



**FINAL REPORT, DECLARATION AND ACTION PLAN**

Sexual abuse of children, child pornography and  
paedophilia on the internet : an international challenge

UNESCO, Paris, 18-19 January 1999



**protecting  
children  
on line**

States parties undertake to protect the child from  
all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Article 34 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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*SPECIAL GUESTS*  
*of honour*

*Her Royal Majesty the Crown Princess of Luxembourg*  
*Maria Teresa*



*Mr Jacques Danois,*  
Director-General World Association of the Friends of Children (AMADE), Monaco  
and representative of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Hanover



*Ms Marianna Vardinoyannis*  
Founder and Director of the Foundation for Children and the Family, Athens



*Ms Homayra Sellier*  
Founder and Director of the White Lotus Foundation, Geneva



*Ms Marie-Paul Poilpot*  
Director of the Foundation for Children, Paris



*Ms Carole Bouquet*  
Spokesperson of the Association Voix de l'Enfant, Paris





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## PREFACE

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The Internet, as well as all future forms of electronic, global dissemination of information and knowledge are indisputably powerful media, instantaneous and interactive. They offer the means for education, culture and self-improvement. They can uplift individuals, they can empower whole societies, they can become hubs of business and profitable human enterprise.

Like any other communication technology, the Internet is only a means, a carrier. Despite its creative advantages, the Internet can also wreak havoc on the lives of our young children. It can expose them to illegal images of child pornography, it can provide the entire transactional basis for lucrative traffic in pornography. Repeated and relentless exposure to paedophile writings, essays and images could mislead children and the general public into thinking that there is nothing wrong with free sex for children of any age, that there is nothing illegal or harmful with the sexual abuse of children or in displaying such acts through pornography or paedophile websites on the Internet. Many paedophile sites aim precisely at proving that their deviant behaviour is 'normal' or 'acceptable' by the very fact that they and their writings are openly and prominently displayed on the Internet.

The convening of the UNESCO expert's meeting on the Sexual Abuse of Children,

Child Pornography and Paedophilia on the Internet was occasioned by reports on Operation Cathedral. This police operation led by Interpol and simultaneously launched in six countries on the night of 2 September 1998 demonstrated how widely spread paedophile networks were and gave an estimation of their traffic in illegal images, one source holding 48 gigabytes, another over half a million illegal images. A non-governmental organization in the USA claims there are at least 21,000 paedophile sites accessible under various names, some of them innocent and even attractive, like 'free spirits' or 'boy lovers.' But even one paedophile site is enough to corrupt children. Despite the driving factor of consumerism, the Internet should not become a means of 'consuming' children.

In calling the Expert's Meeting on 18-19 January 1999 at its Headquarters in Paris, UNESCO sought to provide the venue for an overall assessment of what has been achieved by UN specialized agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations, foundations, police and judiciary forces, psychologists and the media. It was deemed necessary to appreciate the role and contribution of all actors in the fight against child pornography and paedophilia on the Internet: the communication industry, schools, the family and parliaments. Participants sought to enlist the resources that could be counted on and to describe the work that still needed



expertise and financing. Stock was taken of information provided in existing reports and websites maintained by groups defending children's rights, and of the achievements already made by NGOs since the 1996 Stockholm World Conference on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and the 1997 Experts meeting on Child Pornography on the Internet in Lyons.

It was gratifying to note how the International Labour Organization and the World Tourism Organization, The European Commission and the Council of Europe in cooperation with several NGOs had all been struggling to protect children from sex-trafficking and sale, from various forms of prostitution and sex tourism, and from the production of pornographic material; several have also been working towards strengthening existing international instruments in this domain, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. But, it was clearly confirmed, making the Internet safe for children was not a question of censorship.

The fact that crimes committed on the Internet are not restricted by national borders makes many national and conventional laws on child abuse and child pornography either weak or obsolete. Most national legislation on child pornography is based mainly if not exclusively on print as the medium, with an actual child as a model. Most laws have not yet dealt with digitally generated images, morphing, and the mere possession of illegal pornographic materials

using any audiovisual support. Law enforcement often is also handicapped, as few judiciary and police services throughout the world are technically as well equipped as the pornographers and cybercriminals.

Nor has there been sufficient focus on and resources for improving the social context in which these crimes occur: exclusion, social injustice, poverty and a lack of respect and inadequate protection for the child's rights. It is perhaps necessary to broaden one's vision and seek solutions based not on a culture of imposition, force and the superfluous, but on a culture of peace, respect for human rights, democracy and ethical behaviour. To conquer the macroproblems of poverty and exclusion, conditions under which the sexual exploitation of children in any form thrives, major political decisions must be taken at the highest governmental levels and the proportionate level of financing must be allocated. Charity and humanitarian measures alone will not solve these problems. New resources must be imagined, new levels of energy must be released.

The Experts' meeting drew attention to the growth and complexity of the problems of sexual abuse of children, child pornography and paedophilia on the Internet and the need of a global offensive on all fronts – civil society, legal experts and industry. As a new watershed has been reached in this battle, it is realized that we all now need transnational tools and a more articulated flow-across and flow-down international co-operation; we need to ensure cross-border agreements for extradition and extra-



territoriality; co-operation in enforcing laws has to be more effective; key research and particularly quantification and qualification of the problems has to be shared and made easily accessible by the public; children, but also parents and teachers, need to have access to helplines and hotlines. Self-regulation by Internet service providers needs more muscle.

The plight of the paedophile himself was raised by the UN Special Rapporteur and a few NGOs and individuals, for as long as paedophilia itself is not resolved, the sexual abuse of children and child pornography will not end. While this issue was not discussed in depth, it is perhaps worth raising in a future colloquium.

The main concern of UNESCO are the young children of today. Children who are at the very crossroads of life where education and culture, tolerance and peace should beckon them to create their place in society, and not let them succumb to the traffic of prostitution and other forms of sexual abuse. These are the children who should be in the schools that UNESCO and its Member States seek to assist and for which the Organization seeks to provide the latest resources and techniques in education, science and culture. The minds of children are the seeding grounds for the peace of the next generation. Who destroys children, destroys the future of society.

While seeking to protect children from the dangers of the Internet, it is also important to distinguish and punish the real criminals, and not destroy the tools, the new communi-

cation and information technologies, the creative environment which offers the means of transferring culture and education, as well as, unfortunately, child pornography and paedophilia. UNESCO has an ethical mandate to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image, a wider and better-balanced dissemination of information at international as well as national levels without any obstacle to the freedom of expression. The only way to cure the ills of freedom is to ensure more freedom, and the only way to cure the ills of democracy is to have more democracy.

This report is the output of the more than 400 experts and specialists who participated in this meeting. It reflects the experiences and reflections of child protection advocates and specialists, some of whom have been dedicated to this work for over three decades. The overall achievement of this meeting is a Declaration and an Action Plan put forth by the participants in separate workshops and formulated into an ensemble by the Rapporteur. While many of the actions are addressed to UNESCO, the Action Plan proposes that all actors must take these vital steps together.

During the two day meeting, many spoke of the chains of silence surrounding the subject of sexual abuse of children, the silence of children, the silence of the perpetrators, the silence of the courts and of justice, the silence of psychologists and psychiatric counsellors. The Report of this meeting and the dissemination of its Declaration and Action Plan are seen as a first way of breaking these chains of silence.



UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION  
ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

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*Article 34*

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*Sexual exploitation*

*The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.*

“States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practises;
- (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.”



