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The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents

Issues for the Caribbean

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September 2008

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Abbreviations/Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CARICOM	Caribbean Community – an organisation primarily for the purposes of regional economic development comprising the governments of 15 Caribbean countries (members) and five associate member countries
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
DAC	Development Advisory Committee of OECD
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (a global networking organisation working in over 65 countries to eliminate CSEC)
FBO	Faith-based Organisation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGO	Inter-governmental organisation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPEC	International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO)
ISPCAN	International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PAHO	The Pan American Health Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TDHIF	Terre des Hommes International Federation
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WVI	World Vision International

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INTRODUCTION

The commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents (CSEC) is not a new phenomenon. Often referred to as the oldest “profession” in the world, prostitution is a long-standing aspect of human sexual behaviour and there are accounts that indicate the involvement of children throughout history (Manion, 2004). This is also true of pornography, which even when not directly promoting child prostitution has commonly exploited images of children and adolescents; indeed adult women dressed as schoolgirls in sexy poses for instance, sends an explicit message about sex with minors. For the most part, the commercial sexual abuse of children and adolescents has been ignored by governments (Melrose, 2004); however, over the last decade or so, there has been increasing awareness of the seriousness of this global problem in terms of its consequences for children, the fact that it represents a violation of the most fundamental of human rights, shows little sign of diminishing and has knock-on consequences for whole societies (Melrose, 2004). This growing awareness can be attributed largely to NGOs and FBOs working to protect the principal rights of children. Indeed, collectively these organisations have created what can be described as an international movement to eliminate CSEC. This *movement* involves individuals and organisations across the world operating at both national and international levels, some of whom are dedicated specifically to CSEC and others who focus on the problem as part of a larger mandate to safeguard and improve the lives of children. The international NGOs particularly well known for work in this area are listed on page three. In addition, there are many NGOs from specific countries who, although primarily working at the national level, are also involved in international programmes to eliminate CSEC.

Caribbean countries face particular challenges in addressing the commercial sexual exploitation of children. For many countries in the region this is an *emerging* issue; this does not mean that it is a new problem but that there is emerging evidence to show that not only is this a significant problem about which there is increasing awareness, but that in the context of globalisation and the commercialisation of sexual services, this is also a growing problem. Although there has not been much research carried out on CSEC in the Caribbean, studies on related topics point to several significant findings:

- The onset of sexual activity in the Caribbean on average occurs at younger ages than in other parts of the world and early sexual debut has been linked with child sexual abuse (Kempadoo and

Dunn 2001; Blum et al. 1998; Allen, 2000; St. John and Kumar 2001).

- There is evidence of the increasing use of sex among children and young people as a commodity for material exchange, exchanging sex for bus rides, money and material goods such as mobile phones (Ahmed, 2003; Phillips, 2006). Related to this is the observation that sexual risk-taking among adolescents is linked to sexual and physical abuse in early childhood (de Bruin, 2001; Ruland and Finger, 2004).
- The existence of child prostitution is increasingly highlighted in the literature and there is some evidence of organised child prostitution networks (Dunn, 2001). This was commented on in the Second Periodic Report of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago: Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2003.
- Media reports regularly highlight raids on night clubs to which women and teenage girls have been trafficked for erotic dance and sex services.
- Several scholars in the region have explored the connections between sex, sexuality, sexual coercion and sex exploitation within the context of Caribbean cultures, gender and social inequality. Although not though specifically about CSEC this work helps to explain the circumstances in which the sexual exploitation of children in the Caribbean occurs (Carr, 2003; Chevannes, 2001; Phillips, 2002; Barrow, 2005).

Much of the published work on commercial sexual exploitation in the Caribbean has been led by feminist scholars and human rights activists who have created an impressive body of work aimed at reducing gender inequalities and women's vulnerability to sexual exploitation. This wider social context is important for understanding the specific social and cultural factors linked to the sexual exploitation of children in the Caribbean. There is an opportunity created by the Third World Congress on CSEC however, to focus more explicitly on the topic from a position of 'child-centredness'. This is necessary to generate understandings of the particular vulnerabilities of Caribbean children to sexual exploitation and to engender the kind of sustained action to bring about change. In most Caribbean countries the appropriate legislative and policy tools to adequately deal with CSEC are not sufficiently well-developed; the surveillance and monitoring systems for identifying vulnerable children and tracking perpetrators of abuse may not exist; the technological infrastructure to effectively pursue and prosecute perpetrators is often limited and the psychosocial services for the support and rehabilitation of victims are thinly stretched. The development of effective regional strategies and resources is however difficult to achieve without data on the extent of the problem. Gathering these data is always difficult for methodological reasons and governments in the region may need to explore how they can streamline information systems and procedures in order that up-to-date information can be readily produced. This is particularly important for keeping up-to-date with the tactics used for commercial sexual exploitation, for example, the clamp-down of trafficking in a country may simply lead to the growth of local markets for child sex – those who benefit from CSEC do not disappear and will change their

strategies to match their circumstances. Similarly, those who exploit children in this way often target countries with weak national laws as the location for their activities. Laws strengthened in one area may result in a shifting of the problem to another. Clearly, relevant, current and accessible information is essential to strategies to eliminate CSEC. Many Caribbean countries seem to lack effective procedures for gathering and sharing information on child abuse. This is illustrated for example, in the 'invisibility' of Caribbean countries in two recent global studies of child sexual abuse. The International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect global survey: 'World Perspectives on Child Abuse' shows that of the eight Caribbean countries involved in the 125-country survey, there was not a single response from the Caribbean region (ISPCAN, 2008). It is astonishing that in 2008, a publication on 'World Perspectives' does not include the perspectives of a single Caribbean country and while this may simply indicate the membership distribution of ISPCAN or methodological flaws in gathering data, nevertheless, over the history of the global survey (which has been carried out every four years since 1992), only sporadic responses from Caribbean countries have been recorded. This was also the case in an earlier global study on rehabilitation programmes for victims of CSEC carried out on behalf of ECPAT (Manion, 2004). Again this study excluded any information on Caribbean countries as no countries in the region responded to the survey despite having been invited to participate. Clearly there can be many reasons for countries not participating in international studies of child abuse and lack of participation does not necessarily equate with a lack of commitment to addressing the problem. However the dearth of information on the extent of CSEC in the Caribbean within international studies raises questions about whether these data are available at country and regional level. The lack of information on the problem presents major difficulties for governments who wish to translate commitment into targeting resources for prevention and child protection.

The problem of the commercial sexual exploitation of children is especially serious for several key reasons:

- Children are increasingly being targeted for sex - previously minors were often caught up in circumstances that, in many instances, were not explicitly designed for the exploitation of children; however, this is no longer the case and there is considerable evidence of a growing market for child sex.
- The number of children involved worldwide appears to be on the increase.
- Commercial sexual exploitation does not have a distinct pattern and is constantly changing, this makes it very difficult for legislators to keep pace with the activities of child exploiters.
- It is often the most vulnerable of children who are at greatest risk; children already living on the margins of mainstream societies (for example, street children, child refugees and orphans) are key targets for traffickers and paedophiles.
- There is disturbing evidence that some parents and families may be more implicated in the sexual exploitation of their children than we might like to think.

- Linked to other global phenomena such as HIV-AIDS and poverty, CSEC threatens to set back developmental progress especially in relation to human rights and the creation of healthy societies.

Those who exploit children rely upon the inter-connectedness of factors such as poverty and child vulnerability *within* countries as well as international trade and travel opportunities *between* countries to sustain the demand for child prostitution. Over the last decade or so, there has been a shift from approaches based largely upon locally-driven solutions to those based on regional or transnational cooperation and involving governments across geographical borders. This is especially the case in respect of trafficking, which requires collaboration among source, transit *and* destination countries to deal effectively with the problem. Engaging governments and policy makers was an important function of the First World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents which was held in Sweden in 1996. The main purpose of the assembly was to highlight the growing problem of CSEC as a transnational problem and to encourage all countries represented to commit to the Agenda for Action drawn up by the assembly. This resulted in the Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action (a document highlighting agreed priority areas for action), which was signed by 120 countries. This was followed by the Second World Congress in Japan in 2001 which led to 159 countries signing up and current figures are that a total of 166 countries have signed the Declaration (ECPAT, 2008).

