Regional Consultation, which was presented on the final day to participants.

### **Analysis**

**Influencing Recommendations:** The extent to which Under 18 Delegates influenced the recommendations from the Regional Consultation can be shown through a comparison between the recommendations from Under 18 Delegates (developed during the Children's Forum) and the final recommendations outlined in the Concluding Statement from the Regional Consultation (which represented the views of both adults and children at the Consultation).

Overall, thirty per cent of the recommendations from Under 18 Delegates were clearly and specifically mentioned in the Outcome Statement from the Regional Consultation. Twenty three per cent were mentioned in part, which together indicates that just over half of the recommendations in the Outcome Statement reflected the views of Under 18 Delegates.

However, it should be noted that there were almost double the number of recommendations from Under 18 Delegates (58) than were outlined in the Outcome Document (27). Analysis of the content of the recommendations, in most cases, indicated that Under 18 Delegates were more specific in their recommendations. For example, under the theme of violence in schools, Under 18 Delegates recommended provision of training to teachers on positive discipline techniques, which although not specifically mentioned, would presumably be included in a recommendation from the Concluding Statement that called for 'pre- and in-service training courses: for head masters...teachers...on child rights, child psychology and children friendly learning environments.' This presumption is strengthened when reference is made to a section in the Outcome Report that highlights the proceedings of the thematic working group on violence in schools where one of the causes of violence is outlined as follows:

'Teachers that are not trained in non-violent approaches to maintaining student discipline and, therefore, regard corporal punishment as the only effective method to discipline children. Teachers are often not aware of children's rights or child psychology and development;'

In addition, there were some overarching recommendations that formed part of the concluding statement in the Outcome Report that were not specifically referenced in the recommendations. For example, the concluding statement recommends 'that we work towards the elimination of all forms of corporal punishment in all the settings that it occurs'. Under 18 Delegates, however, made three specific recommendations on banning corporal punishment (in three of the seven thematic working groups).



Another overarching theme was the issue of children's participation itself. The concluding statement from the Regional Consultation urges all governments to mainstream children's participation. In addition, in four of the seven thematic groups, children's participation itself is outlined as a separate recommendation. However, in recommendations from Under 18 Delegates, children's participation was only mentioned twice and was specific to the recommendation rather than a general statement on children's participation.

Under 18 Delegates themselves reported from de-briefing meetings at the Regional Consultations that their recommendations and ideas were being listened to during workshops. From Under 18 Delegate Evaluation Forms for the Regional Consultation, 21 of 22 respondents answered positively to the question 'Do you think the recommendations from Under 18 Delegates influenced the final statement'.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Under 18 Delegates substantially influenced the content of the Outcome Report from the Regional Consultation. Under 18 Delegates' views were reflected in the Concluding Statement from the Regional Consultation with just over half the recommendations in the Concluding Statement concurring with recommendations made by Under 18 Delegates.

### **Recommendations**

- The production of a document clearly listing recommendations from Under 18 Delegates (agreed at a preparatory event) is an excellent tool for Under 18 Delegates to use to measure their influence during discussions at the Regional Consultation and with any final recommendations from the event.
- This document should be translated in all languages spoken by Under 18 Delegates and made available to consultation organisers as a resource.

# AFTER THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION

## Follow-up

### Background

Three of the Minimum Standards address the provision of short-term follow-up activities for Under 18 Delegates at the Regional Consultation. NFAs were requested to hold de-briefing meetings with both Under 18 Delegates from their country within a month of their return from the Regional Consultation and subsequently guidelines for de-briefing were distributed to NFAs after the Consultation.

### Analysis

**Regional Activities:** No discussion or plan for follow-up was made by the Steering Committee prior to the Regional Consultation. Two meetings of the Steering Committee were organised after the Regional Consultation, one immediately after the Consultation in June where discussion focussed on the production of the Outcome Report and one in August, where the possibility of producing a children-friendly summary of the Outcome Report (translated and distributed to Under 18 Delegates and their peers) was discussed. A Steering Committee meeting on follow-up took place in October 2005 (four months after the Regional Consultation) where a regional plan for follow-up was developed (which focused on media activities).