*T A B L E*  
*o f c o n t e n t s*

I.	<i>I</i> ntroduction	1
II.	<i>O</i> pening Ceremony	2
III.	<i>O</i> rganization of the Work	8
IV.	<i>F</i> irst Session: Sexual Abuse of Children and Paedophilia	8
V.	<i>S</i> econd Session: Child Pornography and Paedophilia on the Internet	13
VI.	<i>R</i> eport of the Working Groups	17
VII.	<i>A</i> doption of the Declaration and Plan of Action	22
VIII.	<i>C</i> losing Ceremony	23
	<i>D</i> eclaration and Plan of Action	25
	<i>L</i> ist of Participants	29



# FINAL REPORT

EXPERT MEETING ON: SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN,  
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AND PAEDOPHILIA ON THE INTERNET:  
AN INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE  
UNESCO, PARIS, 18-19 JANUARY 1999

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## *INTRODUCTION*

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1 ..... Bearing in mind the demands from almost every quarter of the globe for action against violence and perversity committed upon children, the UNESCO Director-General proposed in 1998 to convene a meeting of non-governmental organizations, personalities, institutions and specialists involved in the fight against paedophilia, child pornography and child prostitution in the media and on the Internet, with the goal of formulating a common Plan of Action against these crimes. "The information highway conveys the best and the worst," he said in announcing this forum. "Child pornography and paedophilia are entrenched there: we must dislodge them. UNESCO works to uphold the free flow of ideas by word and image, and always defends freedom of expression. But we must not tolerate that paedophilia, child pornography and child prostitution pervert these roads of freedom." Thus, on 18-19 January 1999 UNESCO convened an expert's meeting at its Headquarters in Paris. Conscious of the growing threats to young children everywhere posed by paedophiles using the Internet for promoting their cause, the UNESCO Director-General urged the need for a global Plan of Action that would put together the resources of NGO's, researchers, the media, civic groups, child care and child protection experts, law enforcement units and act as a united force to combat pornography and paedophilia on the Internet.

2 ..... The meeting takes into account already existing means - such as reports and Web sites maintained by groups defending children and fighting against pornography and encourages these groups to work together within the framework of a well-structured network. The meeting follows the publication last year of the UNESCO Global Study on Media Violence and in the spirit of the Info-Ethics programme explores the ethical, legal and societal aspects of new information technologies. Its goal is to contribute to a global strategy for alerting opinion and action on the legal and political fronts against this scourge.

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## OPENING CEREMONY

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Present were over 200 child care and child protection specialists, 20 representatives of law enforcement agencies including Interpol and Scotland Yard, 40 representatives of Member States, 157 journalists, teachers, students, lawyers and clinical psychologists. In opening the meeting, the **UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor**, welcomed the participants saying that such broad participation of partners in government, NGOs, research, police investigation, media and child protection bore witness to the world-wide concern over the issues of child pornography and paedophilia on the Internet. He indicated that UNESCO has made its position clear on its commitment to promote freedom of expression world wide through its General Conference Resolutions. Its desire to combat paedophilia on the Internet is therefore motivated by its ethical mission within the United Nations system.

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In referring to UNESCO as the house of peace, tolerance and non-violence, he stressed that the sexual abuse of children through the electronic media calls for international action. The culturally and educational benefits and the services available on the Internet have been defiled by criminal enterprises that defy frontiers, crimes are committed in total liberty and without trace of identity or possibility of control. "Cybercrime challenges the traditional notions of national or state laws because it is borderless, has no frontiers. Today we need transnational tools and international co-operation". The Director-General said that humanitarian assistance could only be a temporary measure. What is needed, he stressed, was high-level political decision making and budgetary allocations from both the public and the private sector.

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Mr Mayor urged participants to refine further the following proposals already raised by some NGOs: mechanisms to ensure cross-border agreements for extradition and extra-territoriality; co-operation in enforcing laws against child abuse, child pornography and paedophilia; undertaking key research, especially in the quantification of the problem; publication of research and public information sensitization campaigns in particular through existing networks or by creating an



electronic watch tower; publication on the Internet of handbooks for children, young people, parents and teachers; and supporting the design of search engines for children, and interesting educational and cultural sites for children. Mr. Mayor ended by suggesting the creation of an international coalition of personalities, composed of leading citizens to support major actions against the misuse of the Internet and for the benefit of children. He hoped that these personalities would give greater resonance to the activities that will be recommended by the meeting. The Director-General then called upon Heads of UN Specialized Agencies and specially invited guests.

6

Taking the floor, Mr Michel Hansenne, Director General of the International Labour Organization welcomed UNESCO's initiative. He said that his organization is committed to continue its fight against all forms of exploitation of children, child labour, child prostitution as well as child pornography which he saw as an extension of child prostitution. He informed the meeting that his organization had undertaken measures to elaborate an international convention which will enable member states to protect children against systematic violation of their rights. Mr Hansenne underscored the fact that member states must have the political commitment to fight child labor and prostitution and he called upon the member states to ensure that all such initiatives would have the necessary financial support. He stressed the importance of the convention scheduled for adoption by the next International

Labour Conference which is "to bring states, in consultation with concerned organizations, to take immediate measures to protect children against the worst forms of labour. The future convention targets, amidst the worst forms of work, bonded labour, the sale and trafficking of children and the use of children for prostitution and for the production of pornographic material. The countries which will ratify this instrument - and I think they will be very numerous - will be obliged to ban such practices, to punish their perpetrators and eliminate in practice such behaviour."

Mr Francisco Frangialli, Executive Director of the World Tourism Organization, then addressed the meeting. Although the tourism industry has boosted economies of countries, he said, in some cases it has also promoted the evil known as sex tourism. In some instances this has resulted in child prostitution and pornography. Mr. Frangialli stated that his organization has been in the forefront in the fight against sex tourism since the late eighties. WTO has invited the collaboration of national tourism agencies as well as national and international law enforcers to fight child prostitution which is not the objective of the tourism industry but which unfortunately is tarnishing its image. Mr Frangialli cautioned that "Child exploitation must be fought in tourism but we must not confuse tourism with what is one of its main perversions." He expressed the hope that the meeting would strengthen the international commitment to fight paedophilia.

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Ms **Judith Karp**, Vice Chairperson of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child stated that the U.N. is committed to fight all forms of violation of children's rights. She went on to invite all member states that had not ratified the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child to do so, saying that international co-operation in the fight against all forms of perversity on the Internet would be meaningless without ratification by all states of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. She insisted on the traumatic effect of sexual degradation on the "psychological, physical and spiritual development of the child" and called for a holistic approach to the problem of child abuse and child pornography. In referring to the Working Group on Children and the Media, under the International Committee on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, she said that at their meeting in June 1997, the members had proposed 12 recommendations for action, including steps to monitor the Internet and provide for children's safety. She announced the holding of the next Workshop on Children and the Media in September 1999 in Oslo.

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The Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, **Mr Daniel Tarschys**, in his written message delivered by Mr Thomas Kattau stressed that "children's rights are human rights." Outlining the need for more international commitment to defend children from abuse, the Secretary-General stressed that "families cannot always provide children with the safety net they need." He reminded everyone that the World Congress of

Stockholm had invited participating states to establish national agendas and strategies by the year 2000. The Council of Europe is now working on a new convention on cybercrime, aimed at understanding better how to combat the use of new communication technology for crimes against children. The Council has also drawn up a full programme of action for children. In closing he pledged the co-operation of the Council of Europe together with other partners at this meeting.

UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, **Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess Maria Teresa** welcomed UNESCO's initiative. She said she spoke, not as the Grand Duchess of Luxemburg, but as the Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO and as mother of five children. She expressed her appreciation to the Director-General of the International Labour Organization for his reference to the situation of working children and how this factor has augmented child prostitution and child abuse. Poverty has driven many of these children to the streets to find work, it has driven many families to bear the indignities caused by the abuse of their children. "We must make a 'qualitative leap' for the protection of our children", she urged. She stated that the conference clearly showed the increasing international awareness of the problems of paedophilia on the Internet. She stated further that the problem was worldwide and that all countries should cooperate to ensure that paedophilia does not subvert the Internet for criminal ends. She went to say, however, that while deliberating on this issue the participants

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should not forget that poverty still afflicts the majority of the world children and in many cases could be the primary condition for sexual abuse of children.

