



Secretaria-Executiva

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World Congress Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents Comes to a Close in Brazil

Nations leave with blueprint for action in the fight to protect the world's children

28 November 2008, Rio de Janeiro – The sexual exploitation of children is not inevitable. That was the message coming out of Rio de Janeiro today where 137 governments have been meeting with children, international organizations, NGOs and private sector companies.

While those gathered in Brazil recognize that ending child sexual exploitation is a long and difficult battle, the organizing partners say countries are in a better position now to win the fight as a result of days of work developing a blueprint for action called the *Rio Declaration and Action Plan to Prevent and Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents*.

“The Rio Action Plan contains important advances in relation to previous documents and points out new strategies to counter new forms of sexual exploitation, such as pornography in the Internet, child trafficking, growing migration around the world. The Brazilian government itself has launched a hot line to help solve crimes in the internet, that have also become more easily punishable with the law sanction by president Lula in the opening of the world congress” said Carmen Oliveira, Brazil’s Undersecretary for Promotion of Children’s Rights. “The responsibility assumed by private initiative and international organizations in Rio to channel resources so that poorer countries may develop action plans to live up to the commitment of the Rio plan is also a very meaningful result from this meeting.”

On prevention, the Rio Action Plan stresses that a comprehensive strategy is needed, which comprises the set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed from across all social sectors — especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice — to support prevention and respond to risks.

But effective prevention will also require a shift in social attitudes and practices that condone sexual exploitation of children, such as child marriage.

“There is no single intervention that protects children from sexual exploitation,” said Nils Kastberg, UNICEF Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. “Building and strengthening child protection systems is critical and requires action from all actors to provide children with the protection they deserve.”

The Rio Action Plan also calls on governments to enact laws that protect all children in their jurisdiction, including undocumented migrants or those who have been trafficked so that every child is provided protection under the law. Governments are also asked to pass laws that do not criminalize children for crimes they have committed as a result of their sexual exploitation.





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“Despite advances such as improvements in national legal frameworks in a large number of countries, increased initiatives to combat trafficking of children across borders and more engagement of agencies at all levels in preventing and addressing these crimes, many children remain vulnerable to sexual exploitation,” said Carmen Madrinan, Executive Director of ECPAT International, “This is due to a lack of knowledge on the prevalence of sexual exploitation of children, social tolerance and legal impunity, limited and inconsistent application of laws that leave doors open for perpetrators to shop for sex with children across the globe, and the failure to provide assistance for recovery and reintegration to child victims that heightens vulnerability to re-entrapment. ”

Unlike previous World Congresses, where the recommendations of young participants were prepared separately, in Rio the young people participated fully in the drafting of the Rio Action Plan.

“Children and adolescents are not just victims of sexual exploitation but are also part of the solution”, said Mr. Lennart Reinius, President of the NGO Group for the Convention for the Rights of the Child. “We had a unique opportunity to have young people as equal partners in this Congress. Now it is up to all of us to ensure that we live up to the commitments we have made in order to achieve a positive, tangible impact on the lives of children and adolescents around the world.”

Main recommendations resulting from the WCIII are:

Governments to provide country-specific information of their National Action Plans to the CRC (Committee to the Rights of the Child). A progress report will go to the UN General Assembly at next year’s Session.

Establish independent children’s rights institutions, such as an ombudsman, focal point, or commissions for children’s rights at the national level, in the next 5 years.

The development of reliable national databases of SEC-related (sexual exploitation of children). information by 2009. By 2013 establish regional mechanisms to exchange SEC-related information.

By 2013, set up a national system for reporting and follow-up of incidences of SEC. This will capture both mandatory reporting by statutory bodies, information from helplines, children and young people’s care institutions and justice systems. This will provide a channel of direct reporting for all children.

Calling on abolition of double criminality (where perpetrators cannot be tried unless there are relevant laws in both their home country and the country where the crime was committed) in cases of SEC.

Countries to commit to working more closely with Interpol on child abuse imagery database and establish a special children’s desk for crimes against children.





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Developing policies to stimulate and support the corporate sector, especially those in tourism/travel, financial institutions, internet-related, and advertising/entertainment to adopt codes of conduct.

Strengthen and harmonise the various types of child protection services.

Call on international cooperation bodies (intl development agencies) such as major financial institutions, including those that direct policy on financial allocation, to assess their policies that impact children to ensure that their allocations support the implementation of their agreements.

To introduce laws that criminalize the purchase (or any form of remuneration) for sex with a child.

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