



ECPAT – End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Exploitation

ORAL PRESENTATION TO COMMITTEE II
Resources and International Cooperation for
Combating Cyber Crime

**DON'T FORGET THE CHILDREN!
CO-OPERATION IS NOT ENOUGH**

Good afternoon – Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates and Experts, Ladies and Gentlemen.

ECPAT International very much appreciates this opportunity to address the 11th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

One of the worst and fastest-growing areas of computer-related and cyber crime globally is the sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

There are tens of millions of images of child pornography on police databases around the world. Each day, thousands more flood into circulation – and behind each image is a child abused to make it.

These are the dangers facing the world's children and young people as leading users of cyber technologies – child pornography, sexual abuse, stalking by sexual predators, and exposure to dangerous images and messages. These dangers will only increase with '3G' third generation technologies.

Sexual exploitation and other cyber crimes against children are a global criminal activity worth billions of dollars each year. This is now linked with organised criminal gangs, with trafficking of children for sexual exploitation, and with child sex tourism.

These cyber crimes are also a gross violation of children's human rights under the CRC. To prevent them requires strong, urgent and concerted action – by the IT industry, by governments and by law enforcement agencies. International co-operation is a vital element. Good examples do exist – the Council of Europe's Convention on Cyber Crime, and Interpol's shared child pornography database to name but two.

But international co-operation is not enough. We need urgent, direct action by the IT industry and governments themselves.

The IT industry must do much more to protect children – with its global reach and vast technological and financial resources. There needs to be global IT child protection body to set industry standards, to research safety technologies, and to fund worldwide education campaigns in all the major languages.

The ultimate responsibility for protecting children from cyber crimes rests with the states.

Unfortunately, too few governments have comprehensive laws which criminalise child pornography or related cyber crimes against children. These legal vacuums allow children to be exploited and abused with impunity – undermining international frameworks and co-operation. The result so far is – few convictions, often minimal penalties, and few exploited children found to get care and protection.

States must take urgent action to comply with international standards, and to implement them. They should ratify the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography – and sign or ratify the Convention on Cyber Crime. Governments must criminalise all forms of child pornography. These laws should protect children under 18 regardless of consent, and should oblige IT companies to

remove or block access to child pornography, as well as to introduce an age verification system.

Governments should give high priority to identifying at-risk and abused children in disadvantaged regions, as they are frequently victims of child pornography. More resources must go to training law enforcement agencies about victim identification, and to rehabilitation for child victims.

ECPAT calls on the Congress to endorse the need for action to combat cyber crimes against children, by strengthening the Draft Bangkok Declaration:

- in paragraph 14 by adding the need to protect child witnesses and child victims of ‘of child pornography and other cyber crimes’
- in paragraph 21 by adding the need for international co-operation to combat ‘cyber crimes against children, including child pornography’.
- and in paragraph 25 by more clearly distinguishing between the need for states to provide appropriate care and protection to children in conflict with the law ... and to provide it to children as victims of crime – including victims of sexual exploitation and abuse via information technologies.

Ladies and gentlemen, ECPAT has a simple message to this Congress – there must be a much clearer focus on children’s needs and rights in crime prevention and criminal justice. Children should not be a side issue. They need to be on the main agenda, if we are to protect them from child pornography and other cyber crimes. Thank you.

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