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"Children must be protected from those who steal their childhood from them," declared French actress **Carole Bouquet**, spokesperson for the Federation of 51 child protection associations in some 60 countries, *La Voix De l'Enfant*. She insisted on the need for political will and argued that due to the lack of specialization in the field of child abuse, some prosecuting officers simply ignored cases which should have been pursued. Justice for some reasons prefers silence to revelation which raises scandal. In this sense, justice favours the aggressor instead of the victim. Ms Bouquet stated that her association is prepared to unite forces with UNESCO and all interested organizations to fight child abuse. "A society which disregards its children has no future," she concluded.

12

Reading a message on behalf of the **Her Royal Highness Princess Caroline of Hanover**, Mr Jacques Danois, Director-General of the World Association of the Friends of Children, stated that the problem of sexual exploitation of children in the era of the new technologies is an important challenge for the international community. He called upon all nations of the world to collaborate in the fight against this evil. He decried the fact that our civilization might seem to be surrendering to those who are committed to engage in paedophilia for fun or for money. He said the crucial word is responsibility. Society must accept that it is

responsible for the well being of its children. All laws which seek to punish crimes against children should be enforced without equivocation. International collaboration in the fight against paedophilia would make sense only if all countries were committed to law enforcement and were prepared to give their relevant enforcement agencies the necessary budgets for specialized equipment and training. It is a problem close to the heart of Princess Caroline, and especially to her mother, the late Princess Grace who founded the World Association of the Friends of Children in the 1960s and who raised the first cry of alarm over the audiovisual crimes committed against children. "It is sad to note," he read from her message, "that the drama of paedophilia and child prostitution show us that despite all the progress made by modern society, many children in this world are still victims of the folly of man. Using the Internet for crimes against children makes them twice victims, the first time when they are actually abused, the second time when this abuse is seen by thousands or millions, and forever on the screen. We should use new information technology to educate and protect children, not to give them over to degenerate crimes."

**Ms. Marie-Paule Poilpot**, Director of the Foundation for Children noted that in France more and more individuals are connected to the Internet, and that France Telecom has predicted that 90% of the homes would be connected to the Internet in the next 10 years, meaning that more and more French families would be exposed to the dangers of paedophilia on the Internet.

13



She went on to say that she was puzzled by the fact that in France there was a surprising silence on the question of paedophilia in general and on the Internet in particular. She noted that just like in any other country of the world, the problems of paedophilia also existed in France. It was therefore important that the whole world should unite to fight those who are prepared to destroy children and their future. She stated that children rely on actions of adults in order to be defended and therefore society cannot remain indifferent to the subject of paedophilia. She queried whether there was need of an international advisory body for the Internet.

14

Ms Homayra Sellier, Board Member of International Health Awareness Network (IHAN), Co-founder and Director of the White Lotus Foundation insisted on the need to end the silence that all too often surrounds the subject of child abuse. As human beings, we must decide to build a better world and once that decision has been taken, anything becomes possible. "We can serve humanity or destroy it," she said. "But whatever destroys our children also destroys us." She underscored the need to involve all mothers in the fight for children, and declared her intention to unite with other associations of mothers in other countries to give a hand to children.

Ms Marianna V. Vardinoyannis, President of the Foundation for the Child and the Family, Athens (Greece), said that the progress of technology has given us a valuable tool for civilization, leading us to a borderless world, where globalization is imposing on us a universal culture. At the same time, evil too, in all its forms and expressions, is instantly globalized. Thus, the rôle and intervention of UNESCO in international problems is opportune: it offers a chance to analyze this problem which stigmatizes this end of the century period; it can be decisive in the restoration of our society and the promotion of a new moral doctrine. We must protect the Internet as a symbol of a globalizing culture where respect for freedom of expression is in proportion to respect for human dignity. She stated her strong belief in the role of the new citizen, particularly mothers as the primary providers of instruction and awareness. She denounced the decline in moral values in contemporary societies and called for regional action involving Balkan and Mediterranean countries to fight the problem of child abuse and child pornography on the Internet. She proposed for this region, a major sensitization workshop.

Ms Ofelia Calcetas-Santos, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, opened her remarks by stating she had selected three major partners to assist in the work of reporting for the United Nations on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. These were the justice system, the media and education. Hence she welcomed the

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initiative of UNESCO. She was particularly alarmed by the abuses of committed against children on the Internet, as the images are cast to all regions of the world, and for all time. And behind every pornographic portrayal, she emphasized, was a child, under the legal age of 18, but often infants, months old, and 2, 3 and up to 11 years of age. She said that little has been accomplished so far in curbing the sexual abuse of children and urged participants to remember that “behind every pornographic image there is a child”. She denounced the brutal practices of pornographers who abuse children and said that international efforts to limit their crimes will fail unless they involve hardware manufacturers, software, service and content providers. In her presentation, Ms Ofelia Calcetas-Santos focused on some of the causes deserving international attention such as domestic violence, drug and gambling addiction, all harming seriously children’s psyches. She also recognized the difficulty of rehabilitating paedophiles, especially those whose behavior is compulsive in nature. She argued that a good number of the producers, senders and/or viewers of child pornography are paedophiles and that the Internet plays a major part in spreading child pornography and paedophile activity. While the value of the Internet as an educational tool is well established, the same technology poses one of the most serious threats in terms of production and dissemination of child pornographic materials.

Special surveys done by on-line administrators suggest that pornographic sites are among the most often visited on the Internet, although the percentage of such usage is not always easy to establish. She reminded that pornographers and other promoters of sexual exploitation are experts in the development of privacy schemes and methods of encryption. She warned that child pornography is also being used as a medium of exchange with other exploiters in public and private sex markets. Such developments in cyberspace have practically rendered existing legislation in child pornography obsolete. Among some of the serious difficulties in combating illegal and harmful content on the Internet are diverse cultural and moral standards; differing national laws on what constitutes pornography: on the definition of child; on the jurisdiction of cases, and on who is legally responsible for what is on the Internet.

Concluding, Ms Calcetas-Santos said that Disney and Time Warner have announced the establishment of “whitelisting services”, Internet inscription utilities that give access not to the whole of the Net, but only to the parts that have been approved. She also mentioned the Bill on Responsibility for Electronic Notice Boards in Sweden, the Dutch and Danish experiences of establishing a hotline for Child Pornography on Internet, the Australian Broadcasting Authority code of conduct established by private industry challenging the computer industry, including the software and hardware manufacturers, to assume their responsibility by establishing codes of conduct both for the service and the content providers.

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## ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK

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The Assistant Director-General then opened the working session explaining the need of having competent conference officers to lead the discussions. After consultation with several NGOs, the following were proposed: Judge Andrée Ruffo, President of the International Bureau of Children's Rights as President; Prof. Viti Muntarbhorn, former UN Special Rapporteur, lawyer and child protection advocate, as Moderator of Session I; Dr Verena Metze-Mangold, Vice-Chairperson of the German National Commission for UNESCO, researcher and media producer, as Moderator of Session II; Ms Muireann O'Brian, Director of ECPAT International in Bangkok, as Moderator of Working Group I; Mr Pierre Dionne, Director-General of the International Bureau of Children's Rights, as Moderator of Working Group II; Professor Jo Groebel, University of Utrecht, as Moderator of Working Group III; and Mr Aidan White, General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, as Rapporteur.