On the issue of children's participation per se, follow-up was organised through the development of a Focal Group on Children's Participation which included many of the members of the Steering Committee.

**National Activities:** It was recognised in the early preparatory stages of the Regional Consultation that follow-up to the event should focus on the national level. Consequently a two-hour lunch on the last day of the Consultation was set aside for national delegations (including Under 18 Delegates) to discuss national follow-up, activities and plans.

Communication with NFAs after the Regional Consultation was poor with only six of 13 NFAs returning de-briefing questionnaires (from de-briefing meetings with 12 Under 18 Delegates) or Protocol questionnaires within the specified one month period. However, data from de-briefing questionnaires indicated that all 12 Under 18 Delegates shared their experience of the Regional Consultation with others at the national level (mainly with projects they were connected to or the media). Also, national activities to follow-up the Regional Consultation had or were taking place in all six countries, at the time of writing this report.

**Contact with Under 18 Delegates:** During the Regional Consultation email contact details for Under 18 Delegates were collated and further to the Consultation the Consultant on Children's Participation communicated with Under 18 Delegates via email. However, email communication was hampered by either a lack of English for many of the Under 18 Delegates or a lack of access to internet. Consequently, two packages with background documents (a DVD of the proceedings and a photographic list of all Under 18 Delegates) were sent to Under 18 Delegates by post, in order to keep in contact.

### Summary and Conclusions

Although it is perhaps too early to tell, follow-up to the Regional Consultation at the regional level was not addressed effectively. No follow-up plans were produced before the Regional Consultation and the issue was not discussed at Steering Committee meetings or with NFAs.

Communication with NFAs since the Regional Consultation was weak, resulting in a lack of data to measure follow-up with Under 18 Delegates. However, it does appear that Under 18 Delegates were being involved in follow-up activities at the national level and that a number of follow-up activities were planned across the region. In addition, the advent of a collaborative project to produce a children-friendly summary of the Outcome Report may well help to invigorate the regional network of NFAs and promote further follow-up activities with children at a national level.

### **Recommendations**

- Planning for follow-up should be discussed prior to the Consultation with the Steering Committee and dates set for further discussion after the event.
- A meeting with NFAs to discuss follow-up should be organised during the Regional Consultation where short term and long term activities are discussed.
- If no regional follow-up event is planned, communication between Under 18 Delegates, NFAs and the organisers of the Regional Consultation should be continued through a follow-up project of some description (which does not have to be too ambitious but encourages NFAs and Under 18 Delegates to communicate with each other).

Note: appropriate follow-up is reliant on collaboration at the national level between NFAs, UNICEF Country Offices and any National Steering Committees that have been set up for the Regional Consultation as a whole (i.e. not just the participation of children).

With many thanks to all those who contributed their opinions to this report, in particular all Under 18 Delegates at the Regional Consultation: Kim Thida, Ngach Samin, Guo Congcong, Wapadaer Abudouwaili, Hilda Wong, Minnie Wah, Audrey Kamali, Samuela Raika, Bella Diniyah Putri, Rahmat Ali, Daovisith Douangboupph, Phoutthasone Inthachak, Lkhagvetseren Gmabaatar, Khorolmaa Batsiakhan, Casey Haverkamp, Michael Sheehan-Bendall, Margarita Harou, Nos Werao, Maria Corazon Buala, Gerald B Concepcion, Parron Sanoonrat, Khununya Junthonoauun, Jacqueline Conceicao Fonseca, Natalino Soares Ornai Guterres, Tie Huy Hoang, Hoang Thi Hue.

