



End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking
February 2009

ECPAT NEW ZEALAND

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Last November world governments met in Rio de Janeiro to consider the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. It was a sign of world concern that 3,200 people were present including official delegations from 137 Governments. Don't ask who went from New Zealand because the sad fact is that we had no delegation. At the last moment Dr Cindy Kiro our current Children's Commissioner agreed to attend and she made an excellent presentation. Sadly our government officials were not officially represented to follow up her words.

At the Congress, statistics from around the world made it clear that child sex abuse appears to be increasing and has become a serious problem in many countries. Some countries reported that the number of cases showed an increase of 6-10% on previous years.

The area of greatest concern is the phenomenal growth of child pornography, or as it is now called *images of child sex abuse*. There are an estimated 100,000 web sites offering this material on the net and the income they generate is around NZ 5 billion dollars a year. This is now an international problem but only 30 police forces in the world have the technical capacity and expertise to participate in international police actions to fight the crime. Even worse there are 80 countries where there is no law against child pornography and many of these places are the points of origin for much of the supply.

To bring all countries into line the Congress endorsed the UN proposal to approve an Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography which will force governments to deal more responsibly with child abuse cases. The need for international co-operation is constantly repeated, including the need for effective cross-border management checking and appropriate sex offender registers.

(Articles on the Protocol and Registers on pages 2 & 3)

The tourism industry was well represented at the Congress and outlined many of the measures being taken to reduce the growth of child sex tourism.

Congress ended with a call for governments to make more resources available to combat the sexual abuse of children and adolescents and to continue to develop their own national Plan of Action. The New Zealand government and NGOs produced a Plan of Action in the year 2000 but it is now in need of revision and more serious implementation.

Following the Congress ECPAT International held its Triennial Assembly and Maureen Crombie of New Zealand was elected Chairperson of the International Board. Alan Bell, the ECPATNZ Director was appointed the Pacific representative on the board.

Our congratulations to them both.

"The reasons why sexual violence occurs and indeed why it is tolerated, encouraged or commercialised are complex, but always it is built on the mirage of distorted values, inequality and self-interest"

- Cindy Kiro

You can read the full speech of Cindy Kiro at:

www.occ.org.nz/media_speeches



From Austria to N Z

This month Nina Hagenauer arrived from Austria and began working in the ECPAT office as an intern. Her presence in New Zealand is a reminder of the world-wide network of people concerned about child sex abuse. She will be in the country for the next four months working with the ECPAT staff.

Nina is a student at the University of Applied Science in St Poelten and shares the concern of many young people about the way innocent children are so often being abused. Living just 20 kms from the village where the infamous child abuser Fritzl was living has reinforced this concern.



Nina is passionate about helping organisations working to eliminate the sexual abuse of children and will use her time in New Zealand to assist ECPAT NZ and to prepare her thesis for her University studies.

Sex Abuse in Austria

In April last year the world was shocked at the story of Josef Fritzl. The 73-year old man was arrested after his daughter Elizabeth contacted the police and told them she had been imprisoned by her father since 1977. For 24 years she had been kept locked in a small soundproof and windowless cellar in the basement of the family home. During that time she was constantly abused sexually by her father and gave birth to seven children. It is one of the worst cases in Austrian criminal history.

Austria is also the home of the highest-ranking church leader to be censured for the sexual abuse of children. Cardinal Hans Herman Groer was forced to resign in 1998 amid numerous allegations of sexually abusing young boys. At the height of the scandal an estimated 50,000 people left the church. Cardinal Groer died recently.

Pacific Partners

For the past two years ECPAT New Zealand has been working with agencies in the Cook Islands to help develop a National Plan of Action. The final document *Protecting our Future* is now almost complete and it is hoped the Cook Islands Government will sign off on it in the near future.

The National Plan of Action will provide a framework for action to effectively protect children from sexual exploitation. Currently more than 50% of the reported cases relating to sexual abuse or incest with children in the Cook Islands have come from Punanga Tautu, a partner agency with ECPATNZ and the only non-government organisation in the country that deals with cases of sexually abused children.

If the new Plan is endorsed it will ensure that there are comprehensive laws that cover all aspects of the commercial sexual exploitation of children as well as developing adequate protection measures in place to prevent child sex tourism.

Internet Predators

The uncensored internet promises endless freedom but now it appears the Internet is exploiting children. The Internet is being called the new predator of children. A US government study says that online child pornography has increased by a massive 1500 per cent in the last decade with countries like Brazil and India having millions of Internet users emerging as hubs with unfortunately very few safeguards.