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### FIRST SESSION : *sexual abuse of Children and Paedophilia*

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#### Theme I:

*Family, social and economic context: origins, causes, prevention and care*

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The chairperson, **Judge Andrée Ruffo**, opened the first working session, under Theme I; the moderator, **Professor Viti Muntarbhorn**, called upon **Dr. Patrice Dunaigre**, French paedopsychiatrist, who dealt with five major issues: the paedophile act, paedophilic conducts and behaviours; the personality and the treatment of the paedophile and the types of links between a child and a paedophile. He emphasized that the incest taboo, as a psychological fact, gives rise to multiple discourses, codes and prohibitions including that of sexual relations between adults and prepubescent children. Hence two types of reality regarding incest co-exist within human beings: the external reality, which preserves the incest taboo as a law that cannot be transgressed and a psychological reality, where nothing is forbidden at the level of fantasies. He indicated that, although paedophilia has always existed, in fact, it has never been institutionalized or spoken about, i.e, it has never been considered admissible for the purpose of regulating relations between the social and the sexual spheres. He said that the tone often used in the media coverage of sexual abuse of children contributes to silencing and stereotyping and this reduces the child to an inconsequential, irresponsible creature, a mere object of power or desire instead of seeking the higher interest of the child. Dr Dunaigre argued that since the child usually will not talk, the media will assume the role of mouthpiece.



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Describing paedophile behaviours, the speaker emphasized that careful analysis of paedophilia scenarios provides useful information for prevention purposes. Knowing that the paedophile takes into account such factors as the presence or the absence of potential witnesses or denunciation by the child, reporting to the police, makes it possible to provide prevention officers with relatively reliable information on the strategies used by paedophiles. Knowledge of the personality of the paedophile, however, is still fragmentary. Numerous factors play a role in the personal constitution of the paedophile producing extremely contrasting clinical charts.

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In closing **Dr. Dunaigre** recommended that UNESCO lead the way in breaking the walls of silence around children, researchers, child protection agents, the media and the public. These walls serve as a haven in which paedophilia can find favourable conditions for self-perpetuation.

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Analyzing the social and economic origins and causes of sexual abuse of children in Brazil, **Ms Hélia Barbosa** indicated that forty million children and adolescents are not cared for or are left to fight for their survival in the suburbs of the big cities or in rural areas exchanging sexual favors for food and shelter. In extremely poor regions girls are sold sometimes by their own families to service big male conglomerations, such as at mines or building sites. Ill treatment and misery, physical and psychological trauma often happen in domestic employment. Drug addiction goes hand in hand with sexual exploitation. The threat of AIDS can also be blamed for the increasing search for younger and younger partners. All this contributes to the growth of sex commerce. Ms Barbosa stressed that child sexual exploitation is also strengthened by the lack of commitment from the State. In Brazil legislation is being interpreted in favor of the Internet service provider. So far no means

exist to punish sexual exploitation. All of this calls for a change of conscience by a great number of people, thus creating a culture of respect for the child and adolescents.

**Dr Philista Onyango**, Chairperson of the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), focused on the problem from a family and a community perspective. From an historical view, the findings of a study conducted in 1985 indicated that child labour was rampant countrywide; that domestic child workers were not only being physically abused, but in some cases also sexually molested. It showed that children working in domestic households often were reduced to mere slavery. Many parents considered that the only way out to fight poverty was to sacrifice their children's primary education, e.g. not even being able to afford school uniforms. It was also in 1985 that the first African conference on child abuse was organized in Nairobi at which some 16 countries were represented. A year later another meeting on all forms of child abuse was organized in Nigeria with even wider participation. The idea and the need to create an African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect was pressing. Another study undertaken in Kenya in 1991 revealed that 300,000 children of school age were not attending school. With so many children out of the education stream situations of exploitation and sexual abuse kept increasing. Dr Onyango emphasized that in order to accomplish its advocacy role, ANPPCAN was engaged in major studies and research activities on street children, violence against children, disability and child abuse, children and criminal justice and conflicts and children. ANPPCAN organized a series of sub-regional workshops to develop and tap community resources to protect the rights of children and educate the public on child labour.

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In her presentation, Ms Maureen Seneviratne, (Sri Lanka) made an historical review of the origins of the child sexual abuse problem and its correlation with the development of the government sponsored tourism, often leading to commercial sexual exploitation of children. She also said that the year 1980 is regarded as a watershed for the shattering of some preconceived notions that this same industry (tourism) could affect adversely the social culture of the country. The appearance of Tim Bond's report on sexual exploitation of children by paedophiles entering the country and some other similar reports provoked the setting up of a Review Committee to draft relevant legislation. The speaker revealed some of their research findings regarding the profile of the child victims and the trafficking of children from rural areas to tourist complexes.

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Exploring family background of sexually abused children showed that often families with low moral and social values can trigger normally unacceptable behavior and addiction to other vices which contribute directly or indirectly to children becoming easy prey. In this respect, preventive work and care are of primary importance. Concluding, Ms Seneviratne reiterated that laws alone are not sufficient to curb commercial sexual exploitation and abuse of children. It is not just a matter of crime and punishment. A lot of research, preventive and rehabilitation work is still to be done in cooperation with all members of society as well as seeking the support of governments to ensure and provide a caring web of protection for the children.

*Theme II:*

*Combating sexual abuse of children:  
role of civil society*

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Ms Murireann O Briain, Executive Director of ECPAT International, emphasized that the sexual abuse of children is in large measure the result of poverty and social exclusion. She dwelt at length on the nature and major

behaviour patterns of the child sex abuser. The persons who exploit children sexually do not constitute a homogeneous group in terms of how they operate, said Ms O Briain. She proposed actions to combat sexual exploitation of children, based on active monitoring of the Stockholm Agenda for Action and networking to enhance capacity for joint actions: promoting the use of extraterritorial legislation, facilitating training of social workers and law enforcement units, carrying out preventive and/or rehabilitation work among victims and organizing information campaigns to raise awareness among parents, teachers and children of the dangers on the Net, developing a globally co-ordinated response to the paedophile networks, were some of the actions proposed by ECPAT International to combat paedophilia and child pornography on the Internet.

Kimberley Svevo, Executive Director of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, indicated that one of the major obstacles in understanding the problem is the lack of substantiated data regarding the number of children reported for abuse. Definitions of abuse are not yet clear nor consistent within some countries, much less from country to country or region to region. The number of abused and neglected children is at risk level because of weak governmental commitment to remedy the problem of child abuse. Ms Svevo indicated that child abuse and neglect prevention are still a new field; approaches and methods of treatment remain controversial. She suggested coordinated efforts in collecting accurate information on national incidence of child-abuse world-wide, based on common definitions of abuse, developing guidelines and appropriate educational and training materials and related research as well as identifying "best practice models" to assist child abuse and neglect prevention professionals and policy makers world wide; monitoring and influencing legislation and

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development of policies affecting children. As important components of the preventive strategy, she indicated building awareness of the issues of child abuse and neglect within the public at large and with policy makers campaigns, generating a movement to establish a continuous training and education on child protection for professionals and the public (including children).

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**Alex Hermoso**, Director of the People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation (PREDA), Philippines, spoke of the economic and political factors contributing to sexual abuse and exploitation of children, he indicated that there are deep, vested political interests in commercializing human sexuality especially that of children. Child pornography is a massive industry in itself, that systematically promotes the abuse of children. This massive cover up has to be countered by public awareness campaigns to help understand the scope of the child sex trade and the rights of the child. Although PREDA's legal action against child abusers was often hampered by an organized syndicate suspected of making and distributing child pornography on the Internet, it was rewarded by getting the first major convictions of foreigners in the Philippines for sexual exploitation of children and for offering minors to foreign sex tourists. Over the years PREDA's preventive and rehabilitation work spread to rural areas and urban centers supporting a number of handicraft projects to develop new skills, provide training and economic assistance to young people victimized by the sex industry. PREDA established a dialogue with Internet service providers to monitor their servers and voluntarily undertake to provide proxy servers to schools and homes. They have also established cooperation with law enforcement agencies and other NGOs to track sex tours targeting minors advertised on the Internet.

**Aurela Pano**, of the Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania focused on the major activities of the Centre concerning the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Albanian legislation regarding children. Composed of a group of lawyers, journalists, writers and physicians, the Centre raises awareness of the situation of children's rights in Albania, monitors social, health and education rights of Albanian children, initiates and implements projects in favor of children's rights. The Centre has published a bulletin on the rights of children and youth, a national study on underage employment, a national study on the reasons for school dropouts, and a medical radio programme on abused children. Ms Pano spoke of incest, child prostitution and paedophilia as crimes being largely unreported in Albania and the lack of public awareness on the scope of these problems. Talking about the misuse of the Internet to disseminate illegal and harmful content, Ms Pano suggested that service providers allowing access to illegal sites should be prosecuted and servers who violate the law should have their operating licenses cancelled. She also suggested to have a central register of child pornography abusers to alert the service providers.