The Third World Congress will be held in Brazil in November 2008. In preparation for this meeting Caribbean countries, like other countries throughout the world, will be reflecting on progress, lessons learned, challenges and the priority activities for continued work against the commercial sexual exploitation of children. An important part of this preparatory work is to review what is currently known on the topic to see what can be gained through knowledge exchange. Commissioned by UNICEF (Eastern Caribbean Region), the Centre for Applied Childhood Studies at the University of Huddersfield, UK, in collaboration with NCH Children's Services (International) has prepared this brief review of the literature to complement the other information-gathering efforts being undertaken to prepare for the Third World Congress against CSEC.

The report is based on a review of recent research and other relevant literature on the commercial sexual exploitation of children. It is *not* an assessment of research studies or an analysis of methods; it is a review of the findings of research and a summary of some strategies being developed. The purpose of the review is to provide the most up-to-date information available to Caribbean governments on the current extent and nature of the problem. The report does not contain information on the responses and progress of Caribbean governments to eliminate CSEC and it will be important for the reader to map the issues raised in the report against progress made in specific countries and on particular aspects of CSEC in order to obtain a balanced and comprehensive picture of child protection development in the region. As many countries in the region engage in law reform, seeking to harmonise domestic law with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and develop National Plans of Action

for Children, preparing for the Third World Congress provides an opportunity to explore how these activities can be used to create synergies for tackling the commercial sexual exploitation of Caribbean children.

AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

The primary aim of the review was to assess the current scale and extent of CSEC at the international level, to explore research on the causes and impact of CSEC and to share knowledge of some approaches and interventions currently being developed. Finally, the report offers some thoughts on the implications of key findings for countries in the Caribbean and summarises some of the major challenges that may be posed for the region in introducing successful intervention strategies to prevent CSEC.

Methodology

A systematic review of literature using information gathered from a number of sources was undertaken. The meta-database Metalib was used to access the following databases: SSCI (Social Sciences Citation Index), ASSIA (Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (CSA)), EBSCO (Electronic Journals Service), JSTOR, NCB ChildData, ISPCAN. In these databases, different combinations of the following keywords were entered: Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Child Prostitution, Child Trafficking and Child Sexual Abuse. In order to ensure that articles reflect the most recent research, only articles published after 2003 were selected except for texts considered seminal or of specific value to the review. Additionally documents from known NGO websites were scanned manually. Known NGO sites in this context are those organisations working in the field of CSEC that have access to the means that enable the production and dissemination of knowledge. Although of indisputable value these organisations do not reflect the whole of what is known on the subject. We acknowledge that other sources of information exist; however, locating and accessing non-published information or information produced in formats that were not accessible on-line was not possible within the timeframe for the review.

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

The following criteria were used for inclusion:

- Literature only linked to CSEC
- Literature from the year 2003 onwards
- Literature on international/global perspectives

The following criteria were used for exclusion:

- Newspapers and other media generated material
- Material older than 2003, unless by a seminal author or considered a key text
- Non-peer reviewed articles (journals only)
- Research/literature related to adult prostitution

Only articles and research from peer-reviewed journals and NGOs considered reliable in that they can reasonably be expected to apply accepted standards for ethical, robust research were used. A systematic search revealed a wide and varied literature which was filtered to match the objectives of the review.

While both qualitative and quantitative studies were sought, the review is based predominantly on findings produced from small scale qualitative studies. Qualitative research is often criticised for not being sufficiently rigorous due to the difficulty of verifying reliability (Bowling, 1997); it was apparent from the outset, however, that there is a dearth of literature based on quantitative studies of CSEC. While an obvious limitation to increasing knowledge on scale and prevalence of CSEC, the approaches used in the studies reviewed nevertheless deepen understanding of both causation factors and effects of CSEC. Most studies reviewed sought to incorporate the perspectives of children and young people who had experienced commercial sexual exploitation - this seems essential in the development of effective intervention strategies. Several studies examined incorporated a phenomenological approach based on the personal observations and experiences of research participants. One advantage of utilizing phenomenology is that it provides explanations for certain events and thus creates a deeper observation and understanding of particular situations (Aveyard, 2007). Other articles were based on studies in which ethnographic methods and the observation of children and young people helped to explain behaviours and responses to CSE in particular circumstances. Both phenomenology and ethnography are useful for the study of CSEC as they can help identify different socio-cultural factors (Cormack, 2000; Robson, 2002). These insights into the methods used for investigating a sensitive and complex problem like CSEC are highlighted because they are linked to the credibility of findings. Nevertheless, it was not an aim of this review to evaluate or compare different methodological approaches.

Limitations

This report was produced in response to an opportunity to update what is known on the subject of child sexual exploitation and to identify some of the key issues for the Caribbean region. The period in which to undertake the task was extremely short and the literature review inevitably has several limitations:

1. This is not a comprehensive review of the literature available on the topic.
2. The review does not cover *all* aspects of the topic. Perhaps the most glaring omission is literature on child pornography and the growing area of child sexual exploitation linked to communication technology generally (internet and mobile phones). This was deliberate. The use of computer technology in the abuse of children is developing at a rapid rate and requires adequate time and resources to fully explore the impact of the emerging counter-abuse technologies being produced – this was not possible within the time available.
3. The cut-off point for literature included was intended to ensure that only the most up-to-date information is provided. Clearly some important texts will have been excluded.
4. Only those sources that were easily accessible have been used. It is important to acknowledge that although this was understandable under the circumstances, using known sources often inadvertently replicates the ways in which dominant systems of information reproduction become accepted as 'knowledge'. The danger here is that other sources of

information on the topic are marginalised and may be regarded as less important. This may be the case, for instance, for reports produced by small, resource-limited NGOs that do not have the means for international dissemination.

5. One major constraint was the difficulty reported by researchers in measuring the extent of the problem of child sexual exploitation. As a largely 'out-of-sight' population, children involved in sexual exploitation are difficult to identify and very few studies provide an overview of the extent of CSEC in any given country. Given the lack of quantitative research, the literature review has relied predominantly upon qualitative studies.
6. Some policy, practice and legislative interventions in different countries are described; however, it should be noted that the review did not include an evaluation of the efficacy or effectiveness of these initiatives.

Structure

Part One of the report discusses the significance of differing definitions and conceptualisations of the problem. Next, an overview of literature on the international extent of the problem is provided. In Part Three, issues specific to the Caribbean region are highlighted and in Part Four strategies and interventions are outlined.

PART I

DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTUALISATIONS

One of the early challenges identified in the review is that the sexual exploitation of children is defined differently in different contexts. While the differences may appear insignificant to the overall extent of the problem, the literature suggests that diverging emphases may lead to action based on different targets and outcomes and thus may undermine collective efforts to address the problem (Dottridge, 2007). For instance, some definitions include a comprehensive range of activities under the term 'exploitation' as they relate to children, others highlight the *commercial* aspect of these activities, while yet others include attention to the *illegality* of these activities. Although these differences may appear unimportant, it is easy to see how they may contribute to decisions about focusing resources to tackle the problem. Child sexual exploitation as defined by the UN is incorporated into a broader statement that includes different forms of exploitation, such as child prostitution, child pornography, forced marriage, and any occupation in which a child is forced to work or make money for someone other than a parent or guardian. The Declaration adopted at the close of the First World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, however, more clearly links this exploitation to its commercialisation. This is because it is the commercialisation of child sex which both drives and sustains demand:

...sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons (The Legacy of the Stockholm Conference 481).

The UK Department of Health's (2001) definition on the other hand, emphasises the *illegality* of the behaviour: "...the term 'commercial sexual exploitation of children' should cover illegal areas of activity with children, such as, trafficking for sex tourism, pornography and marketing for prostitution".

In-depth exploration of the relationship of phrases to their meanings, the socio-political context in which they arise and the reasons that specific groups use particular terms was not within the remit of this review, however this is an important aspect of the problem. It is clear from the literature that language and definitions are key constituents of the way CSEC is viewed and are contributory factors in how it is responded to. For example, ten years ago the Amsterdam Treaty (a European Union response to CSEC) defined sexual exploitation as:

- a) the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- b) the exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; and/or
- c) the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials, including the production, sale and distribution or other

forms of trafficking in such materials, and the possession of such materials.

