



[www.make-IT-safe.net](http://www.make-IT-safe.net)

**CAMPAIGN LAUNCH SPEECH**  
**ECPAT International executive director, Ms Carmen Madriñán**  
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Good morning and welcome to the global launch of the make-IT-safe campaign. This campaign is being undertaken by our ECPAT global network in 67 countries along with the Children's Charities Coalition for Internet Safety, which is made up of all the UK's leading children's welfare groups.

We're launching this campaign today in London and Bangkok – and a dozen ECPAT groups around the world are also doing their own national launches this week. Other groups will follow.

This campaign is directed squarely at the global IT industry – the Internet and high tech sector – to take responsibility for ensuring its goods and services are safe for children and young people everywhere. I would like to come back to the target of our campaign a little later.

We're launching this global campaign to make IT safe for children and young people – why are we doing this?

On a global scale, children and young people represent one of the largest groups of users of new information technologies – especially of the Internet, email, peer2peer communications, newsgroups, chat rooms, web cams and, of course, mobile phones.

- A survey of eight European countries in 2003 found more than 13 million children and young people – especially the under-12s – flocking to the Internet, up one third in a year.
- A national survey in Thailand last year found that more than half the country's Internet users were aged 15-24, with another 10% aged 6-14.
- In Japan, one in four children has a mobile phone. UK research shows that 52% of all 7 to 16 year olds own a mobile phone.
- In Africa, mobile phones already outnumber fixed lines and constitute more than 80% of all African telephone subscribers - a higher ratio than on any other continent.

ECPAT believes that the experience of children and young people of the Internet and interactive technologies is largely positive – young people making the best of the new opportunities to connect, explore and learn. There is no doubt that these online and interactive technologies bring great benefits - enhancing the spread of information, education and creative and leisure entertainment.

Nevertheless ECPAT's work to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation has shown that the benefits of the Internet, mobile phones and interactive technologies are often off-set by the downside. This downside is the harmful, dangerous and often illegal exchanges made easier by these new technologies and which put children at great risk, or worse.

We already know the dangers of Internet chat rooms, dating boards and mobile phones – used by adults to contact and ‘groom’ children and young people for sexual abuse. The phenomenon of *enjo kosai* – or adults using mobile phones to solicit ‘dates’ and sex from legal minors – is unfortunately well known in Japan and, lately, in other parts of Asia.

Today there’s the new danger posed by Web-cameras and digital cameras on mobile phones. These add new and harmful dimensions to instant communications across the globe. Sex exploiters can now provide ‘real time’ photos and moving images of the sexual exploitation of children – giving instant access to viewers around the world, who pay to take part in this live sexual abuse of the child.

This misuse of these technologies raises the urgent question of how to prevent and suppress child pornography and other forms of online abuse. It’s an urgent issue because these images of abuse will accompany children for the rest of their life. Images of child pornography on the Internet or circulated by mobile phones and peer2peer systems never go away – they are infinitely replicable and indelible and live forever to confront the child, with devastating consequences.

The sexual abuse and exploitation of children to make these images is increasing – these new technologies make child pornography easier to produce and circulate, that fuels demand and the opportunity for commercial gain. A few examples will help illustrate the extent and the growth of the problem of child pornography on the Internet:

In the year 2000, three men from Indonesia and Russia, and a couple from Texas USA, were charged by police for selling pictures and videos of children having sex with adults through web sites named “child rape” and “Lolita hardcore”. Some of these children were as young as four. The Texas couple charged US\$29.95 per month for access to the sites from which they made US\$1.1 million a year. Two-thirds of that money was paid to the webmasters in Indonesia and Russia. Their customers extended to several continents.

Three years later, in 2003, the UK Yorkshire police reported that they handled 700 per cent more cases involving child pornography than in the previous two years. This year Federal Police in Argentina reported that cases of child pornography had risen five-fold within the one year. Their investigations discovered that at certain times, as many as 2 million persons were connected to child pornographic sites – and within 2 minutes, had been able to access 14-hundred child pornography images.

