



ECPAT International Media Release  
For immediate release

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

**Latin American and Caribbean governments meet in preparation for World Congress III against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents**

**28 August 2008**

**Buenos Aires, Argentina** - The Regional Preparatory Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 20- 21 August 2008, bringing together 240 participants from the region's governments, NGOs and other institutions. The event was co-organized by ECPAT International, the Human Rights Secretariat of the Government of Argentina, Save the Children, ILO-IPEC and UNICEF. The objective of the meeting was to create a regional platform for exchanges on the priority themes for the region, as well as to contribute to the World Congress III.

The proposals that emerged from the two days of discussions will be presented at the World Congress III, and include:

Dimensions of Sexual Exploitation of Children

It is necessary to include gender and new masculinity perspectives in addressing this issue, especially in educational and communications policies. Income substitution policies for families were identified as a key measure for eliminating sexual exploitation of children as a survival strategy. Another crucial point is the need to move quickly to detect potential victims and uphold their right to protection. Training in new internet technologies to detect and address criminal activity was also identified as an important way to tackle sexual exploitation related to the use of the internet.

Private Sector Efforts & Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility, especially in the travel and tourism industry, was identified as a means of preventing the sexual exploitation of children. This would include employee training on responsible and sustainable tourism, which includes not only environmental issues, but children and adolescents' rights. Increasing the regulation and control of technology access and use, especially at internet cafés and through public telephones, were also identified as a means to address sexual exploitation of children.

Challenges and Limitations in the Application and Enforcement of Legal Frameworks

One of the main challenges to law enforcement are cultural practices that result in the acceptance of sexual exploitation. National laws and regulations that protect the rights of children and prevent re-victimization and the penalization of children and adolescents must be enforced. Statistical data on crimes related to sexual exploitation of children must be collected in order to accurately inform public policies. Other proposals included the effective implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as it pertains to child prostitution and child pornography, and the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking, with an emphasis on protecting women and children.

Inter-Sectoral strategies & Integral systems for the protection and guarantee of rights

The implementation of National Plans for the elimination of sexual exploitation of children in each country is crucial to building protection systems. Thus, these plans must be cohesive, sustainable and part of State policy, and be allocated sufficient resources. In addition, local law enforcement



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should be strengthened by training relevant government officials and community leaders. Police report mechanisms should be created. Relevant officials in the judiciary system should also be trained on sexual exploitation issues. The creation of specialised shelters for victims of sexual exploitation was also suggested.

### Regional Cooperation

Promoting international cooperation and strengthening the parliamentary powers in the countries of the region and the MERCOSUR sub-region were discussed at the meeting. This included the enhancement of communication flows for sub-regional cooperation planning strategies and sharing successful experiences and good practices. In terms of regional cooperation, domestic protection systems coordination is needed. Regulations on new technologies also need to be addressed. Deportation agreements and regulations need to be reviewed in order to better protect the rights of children and adolescents.

Another relevant highlight was the presence of young people at the Preparatory Meeting. Apart from participating in the general discussions, they presented proposals for tackling the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in the region. One of their main suggestions was the creation of a Media Code of Conduct. A key conclusion of the regional meeting was that the role of children and young people needs to be promoted through the creation of mechanisms for their participation in order to consider their views in public policy planning as well as in conferences and forums.

Prior to the Preparatory Meeting, other related key events took place. On 19 August, a sub-regional meeting for the discussion of regional cooperation strategies against the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents for MERCOSUR country members and country associates took place. On the same day, young people from different countries of the region, who are collaborating in projects developed by ECPAT International's Network and Save the Children Sweden's partner organisations, met to discuss their messages for the Preparatory Meeting. Simultaneously, the National Tourism Secretariat of Argentina organized the first Regional Encounter for the Protection of Children's Rights in Tourism, in which they launched the Code of Conduct and encouraged the tourism sector to join. Argentina is amongst the first countries in the region to promote the adoption of The Code.

### **For further information:**

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### **Notes to editors:**

- ECPAT International is a global network of organisations and individuals working together for the elimination of child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. It seeks to encourage the world community to ensure that children everywhere enjoy their fundamental rights free and secure from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation. For more information, see [www.ecpat.net](http://www.ecpat.net)