

**15.00 (CET), 17 November 2017, Lyon, FRANCE** – ECPAT has been presented with a prestigious award by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) at a ceremony held in Lyon, France today.

The “Crimes Against Children” Award from INTERPOL’s Crimes Against Children team recognizes the more than two decades that ECPAT has worked to prevent child sexual exploitation and advocate for its victims – particularly through programmes to confront trafficking for sexual purposes; the exploitation of children through prostitution and pornography; online child sexual exploitation; and the sexual exploitation of children in the travel and tourism sector.

Accepting the award, Dorothy Rozga, ECPAT’s Executive Director, paid tribute to the organization’s 103 members working in 93 countries. “Through research, advocacy, the provision of direct services to children, awareness raising and campaigning - members of the ECPAT Network are making a positive difference to the lives of children.”

“Due to the clandestine nature of child sexual exploitation, reliable data is difficult to come by,” she said. “Nevertheless, we know that the number of victims is huge and that very often these children suffer in silence.”

Rozga emphasized that over the years ECPAT has learned the importance of involving all stakeholders in addressing the crime of child sexual exploitation. “It is absolutely essential to adopt a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach,” she said. “We work with a wide range of actors, from the private sector - including hotels, Internet and tech companies, travel agents, airlines - to governments, the UN, and other NGOs. This is why we place such a high value on our collaboration with INTERPOL and other law enforcement agencies.”

“This award is a recognition of the excellent work done by ECPAT to end the sexual exploitation of children around the world,” said Bjorn Sellstrom, Head of INTERPOL’s Crimes Against Children team. “We look forward to continuing our joint efforts with ECPAT to protect the most vulnerable members of society from abuse and further develop awareness of this global issue.”

Previous recipients of the award have included Mads Nielsen, a world leader in victim identification helped to safeguard hundreds of children, and Anders Persson, the father of the INTERPOL International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) image database.