(The Amsterdam Treaty, The Council of the European Union EU, 1997 Joint Action Statement against Child Sexual Exploitation).

In contrast to the definitions above, the EU definition did *not* stress the commercialisation aspect of sexual exploitation and perhaps underplays the significance of the commercial commodification of children as sexual 'objects' that was considered such an important aspect of later definitions. While the production of standard definitions can result in universal assumptions that negate the importance of specific circumstances, the lack of a common definition on child sexual exploitation is problematic. It means for example, that comparison on the effects of interventions and policy are difficult to assess and it also limits the comparative analysis of research findings since studies are often underpinned by different sets of assumptions and target different aspects of the problem. Despite variations in definitions, the World Congress meetings have helped to focus discussion on what child sexual exploitation involves and what the most important elements to be addressed should be. Within the different definitions currently in use, there are areas of commonality and it is clear that the commercial sexual exploitation of children is universally regarded as a form of violence against children and a violation of children's rights. A useful summary of CSEC is provided by the UK-based NGO, Barnardo's:

The sexual exploitation of children, both boys and girls takes different forms, from children being involved in sexually exploitative relationships and receiving money, drugs or accommodation in return for sex with one or more men, to being exploited in more 'formal' prostitution. In all cases, those exploiting the children have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, physical strength, or economic or other resources, such as access to drugs. While some element of coercion or intimidation is common, the involvement in exploitative relationships is more significantly characterized by choices borne out of the social emotional and economic vulnerability of the child (Barnardo's, 2005: 11).

The four types of commercial sexual exploitation of children commonly recognized within the literature are prostitution, trafficking, sex tourism and pornography (it should be noted that pornography is not discussed specifically within this report).

Child prostitution, refers to inappropriate sexual activity with a child, this sexual activity may include touching, masturbation, oral sex and/or sexual intercourse.

Trafficking – in Article 3 of The Palermo Protocol To Prevent, Suppress And Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women And Children, (2000) trafficking is defined as:

... the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat of or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or

of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Importantly, Dottridge (2007) states that although child trafficking may involve violence, threats, or coercion, it equally well may not. Children may be enticed, lured, duped or abducted, but children may also voluntarily agree to accompany someone. Regardless, children are still said to have been trafficked if they are delivered into a situation of exploitation (Dottridge, 2007).

Sex tourist - Gallagher (2006) defines a sex tourist as an individual travelling abroad with the intention of achieving illegal sexual activity with a minor.

All these terms are used within this report as they all refer to the sexual maltreatment and exploitation of children and they accurately reflect the language in current use. Notably however there is consensus within the literature that no child under the lawful age of consent can willingly enter into prostitution for the reason that any sexual activity between an adult and a minor is considered harmful, coercive and/or unlawful (and in many instances is legally classed as rape) (Save the Children, 2008). In line with this position, the authors do not use the terms 'child prostitute', 'child sex worker' or 'adolescent prostitute' as these terms mask the coercive and exploitative nature of child prostitution. Furthermore it is the view of the authors that such terms reinforce the conceptualisation of children as sexual objects. In making this point, the significance of language and definitions and the ways in which these influence perceptions and responses to CSEC is further illustrated.

Cultural and social factors are also important in the definitions and meanings associated with child abuse. In a study of 75 countries, however, ISPCAN (2008) found that there was greater commonality than difference in understandings of child sexual abuse with widespread agreement that this includes incest, sexual touching and pornography. While the ISPCAN study does not specifically focus on the commercial sexual exploitation of children, this important work suggests that searching for commonality of understanding is an achievable exercise. For the Caribbean region, which, despite considerable diversity, has a shared history and common social characteristics across many aspects of life, reaching consensus on what constitutes CSEC would strengthen collective efforts to address the problem. Furthermore the dialogue and process involved would provide what World Vision International describes as a 'strategic space' for influencing policies and developing transregional cooperation. This is discussed further in Part III of the report.

PART II

INTERNATIONAL OVERVIEW

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a complex and intricate topic and, although it has received considerable attention over the last decade, it is a difficult subject matter to research since both the children involved and those who exploit them are 'hidden' populations (Brown & Barrett, 2002). Furthermore, the study of CSE is hampered by the multifaceted routes by which children become exploited and the fact that sexual exploitation comes in many guises and often children themselves may not understand that they are being exploited. Neither are we able to glean much information on the extent of the problem from the conviction rates of perpetrators because of: the illicit activities involved; under-reporting; poor detection; inadequate domestic and extraterritorial laws and the involvement and collusion of law enforcement officials in some instances. These are all factors as to why the conviction rates of perpetrators of CSEC are low – a problem of all countries and particularly so in less economically developed countries. For instance, Manion (2004, citing Brown, 2000) highlighted the fact that up to publication, there had been no successful prosecution of a child trafficker within Asia even though child trafficking is considered a major problem in the region. ECPAT declare that it is almost impossible to give a precise number of children involved in prostitution worldwide. The organisation states that this is due to the features of concealment and illegality of child prostitution which make it extremely difficult for quantitative studies to be undertaken (ECPAT, 2004). Despite the difficulties in determining the scale of the problem and variations in estimations of its prevalence, many organisations report that CSEC is on the increase and base this observation largely on the perceptions of workers in the field. Melrose (2004) points out that variation in estimations may simply reflect contradictory classifications and definitions of child prostitution rather than significant differences in understandings on the size of the problem.

In 2002, UNICEF stated that approximately one million children worldwide enter prostitution annually and in 2004 reported that there were probably 60-100,000 children involved in prostitution in the Philippines alone. In addition to the estimated one million children *entering* the sex trade worldwide annually, the UNICEF report of 2006 states that there are approximately 1,000,000 children *currently* working in the commercial sex trade in Southeast Asia. Furthermore there are as many as 235,000 children involved in prostitution in the United States annually, and up to 5,000 in the United Kingdom, with over 1,000 children at risk of sexual exploitation in London alone (Barnardo's, 2005). One recent study of CSEC in Ethiopia documented that almost 20,000 children were involved and stated that the number is growing, particularly among children under the age of ten (Hoot, Tadesse and Abdella, 2006). With regard to the trafficking of children, it is estimated that in excess of 200,000 children in Central Africa are trafficked to urban areas in the country each year (UN, 2005) and 200,000 overseas children trafficked into Thailand annually (UNICEF, 2006). Research on the number of paedophiles is also difficult to carry out; prevalence studies can only be

based on convictions and conviction rates do not represent the true scale of the problem. Despite these methodological difficulties, Manion (2004) points to studies that show an increase in the number of foreign paedophiles in Latin America in particular. Clearly, the commercial sexual exploitation of children has become such a persistent and pervasive social problem that no government can afford to ignore it (Brown and Barrett, 2002).

Quantifying CSEC

The difficulties in quantifying CSEC arise partly out of the nature of the problem which is characterised in relation to trafficking by the illicit cross-border or internal movement of children and adolescents for the purpose of exploiting them. It must be understood that trafficking does not only involve the one-way linear movement of children and as Dottridge (2007) points out, in many instances the child's experience is not sequential: "...some children escape (or negotiate their own withdrawal) only to be drawn back into an exploitative situation again" (Dottridge, 2007 p25). Statistics can therefore include children who have been 'double-counted'. In respect of sexual activity, CSEC is characterised by a wide range of illicit commercial sex activities including street prostitution, work in brothels, massage parlours, escort services, clubs and hotels; the involvement and/or collusion of many different people in procuring and exploiting children; the masking of child sex tourism by linking with legitimate tourist businesses; bride 'purchase' and the clandestine nature of CSEC.