Every day thousands of sexually explicit and exploitative material of children, sometimes as young as 6 or 7 is uploaded onto the Web. It happens not just on shady private sites but also popular social networking sites like Orkut and Youtube. Their clients are faceless pedophiles across the globe. (*ECPAT International News*)

New Zealand has the third worst rate of death by child abuse & murder out of 27 OECD countries

How can we begin to slow the growth of violent child sex abuse in New Zealand? Educating the public is one possibility and developing more protective measures is another. But a more direct way which could easily be developed is to have an effective register of sex abusers. This, of course, is not the perfect solution but it does give increased protection from the preferential child sex abusers who may molest hundreds or even thousands of children in a single lifetime.

Civil libertarians argue that abusers leaving prison have paid their debt to society and should be free to live a normal life.

Despite libertarian opposition almost every State in the United States of America has adopted some form of paedophile register and it appears to be having some effect depending on how it is being used by the police and the wider society.

A recent FBI survey suggested the registers have helped reduce the offending of some of the most persistent abusers but it is still in need of some refining. The report claims that only between 1-10% of abuse cases are reported.

ECPAT-NZ will continue to lobby the New Zealand government to implement an effective paedophile register in our country.

Time for an International Agreement

How can we best protect our children from those who would abuse them?

This is the basic question ECPAT and its supporters are always asking. One thing that became apparent at the World Congress in Rio last November is that everyone has to be talking the same language!

It comes as a shock to discover that laws to protect children are often dramatically different from one country to another. Those who offend in one country can cross the border and escape punishment. Sexual predators keep in touch with each other on the internet and know which countries they can go to in order to avoid being arrested. Others who trade in child sex abuse images know that there are dozens of countries in the world where there are no laws to prevent the making and distribution of child pornography. And trafficking in children is made easier by countries who do little to protect their borders. The final insult comes when children who have been abused are denied any legal rights or rehabilitation in the country where the offence took place.

Somehow we have to develop an international understanding of the law so that abusers and other criminals can be caught and prosecuted and where children who are abused are treated in a humane manner by the authorities.

In the year 2000 the UN recognised this was a serious problem and developed what they called an “Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography”. Despite the legal jargon that surrounds the protocol the intention is clear. For the first time these crimes against children have been defined and described so that there will be a common international understanding of what is illegal and what is permissible.

Equally important is the fact that the Protocol requires States to criminalise these prohibited acts; ensure jurisdiction over the offences; provide for the extradition of offenders and encourage international cooperation between States to pursue the offenders.

We live in an increasingly globalised world and many of the crimes against children which concern us at ECPAT are crimes committed across borders. The strength of the Protocol is that it will force countries to have a common understanding and follow common guidelines.

New Zealand was one of the first to sign the Protocol back in September 2000 but signing a protocol is just a formality. It doesn't mean anything until a country ratifies the protocol and makes it a part of the country's laws.

With our concern for children you would think that New Zealand would have been one of the first signatories but so far we have failed to ratify the Protocol although more than 60 other countries have done so. One of our goals this year will be to put pressure on our government to ratify the Protocol and show that we are serious in finding ways to protect our children.

A new Electronic Newsletter

ECPATNZ is planning to send out a regular e-bulletin with information to our friends and supporters.

This will keep you up to date with info about ECPAT plus the latest news from New Zealand and around the world on child prostitution, child trafficking and child sex abusers.

If you would like to receive this monthly news or know of others who would like to be on the list just send email address(es) to office@ecpat.org.nz

A Message from the Director

The year started well for ECPAT with a business plan and budget prepared for 2009 through to 2012.

But one of the realities affecting our plans is the impact of the economic downturn. Like most organisations ECPAT has been forced to reconsider the resources available during this difficult time. Some grants have already been reduced and there are others that will not be available to us. One of the major grant organizations – the ASB Community Trust – was in the *Auckland Herald* headlines recently after announcing a loss of some \$200 million. This will affect the charities being funded by them.

However the issues of sexual exploitation of children will not become less. ECPAT believes that the economic situation will increase the risk of sexual exploitation of children. We are already aware of some cases where children (under 18 years of age) are turning to prostitution to earn money or to receive shelter or food. If unemployment increases significantly and the level of income drops for families that are already hard pressed financially it is almost inevitable that more children will be vulnerable and at risk. Poverty is not the cause of child sexual exploitation but experience has shown that poverty does increase vulnerability.

We remain optimistic that we will continue to be an effective voice for children and their freedom from sexual exploitation. The economic downturn brings challenges but it is also an opportunity to seek innovative ways of achieving our goals to protect the innocence of children.

To reduce mailing costs we hope to communicate electronically for those who would like to receive our news via e-mail.

Read about it in this newsletter and let us know if you would prefer e-newsletters in future.

Meanwhile we thank all those individuals who make financial contributions to our work. Your support is deeply appreciated

Alan Bell

Director ECPAT NZ



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