*Theme III:*

*Legal aspects, application of the law and detection of infractions, extradition*

**Pierre Dionne**, Director-General of the International Bureau of Children's Rights (Montreal, Canada) focused his presentation on the putting in place of national and international legal networks to combat the sexual exploitation of children. After highlighting the need for political will at the national level, he urged that bilateral extradition agreements be taken into account in adopting extraterritorial legislative measures. This would make it possible to prosecute sex tourists, other individuals or national bodies implicated

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abroad in sexual offences involving children. Various options could be used to meet this objective. However, only 8 of the 20 countries adopting this policy have prosecuted their nationals. In light of this, he asked for closer co-operation and co-ordination both at the national and international levels.

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**Agnès Fournier de Saint Maur**, representing Interpol, an organization comprising 177 member countries, focused on the legal aspects of the Internet and on possible solutions. With a view to encouraging collaboration among member countries, Interpol adopted a system of information exchange based on bi-annual meetings. The aim is to ensure that criminals cannot act with full impunity and are prevented from exploiting technological advances to their own ends believing themselves immune from prosecution. At present, this system has facilitated close collaboration among some thirty countries. However, despite the efficiency of this network, child pornography via the Internet has flourished. Indeed, the Internet is a major vehicle for the exchange and transmission of images. There has been a steady increase in the size of seizures with every search (numbers vary from 75,000 to 250,000 photos and in some cases reached even 500,000 photos). Further, photos of past victims of sexual abuse remain available permanently on the Internet, thus representing a lifelong source of trauma for these people who generally come from the poorest countries. To curb this alarming situation, Interpol proposes the following solutions:

- specialized training for those who take charge of sexually abused children and the personnel who track down the perpetrators;
- enactment of a battery of legislation against paedophiles;
- strengthening of existing laws;
- better handling of child victims;
- collaboration with the private sector.

**Gordon Fung**, Assistant Police Prefect of Hong Kong reported that the local legislation was independent of China's lawmaking. Significant progress has been made in the area of legislation pertaining to sworn statements by children to the courts, but much still remains to be done. Since December 1995, new legislation has made it possible for the Hong Kong police to set up five special regional investigative units on child abuse, in particular, on the mentally handicapped. Thanks to these measures, children are now treated better and their testimony taken into account. The use of video and the role of psychologists have played a major part in the advancement of cases. The choice of a more convivial atmosphere, away from police stations has made it easier to obtain the testimony of children. Close collaboration between social workers and the police was established through this new policy, making the task of educators easier. On the issue of pornographic material and sexual exploitation, Mr. Fung called for closer co-operation between States.

**Bruce Harris**, Executive Director of Casa Alianza, stressed that Internet surfing is increasing rapidly in Costa Rica and that paedophiles have made Latin America their new destination of choice. They take advantage of the new network-based communication technology to foster sex tourism exploiting children from the poorest countries and governments with the most lax systems in this area. Local legislation is not keeping pace with criminal behaviour. Further, gaps in the law in this field make it difficult for the police to track down perpetrators and bring them to justice.

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## SECOND SESSION : *Child Pornography and Paedophilia on the Internet*

### *Theme I:*

*Reconciling the promotion of the free flow of information and the goal of the international community to combat sexual exploitation of children, child pornography and paedophilia on the Internet*

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**Aidan White**, Secretary-General of the International Federation of Journalists, focused on the use of information via the Internet. He warned the authorities who want to remove harmful and illicit material from the Internet that care should be taken not to encroach on the fundamental freedom of communication. Although everyone agrees that communication of an illicit nature should be sanctioned by law, exactly how to tackle the problem remains an open question. It requires not only a commitment by governments but also adoption and implementation by the computer industry of codes and standards that make it possible to detect harmful material and facilitate the identification of offenders. Concrete technical solutions at affordable prices therefore need to be developed to help parents protect their children, teach them to use the Internet, and draw up a plan of action.

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**Elisabeth Auclaire**, Chairperson of the Commission on the Rights of the Child, League of Human Rights (France) noted that the new technologies should not be used as a scapegoat for our own shortcomings. Children must be taught “their rights” and to say no to adults who do not respect them. We must learn how to listen and be responsive to children. The incidence of abuse kept secret within families is still too high and cannot be blamed on the Internet. UNESCO has a role to play in the thinking on information content and modes of transmission, in the setting up of preventive education programmes and in encouraging countries that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to make the necessary adjustments to bring their internal legislation into compliance. Careful thought should precede any action. There is a need for a public health policy that takes account of the causes of child abuse. Research in this field is a must. With regard to information and education, the messages and means are still to be determined. Here, Ms. Auclaire suggests setting up a watch-tower on the handling of subjects dealing with families and sexual abuse.

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**Mark Hecht**, Assistant Director of Human Rights Internet (Canada) asserted that freedom of expression has its limits and that paedophilia is unacceptable. The question of who is most competent to ensure the effective application of standards is critical. Within the confines of their national borders, governments must put in place the necessary protective measures. Regional tools also need to be developed. In addition, Internet users, service providers and entrepreneurs should be educated on the seriousness of this problem. NGOs have an important role to play in this field.

*Theme II:*

*Individual freedom, the protection of private life and use of the Internet for illicit purposes; protecting young children who use the Internet – service providers, screening of unsolicited messages, search engines, self-classification of Web sites, surveillance and networking*

are sufficiently serious issues to warrant the adoption of pragmatism and co-operation as the two essential principles on which to build an appropriate response to the difficulties posed by the Internet without curtailing its advantages. As co-operation at the European level is not enough, Mr. Le Toquin appealed to UNESCO to broaden that co-operation.

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**Dr. Parry Aftab**, Executive Director of Cyberangels (USA) manages an association whose mission is to teach people to use the Net. The association operates patrols and special programmes run by 400 volunteers of all ages to detect illegal sites and images. At present, although approximately half of the children in the U.S. are online, on a worldwide basis, the situation is still manageable since only a small percentage of children have access to the Internet, but unless urgent measures are taken quickly, it will soon be beyond our control. Today, this constitutes a major international challenge that could be met successfully only through joint action on a broad scale. There is an urgent need to exchange information worldwide by creating co-operation networks.

The main points of the presentation by **David Kerr**, Deputy Director of the Internet Watch Foundation (UK) focused on facilitating self-regulation by parents and teachers of illegal and harmful programmes. The Foundation advocates the use of a screening system that leaves parents and children free to choose the profile of the Web sites of interest to them. Thus, the primary objective is find the most appropriate means of standardizing this method which has the advantage of respecting consumer freedom and choice. The speaker would like this type of approach to be adopted within the framework of a partnership on a worldwide scale between governments and private enterprise.

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**Jean-Christophe Le Toquin**, Permanent Delegate of the European Association of Internet Service Providers presented the Association des Fournisseurs d'Accès à des Services en ligne et à Internet (AFA) which was established in 1995 and brings together 10 European countries which work together with the public authorities. Since its creation, 6 European countries have adopted a code of conduct on illegal content, with every country responsible for taking the necessary steps to combat the scourge. The principal objective of the association is to alert national and international public authorities to the importance of the new space created by the Internet. The Association's spokesman stressed that the concept of what is legal or illegal may vary from country to country, and that the protection of children and of human dignity

**Nigel Williams**, Director of Childnet International (UK), said that this NGO focuses its efforts on the protection of children, with a new response on the Internet to counter illegal content and harmful contacts. Childnet also aims to assist the police in doing its job efficiently. The Director stressed the need to screen harmful sites and encouraged co-operation at all levels. In addition, hotlines or toll-free numbers could play a major role in:

- informing the police;
- helping the Internet community to eliminate pornography;
- sharing information and common procedures.