Added to these challenges about the nature of CSE is the reluctance of children and young people themselves to reveal information about perpetrators for understandable reasons. Children do not willingly enter prostitution and the factors which caused them to be exposed to CSE in the first instance may still exist (such as poverty, homelessness, responsibility for family members, loss of parents and so on). Disclosure of involvement in prostitution may create another set of risks for the child including risk of violence from 'pimps', loss of livelihood, and even the threat of prosecution. There are several studies which suggest that prostitutes (including children who are involved in prostitution) are more likely to be prosecuted than those who solicit, procure or pay for their services (Manion, 2004). Furthermore children may have become addicted to drugs or alcohol and may need the income from prostitution to pay for drugs. These dangers serve both to keep children in situations of exploitation and also to silence them. A further issue is that the experience of being sexually abused and exploited creates psychological barriers that make disclosure very difficult for the children involved, such as intense feeling of shame, self-blame and unworthiness. Most societies (even economically advanced societies) sustain gender norms which link female sexual behaviour with concepts of purity and chastity and these in turn may determine marriageability and/or reflect or undermine family honour. Girls who have been involved in prostitution find it extremely difficult to get out of it and may believe that they have no other options for earning a living. Children's caution in revealing the nature of the activities they engage in helps to mask the extent of the problem; however, these responses need to be understood in the context of the failure of governments to provide adequate protection and rehabilitation programmes

for child victims of CSE. Another factor contributing to the CSEC is the lack of effective data collection measures in many countries not only in relation to trafficking but also in identifying children at risk of being trafficked (such as children displaced or orphaned as a consequence of natural disasters and wars, and young refugees). For all of these difficulties - the nature of the problem, the lack of effective child protections services, and the failure of systems for detection and prevention - accurately determining the international scale and prevalence of CSEC is not possible and only estimations of the problem can be given. Although there are developments to ensure that determining prevalence is based on more reliable data collection systems, the true scale of CSEC can probably never be determined (ECPAT, 2006). There is, however, overall agreement that CSEC is a growing problem and not simply one in which there is growing awareness, although the lack of empirical evidence undermines proposals for more resources to be targeted at the problem and may explain the observation that the causal factors and effects of CSEC are still, in the main, disregarded by governments (Brown and Barrett, 2002). The psychosocial costs of CSE include lasting harmful psychological effects such as depression, self harm and risk of suicide (Cecil and Matson, 2005); physical harm due to violence, increased risk of drug-abuse and addictions; and the often premature and untimely death of many victims due to these and other causes (UNICEF, 2006). There are also long-term health risks; for example, complications from pregnancy and abortions, and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV. Child protection groups underscore the humanitarian need to stop the sexual exploitation of children primarily to prevent these consequences. However it is also argued that failure to stop the sexual exploitation of children, while clearly detrimental at the level of the individual and the family, also leads to severe social repercussions for any society (UNICEF, 2002).

Globalisation and Demand

Factors linked to globalisation have had a significant influence upon the rising demand for children to be trafficked in and out of various countries for the purpose of prostitution and exploitation (UNICEF 2006, Brown and Barrett 2002). Globalisation can be defined as 'the postcolonial expansion of global markets, increased trade liberalisation, cross-border interaction and interdependence facilitated by unprecedented advances in technology and global communication'. Globalisation has provided opportunities not only in relation to trade in goods, but also the commercialisation and transnational trade in human beings and in human services including sexual services. The permeability of geographic borders and increasing ease of travel has resulted in CSEC becoming profitable in many developing and developed countries and especially in countries in economic transition (Brown & Barrett, 2002).

In Thailand and Southeast Asia, the growth of global markets has been directly linked to the growth of sexual markets and human trafficking; additionally, inadequate law enforcement and corrupt officials are said to be contributing to the increase in child sex tourism (UNICEF, 2006). ECPAT (2004) reports how rising numbers of children are also being trafficked from

what were once Eastern coalition countries, e.g. Romania, Czech Republic and Ukraine, to Western countries. What emerges clearly from the literature is that the association between CSEC and trafficking for sexual purposes is a consequence of the disparities that sustain poverty and the neglect of risk factors which allow vulnerable children to be exploited for their prostitution:

Where war and conflict, natural disaster or political instability exist, the accompanying breakdown of social structure leads to less protection for children, leaving them more susceptible to ending up in the sex trade (UNICEF, 2006:1).

For the Eastern bloc countries, war and conflict has increased the susceptibility of children to CSE. Additionally, migration, displacement and/or loss of families are all features which expose children to the force, coercion, deception and at times, kidnapping which accompany CSE. The literature also highlights that children from ethnic minority communities, especially if they are marginalised within the countries in which they live, may be at more risk of being targeted by traffickers. The issue of child trafficking out of Eastern bloc countries is now an increasing concern for government officials in Western European countries, one of which is the United Kingdom. In 2004, ECPAT published a report into the trafficking of children from Eastern Europe to Western Europe. The report listed the United Kingdom as one of the destination countries and stated that as many as ten thousand children may be, or have been, trafficked into the United Kingdom (ECPAT, 2004). This figure contrasts greatly with known cases of trafficking. According to police records, there are between 142 and 1420 women and children trafficked into the UK annually for the purpose of prostitution (Melrose & Barrett, 2004). This discrepancy reinforces the general agreement that children who have been illegally trafficked for CSE are often impossible to distinguish from children entering for other purposes.

International organisations agree that the demand for the services of persons who are trafficked should be tackled more systematically by governments. Understanding the demand for the services of trafficked children may therefore be fundamental to tackling the problem of CSE. Demand cannot be said to be only about sex with children, that is, it is not limited to the men who pay for commercial sex but also extends to the demands created to supply the money and goods made available through CSE. Thus the demand can be said to be created not only by those who seek children out for sex, but also by those who benefit from the income children earn, including parents and families and those who make a profit out of children, either in the course of recruiting them, transporting them or by the money children earn being used to pay pimps and agents.

Economic Deprivation

Studies that have attempted to identify and understand the determining factors which lead to a child entering prostitution still point overwhelmingly to poverty as the root cause of children's vulnerability to exploitation. Melrose (2004) proposes that the problem of child sexual exploitation cannot be considered without taking into account the often extreme social conditions

that enable the sexual exploitation of children to thrive. The promise of work and income are often seen by families as a possible escape from poverty and a means of feeding and educating their children. In some countries girls may be expected to make sacrifices for the benefit of the whole family; their education may be considered less important and they may be seen as costly to keep because of dowry and marriage costs and thus their gender makes them more vulnerable. One research article which supports this revealed how the declining economic conditions in Ethiopia forced families to sell their daughters into the sex trade to provide an income:

Increasing numbers of families are left with two choices: either selling their children into prostitution or going without food (Hoot, Tadesse and Abdella, 2006: 130).

For some of the families in this study, the sexual exploitation of children was their only income and girls as young as ten often had to carry the burden of being the only person working to provide for the entire family's basic living requirements (Hoot, Tadesse & Abdella, 2006). Hoot et al (2006) also point out that in Ethiopia there is a growing demand for children to work in the sex trade.

The Concept of 'Risk-free' Sex

The work of Hoot et al (2006) suggests that the increase in the market for sex with children while driven by poverty, may also be linked to a perception that children are less likely to be affected by the HIV virus and thus provide 'risk-free' sex. This belief is said to exist particularly in parts of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and has been linked to a myth that is increasingly referred to in the literature, that men in some of these countries believe that sexual intercourse with a child may cure AIDS (Hoot, Tadesse & Abdella, 2006). We believe that this perception needs further investigation. In no instances in the literature did we come across any empirical evidence to support the statement that this is a common myth although authors repeated it because this was a comment they had heard. Our concern is that in the retelling of a myth without the necessary evidence, a perception is reinforced which may indeed be a *false* perception and which may detract from uncovering other truths. We *did* find for example, overall evidence that children are generally considered to be less likely to be infected with sexually transmitted diseases (and HIV) than adults and were sometimes targeted on this basis. Indeed within the sex tourism business, child sex is often *marketed* on this basis (Manion, 2004). This belief was not, however, specific to a particular country or region and neither had it surfaced only in relation to HIV. The literature suggests this has been a long standing aspect of the child sex market (Manion, 2004) indicating that fear of HIV transmission has compounded (rather than introduced) the perception that sex with children is risk-free and thus is more marketable and more profitable. The basis of this belief is the assumption that children have had less frequent exposure to sex than adults and therefore have reduced likelihood of having an STI. The reality however is that while the frequency of sexual activity *is* correlated with increased probability of STIs and HIV, the converse is not true and a single sex act may result in an infection being transmitted. There is also clear evidence that young females are biologically more susceptible to STIs than

men, are more vulnerable to HIV (transmission of the virus is several times more efficient from men to women than from women to men) and that physical immaturity also increases susceptibility to infection (Bain, 2001). Unlike adults involved in prostitution children do not have the means or power to protect themselves, may be unable to access condoms and in any case are unlikely to be able to insist on their use. The implication of these studies (Hoot et al, 2006 and Manion 2004) is that children are increasingly regarded as valuable assets within the sex market and may be more so in circumstances in which sex carries particular risks. The increased prevalence of HIV may therefore be a contributing factor to the rise in the CSEC in particular regions. What these studies also tell us is that children are not only harmed by the psychological consequences of CSE but are also at specific risk of exposure to STIs and HIV.

