

55 CRC Session – Sri Lanka

Recommendations to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Prepared by Child Helpline International and Don Bosco LAMA SARANA – April 2010

Background:

The Don Bosco Sri Lanka Child helpline commonly known as 'Lama Sarana' is operated out of the Don Bosco Headquarters in Sri Lanka. The Don Bosco Child helpline toll free number is (011) 2332332 and is a number provided by the national telecom company 'Sri Lanka Telecom' (SLT), on a fixed charge which Don Bosco has to pay the telecom on a monthly basis. A fully equipped and resourced child helpline, with current technologies and infrastructure, has the potential to answer 320,000¹ calls.

Recommendation 1

Allocate an easy to remember, 3-4 digit telephone number to the child helpline and ensure that this number is toll free for the child and the child helpline. Preferably this is the regionally harmonised number for South Asia 1098.

- The government should allocate appropriate financial and technological resources to support long-term activities of the helpline including for training and capacity building of counselors to meet international quality standards
- The cost of call should not be paid from resources previously allocated to the child helpline
- The government should cooperate with the child helpline in ensuring that the child helpline is accessible 24hrs per day.
- The government should raise awareness about the child helpline with target groups and those working with children.

Recommendation 2

Ensure that the child helpline has an outreach component to work with marginalised children and those at risk of having their rights violated.

- Early intervention and prevention are essential to protect the rights of all children. Outreach, to work with those children most at risk, is pivotal in this process.
- Allocate appropriate resources to cover costs of outreach activities, build capacity and train counsellors.

Recommendation 3

The governments should cooperate with the child helpline and recognise it as a vital tool for child protection

- The government should recognise the child helpline as a source of information for policy and legislation on children's issues
- The government should cooperate with the child helpline to remedy child rights violations and stimulate (governmental) child protection agencies to do the same.

If you wish to receive further information please contact Child Helpline International:

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¹ According to an estimate of McKinsey. Data used from ITU (2008) and Unicef (2008)