

Media Release

30 July, 2010

Campaign highlights prevalence of child sexual exploitation in New Zealand



You may have assumed that New Zealanders are not offenders in the child sex trade, but looking at our sexual abuse statistics*, 40% of sex crimes in New Zealand have been committed against children 11 years and younger.

This week, The Body Shop and ECPAT Child Alert have launched the second stage of a three year global campaign to "stop the sexual exploitation of children and young people in New Zealand and around the world."

The focus of The Body Shop/ ECPAT Child Alert campaign is to bring to the attention of New Zealanders the need for everyone to join in the fight against the sexual exploitation of children.

At the completion of a global survey conducted by The Body Shop / ECPAT partnership, countries were ranked according to their performance in actively preventing the sexual exploitation of children. New Zealand is among 56% of countries that have made "some progress," but we fall short of demonstrating "notable progress." The Report draws attention to several factors that need urgent action by New Zealand to match countries such as Taiwan, Denmark and the United Kingdom.

Concerned citizens are asked to visit The Body Shop stories throughout the two week campaign to add their voice to the petition that has gained 200,000 signatures globally in just four days.

Human trafficking is the third largest illegal industry in terms of income (third only to arms and drugs) and is the fastest growing criminal industry worldwide. It is estimated that 1.8 million children and young people are already exploited by the global sex trade while this figure is likely to be much higher due to the underground dealings of the traffickers. It is estimated that feeds the illegal child pornography sites that up to 50,000 clicks from New Zealand computers each day.

ECPAT International is a global network working in 74 countries worldwide to combat the sexual exploitation of children. To assist in this objective and as part of this campaign, The Body Shop has launched a "Soft Hands, Kind Heart" Hand-Cream with 100% of the profits being donated to ECPAT Child ALERT.

"We believe in a world where children can enjoy their fundamental rights free and safe from all forms of sexual exploitation," says ECPAT Child Alert director, Alan Bell. "Few people know the extent of the problem here at home and this leaves our children at risk of more abuse."

Protect our children's innocence and take action today.

Ends.

Photo opportunity: As per last year's photograph (attached), children will be engaged to help with The Body Shop campaign throughout the country. Please contact us if you would like to schedule a photo opportunity time.

For further information, launch photos, and interviews please contact:

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*Govt Statistics 2006, ** (UNICEF UK 2003) ***UNFPA 2006; ****UNGIFT 2008; *****UNICEF UK 2003