Risk Factors and Vulnerability

While it is argued that poverty is the primary reason that lies behind the sexual exploitation of children, poverty is not the sole reason and does not explain why some children are more at risk of CSE than others. For instance, some children may leave home voluntarily to escape poverty, neglect, abuse or domestic violence and thus are more at risk of exposure to predatory behaviour and other children may be forced into prostitution by their families. UNICEF (2006) suggests that CSEC cannot be understood without taking into account the cultural, political and historical circumstances that link to social and economic risk factors for children (such as poor education, social exclusion and social class/gender inequalities). Furthermore, political conflict and natural disasters often lead to the mass movement of people, weaken the social protection available to children and thus increase children's vulnerability to all forms of exploitation. Clearly, the circumstances that segregate children from the conventional protective functions of family life and limit access to supporting social networks need to be scrutinized to understand how children are made more vulnerable to CSE. Reporting on a study of the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Mexico, Azaola (2006) found that the following reasons increased children's vulnerability to sexual exploitation:

- Weak application of the moral norms
- Violence, ill-treatment and sexual abuse against children that is widespread and frequently tolerated
- Deterioration of the conditions, quality, and life expectations of wide sectors of the population in recent years
- Migration of members of the family or the complete family inside or outside the country with a consequent lack of stability and changes in the nuclear family
- Alcoholism among parents and increasing drug consumption among children
- Abandonment or expulsion of children from the family and an increase in the number of children living or working on the streets
- Low levels of schooling
- High levels of unemployment and under-employment

- Loss of purchasing power in the formal economy
 - Increasing involvement in the informal sector of the economy
 - Existence of organized networks for the recruitment, trafficking, and sexual exploitation of children
 - Corruption of police and their participation in organized crime networks
- (Azaola 2006)

In order to prevent trafficking it is necessary to understand how children are made vulnerable to being trafficked. Dottridge (2007) draws on the work of ILO and suggests that there are causes at three levels: the child and family level; causes due to underlying factors, and root or structural causes. In the extract below Dottridge explores these factors further:

Immediate causes are the most visible and obvious: they act directly at the level of the child and the family. Household-income poverty (income not meeting cash needs for subsistence) and cash-flow crises caused by shocks to the household economy are key. For example, with a sick mother, an absent father and no food, the eldest child in the family may well pick up a bucket and cloth and go to wash windscreens. Underlying causes refer to values and situations that may predispose a family or community to accept or even encourage child labour for boys and/or girls. Perceptions of poverty come into play at this level; for example, "consumerism" may drive children and parents alike to seek to earn more money to buy the consumer goods that are becoming increasingly available. Structural or root causes act at the level of the larger economy and society, influencing the enabling environment in which child labour can either flourish or be controlled. Aggregate national poverty (low Gross Domestic Product) operates at this level (Dottridge, 2007: 25).

Dottridge's work is useful because he explores some of the socio-economic factors that link to the causes of CSEC at each of the three levels identified by ILO – this is important for the development of prevention strategies. He suggests that the risk factors for children fall under one or more of the following categories:

- Income-related (e.g. lack of income, lack of land, family indebtedness);
- Crises or 'shocks';
- Demand-related (i.e. demand for cheap labour or a specific demand child labour), including cultural practices, such as the extent to which paying for commercial sex is regarded as normal by men and boys in a society;
- Identity-related (i.e. linked to a child's racial, ethnic or social origins), including racial or ethnic discrimination and denial of citizenship to entire groups of people;
- Gender discrimination and other issues relate to gender, including cultural practices (such as discrimination against girls owning or inheriting land or other property) and marriage practices (such as dowry and bridewealth);

- Education-related (e.g. certain children dropping out of school or not making the move from a local primary to a more distant secondary school);
 - Levels of respect for the rule of law (e.g. corruption and coordination between different branches of government or law enforcement agencies, or the lack of it).
- (Dottridge, 2007, p25).

Gender and Culture

There are links between specific cultural and social attitudes towards children and the practice of CSEC. In a study carried out by ILO-IPEC (2007) in Belize, the attitudes of the male participants involved were different to female respondents. Unlike women, men in the study indicated that in some circumstances they thought it would be acceptable to pay for sex with minors:

Some men make a distinction between sex with prepubescent and pubescent children or children less than 90lb which is repugnant to them. However, children who pass the "90lb.test" are seen to be ready for sexual encounters regardless of their age (ILO-IPEC, 2007).

While many other studies have commented on gender inequalities in relation to CSEC and the increased risks to girls, this study highlights gender differences in the attitudes and behaviours of men and thus provides important information for gender-informed policy and programmes. Although not a cause of CSEC, inadequate domestic laws and policy, ineffective enforcement of legislation and difficulties in keeping pace with the changing, complex world of CSE also contribute to environments in which trafficking is able to flourish.

PART III

THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN THE CARIBBEAN

According to the Pan American Health Organization, information on child abuse in the Caribbean is difficult to obtain due to the lack of surveillance systems within countries (PAHO, 2001). However, what research has been carried out shows that in common with many countries of the world, the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the Caribbean is a persistent and growing problem (IOM, 2005). Referring to child abuse in Latin America and the Caribbean, a PAHO report stated "child abuse is a problem in both Latin America and the Caribbean" and further commented that "...sexual abuse and exploitation is one of the more common types of abuse in the Caribbean" (PAHO, 2001). Regionally, the Caribbean has many of the negative social and economic characteristics generally associated with CSEC, such as high unemployment rates, poor levels of education in deprived communities, social class inequalities, gender inequalities and social deprivation (UNICEF, 2007), although there are variations from country to country. There is little evidence to suggest that economic growth leads to economic equality and therefore even in Caribbean countries that are relatively prosperous (such as Trinidad and Tobago) the drivers of commercial sexual exploitation are not reduced. On the contrary ECPAT (2008) suggests that areas of rapid industrial development are often associated with a growth in sex markets to provide sexual services for construction workers, miners, workers from international companies and so on. Teenage girls in particular are often targeted for exploitation and even when foreigners move out, the sex markets often remain and are used by local men (ECPAT, 2008).

The specific problem of the commercial sexual exploitation of children is not widely recognised in the region although within many Caribbean countries the commercialisation of sex is an accepted feature of society. Many forms of economic/sexual relationships exist as evident by the terms 'sponsoring', 'sugar daddy' and 'sugar mommy'. Transactional sex, in which young people (especially young women) exchange sex with older men for material goods and money, is a common form of economic security (Dunn, 2001; Kempadoo and Dunn, 2001; Ahmed, 2003; Barrow, 2005).

Migration and Trafficking

Migration, a key aspect of the social mobility of people in the Caribbean has also been linked to commercial sexual exploitation. The liberalisation of trade barriers and the free movement of workers as a consequence of globalisation have resulted in both legitimate and illicit migratory flows in the region including an increase in trafficking (IOM, 2005.2):

There are three primary migration flows in the Caribbean: internal migration (e.g., from rural areas to a city); intra-regional migration (e.g., movement among islands); and outward migration (e.g., movement to Latin America, Europe or North America). Three of the

most important factors influencing these flows are socio-economic inequalities (both within the Caribbean and globally), tourism and human trafficking (IOM, 2005.2: 10).

As was earlier stated, CSEC is difficult to measure and the inability to quantify the problem means that there are no reliable statistics. A review of research into the trafficking of persons in the Caribbean undertaken by the International Organisation of Migration concluded that researchers had often speculated about the characteristics of trafficking of children for CSEC in the Caribbean. Furthermore, most of the research carried out involved only a small number of Caribbean countries, leading to the view that the findings were not generalisable (IOM, 2005.1). Not only were questions raised about inaccuracies in data on trafficking it was also noted that there was a dearth of reliable research on children who are sexually exploited and abused in the region more generally (IOM, 2005.1).

