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LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

## **Child Sex Tourism**

### **Main Characteristics**

Child Sex Tourism generally involves adult men who, in the course of their travels, pay for sex with children. While some women engage in such violations, they represent less than 5% of sexual offenders. Child sex tourists may not have a specific preference for children as sexual partners but take advantage of a situation whereby children are made available to them for sexual exploitation. It is often the case that offenders travel from a wealthier country to a less-developed destination where poorer economic conditions, favourable exchange rates for the traveller and relative anonymity are key factors conditioning their behaviour and sex tourism.

Travellers may rationalize their Sexual Exploitation of Children through the belief that sex with a child is culturally acceptable in the place that they are visiting. This can occur in locations where law enforcement authorities fail to punish crimes against children or where it is known that legal action may be offset through bribery. Indeed, the economic benefits derived from tourism often override a national government's commitment to prosecute and punish all crimes against children through national laws and international instruments that ensure the protection of children against sex exploiters in tourism.

The fundamental protection of Children against Commercial Sexual Exploitation is addressed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), specifically in its Articles 34, 35, 36 and 19. The CRC commits signatories to ensuring that children are protected from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and pornography. The CRC's position on Child Sex Tourism is strengthened by the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, which expresses explicit concern about Child Sex Tourism.

### **Terminology**

**Pedophile:** an adult who is primarily sexually attracted to prepubescent children.

**Situational abuser:** usually a man who uses a child for sex because the child is made available to them, commonly through prostitution or within the family. The majority of child sex abusers are situational abusers. The situational abuser does not usually have a specific sexual preference for children.

**Preferential abuser:** focuses on pubescent children as sexual partners or objects.

The common link between all child sex abusers is that they have sexual encounters with children or young persons who are, or appear to be, vulnerable, immature and powerless. (\*)

(\*) **Definitions taken from the ECPAT International website:** [http://www.ecpat.net/EI/Csec\\_cst.asp](http://www.ecpat.net/EI/Csec_cst.asp)