

“Inter-American Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Illegal Smuggling of and Trafficking in Children”

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The commercialization of sexuality by paying in cash or in kind in exchange for sexual access to women and men of different ages is a practice as old as humankind itself.

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Social and cultural transformations, extensive global trends intersecting with local realities, and new transportation and communication technologies have given shape to new environments and settings in which trading in bodies or depictions of children with the purpose of satisfying the sexual compulsions of those who pay for them is presented in new ways which can astonish incredulous observers, exceed the bounds of existing laws and regulations and give rise to new ways of reproducing ancestral exploitative relationships based on the asymmetry of power. In this context, different forms of commercial and non-commercial sexual exploitation overlap with each other and with other ways of exploiting and trading in human beings, such as trafficking.

However, change has affected not only the context and characteristics of this phenomenon, but also the progress society has made with regard to enshrining and safeguarding rights, from which new perspectives emerge that shed light on aspects that had previously been invisible.

The commercial and non-commercial sexual exploitation of children constitutes a generalized violation of child rights and the answers from the states and the community should bear in mind this comprehensiveness as well as the multiple causes and complex nature of the phenomenon.

The international community has expressed its concern regarding sexual exploitation on a variety of occasions. An expression of this was the celebration of three World Congresses after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Declaration and Action Plan against Sexual Exploitation was adopted at the First World Congress, held in Stockholm in 1996. The specific work streams agreed at this Congress are still current in the design of national plans of action, including: 1. Coordination and Cooperation; 2. Prevention; 3. Protection; 4. Recovery and Reintegration; 5. Child participation.

The Second World Congress was held in Yokohama, Japan, in 2001 and was preceded by six preparatory meetings: in Bangkok (Thailand); in Dhaka (Bangladesh); in Rabat (Morocco); in Montevideo (Uruguay); in Budapest (Hungary) and in Philadelphia (United States). The Inter-American Children’s Institute (IIN) headed the meeting held in Montevideo.

The Third World Congress against Child Sexual Exploitation took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2008, and was also preceded by regional and thematic meetings throughout the world.

As a result of this Third Congress, “The Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents” was adopted, which shows persisting concern on the part of the international community regarding the difficulties encountered by several countries when attempting to establish effective and accessible public policy which is sufficiently wide-ranging, aimed at the social reintegration of the victims of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and the restoration of their violated rights.

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Amongst other concerns, it mentions the fact that “Information continues to circulate that is not based on updated knowledge and the wealth of field-based experience in the areas of prevention and protection of children, law enforcement and victim support; and there is insufficient proactive sharing of experiences and lessons learned”.

Sharing this concern, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Directing Council of the IIN adopted a number of resolutions on the subject, which include mandates for the IIN as a Specialized Organization within the Inter-American system in issues related to childhood and adolescence.

In order to comply in full with mandates received, the creation of an *Inter-American Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Illegal Smuggling of and Trafficking in Children* was proposed.

This programme was initially executed through the *Inter-American ANNA Observa Observatory*, which is a soundboard for all of the activities carried out in compliance with the programme.

The principal mandates the IIN has received on this matter are:

- 4 June 2009 – AG/RES. 2486: Prevention and Eradication of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Smuggling of and Trafficking in Minors.
- 3 June 2008 – AG/RES. 2432: Prevention and Eradication of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Smuggling of and Trafficking in Minors.
- 27 July 2007 - CD/RES. 10 (82-R/07): Inter-American Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Illegal Trafficking.

Resolves: 3. “To support the creation of an Observatory on child commercial sexual exploitation and illegal trafficking and promote the creation of a widely-disseminated publication on a periodic basis having an incidence on

public policy design.”

- 27 July 2007 - CD/RES. 11 (82-R/07) – Action Plan 2007-2011, Inter-American Children’s Institute.
“An Observatory on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of children and adolescents and other forms of violence (...) was established.”



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The Inter-American programme proposal uses the significant aspects of the mandates received and groups them into three work areas:

- A. Compile and update information regarding CSEC in the region, to be made available to States Party.
- B. Generate information and knowledge on the subject of CSEC, which will aid States Party in the design and implementation of their policies and action in addressing this problem.
- C. Train human resources and provide specialized technical assistance to States Party.

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These work areas provided mutual feedback and were implemented in successive temporal stages. They were all kept operational once full programme implementation was reached according to the following schedule:

Year	Work Area
2008	Design and launch of first online platform.
2009	Emphasis on Work Area A – Compile and update information
2010	Emphasis on Work Area B – Generate information and knowledge; impact.
2011	Emphasis on Work Area C – Train human resources. Technical assistance for the states.

Description of Areas and Activities

Work Area 1

Compilation and systematization of meaningful and updated CSEC-related information, with particular emphasis on regional issues, and placing it at the disposal of states, organizations and other interested parties.

The principal instruments used for this task are:

- ***The Inter-American Observatory on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, which can be visited at: www.annaobserva.org.***

The Observatory constitutes component 1 of the “*Inter-American Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Illegal Smuggling of and Trafficking in Children*”. It contains papers in Spanish and in English in the fields of legislation, public policy, coordination initiatives, good practices, independent monitoring, civil society initiatives, statistics and others. The papers are indexed so

that they can easily be found by means of an advanced search engine or the site's interactive map.