Migration, especially undocumented and informal migration, although not a direct cause of CSEC, can mask trafficking activities. Also the migration of parents can place children left behind at increased risk of predatory behaviour especially when surrogate care arrangements are inadequate. Children in the Caribbean may also become vulnerable to CSEC and trafficking due to displacement caused by natural disasters (UNICEF, 2007).

Tourism

Many of the smaller countries in the region have limited exportable assets and rely on tourism as a source of income and employment (IOM, 2005.1). Kempadoo (2004) argues that commercial sex has long been an integral feature of Caribbean tourism (Kempadoo, 2004). Some Caribbean countries have become known as sex tourist 'hot spots' and the image of sexual permissiveness is a key subliminal message in many tourist advertisements. While prostitution is not officially condoned, 'tourism-orientated prostitution' and commercial sex transactions are by-products of the tourist market with legitimate tourist businesses being used to legitimise or hide illicit tourist activity. There are two sides to this picture – the foreigners in search of destinations for sexual 'romance' and adventure, and local people who view sex with tourists as a viable means of making a living or improving their economic conditions. Much of this activity is quite legal and involves consenting adults; however, the increasing commercialisation of sex and pornography is also a contributory factor to the sexual exploitation of children and the growth of child sex tourism. Where sex markets exist and where the cultural and social environment is one in which illicit or clandestine sexual exploitation occurs, children, and teenage girls in particular, can easily get drawn into prostitution.

Sex tourism is often blamed for the increase in CSEC worldwide; it is important to note, however, that most people who sexually exploit children in any given location are likely to be local residents. In Thailand, 90 per cent of those sexually exploiting children are said to be local people, and in the Philippines the figure is said to be 50 per cent (Manion, 2004). Foreign sex tourists are a major source of the demand for child

sex; however, they are often not the main source and it is important to ensure that in targeting sex tourists other risks to children are not neglected.

Poverty

Economic deprivation and poverty have been listed as the foremost causes of children engaging in CSE and we have earlier highlighted how children, and girls in particular, are rendered vulnerable especially when they have a low economic and social status. A study of St. Vincent and the Grenadines revealed how some Caribbean parents disregard the sexual exploitation of their children when the family needs the income it brings:

The plight of sexually abused children is exacerbated by poverty, which, among other things, encourages parents to turn a blind eye to their child's involvements in transactional sex, because of the economic benefit it can bring to the entire family (Sealy-Burke, 2006, p7).

This practice is not the same as selling children into prostitution but the evidence does demonstrate the ways in which the degree of poverty some children in the Caribbean experience increases vulnerability to sexual exploitation. As with children elsewhere, economically deprived and poorly educated children in the Caribbean are the ones most susceptible to risk of CSE, and also exposure to HIV-AIDS (Sealy-Burke, 2006). Approximately 60 per cent of children under 12 and 50 per cent of young people aged 13 to 19 years live in poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNICEF/ECLAC, 2002). Most children who live in poverty do not become involved in sexual exploitation and research on the factors that increase risk in particular situations is needed. Most poor parents would not "turn a blind eye" to their child's involvement in commercial sex and questions about the specific nature of circumstances that contribute to the abandonment of the protective functions of family life need to be explored. Protecting children from CSE in the Caribbean will require addressing the economic, social and cultural contexts that contribute to it and more emphasis will be needed on the promotion of education.

Policy and Legislation

The International Organisation of Migration has commented on the lack of wide-ranging, cohesive legislation to tackle trafficking in the Caribbean, although of note, the organisation also praises CARICOM for introducing model legislation to facilitate the implementation of laws to combat trafficking (IOM, 2005.1). CARICOM provides support to member governments in drafting laws which cover prostitution and trafficking offences. One of the major challenges in regional cooperation on CSEC is that Caribbean countries often have differing interpretations and definitions within the laws that deal with prostitution:

The age at which the victim is considered a minor differs between countries, and frequently differs from the age of sexual consent for other offences within the same country. For example, in The Bahamas, St Lucia and Jamaica, the age of sexual consent is 16 years, yet

procurement of a person (or woman in the case of Jamaica) for sexual purposes is prohibited for those less than 18 years of age. Despite the fact that Guyana has the lowest age of sexual consent, the law prohibits procurement of women under the age of 21. However, procurement of minors for prostitution, as a specific offence in Guyana, deems the age of consent to be 12 years of age (IOM, 2005. 1, p17).

Other countries, such as Surinam, have no explicit legislation to deal with the exploitation of children for the purpose of prostitution or pornography (ILO, 2005), while in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, legislation does not consider that young boys can be sexually abused through prostitution and sexual intercourse (Sealy-Burke, 2006). Significantly, a number of Caribbean countries limit the definition of sexual intercourse to vaginal intercourse and rules out other sexual acts such as anal/oral sex or penetration by other methods (Sealy-Burke, 2006). Some Caribbean countries prosecute children between the ages of twelve and eighteen for adult prostitution offences even if perpetrated under circumstances of violence and intimidation. To some extent this mirrors criticisms of the UK where children who have been trapped into CSE and trafficking are treated as offenders rather than as its victims (National Children's Bureau, 2008). These contradictions in legislation create confusion, lead to conflicting priorities and provide legal loop-holes which leave children at risk of abuse and create opportunities for paedophiles. The wide variations across the region also indicate a lack of consensus within the Caribbean on the definition of commercial sexual exploitation.

Many countries in the Caribbean have signed up to international agreements to protect children's rights and to safeguard children from involvement in CSE. However, Caribbean countries are currently experiencing a weakening of their economic stability and high levels of unemployment (UNICEF, 2007) which undermine the implementation of these agreements. Governments may be reluctant to inject funds into social policies to combat CSEC and this may be particularly the case in countries that have become identified as a destination for sex tourists especially where such tourists are viewed as contributing to the economic growth of the country. Development in the region is, by and large, determined by economic policies, and the constraints posed by international debt agreements (e.g. economic restructuring policies) may be one reason why CSEC does not appear to be given sufficient priority within the political agenda. This may also partially explain why although all Caribbean countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, not all countries have signed or ratified documents relating to the trafficking of children, or the sale of children for prostitution and pornography, since ratification requires governments to commit resources to the implementation of these agreements. The tables below, based on an analysis across seven Caribbean countries, illustrate the low level of engagement with these international policy frameworks:

Signature and Ratification

Table 1 Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

	<i>Signed</i>	<i>Ratified</i>
Bahamas	30 th October 1990	22 nd March 1991
Barbados	19 th April 1990	8 th November 1990
Guyana	30 th September 1990	13 th February 1991
Jamaica	26 th January 1990	13 th June 1991
Netherlands Antilles	26 th January 1990	7 th March 1995
St Lucia	30 th September 1990	16 th July 1993
Suriname	26 th January 1990	31 st March 1993

(IOM, 2005. 1)

Table 2 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000)

	<i>Signed</i>	<i>Ratified</i>
Bahamas	9 th April 2001	No
Barbados	26 th September 2001	No
Guyana	No	No
Jamaica	13 th September 2002	29 th September 2003
Netherlands Antilles	12 th December 2000	No
St Lucia	No	No
Suriname	No	No

(IOM, 2005. 1)

Table 3 Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000)

	<i>Signed</i>	<i>Ratified</i>
Bahamas	No	No
Barbados	No	No
Guyana	No	No
Jamaica	8 th September 2000	No
Netherlands Antilles	7 th September 2000 (v Neth.)	No
St Lucia	No	No
Suriname	10 th May 2002	No

(IOM, 2005. 1)

In respect of the sexual exploitation of children, it seems that the global agenda as outlined in the agreements above is not adequately enforced throughout the region (IOM, 2005.1). Furthermore, although all Caribbean countries have ratified the CRC, UNICEF (2007) states that the harmonization of domestic laws across the Caribbean with the CRC is still either fragile or non-existent despite the fact that this policy framework obliges all who have ratified it to ensure its implementation.

