Presentation of the organizations

Renew Bhutan

• Non-profit organization that campaigns to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and children.

• ECPAT International

Global network of 102 organizations in 93 countries whose mission is to fight Sexual Exploitation of Children (SEC).
Sexual Exploitation of children in Bhutan

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National Consultations

- Statement is based on the joint Renew / EI report submitted to the Human Rights Council for the UPR.
- Report based on the research and work experience of both organizations in Bhutan
Follow-up of the last UPR

- UPR of the country in 2014 - the report of the Working
- 17 recommendations on SEC
- 2 recommendations on *combating violence against women and children*”
- *1 recommendation* on need to *increase efforts to prevent worse forms of child labour* which includes SEC.
Status and developments on sexual exploitation of children

Sexual exploitation of children through prostitution- In a 2016 study on “Violence against Children in Bhutan” by the National Commission for Women and CWC and UNICE,

- SEC emerged as an issue in the southern and south-eastern regions, together with physical and emotional violence.
- Half of female commercial sex workers in southern cities are Bhutanese and Indian children, from poor background and working in hotels, entertainment centers, with many of them addicted to drugs and alcohol.
- Few examples of boy victims also emerged.
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Status and developments on sexual exploitation of children (continued)

Child marriage

- 6% of children is married by the age of 15; and 26% by 18.
- Child marriage is both a factor enhancing vulnerability to SEC and a form of SEC itself-
- as the marriage is settled between two families, the economic transaction behind it establishes full control over the life of that child, including using a child for sexual)
Status and developments on sexual exploitation of children

*Sexual exploitation of children through trafficking*-  
- Bhutan is both a source and destination for child trafficking for sexual purposes.
- Girls from Bhutan are trafficked from rural areas to urban areas, in Bhutan or India.

*Sexual Exploitation of Children through on line (OSEC) and in travel and tourism (SECTT)*

- No evidence for these forms of SEC in Bhutan,
- Might change, as Bhutan undergoes transformation with rapid expansion of tourism and connectivity to internet (37% use in 2016) and mobile phones (82% use in 2015)
General measures of implementation Progress and Challenges

National Action Plans and overall Strategies

- The National Plan of Action for Child Protection of 2012 is being reviewed.
- RGoB is also developing a comprehensive National Plan of Action for Child Wellbeing and Protection (NPACWP) to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation of children.
- The protection services in NCWC recently reshaped from its original legal service mandate to professionalize and enhance the protection.
General measures of implementation Progress and Challenges (continued)

Coordination and Evaluation

• Ministries responsible to end SEC are: Home and Cultural Affairs, Health, and Labour and Human Resources
• INational Commission for Women and Children (NCWC)-2014
• National Action and Coordinating Group (NACG) to End Violence Against Children and Women in 2013.
• The NCWC and NACG- important steps towards coordination of child protection,
• Need to enhance their capacity for them to efficiently carry their responsibility
General measures of implementation  Progress and Challenges (continued)

Legislative framework-

**Sexual Exploitation of Children through prostitution**

- Prohibited expressly in the *Child Care and Protection Act*; and the definition is consistent the OPSC.

**Child trafficking for sexual purposes**

- Prohibited through the and the Penal Code. However
- Bhutan is not a party to UN Protocol to Prevent Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children
- Definition of child trafficking is narrower than the Protocol’s
General measures of implementation Progress and Challenges (continued)

Legislative framework (Continued)

Sexual exploitation through pornography

- Prohibited in the *Child Care and Protection Act*, and in line with the OPSC.

- The Penal Code criminalizes pedophilia, acts of photographing or videotaping a child in a sexual act, and or selling, manufacturing, distributing material that contains any depiction of a child engaged in sexual contact.

*Online Sexual exploitation of Children*

- Criminalized under the Penal Code; and punishable under the Bhutan Information, Communications and Media
Sexual exploitation of children through travel and Tourism

• No specific legislation addressing SECTT nor legislation that providing for extraterritorial jurisdiction for SEC offences

Child Early and forced d marriage (CEFM)

• Since 1996 the minimum age for marriage for both man and women is 18 years. However CEFM remains an ongoing issue
General mesures of implementation Progress and Challenges (continued)

Prevention

- Conducted by Government institutions and a myriad of civil society organizations.
- Efforts are not coordinated and their impact have not been evaluated.

Protection of the rights of child victims

- Bhutan also has a specialized law enforcement units, which address violence against women and children, including child marriage.
- RGoB established a toll free helpline/2018 that provide counseling, legal and referral services around the clock. The biggest challenge is the lack of reporting.
Recommendations to RGoB

Coordination and Evaluation

• Establish an adequately staffed, financially and technically resourced government entity, mandated to coordinate the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its ratified protocols.

Legislative framework

• Align CCPA definition of child trafficking in line with the UN Protocol to Prevent Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.
• Ratifying the International Protocols, Convention and Treaties.
Recommendations to RGoB (continued)

Prevention

• Expand the NCWC mandate to support, coordinate and evaluate prevention efforts
• Enhance awareness raising among vulnerable populations and in remote and poor communities
• Provide economically vulnerable families with adequate support and welfare
• Deny entry to convicted child sex offenders
• Work with the media to increase public awareness on online sexual exploitation of children
Recommendations to RGoB (continued)

Protection of Child Victim

• Institute Mandatory reporting of suspected sexual exploitation of a child, with strong sanctions for non-compliance; and protection mechanisms for those who report the crime.

• Improve access to justice through professional training curricula for law enforcement officers and judges.

• Ensure that child-sensitive services are available; regulated by quality standards; administered by knowledgeable, well-trained staff; adequately resourced; and easily accessible to all children.
Thank you for your attention

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