



**END CHILD PROSTITUTION
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY
& TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN
FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES**

Press Release

Not to be released before 19 December 2006

STRONG ACTION NEEDED TO CURB THE DEMAND FOR SEX WITH CHILDREN

Children of all ages are under threat from abusers and exploiters. The changing nature of the means used to meet adult demand for sex with children and the fragmented action being taken to protect them, has maintained this threat. Ten years after the scale of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) was first acknowledged at the First World Congress against CSEC, a review of progress shows that legal measures alone are not enough to stop the demand.

ECPAT International's global reports highlight the widespread sexualization of images and contact with children. This coincides with trends of children being frequently victimized by adults for commercial sex, under the wrongful concept of their ability to consent to exploitation.

Analysis of countries around the world shows that poverty, low levels of education and political and civil unrest still force huge numbers of children into sexual exploitation. At the same time, new consumer culture and media influence are redefining the boundaries of social belonging, creating profound pressures which can propel children into the hands of adults who will use their bodies and exploit children's search for resources to meet these expectations. While the children are often wrongly blamed, the role of the perpetrator who exploits them through abuse of power and wealth goes largely unnoticed and unaddressed. Only half of the countries examined have child prostitution laws that carry penalties for exploiters and in most cases, prosecution is constrained by the necessity to prove rape, coercion or corruption of minors.

While the global awareness of child sex tourism has led to improvements in prevention and protection mechanisms, the dramatic growth in low cost airline routes and increase in worldwide tourism have facilitated the ease with which abusers can access children without constraint in virtually any destination. Likewise, developments in information technology are seeing multi-billion dollar growth in child pornography materials and the number of adults accessing images of child abuse. The children they seek to entrap can now be victimized from anywhere in the world with very few countries putting sufficient protection measures in place.

ECPAT research has found that less than 25 per cent of countries have a dedicated and current National Plan of Action (NPA) to combat the various forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children. Of those which do, many NPAs contain weak goals and objectives and have no assigned resources for implementation.

"These reports are a wake up call to the global community to do more to prevent these heinous crimes against children" states Chairperson of ECPAT International, Ms. Amihan Abueva. "The first two World Congresses galvanized world awareness and action to combat sexual exploitation but unless the issue remains in the global spotlight, the response of the world community is in danger of being diluted as the problem gets more complicated in its manifestations and scope".

ECPAT calls for immediate action:

- Countries must fulfill their obligation to develop strategies and National Plans of Action to combat commercial sexual crimes against children in all forms.
- National laws must be changed to reflect the international legal instruments that countries have committed themselves to.
- All children up to the age of 18 must be afforded legal protection from commercial sexual exploitation, while enforcement of the law must be rigorous and punishment should reflect the grave nature of these violations against children.
- The responsibility to support comprehensive care, protection and recovery services for children who have been exploited in commercial sex must be assumed by States, as in many countries, NGOs are the only primary care providers.

A sample of information found in the reports.

Child Sex Tourism in East Asia

Child sex tourism (CST) occurs in long-established destinations such as the Philippines and Thailand, however, recently it has shifted with force to new destinations such as Indonesia and Cambodia. The rapid development and prevalence of CST in these and other new destinations has prompted concerns that factors such as the high commercial gain involved, ineffective monitoring and control of overseas travel by known sex offenders and the relative ease in establishing mechanisms to facilitate these crimes, are converging to put more and more children at risk. The risk is exacerbated by the present push in the region for development of new infrastructure in more remote and exotic destinations, such as Lao PDR, China, Myanmar and the Pacific, without child protection policies and impact assessments being integrated in development planning.

The traditional regional travel routes from Japan, Australia and New Zealand continue, but other East Asians, such as South Koreans (increase of 124% to Thailand from Jan. 2005 to March 2006) and Chinese (increase of 259% to Thailand from Jan. 2005 to March 2006) are travelling in far greater numbers to destinations across the region. Research indicates a corresponding increase in child sexual exploitation by nationals from these regions. Child sex tourists also continue to arrive from the west and other regions often targeting less protected and more remote areas.

Prostitution in South Asia

ECPAT's research on the prostitution of boys, in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India revealed that it is a much larger problem than previously recognized. It also revealed a degree of silent acceptance at all levels of society, on the sexual exploitation of boys. As such, initiatives to address these violations and to provide support for boy victims remain peripheral to other efforts that address gender violence in these countries. There is an urgent need to challenge the social indifference that allows these practices to continue unquestioned.

Exploitation of indigenous children in Latin America

Research carried out by ECPAT and four NGOs in Peru on the demand for sex with children, showed the need to expand the focus of counteraction beyond paedophiles to include the much larger number of opportunistic local men who demand and buy sex from adolescent children with impunity.

ECPAT's work in regions of the world with high indigenous populations or ethnic minorities shows that children from these groups are heavily represented among sexually exploited children. Sexual exploitation of indigenous children in Latin America, for example, is associated with myths that

rationalize the exploitation as being consistent with local cultural practices of early sexual experience. In some countries examined, sex with indigenous children was reported as a preference, based on prejudiced social constructions that are widely accepted. This vulnerability of minority groups is mirrored in all parts of the world where there is unequal legal and social protection for them.

Trafficking in children in Europe

Despite the acknowledged scale of trafficking in children for sexual purposes, only a small number of countries in Europe and CIS were found to have specific laws to protect children from trafficking and a few explicitly penalize domestic trafficking: a serious gap when it is considered that child trafficking usually begins within borders. Research conducted by the ECPAT Europe Law Enforcement group in western and eastern Europe shows that trafficking in children for sexual exploitation is recognized as a growing phenomenon and is increasingly linked not only to child prostitution but to other forms of sexual exploitation in countries such as Ukraine, Belarus, Czech Republic and Russia, where children victims of trafficking are also used in the making of pornography.

Bangkok Launch

*ECPAT International Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action
Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*

Tuesday

19 December 2006

Novotel Lotus Hotel

(3 minutes from Phrom Phong BTS Station)

10.00 am

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ECPAT International

Note to Editor:

ECPAT International is a global network of organizations and individuals working at all levels to build collaboration among local civil society and the broader child rights community to form a global social movement to eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children. It encourages the world community to ensure that children everywhere enjoy their fundamental rights free from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC). ECPAT began in the late '80s as a campaign to raise awareness of the growing incidence of CSEC in Asia, and gradually extended to formalize links with other groups and organizations around the world. The ECPAT network now comprises 85 members in 76 countries.