ECPAT believes that the IT industry – companies providing Internet, mobile phone, software and other new interactive technologies – has a responsibility to protect children.

As these cases illustrate, the making, distribution, downloading and exchange of millions of child abuse images via the Internet and other interactive systems is a growing problem. And it’s a global problem. Websites can be located anywhere in the world. It is now possible to access child pornography from any location by paying a monthly fee through credit card or in some cases through the exchange of child abuse images.

Some industry players are taking steps to address the problem – by moderating or closing chat rooms, or developing new filtering and tracking software. While these are welcome steps, ECPAT considers such initiatives to be too isolated and incomplete. They lack the strategic vision, co-ordination and broad industry commitment required to address such a complex, borderless threat to the safety of children and young people around the world.

There needs to be a new, global urgency within the IT industry to address this threat. In particular, ECPAT and our partner child rights organizations are concerned about the dangers posed by new 3<sup>rd</sup> generation technology, such as Internet enabled mobile devices. These will enhance the applications already so popular with kids - access to music and improved graphics for games, video streaming, chats, online gaming and dating sites.

These 3G technologies will not need a fixed Internet connection. They will operate in a more private and personal sphere where it will be even more difficult than it is now to monitor and control unwanted intrusions and forms of exploitation.

I would like now to show you our make-IT-safe campaign website ... this is one of the focal points for our global campaign – we're using interactive technology to make it safer. The website is for all the campaigning groups – and everyone else who supports the goal of making IT safe.

What are the goals of the make-IT-safe campaign? The make-IT-safe campaign - which ECPAT International is launching today in collaboration with the Children's Charities Coalition for Internet Safety - calls on the internet and interactive technologies industries to take some specific steps to:

- Create a global industry child protection body which can -
- Set and implement global industry standards and protocols for child protection
- Fund research into technological tools to combat child abuse and sexual exploitation on line
- Support and fund a wide-spread public education campaign in all the major languages

ECPAT is also using its global network of groups to call on governments to:

- Develop policies that will guide the IT industry in providing products and services that are safe for children ... and to do this through broad consultation and a conducive environment for industry players at all levels – from the global Telco or software house to the neighbourhood Internet café.
- We also call on governments to facilitate and enable international cooperation by law enforcement agencies to combat child abuse and exploitation on line and through interactive technologies
- And to provide specialized training and develop protocols and standards for all those providing care and protection for children exploited or expose to harmful images and messages online and in interactive technologies.

Our campaign is based around some key actions right now – we are running an online petition for anyone to support the make-IT-safe campaign. We're especially keen for IT owners, managers and staff to sign on and to talk to us about how to make their products safe for children.

Through the website and our global network, we're also providing lobbying tools to individuals and groups around the world to go to their local IT companies, to government and to the media. The lobbying effort and petition are important tools in building a global coalition for IT child safety, so it will be hard for the IT industry and its leaders - and for governments - to turn away from a loud appeal from so many of their customers and citizens.

In view of the urgency and seriousness of these crimes against children worldwide, ECPAT International notes with concern and disappointment that the UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which begins in Bangkok today, does not include a specific session on crimes against children in its plenary sessions and policy-making forums. This gap is particularly notable since the Secretary General of the UN has acknowledged the need to address the growing threats to children, and called for a global UN study on violence against children to be presented in 2006. ECPAT is co-ordinating the contributions to this study on violence against children through the Internet and interactive technologies.

It is in this context of increasing vulnerability of children to exploitation and violence, that we ask the global community to join our call to the IT industry to act urgently to protect children. It is our hope that each of you through the media and communications, which you generate to make the public aware of the important issues facing us today, will help us to make this campaign widely known and to sign on to it yourselves.

This is our make-IT-safe campaign in a nutshell. There's a lot more – it's all on the website. Go and have a look, and sign on.

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