



ECPAT-USA NEWS

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography, and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes

WORLD CONGRESS III AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

The sexual exploitation of children is not inevitable. That was the message coming out of Rio de Janeiro on November 28, when 137 governments met with children, international organizations, NGOs and private companies at the World Congress III Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. While those gathered in Brazil recognize that ending child sexual exploitation is a long and difficult battle, the organizing partners of the World Congress say countries are in a better position now to win the fight after countries worked to develop a blueprint for action called the Rio Declaration and Action Plan to Prevent and Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. The World Congress was sponsored by ECPAT International, UNICEF, the NGO Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and it was hosted by the government of Brazil.

U.S. Participation

The World Congress was attended by 3,500 people, including 137 government delegations, the First Ladies of 7 countries, 260 journalists and more than 300 children from around the world, including one youth from the United States. Workshops, dialogues and forums were held about the vast expanse of issues related to sexual exploitation of children.

The United States government sent a 21-person delegation, including representatives of the Departments of Justice, State, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, FBI, Agency for International Development and senior staff members of Congress. Among the NGOs represented, along with ECPAT-USA, were the National and International Centers on Missing and Exploited Children, Kristi House in Florida, the Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition and Minga. Also in attendance were Shared Hope International, ECPAT-USA's partner in co-sponsoring the Canada-US Consultation in Preparation for the World Congress, and Johns Hopkins University's Protection Project, a cosponsor of the Mid Term Review of the Second World Congress.

To read the Report of the Canada-US Consultation in Preparation for World Congress III Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, see:

http://www.ecpat-usa.org/pdfs/canada_us_consult_report%20FINAL2.pdf.

To read the Report of the U.S. Mid-Term Review of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, see:

<http://www.ecpat-usa.org/pdfs/FinalReportfromtheUSMidTermReviewwithcoverart.pdf>

What We Did in Rio

I) Plenary sessions. President Luiz Inacio da Silva of Brazil and Queen Silvia of Sweden were the luminaries who kicked off the opening session at the World Congress. Others on the main panel at the opening session were Anne Veneman, executive director of UNICEF and Amihan Abueva, chairperson of ECPAT International. Over the next three days, plenary sessions were held on each of the five main themes of the World Congress: a) Forms of Sexual Exploitation and its New Scenarios; b) Legal Framework and Liability; c) Integrated Inter-Agency Policies; d) Initiatives of Social Responsibility; and e) Strategies for International Cooperation.



II) Youth activities. With 300 young people under the age of 18 and as many as 100 adolescents, youths were represented at all events. Every plenary session heard a presentation by at least one youth representative. There were numerous youth-only workshops too.

TO STOP CHILD TRAFFICKING: A CANADA-USA STRATEGY TO PROTECT ITS VICTIMS

SPONSORED BY ECPAT-USA, SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL AND
BEYOND BORDERS

"Police officers are really in a bind in most cities. Girls as young as 12 years old are rescued from their pimps, but there are so few places to bring them. They end up in jail, with a criminal record. This has to stop," says Carol Smolenski.

Organizations and government representatives from across North America came together in October to discuss an agenda for protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation. The Canada-US Consultation was held to prepare for World Congress III.

The Consultation was hosted by Shared Hope International in Washington, DC. It brought together 60 of the top experts in both countries, including U.S. government representatives and the Canadian government-appointed Ombudsman for Victims of Crime on how to strategize to confront the growing problem of child trafficking. The Consultation Report lists many of the important steps that have already been taken in both Canada and the U.S., notably the passage of strong laws in both countries. But there are many gaps as well. "In Canada, the lack of enforcement of the law against child sex tourism is the most glaring law enforcement gap," states the Report. "While child trafficking is beginning to be recognized in Canada with several recent prosecutions, there remains significant room for further enforcement action against traffickers and commercial child sex abusers."

In the U.S., sexually exploited children are too often arrested instead of offered assistance and protection because there are so few shelters equipped to care for their special needs. "Police officers are really in a bind in most cities. Girls as young as 12 years old are rescued from their pimps, but there are so few places to bring them. They end up in jail, with a criminal record. This has to stop," says Carol Smolenski, executive Director of ECPAT-USA.

The full report is available on the ECPAT-USA website at www.ecpatusa.org.

...World Congress III Continued

III) Workshops and Dialogues. Up to 18 workshops were held on each of the themes with experts in a wide range of fields presenting the latest information. Dialogue sessions were held to encourage discussion among those of a common profession or sector, including the travel and tourism industry, religious communities and leaders, members of police forces and many others.

- ECPAT-USA's health advisor Brian Willis spoke about the health impact of commercial sexual exploitation of children, with an emphasis on prevention as key.
- Augusto Sosa, from Playa del Carmen, Mexico, a partner in ECPAT-USA's Protect Children in Tourism Project, took the floor a few times at the plenary sessions to question the authorities about why the gaps still exist despite years of good declarations and plans.
- Roz Prober from ECPAT's Canadian partner, Beyond Borders, spoke at a panel about Sexual Exploitation and its Relationship with Race and Ethnicity about the protection needs of aboriginal children in Canada.