The Observatory undergoes constant updating and the gradual improvement of its software platform, leading to improved functionality for its users.

- ***Network of technical liaison officers appointed by the states***

Early efforts focused on updating the documentary database and “coordination initiatives”; that is, information about institutions and persons to contact regarding CSEC-related issues in every country.

The liaison officer network is essential to keep the Observatory updated and dynamic. It provides access to information produced in the states and comprises a core of users that lead to links with their respective states and within them, with the agencies responsible for fighting CSEC.

Efforts are made in order to ensure that all of the states of the Inter-American system participate actively in the network.

- ***Working agreements and exchanges with organizations that are reference points in this field***

In order to empower the Observatory, connections have been established with international organizations that are well-known for their work in this area. They publicize the benefits of using the Observatory and at the same time contribute material.

Work Area 2

Production of knowledge and instruments to strengthen the capacity of the states when addressing the sexual exploitation of children.

This area includes:

- ***The production of ANNA Observa Newsletters in Spanish and in English*** in order to circulate useful information and articles for people involved in the protection of children against sexual exploitation. Brief reports with references to further reading if required. The intention is to circulate these newsletters widely. Publication schedules are established every year and Special Newsletters may be drafted on particularly significant subjects.
- ***Annual Report to the Secretary General of the OAS on action undertaken by member states to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children in the Americas.***

In compliance with OAS General Assembly resolution AG/RES. 1667 (XXIX-O/99), the IIN submits a yearly report on the measures undertaken by member states in order to combat CSEC. These reports are always validated by the childhood authorities of the member states and mainly reflect their efforts to bring legislation into line with international regulations, as well as to design and set in motion public policies in compliance with international recommendations.

Drafting this report constitutes an opportunity to work on a particularly significant subject. A summarized version focusing on thematic contributions is translated and disseminated widely as content arising from the Programme.

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- ***Regional Meetings on “Prevention, Protection and Restitution of Rights in the face of CSEC: Experiences for Reflection”.***

The activities planned for the identification, analysis and exchange of experiences in Work Area 2 include sub-regional meetings convened by the IIN and the relevant agency in the host country. Their objectives are:

1. To exchange specific experiences being carried out in the region with regard to the prevention, protection and restitution of rights in the face of CSEC.
2. To reflect, on the basis of these experiences, on how to derive lessons that will strengthen the capacity of the states and of civil society, with the ultimate purpose of guaranteeing the rights of persons affected by CSEC.
3. To build consensus regarding priorities, progress and challenges that still exist in this area.

Delegates from the national commissions or principal coordinating agencies in this area from the countries in the region take part in the thematic discussion panels. In addition, conferences are delivered by international organizations and civil society representatives.

A Final Paper is drafted summarizing the remarks of the speakers, which is discussed in a plenary session and circulated subsequently for comment. This paper and the presentations delivered are published as part of the "Good Practices" series.

This publication constitutes the basis for the following Regional Meeting on CSEC. It is anticipated that these meetings will take place every year, in different regions of the continent.

Work Area 3

Increase the capacity of the states to confront CSEC, through technical assistance and training.

- ***Advice provided to national coordinators in the area of CSEC***

Technical assistance and counselling is provided to the state agencies that request it, as part of the Inter-American Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Illegal Smuggling of and Trafficking in Children.

Guiding tools are developed in this context, with the purpose of designing and updating national plans. Advice is provided on the regular reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Events and activities organized by the states are attended.

This assistance, as far as available resources allow, includes support for the production, implementation and evaluation of national plans through the coordination of face-to-face and distance initiatives.

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- ***Semi-distance course on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children***

After an evaluation of the distance courses experience, a new methodology was established. The new format involves a semi-distance course combining distance training and face-to-face activities organized in coordination with the states taking part in this initiative. This makes it possible to increase coverage significantly (the yearly quota up to then was 22 students) and generate greater commitment from the states as they are required to organize the face-to-face stage. Course participants are selected and proposed by the states and the states in turn become involved in the initiative by organizing and evaluating a face-to-face module in which the general ideas addressed in regional terms are reviewed in the light of each country's situation and priorities. At the start of each edition of the course, agreements are established with the member states that wish to take part and the format of the face-to-face activities is coordinated. At the end of the course and if the course participant has completed both stages successfully, he or she is awarded the appropriate certificate, signed by the IIN representative responsible for the course and the participating state.

The course is designed in two stages: a first online stage delivered by the IIN to all participants and a second face-to-face stage delivered by each member state to participants residing in that country.

The specific objectives of the course are: to provide a common framework of reference in order to understand the commercial sexual exploitation of children; to promote local training activities bearing in mind the needs of each member state and to facilitate exchange between the bodies that are reference points for this matter in every participating member state.

A free software distance training platform – *Moodle* – is used and there are local coordinators in each of the participating countries.

A key role is played in all of these activities by the network of liaison officers that links the IIN to the national commissions of every state. The network underpins exchanges

and deals with requirements, and at the same time is reactivated, strengthened and broadened as a result of the various activities performed.