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The Movement Against Paedophilia on the Internet (MAPI), is a volunteer academic movement created in Belgium in 1996.

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Its representative, **Beatrice van Bastelaer**, stated that the hotline/toll-free numbers set up to combat child pornography and help its victims were quickly overwhelmed by the number of calls and, in particular, by inquiries beyond the scope of their competence. There is a real need for international co-ordination in collating available information. MAPI realized that people preferred to use a neutral intermediary rather than contact either their Internet service provider or the authorities directly. Given the success of their movement, MAPI is ready to share these experiences. It is calling for more targeted studies and greater sensitization in this field.

*Theme III:*

*Research, information, surveillance and public awareness*

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**Professor Jo Groebel**, Director of the Centre for Media Competence, University of Utrecht (Netherlands) noted that child pornography has been an issue since the invention of the media. However, the Internet offers easier, more anonymous access with no immediate threat of prosecution. He further noted that as only 5% of the world's children have access to the Internet there is no need to be overly anxious. Efforts should focus on the international aspects of the issue:

- How far-reaching is the problem worldwide?
- How do the various national legislations and policies deal with the problem?
- How far-reaching is the international circulation, what kinds of images of children are available as "commercial products" and what are the characteristics of this trade?
- Under what circumstances are children exposed to becoming victims of pornography?
- Are there any effective preventive measures, apart from legal proceedings, that could contribute to solving the problem ?

According to Prof Groebel, UNESCO will have a major role to play in devising international information and communication policies in this field as well as in the taking of vital educational measures targeted at schools and parents. UNESCO should also help raise international awareness of the problem in order to protect the children of the poorest countries who are usually the victims of child pornography.

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**Dr. Ulla Carlsson**, Director of the UNESCO International Centre for information exchange on children and violence on television at the University of Göteborg (Sweden) stated that the world's children are the most vulnerable to media globalization. Many people feel that there is a link between the increase in violence in our daily lives and the culture of violence on television, in video films, computer games and on the Internet. We might ask ourselves what role the presence and easy access to child pornography on the Internet plays in relation to the sexual exploitation and abuse of children in today's world? In fact, the problem is much more wide-ranging, deeper and more serious for it raises the possibility that child pornography involving small children on the Internet is a contributing factor in the entrenchment of sexual exploitation of minors. In this field, media research is but one of the many disciplines to tackle this problem.

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In her presentation, **Hélène Sackstein**, co-ordinator of a group of NGOs concerned with the exploitation of children, and the Focal Point for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, stressed the role of NGOs as action groups in the field. She also emphasized the need for partnership with the private sector to ensure strict application of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. She went on to speak of the gap between the reality encountered by NGOs in the field and the international mechanisms in

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place. Hence the experience of NGOs in implementing the UNCRC, particularly as it relates to child sexual abuse, is only an initial response to this problem and NGOs involved in this area need the support of specialized agencies and the international community to strengthen their work.

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**Carol Aloysius**, journalist and assistant editor of the Observer (Sri Lanka) pointed to the silence of the media in her country on this problem. She stressed the need for a public information and sensitization campaign aimed at both political leaders and the population. Sex tourism in her country is growing at an alarming rate because of underlying poverty and the Internet-based paedophile networks that promote this form of tourism in the face of the laxism of the competent authorities. This evil can only be contained through a clear political commitment and by educating parents and children. A toll-free number must be set up urgently.

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In the short open debate that followed, **Mr Ronnie Koven**, representing the World Press Freedom Committee, cautioned that one must not confuse roles especially concerning police work. Giving information to the police, also means giving power to the police. The meeting should seek to identify ways to protect children on the Internet which do not confuse net safety work with police work and which do not suppress freedom of expression.

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**Mr Richard Swetenham**, representing DG XIII of the European Commission, reminded the meeting of the Commission's Action Plan for Safety on the Net, including Euro hotlines, preparatory work on criteria and site classification, policy recommendations on minors and human dignity, and the Council of Europe's draft Convention on Cyberspace. As strong partnerships had already been

forged with many of the NGOs, he urged that prospective partners build on what has been started and carry it forth with renewed energy and resources.

**Mr Jim Reynolds**, retired Inspector from Scotland Yard and one of the pioneers in fighting paedophilia on the Internet underscored the importance of Internet service providers in managing their sites and ensuring in a spirit of self-regulation, that there are no sites with illegal contents. In saying this, he urged that the laws on paedophilia should apply also to violations that make use of the Internet. In concluding he encouraged all partners to work together, as cooperation is often more effective than police action.

**Ms Debbie Mahoney**, Founder of Safeguarding our Children - United Mothers, (SOC-UM, USA) recounted her personal experiences in combating paedophilia. In her work, she has reviewed some 8,000 paedophile sites. To fight this evil on the Internet, she urged that it is necessary to understand the mentality and objectives of paedophiles, how they behave, in order to prepare precautionary measures and safety valves for children using the net.

In closing this part of the meeting, the Chairperson referred to the three working groups that would meet the next day to propose elements for the Plan of Action. The Plenary would convene again at 16:00 on Tuesday, 19 January.

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# REPORTS

## OF THE WORKING GROUPS

### Working Group I:

*Social and economic preventive strategies, developing support systems and links between organizations concerned with child safety on the Internet*

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In reporting the discussions of Working Group I, the Moderator, Ms Muireann O'Brien reflected the concerns of many that the actions to be proposed should be based on, and move forward from, the 1996 Stockholm World Congress on the Sexual Exploitation of Children, which also dealt with pornography and paedophilia on the Internet. She urged that child care specialists make broad use of the wide net of NGOs already operating in this sphere. She expressed the belief of many that the sexual abuse of children on the net has its ultimate foundations in economic depravation, inequality and poverty -- problems that remain to be solved by states. The Working Group thus urged that the 200 Governments participating in that meeting take their rôle seriously following their agreement in Stockholm to draw up by the year 2000 their own national agenda for action.

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Several members of this Working Group pointed to the need of tackling more directly the problems of children falling prey to pornographic images or acts of paedophilia on the Internet and urged that those who have already gained experience in these problems share their knowledge and strategies with those just entering this technological phase. On the other hand, many others were still concerned about the 95 % of children who do not have access to the Internet, but who are the potential victims of pornographers and sexual predators before the camera. They further urged that if this problem is not solved in reality, it cannot be solved on the screen, as a matter of fact, the screen only shows that the crime has already been committed and is being replayed over and over again.

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Despite the number of major networks and websites, some smaller or more isolated organizations said they felt left out of the mainstream and were not aware of major actions undertaken in these fields and therefore felt unable to lend their support to or benefit from them. Several thus urged a network of networks which would not only provide links to these other organizations and websites, but which would also provide basic information on the problem and guidelines that parents, teachers, and social workers could make use of. There have already been successes in cooperation among some major NGOs, such as the Child Rights International Network (CRIN), End Child Exploitation through Asian Tourism (ECPAT), Childnet International, the Focal Point of NGOs concerned with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

(ISPCAN). The example was cited of Cyberangels in the U.S. that has 400 volunteer patrols combing the net daily for illegal materials. The Working Group thus urged further cooperation among these and other NGOs, and especially a three way coalition among the NGOs, the police forces and the ISPs. The electronic approach was also favoured by some organizations in developing countries who said that they were suffering from the spillover of western technology into their countries.

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Where UNESCO can give unique assistance is in using its education and communication programmes to integrate all the issues raised in this meeting to promote public awareness of the dangers to children from the net; to integrate awareness of net safety in school programmes; to address parents, educators and children on how to ensure safety on the net, by using, for example, net smart rules; to raise the awareness of communities about sexual exploitation of children, so they can learn how to protect their children; to increase general knowledge on the negative and long term effects of sexual abuse on children; to identify sexual abuse of children as an abuse of power, and thus target those who use that power -- the distributors and the users of pornography. Peer education should be involved in innovative ways, involving children and young people in the solutions to the problems which they face.