PART IV

CONCLUSION

This review has highlighted how the growth of global travel, trade, communication and economic inequality is linked to the increasing demand for children trafficked and exploited commercially for sex. One major theme in the literature is that over the last two decades there has been a shift in recognition that CSEC is a transnational problem and that only through regional and international cooperation can it be tackled. Many government and non-government organisations now have specific guidance based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (UN, 2000) and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (UN, 2000). Nevertheless, the literature also exposes several failings in the implementation of these international policy frameworks such as inadequate law enforcement, contradictory legislation and conflicting conceptualisations of the problem which lead to children being criminalised, rather than protected. Certainly these limitations undermine the effectiveness of these agreements. In relation to the Caribbean, the literature suggests that while on the one hand the sexual exploitation of children is a growing problem, on the other, legislation and policy remains woefully inadequate and there is pressing need for Caribbean governments to follow up and implement the protocols on CSE. It must be pointed out, however, that the implementation of International Agreements is not necessarily a measure of Caribbean States' commitment to protecting children's rights, as governments are often hampered by economic constraints and other social problems that compete for resources.

Finally, the review of current literature on the topic reveals the fundamental need for a holistic *regional* approach to prevention and intervention strategies based on cross-border cooperation and the creation of environments to facilitate effective inter-agency working. While the agencies working to protect children from CSE in the Caribbean should be commended for their efforts, nonetheless there is a need for government officials to focus their agendas primarily on the needs of children, to more speedily work towards the harmonisation of policy and legislation across the region and to ensure compatibility with international agreements. There is also need to cut through conflicting interests and streamline overly bureaucratic procedures which may impede the capabilities of government to protect children from CSE. While there are clearly significant costs in addressing CSEC, perhaps the most important message to emerge from the literature is that the costs of failing to do so may be much greater.

Interventions and Strategies – Learning from Developments Elsewhere

The interventions and strategies outlined below have not been evaluated in terms of efficiency or effectiveness and they are *not* offered as models of good practice for Caribbean countries. They simply highlight some of the policy and practice developments identified within the literature; indeed the

authors suggest that while learning from elsewhere and sharing ideas is important, the Caribbean will need to develop responses that are relevant to the cultural and social context of CSEC within the region.

De-criminalising Victims

The commercial sexual exploitation of children has recently ascended the political agenda within the United Kingdom. Subsequently, the government has introduced guidance on 'Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution' (DH/Home Office, 2000). This guidance stipulates children under the age of eighteen involved in CSE must now be treated as victims and not be subject to the Criminal Justice System or treated as offenders (DH/Home Office, 2001). The United Kingdom has a multi-agency approach to tackling CSEC, which aims to bring together government and non-government services. The main aims of the multi-agency approach are to identify children at risk and provide an immediate plan of action to remove children from any threat or involvement in CSE (DH/Home Office, 2001). However, it must be noted that no additional government funding has been provided to implement the guidance, and agencies have to rely upon existing financial resources which are often limited (Swan and Balding, 2001). Despite UK government intentions, another UK-based NGO, the National Children's Bureau (2008), has highlighted that on the one hand there is a very low rate of prosecutions for child trafficking yet, on the other, trafficked children are still being treated as offenders and are more likely to be subject to the Crown Prosecution Service rather than supported by child protection services. This apparent failure to address the primary protection needs of children has been heavily criticised.

Protection and Surveillance

Based on a recent study of CSEC in Mexico, recommendations made for protection and surveillance include:

1. The design of a national policy that has the consensus of the states to avoid the sexual exploitation of children in all its forms so that actions can be taken in a coordinated way at federal, state, and local levels.
2. The preparation of one sole national register of cases of ill-treatment, sexual abuse, and commercial sexual exploitation of children in Mexico and a mandatory requirement of the authorities to report these cases.
3. The preparation of one sole national register of cases of children who have been stolen or have disappeared in Mexico and the establishment of collaboration agreements with other countries to facilitate their localization and reintegration with their families.
4. The adoption of the necessary measures to strengthen the application of the existing laws and to make the legal modifications needed to make the prosecution effective and offer protection necessary for child victims who decide to give evidence.
5. A study of the suitability of sanctions for clients and all the procurers and intermediaries who obtain benefits from the sexual exploitation of children, including the authorities that could be

responsible for these cases through their acts or through omission in exercising their functions.

6. The design of minimum standards for the treatment of child victims and witnesses by the crime prosecuting agencies and the judicial system as a whole.
7. The design of integral care programs specializing in child victims of sexual exploitation, including the creation of places of refuge and protection for both the children who are being exploited and for those at risk.
8. The preparation of information campaigns and sensitization of the media to give publicity to adults who obtain benefits from the sexual exploitation of children and to the circumstances that make the children victims and that prevent or make it difficult for them to resist being exploited.

(Azaola 2006)

Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation

In 2005, Barnardo's (a UK-based NGO), made a number of recommendations for increasing measures to protect trafficked children, arguing that these children were being failed by the Child Protection System. Barnardo's proposed a *continuum of care* involving: prevention – general educative work in schools to enable children to develop appropriate relationships and help them be less vulnerable to exploitation ; early identification – targeting those children at most risk of exploitation and working with them to minimise the risk of vulnerability escalating into exploitation; protection – specialist services working with all agencies to provide intensive support; access – enabling exploited children to access mainstream services such as health and education; safe accommodation – to assist children to 'escape' from exploitation and provide a secure and supportive place to aid the recovery process; prosecution – proactive police work to pursue and prosecute perpetrators and gather intelligence on exploitation (Barnardo's, 2005: 3).

Child Pornography

Norway has been very active in the field of combating child pornography on the Internet, with ECPAT Norway leading the way in a range of interventions. For example, an international hotline was established in 1996. Save the Children in collaboration with ECPAT Norway initiated the closing of 1235 web pages that contained child pornographic images. These organisations work closely with a special team at the Criminal Bureau of Investigation dealing with child pornography (Alexander, Meuwese and Wolthuis, 2000). As part of the country's commitment to combating CSEC, a National Plan of Action was created. Specific interventions include inter-agency cooperation in child pornography raids and revision of the school curriculum to generate awareness amongst children. Of note, the Swedish government allocated additional finances to pay for these initiatives to be implemented (ECPAT, 2006). Although a number of NGOs have criticised the Swedish government for lacking commitment to the issue of CSEC, advancement has been made in respect of legislation and prevention (ECPAT, 2006.2).

Child-Safe Tourism

Sweden ECPAT has developed a Certified Code of Conduct for tour operators with guidelines on measures to be taken by the travel industry in Scandinavia for preventing sex tourism and trafficking. The Code of Conduct is described as a 'corporate responsibility tool' which comprises six criteria which companies must follow once they become members (ECPAT 2008, 5). In the ten years since the code was first developed, over 600 companies, in 26 countries, have adopted and implemented it. Although essentially a self-regulatory tool, the Code of Conduct has proved to be one of the most successful tools for combating child sex tourism. There is convincing evidence that tourists are attracted to the concept of child-safe tourism and that they would actively seek out destinations and companies that promote the protection of children (ECPAT, 2008). As with environmentally-friendly and sustainable tourism, the concept of child-safe tourism offers an opportunity for generating awareness worldwide and for engaging tourist markets constructively and cooperatively in tackling global problems.

A further illustration of the value of engaging tourism companies is the partnership between ECPAT and Accor Hotels (a large hotel chain that operates globally) which has led to partnerships on several projects on CSE. Accor is currently implementing the code in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, Mexico, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, Romania, Switzerland and France, and in the next phase of implementation will include African countries (ECPAT, 2008).

Inter-agency Collaboration

Southeast Asia is a region in which CSEC and trafficking for the purpose of prostitution has been especially prominent. Southeast Asia illustrates the ways in which global inequalities impact on CSE unremitting poverty levels and the declining economic conditions of Cambodia and Myanmar propel migrants to more economically developed countries such as China and Thailand and the trafficking of children between these countries is thus made easier. World Vision International and Save the Children operate a range of projects at the community level across the region and campaign through the media, promote harmonization between government officials and NGOs, provide training and advocacy, and fund various intervention initiatives. These NGOs engage with children regionally and nationally to generate information based on children's perspectives (Save the Children, 2006). A good model of interagency cooperation is that which exists between governments and NGOs in some regions. In this model, the responsibility for different aspects of trafficking is clearly identified through inter-agency agreements – activities complement and dovetail with each other and duplication is minimised. For instance, working with relevant ministries, UNICEF provides support for the development of child protection systems, the ILO deals with vocational training and exploitative/hazardous working conditions, the UN Office for Drug Control (UNODC) advises on criminal

investigation and prosecution systems and the IOM provides assistance to help victims of trafficking rebuild their lives.

