

## Oral Statement on Child Sexual Abuse in Cambodia



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**Item 10: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Cambodia, Prof. Rhona SMITH**

The International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE), *Opérations Enfants du Cambodge (OEC)*, would like to thank Prof. Rhona SMITH for her oral update on her last visit in August 2017 to Cambodia. Alongside a difficult political situation that requires genuine attention from the Special Rapporteur, she did focus her mission on discrimination and marginalization of children, especially the trafficking and exploitation phenomena.

Despite some progress made on the implementation of the rights of the child (birth registration, Violence against Children Survey and Action Plan, Action Plan for Improving Child Care, Partnership Programme for the Protection of Children (3PC), Juvenile Justice Law, etc.), concerns remain about neglect and abuse of children, sex tourism, a high rate of school drop-out, lack of access to education, dependency to drugs and children in street situations. The more the children are left without protection and a real access to education, the more they are subjected to exploitation, trafficking and abuse.

In addition, the impunity of child abuse perpetrators at school, within the family and in child care institutions deprives victims from due remedy and redress, and from benefitting from counseling, care and reintegration programs. The lack of legal, medical and psycho-social services jeopardizes effective access to justice for abused children.

Our organizations would like to formulate the following recommendations and relay some stated by the Special Rapporteur in her press statement of 18 August 2017 in Phnom Penh:

- 1. Ensure child rights are duly integrated throughout all national action plans from a child-rights based perspective in accordance with the best interests of the child;**
- 2. Strengthen capacities of social workers within the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016 – 2026;**
- 3. Discourage child sexual abuse cases mediations that favor impunity and investigate allegations of corruption within the police;**
- 4. Facilitate criminal proceedings against abuse perpetrators, whilst easing and speeding judicial proceedings for victims, including effective free medical certificates, access to legal aid, and implementation of rehabilitation, counseling and social reintegration programs;**
- 5. Implement in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 4, the universal access to education, including in rural communities, with the participation of the Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC), Heads of village (HOV), Non Formal Education (NEF) Teachers, Parents Associations (PA), Child Clubs (CC) and Cambodian Network for Children Education (CNCE).**

Finally, we recommend that this year HRC resolution on Cambodia renews the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and provides for stronger in-country child sensitive monitoring steps, and capacity building of Cambodian institutions that could ensure the implementation of the Special Rapporteur's recommendations.