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A paedo-psychiatrist remarked that the paedophile is examined and given an image and the child is studied and described, but rarely is the relation between the two analyzed. The risk is that such a method will end up making a devil of the paedophile, and making the child more childish and helpless. Hence, some urged medical or psychiatric assistance for paedophiles,

emphasizing that prison cannot solve the long term social problem. It was also suggested that child care and prevention organizations have to check their recruitment methods and monitor their operations to ensure that they are not infiltrated by sex predators and paedophiles. There was also a suggestion for granting 'civil status' to children, a kind of identity card that recognizes them as young citizens with rights. Finally, Ms O'Brian said, there is no hierarchy in human rights. Freedom of expression is not to be subordinated to the right of children to be protected.

*Working Group II:*

*Legal processes, reinforcing national legislation and juridical processes*

The discussions in Working Group II, were strongly coloured by the lack of standard definitions, and lack of harmonization of laws across regions and nations. The origins, traditions and understanding of law differ widely from country to country, even definitions of legal age or pornography as a crime. The Internet as a recent information technology has also brought about changes in working relationships of industry, government and the private sector. Service providers, for example, cannot monitor all the cyberporn on their server, but when informed of illegal content they could take appropriate technical and legal steps to remove them. While the principal focus is on illegal content, one must not lose sight of harmful content especially that which deals with paedophilia. There are indeed some service providers and web rings that do host paedophile sites, for these are providing a lucrative traffic.

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**59** Law enforcement needs training in how paedophiles use internet services. Industry ..... can only intervene within their technical possibilities, by cutting access to illegal content. ISPs could produce records for evidence purposes or for tracking, if they are obliged to keep such records; but it was also queried whether police and justice services are to be allowed access to these records. In the U.S., the Justice Department has opened a dialogue with service providers and asked that they give zero tolerance to child pornography; providers are invited to training sessions, and are urged to develop screening and filtering facilities. After such dialogue and training, they have even warned that providers who do not remove illegal sites can be criminally liable. When the Human Decency Telecommunication Act of 1996 was abrogated in 1997 by the Supreme Court, the result was that the absence of this law brought the service providers into dialogue with the justice agencies to work on self-discipline.

**60** With regard to radio and television the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) over the years has formulated directives for self-regulation of violence, pornographic and other harmful images, but this is mainly because one can identify responsibility in broadcasting and enforce it. For similar reasons, self-regulation of the printing industry is possible. But the internationality and often the anonymity of operators working on the Internet poses many problems in seeking satisfactory solutions for ensuring safe content.

**61** Thus, in presenting the proposed actions of this Working Group, the Moderator, Mr Pierre Dionne, presented a broad range of proposals in some cases extending beyond what is purely legal: Practical actions include:

- the creation of a task force of experts that can analyze legal problems of child pornography and the Internet and seek and coordinate solutions, or even apply public pressure for reforms; this might also form a mechanism that is independent but has the support of industry; government and NGOs.
- foresee regulation from 3 angles: targeted regulation against child pornography, including pseudo-photography and sanctioning not only the manufacture and distribution of pornography, but also the possession of it; soft laws or broadened self-regulation with participation of public and of children to enrich those standards; and co-regulation, that is with the backing of government and NGOs.
- Make stronger and more coordinated use of the various international platforms offered by international and inter-governmental organizations.
- UNESCO to focus particularly on preventive education such as teaching both children and parents how to use media; promoting sex education and life skills education, so children have a wider set of options to choose from; collecting and disseminating information; coordinating with different groups in the preparation of laws and enforcement, particularly relating to Internet service providers and their cooperation, linking up with other organizations on related issues.
- Clarify and coordinate reporting procedures: where to notify, whom to call.
- Define in both legal and practical terms: pornography (children clothed but associated with paedophile messages, use of morphed images); paedophilia; the age of majority, as defined legally only in each country or other norms; the criminality of providing addresses or contacts to find services of children or paedophile services.
- Member states should be reminded of their agreement in Stockholm to draw up their national plan of actions and contribute to UNESCO so it can carry out the tasks to be assigned at this meeting.

*Working Group III:  
Research, networks, monitoring and  
sensitization of the public*

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In presenting the results of the discussions the Moderator, **Professor Jo Groebel** reported that the participants held broad discussions prior to delineating elements for action. He stressed the important need of identifying and differentiating areas, sites and operations that are risky on the Internet and those that are safe. It is helpful to appreciate the goals of others working in the same fields and their points of view in order to arrive at commonly held goals. It is necessary to seek both quantitative and qualitative data, to understand the social mechanisms at work among paedophiles, between paedophiles and potential child victims. Is there a correlation between new technology, illegal and harmful content and criminality ?

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One research in Ireland had already been initiated last year to analyze how child pornographers and paedophiles are organized and how they operate on the Internet: chat rooms and bulletin boards and stories seek often to rationalize child sex and show that paedophile actions are 'normal.' Such predators are often highly skilled in information technology and operate cohesively, forming criminal organizations not based on money but in trading pictures or information on where and how to find children. This same research has shown that of the 40,000 sites identified, only .07% contain child pornography and of this three-fourths is child erotica, children in stages of undress, but not sexually explicit, and therefore, at least theoretically, not illegal. Criminal technology nonetheless is driving paedophilia. The conclusion is that child safety organizations need to be equally

organized and technologically efficient. This research, just begun last year, could be the basis of working out a more comprehensive theory of how paedophilia works on internet.

Some went on to propose that the very technology of the Internet should be used to counter attack the perils of child pornography and paedophilia through the design of children's programmes on culture and education that are informative and attractive; Internet technology can also help provide methods of prevention and alert. The Internet itself could be a first helpline for children seeking advice from experts, adults or from their peer group. Peer group learning and sharing is perhaps a means that should be applied in hotlines, as children who are victims often prefer to speak to a friend of their own age. Since even among experts there is still a lot of information missing, central information through a multi-level special website involving all NGOs could also provide for more frequent and more transparent dialogue among child protection organizations, thus in several ways contributing to breaking the 'chains of silence.'

It is necessary to use terms that are understood by everyone and understood across cultures, and avoid labelling, euphemisms and hysteria. One should also consider the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a baseline document and measure of the work. This should in turn lead to clear notions of what information to collect and what to do with it. It was urged that researchers should try not only to quantify but also qualify child pornography, distinguishing production, possession and distribution of these contents; and on the subject of paedophilia, to distinguish networking, stalking, sex tourism, and the



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workings of sex tourism agencies. Solutions should be inclusive but not emotional and not seek to induce a kind of vigilantism. While studying these phenomena on the Internet, it must be borne in mind that child pornography and paedophilia are the end product of a more complicated and difficult to solve social and economic disorder, in a word, poverty. From this perspective, realistic targets can be set concerning the safety of children on the Internet, not only to protect them from harmful or illegal images, but more so from paedophiles who use the net to access children.

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As education plays a major role, UNESCO ought to review various learning models in preventive education and see how the transfer of experience can be used to advantage in educating children, parents and teachers in using new technology safely. UNESCO should build upon existing research centres and networks seek to create a clearing house for the exchange of information among the various groups and NGOs concerned with Child Rights.

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Finally it was urged that the cooperation begun in Stockholm must continue, building on the NGOs and networks set up and carrying this work forward, now with renewed force and a broader range of partners, including the industry.