IV) The Outcome Document. An important result of the World Congress is a strong statement condemning the commercial sexual exploitation of children, agreed to by all the governments who attended. The Outcome Document incorporates the recommendations and discussions from the reports of all the meetings held in preparation for the World Congress. Three sections of the Outcome Document were decided by the end of the Congress, the Preamble, the Review of Progress and Outstanding Challenges, and the Declaration. A fourth section, the Plan of Action, is open to input from all participants for 30 more days.

To read the agreed upon sections of the Outcome Document see:

http://www.iiicongressomundial.net/index.php?pg=docs&inicial=2&id_pg=79&sid=3a2ee5aac594de154131c93eec0d4951&id_sistema=2&id_idioma=2

For more information see:

<http://www.ecpat.net/WorldCongressIII/index.php>



ECPAT-USA BRIEFS CONGRESS ABOUT IMPROVING U.S. POLICY TO PROTECT CHILDREN

In July, ECPAT-USA briefed staff members of the U.S. Senate and House about policies to protect children from sexual exploitation. Despite U.S. participation in international gatherings and good progress, especially in passage of laws and law enforcement, Congress has yet to take certain fundamental steps to match generally accepted international standards for protecting a child's right to grow up free from sexual exploitation. ECPAT-USA invited Julianne Duncan of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Prof. Jonathan Todres of Georgia State University, and Howard Davidson of the ABA Center on Children and the Law to participate. More than 50 people attended.

Key Policy Recommendations:

- The federal government should develop and implement a National Plan of Action against commercial sexual exploitation of children to streamline use of resources; improve coordination among the federal, state and local agencies; and ensure comprehensive data collection.
- Children are frequently arrested and detained for being sexually exploited; they are often treated as criminals rather than as victims because most states still criminalize all participants in prostitution. The federal government should provide leadership to the states for incentives for better protecting children.
- Children should not have to convince federal law enforcement officials that they are being trafficked nor should they be forced to live in insecure situations while someone intervenes on their behalf. For international unaccompanied child-trafficking victims, the government should re-examine the referral mechanisms to make it easier for trafficked children to receive timely services.
- For American children, the federal government should help reform child welfare, juvenile justice and homeless and runaway youth service systems to consider the child's victim status in designing and implementing their services rather than focusing on the crime of participating in the sex trade. These systems should include training to help practitioners better understand the particular trauma that a child-trafficking victim suffers.

US Signatories of the

Code of Conduct :

- *American Society of Travel Agents*
(www.asta.org)
- *Carlson Companies*
(www.carlson.com)
- *ELA Brazil*
(www.elabrasil.com)
- *Amazon Tours*
(www.amazonontours.com)

AMAZON TOURS SIGNS THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

On September 15 in New York City, Amazon Tours signed the ECPAT *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism* in the presence of the U.S. State Department and the Brazil Mission to the U.N. In signing the Code, Phil Marsteller, president and CEO of Amazon Tours, took a stand against child sex tourism and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The son of missionaries, Marsteller grew up in the jungles of Northern Brazil. After founding Amazon Tours, he was appalled to see other fishing tour operators take tourists to indigenous reservations where they could "have their pick" of young indigenous girls as young as 12 years old. "I want to fight this cancer that is ruining not only my industry, but the lives of those living in the land I love," he says.

ECPAT-USA is delighted that Amazon Tours is taking a stand. It is especially important for American companies to get involved because 25 percent of perpetrators of child sex tourism are American.

Amazon Tours is a Texas-based company that owns and operates fishing destinations with luxury accommodations in the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil. It boasts more than 8,000 satisfied clients and seven International Game Fishing Association world records. (www.amazonontours.com)

More than 900 companies around the world have signed the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation In Travel and Tourism (www.thecode.org), but very few in the United States have done so.



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We're on the Web!
www.ecpatusa.org

Save the Date!

Children Studies Center
Brooklyn College/CUNY

Third Child Policy Forum
of New York

Implementation and monitoring of the optional protocol to the U.N. Convention of the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Day: Friday
Date: February 6, 2009
Time: 1:00-5:00 PM
Place: Church Center for the U.N., Room 212, 777 UN Plaza, New York City

TAKE ACTION!

There are many ways you can join the fight to END Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking of Children.

ACT

- 1) Get Knowledgeable. Read up about the issues on our website. If you are not on our mailing list, send a message to ecpat@ecpatusa.org asking to be listed.
- 2) Talk to Someone. One reason that child sexual exploitation persists is due to the difficulty that many people have in acknowledging and talking about the scope and characteristics of the problem. But talking about it is the first step toward ending it. Tell one person you know about what you have learned about sexual exploitation and how it profoundly impacts children.
- 3) Mentor a Child. Children who are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation are often from families where abuse and neglect has taken place. Get involved by volunteering at a program to offer a helping hand to a young person without stable adult relationships.

See our website at www.ecpatusa.org for more ideas.

Join the ECPAT-USA Facebook Cause. See our website to log on.

*** To report suspected cases of child sex tourism, go to:

www.cybertipline.com

or let us know at ECPAT-USA***

Help us continue our important work. You can donate through Network for Good on our website <http://ecpatusa.org/donations.asp>

or

By sending a check made out to "ECPAT-USA"
157 Montague St., Brooklyn, NY 11201

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Enclosed \$25_____ \$50_____ \$100_____ Other_____

All contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

ECPAT-USA depends on individuals like you to keep our campaign strong. Thanks!