

# **Fact Sheet About Child Sex Tourism**

**1. Child sex tourism occurs when an individual engages in sexual activities with a child while traveling away from his or her country or region of origin.**

**It usually involves some form of payment. It is also referred to as "commercial sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism."**

**2. Children are people under 18 years old, as defined by the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

**3. Quantifying the problem is difficult, but it is generally accepted that there are over two million children sexually exploited in the world. ECPAT-USA estimated that about 25% of the sex tourists exploiting children abroad are from the U.S.**

**4. Reasons for the sexual exploitation of children in tourism include:**

**a. Anonymity. Far from home, some tourists feel they can act in ways they would not consider in their own neighborhood, such as visiting brothels.**

**b. Cultural ignorance. Some men, it is mostly men who are sex tourists, believe it is culturally acceptable in some places to sexually exploit children.**

**c. Rationalization. Tourists tell themselves they are helping the poor children because they give them money for the sex acts they perform.**

**d. Sense of superiority. Some tourists believe themselves superior to the local population, because they have more money, are a different race, or a different culture. This leads them to believe the local children can be treated in ways they would never consider in their own country.**

**e. Fear of AIDS. Younger children are in demand because it is believed they are less likely to be infected. In some countries there is a myth that sex with a virgin invigorates men. In some countries there is a myth that sex with a virgin cures AIDS.**

**5. Child sex tourists include the following types.**

**a. Situational child sex abuser. These are sex tourists who may not have traveled with the intent to sexually exploit children, but just accepted an offer made or was influenced by peers, advertising or other media.**

**b. Preferential child sex abuser or pedophile. These are people whose sexual identify focuses on younger children.**

**6. The legitimate travel industry does not support commercial sexual exploitation of children. But its facilities may be used to that effect and thus the industry is in a position to help stop it .**

**7. There is a sex tourism industry that promotes sex tours to many destinations. They usually do not promote child sex tours, at least in the United States, but travelers who go on these tours know that at the destination children may very well be available.**

**8. Child sex tourism is illegal everywhere. Americans may be prosecuted in the destination country or in the United States under the federal extra-territoriality legislation called the PROTECT Act. As of the end of 2007 more than 50 Americans had been indicted under this law.**