Community Vigilance

In South Asia one of the intervention strategies reported in the literature includes the establishment of 'vigilance committees' to monitor and identify trafficking activities. In Bangladesh, for example, the Ministry of Home Affairs has created 'anti-trafficking committees' along the border. These committees are made up of government officers and prominent members of the community (such as teachers, doctors and religious leaders). While this strategy may be useful for involving the community in the protection of children, the results have not been promising and concerns have been expressed that children's rights are often ignored rather than protected. In Nepal for example, NGOs have set up check-points on the border with India in order to identify girls who may be being trafficked. These NGOs stop girls from crossing to India and place them in transit centres where they are sometimes kept against their will (Dottridge, 2007).

Education and Awareness-raising

A number of studies suggest that education and vocational development are essential strategies to divert children from trafficking and CSE:

Education is key to stopping trafficking. Formal and informal education for children and their families provides the hope for an alternative future for children who are at risk (UNICEF, 2006.2).

Education, although regarded as a way out of poverty, does not of itself usually lead to reducing economic deprivation. It has been pointed out for instance, that educating young females in economically poorer countries can be futile if ongoing income generation opportunities are not made available for them to utilise their skills and make a living (UN, 2005). Hoot, Tadesse and Abdella (2006) observed that children involved in CSE in Ethiopia were, by and large, unqualified for other occupations that would produce adequate earnings to sustain themselves and their families. Thus, an important element of any strategy should be to include programmes which would prepare children for alternative occupations (Hoot, Tadesse & Abdella, 2006). A significant point to note here is that even in settings in which education and employment opportunities have previously kept children out of risk, shifting political priorities and declining economic conditions can have a rapid negative impact in what were formerly relatively stable circumstances.

Raising awareness of the risks and consequences of CSEC is important among groups of children and young people, carers and parents and the general public more widely and the literature highlights examples of strategies to raise awareness among each of these populations. For example, ECPAT Sweden has created an online game on child trafficking, '*Finding Sasja*', for young people and the public. Many girls are trafficked into Sweden from Russia, Lithuania, Estonia, Moldova and Poland and the game utilises this knowledge and provides an interactive, problem-solving

approach to finding a typical young person at risk. The game aims to reinforce important messages about child sexual exploitation (ECPAT, 2006). In Costa Rica, a specific campaign was created to target particularly vulnerable teenage girls. Fundacion Paniamor (the coalition against CSEC in the country) focused on positive images of teenage girls and produced an empowering message based on the concept of peer education to encourage girls to protect themselves and take control of their sexuality. This campaign has proved to be hugely successful (Altamura, 2007).

National and Extraterritorial Legislation

Ineffective national laws are one of the factors that contribute to CSEC, as ECPAT comments '...child sex offenders tend to choose destinations known for their lenient laws... the importance of strict laws coupled with severe penalties that reflect the growing gravity of child sex tourism offences and act as efficient deterrents cannot be overemphasised' (ECPAT, 2008:4). The most important aspect of establishing a legal framework for CSEC is to ensure that national legislation is effective and consistent with international agreements to eliminate CSE. In an extract from the work of ECPAT International (2008) on the topic, recommendations for law reform include:

- Ensure that all forms of CSEC, including child sex tourism, are defined and specifically criminalised/penalised in national legislation
- Ensure that elements of child sex tourism offences include: (1) engaging in sexual conduct with a child abroad, including non-commercial and commercial illicit sexual conduct with a child under 18; (2) travelling with the intent of engaging in sexual activities with a child abroad; (3) advertising or promoting child sex tours; (4) making travel arrangements for a person for the purpose of engaging in sexual activity with a child at the destination; and (5) transporting a person for the above purpose
- Eliminate the requirement for a victim complaint or formal State request
- Require that a prosecutor's refusal to proceed is justified
- Rapidly and effectively provide mutual legal assistance in relation to all sexual crimes committed against children... Unduly restrictive condition on the provision of mutual legal assistance should be removed
- Hotlines should be established to provide channels for the public to report child exploitation

(ECPAT 2008:16)

Some countries have strengthened their national laws by enacting extraterritorial legislation and up to June 2008 over 40 countries have such laws in the process of implementation. Extraterritorial jurisdiction enables an offence committed abroad also to be deemed an offence in the home country and is considered particularly useful to prevent offenders returning home to prevent prosecution. For extraterritorial laws to be effective, it is necessary to put in place efficient extradition arrangements. The evidence to date suggests that extraterritorial laws can be costly to

implement and difficult to apply in practice, as illustrated by the low overall rate of convictions (ECPAT 2008), although they send an important message to child abusers that there can be no haven for them to escape to. A landmark extraterritorial case in the UK involved the conviction in 2006 of a British man who committed sexual offences against children in Ghana between 2004 and 2005 (ECPAT, 2008).

Informal cooperation mechanisms are less costly and can also be very effective. Examples include the cooperation between the Australian Federal Police and the Cambodian National Police which has resulted in an Australian liaison office being set up in Phnom Penh (ECPAT, 2008).

National, Regional and International Information Exchange

The work of INTERPOL provides many examples of the importance of the exchange of information among law enforcement agencies especially in relation to perpetrators. For example, the recent conviction in Thailand of Christopher Neil, a man responsible for the distribution of pornographic images of children through the internet, was made possible because of Interpol's global campaigning (Interpol, 2008). Regional and international information sharing is only possible, however, where there are national systems for surveillance and monitoring of CSEC. ECPAT recommend that national databases on CSEC should be established and sex offenders' registries should be put in place to facilitate the notification to relevant authorities (home and abroad) of a registered offender's intention to travel.

Some Final Thoughts

Achieving consensus on the definition of CSEC seems an important basis for the development of a regional strategic approach to eliminate CSEC. Conversely, if countries adopt definitions with diverging emphases and conflicting legislation, this is likely to result in incongruent rather than cohesive approaches and may undermine collective efforts to address the problem. Agreement on what constitutes CSEC, and the most important elements to target, will not be an easy task since it will require ensuring that laws in Caribbean countries are compatible with the definition adopted and consistent across the region. For instance, there is need for regional agreement on the issue of determining when sex with a minor is classed as rape and in agreeing the minimum age of consent to sexual activity. Harmonisation of legislation and policy on vulnerable children across the Caribbean would provide a major impetus for tackling CSEC and would facilitate greater interagency cooperation.

The three major groups of people who present the greatest threat to children in the Caribbean are: those who seek to profit by procuring children for sex or facilitating their exploitation (including in some instances, the families of children themselves); sex tourists (also on the increase) and local men (the single largest group of child sex abusers). Strategies are needed to deal with the risks posed by each of these groups and action is needed on several fronts simultaneously: prevention; protection; detection; prosecution; rehabilitation. The literature points overwhelmingly to the fact that no

country can tackle the commercial sexual exploitation of its children alone. Within the Caribbean, regional collaboration will provide the strategic momentum to address CSEC, strengthen national programmes and will also contribute to the enhancement of civil society by raising awareness of the risks and consequences of the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

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FURTHER RESOURCES

Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism available at: www.thecode.org

Best Practices for Programming to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings in Europe and Eurasia. Development Alternatives Inc for USAID. Ruth Rosenberg, Sebastian Lazaroiu and Elena Tyuryukanova. September 2004. This can be downloaded at: [http://www.vitalvoices.org/files/docs/Prevention%](http://www.vitalvoices.org/files/docs/Prevention%20Practices.pdf)

Trafficking Prevention Training Module for Teachers. Robert Gjedia (The Institute of Curriculum and Standards in Albania) and the International Organization for Migration (Ruth Rosenberg, Anna Bengtsson and Silvana Haxhiaj) August 2005. Both the module and the handouts for trainees can be downloaded at: <http://iomtirana.org.al>

Smooth Flight: A Guide to Preventing Youth Trafficking. Alison Boak, Amy Boldosser and Ofronamu Biu. International Organization of Adolescents (IOFA). 2003. available at: <http://www.seerights.org>

Help for social workers, immigration officers, police and other practitioners to better assist children whom they suspect may have been trafficked. Child trafficking information and advice line- further information can be found on the NSPCC website at: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk>

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