## Annex 1

## Methods of Evaluation

Method	Description	Used when	Responses
<b>Protocol Documents</b>			
Application Forms for Under 18 Delegates	Analysis of data in Under 18 Delegate Application Forms	Forms submitted June, analysis in August	24 of 26
Application Forms for Guardians	Analysis of data in Guardian Application Forms	Forms submitted June, analysis in August	9 of 13
Consent Forms	Analysis of data in Consent Forms	Forms submitted June, analysis in August	19 of 26
Under 18 Delegate Participation Agreements	Analysis of data in Under 18 Delegate Participation Agreements	Agreements submitted June, analysis in August	15 of 26
Guardian Participation Agreements	Analysis of data in Under 18 Delegate Participation Agreements	Agreements submitted June, analysis in August	6 of 13
<b>Evaluation Forms</b>			
NFA Questionnaire	Self completed questionnaire by NFAs	Beginning of NFA Meeting	16/16
Children's Forum Questionnaire	Self completed questionnaire by Under 18 Delegates (with help of translators if needed)	End of Children's Forum	23 of 26
Regional Consultation Questionnaire	Self completed questionnaire by Under 18 Delegates (with help of translators if needed)	End of Regional Consultation	22 of 26
Guardian Questionnaire	Self completed questionnaire by Guardians	During Regional Consultation	8 of 13
De-briefing Questionnaire	Questionnaire completed by NFA through de-briefing discussions with Under 18 Delegates.	Up to one month after the Regional Consultation.	10 of 26
Protocol Questionnaire	Self completed questionnaire by NFAs	Up to one month after the Regional Consultation	3 of 13

<b>Method</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Used when</b>
<b>Workshops/meetings</b>		
Regional Steering Committee Meetings	Minutes from meetings	Held every 1-2 months from June 2004 –August 2005
Advisory Group on Children's Participation	Notes from meetings	Held every month from January – August 2005
Evaluation Workshop with Regional Steering Committee	Facilitated workshop using semi-structured questions.	17 August
De-briefing with Children's Participation Co-ordinator	Using semi-structured questions from evaluation workshop	26 August
De-briefing with Facilitator at Children's Forum	Notes from meeting.	2 September

<b>Method</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Used when</b>
<b>Evaluation Reports</b>		
NFA Meeting Evaluation Report	Produced by Consultant on Children's Participation in collaboration with NFA Facilitator	De-briefing meeting on xx April
Under 18 Delegate De-briefing Notes	Notes made by Consultant on Children's Participation	During de-briefing meetings with Under 18 Delegates on 15, 16 June
Guardian De-briefing Notes	Notes made by Consultant on Children's Participation	During de-briefing meetings with Guardians between 11-16 June
Lead Facilitator on Under 18 Delegate's Participation Report	Produced by Lead Facilitator. Includes additional questions from Consultant on Children's Participation	1 month after Regional Consultation
Child Protection Focal Person's Evaluation Report	Produced from an evaluation meeting of the Child Protection Team	1 month after Regional Consultation

**Annex 2****Timeline for Minimum Standards Project**

<b>Timeline for Minimum Standards Project</b>	
2002	Announcement of the UN Study on Violence Against Children
October 2003	First meeting of Regional Steering Committee for UN Study
August 2004	Consultant on Children's Participation employed
December 2004	Regional Steering Committee approves: Draft Minimum Standards Draft budget for Children's Participation
1 January 2005	Project to pilot Minimum Standards starts.
Date April 2005	National Focal Agency Meeting Regional Steering Committee approves Protocol on Children's Participation
Mid May 2005	Child Protection Focal Person starts
26 May 2005	Children's Participation Co-ordinator starts
6 June 2005	Lead Facilitator starts
10 June 2005	Training for translators
11-12 June 2005	Children's Forum
13 June 2005	Under 18 Delegates visit UN Conference Centre (morning only) Training of Facilitators for Regional Consultation
14-16 June 2005	Regional Consultation
17 August 2005	Evaluation Workshop for Regional Steering Committee

**Notes:** Meetings of the Regional Steering Committee were held approximately every two months from June 2004 (before this date meetings were more irregular), meetings of the Advisory Group on Children's Participation were held every month from January – June 2005. In addition there was very regular (at times on a daily basis) interaction through email especially amongst the members of the Advisory Group and the Consultant on Children's Participation.