# *A*DOPTION

## *of the Declaration and Action Plan*

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Before presenting the draft Declaration and Plan of Action, the Rapporteur, Mr Aidan White, qualified this meeting as timely, calling it a ‘watershed’ in the fight for children’s rights. Events had passed quickly since the 1996 Stockholm meeting issued its Agenda for Action; users of the Internet have increased and its operations have become more sophisticated; several new organizations concerning child care and child protection have arisen in the last three years. It was important and necessary to call a meeting now focusing on the Internet and how information functions in our lives, particularly how it has been used to promote paedophilia. All realize that today the Internet reaches only 5% of the children of the world, but that figure will rapidly change. Focusing on this problem today gives us hope that UNESCO and international agencies will be sensitive to the potential social exclusion that is at work and regarding the Internet itself, that it is necessary to understand its workings, not only viewing websites, but understanding how to operate in chat sessions, forums and discussion groups, and other forms of exchange.

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Concerning the draft Declaration and the Plan of Action, the Rapporteur said it was a monumental work to gather all the observations and proposals brought forth at the three working groups and produce the results of their work within the limited time available. He then presented the Declaration and the Plan of Action, based on the reports of the Working Groups and consultations with the moderators of each group. It was felt by the officers of the meeting that the seriousness of child abuse and its global implications brought about by the new information and communication technologies merited a more focussed attention to this issue through a declaration complemented by an action plan. This was drafted by the Rapporteur in consultation with the President and moderators. After minor amendments were incorporated, the Declaration and Plan of Action, upon a motion by Mr Thomas Kettau representing the Council of Europe, were adopted by acclamation.

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The Rapporteur then briefly summarized the highlights of the meeting and proposed that the report be finalized by the UNESCO Secretariat for his review and approval, taking into account all that had been said during the two days.

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## CLOSING CEREMONY

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The President then called on **Professor Viti Muntarbhorn**, former UN Special Rapporteur who by reminding himself of his tasks to be done upon returning home, underscored the conclusion that this meeting was only the beginning of renewed efforts, but now reinforced through the resources of the persons and institutions committed to combatting sexual abuse of children, child pornography and paedophilia on the Internet. He stressed the need to continue to fight for childrens' rights, to foster the use and refinement of rating systems, to create methods for reporting criminal activities where necessary ; to encourage industry responsibility to eliminate illegal sites from their services; to review and monitor the work and inform the public. He welcomed the broad representation of specialists in attendance and underlined the need to cast yet a wider human net of child protection institutions and professionals, including the business and industrial sector. He pointed to the generosity of many working in this field and expressed the belief that there is also a spiritual element at work in fighting for children's rights.

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The Chairperson, **Judge Andrée Ruffo**, then turning to the Director-General, said the whole assembly had worked hard for two days in response to his challenge. They worked with heart and mind, with fears and with dreams. But the overriding thought was the transcendent value of human dignity and the dignity of our children. "We are poised on the eve of a new millennium and this should be for us all a new departure." She then presented the Declaration and Plan of Action to the Director-General.

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The Chairperson then called upon the Director-General to close the meeting. In response, the Director-General declared that children are at the heart of UNESCO's mission. "Children are at the crossroads of education and culture, and a new sense of democracy that is national and international at the same time. They indeed represent a great hope and a new point of departure for the coming millennium." The Internet is a formidable tool for education and culture. "But we must work to safeguard freedom of expression, as in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We must also work hard to protect our children, as we pledged in Article 34 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, and as evinced in the Agenda for Action of the 1996 Stockholm meeting." He spoke of the need to involve parliaments, those free fora of discussion, and the media, as these are the key means for mobilizing whole societies. Fighting the sexual abuse of children in the media or on the Internet is not a simple matter of censorship.

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He said that the Declaration and the Plan of Action make it very clear that all concerned must work on a strategy that makes the most advantageous use of the Internet for the cultural and education benefit of our children. He stressed the need to reinforce legislation especially at the international level so criminals could no longer go free. While urging the need to work out prevention programmes and public information strategies, he focussed on parents as the key to unlocking the whole process. Recognizing the importance of understanding and analysing the problems correctly, the Director-General supported the recommendations for designing a comprehensive research programme. He ended by exhorting the joint efforts of all with renewed vigour and resources.

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The Chairperson then formally closed the meeting.

## DECLARATION AND ACTION PLAN

### *Child Pornography and Paedophilia on the Internet : an international challenge*

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On 18 - 19 January 1999, some 300 specialists in child care and child protection, Internet specialists and service providers, media practitioners, law enforcement agencies and government representatives met at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris to consider ways of combating paedophilia and child pornography on the Internet. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child form the basis of UNESCO's efforts in this domain. Taking account of work that has already been done, the experts' meeting prepared an action plan and issued the following declaration.

#### **DECLARATION**

The Internet provides a new world for curious children. It offers entertainment, opportunities for education, information and communication. The Internet is a tool that opens a window of opportunities, but it is available only to a tiny minority of the world's children. Today only five percent of children have access to the Internet and most of these live in the developed regions of the world. This information gap between have and have not countries must be closed.

As Internet use grows, so do the risks of children being exposed to inappropriate material, in particular, criminal activity by paedophiles and child pornographers. While the benefits of the Internet far outweigh its potential drawbacks, these dangers cannot be ignored. If left unanswered they pose a threat to children and will become the object of resistance to future Internet use.

We believe that future use of the Internet will be determined by the next generation who have been born into a digital society and are beginning to think, work, play and learn in fundamentally different ways from their parents. In this current period of transition, however, the use and development of digital technologies must take account of current social, cultural and democratic values.

Above all, we need to know more about what is available on the Internet, its accessibility, the nature of the content, how many and which people consume it. To date, not enough is known about the scale or extent of paedophile activities on the net, their consequences and impact on young people.

Child protection on the Internet is not a matter of censorship. Creating a safe environment for children online must preserve and enhance fundamental liberties, such as freedom of expression, freedom of information and the right to privacy, while ensuring their right to protection from harmful and illegal material.

The fight against paedophilia and child pornography on the Internet requires a coalition of forces involving children, industry, policy makers, educators and parents to ensure that users are aware of the potential dangers and have available to them the necessary means to combat these threats.

Action against illegal content needs industry co-operation to restrict its circulation and a fully functioning system of self-regulation aiming at a high level of protection, which must go hand in hand with effective law enforcement. Harmful content needs to be treated differently from that which is clearly illegal.

In this spirit, we have identified concrete measures which are needed in order to encourage an environment favourable to the development of a child-friendly

Internet. The following Action Plan requires a strategic approach which is both global and inclusive, and carries with it the commitment of all the actors, in particular governments, to ensure a framework of coordination, financial resources and political support. We request the Director-General to bring this text and Action Plan to the attention of the Member States of UNESCO, the National Commissions and the General Conference.

## **ACTION PLAN**

While the Action Plan is addressed primarily to UNESCO, it contains elements which must be taken up by all actors in the fight against paedophilia on the Internet. Governments, international agencies, NGOs, the industry, educators, parents, law enforcement agencies and media all have a role to play but special effort should be made to ensure that the voice of children is also heard in the elaboration of strategies to make the Internet safe. UNESCO's role in this joint effort should be primarily that of a catalyst.

### **I. Research, Awareness and Prevention**

Within its field of competence, UNESCO has a specific role and responsibility for action. In particular, a clearing house should be established for the exchange of information and to promote co-operation among groups concerned with child rights.

UNESCO educational, cultural and communication programmes should take up the issues raised at this meeting and in particular should:

- \_ Sponsor and develop initiatives for the use of technical means to combat harmful content on the Internet, particularly through the use of filters and self rating systems;
- \_ Promote existing screening tools which make children and adults aware of how to protect themselves; and
- \_ Sponsor information campaigns which raise public awareness of the harm suffered by children who have been sexually abused and identify such abuse as an abuse of power.

In addition UNESCO should:

- \_ Systematically design and support research programmes in partnership with research institutions, to obtain a clearer, comprehensive and more up-to-date understanding of the problem of paedophilia on the Internet ;
- \_ Disseminate information among researchers, and promote exchange of information among child care and child protection organizations, ISPs, web masters, police and judicial institutions, media practitioners, citizens' and civic groups and other concerned groups;
- \_ Commission the preparation of a comprehensive glossary of terms concerning the Internet and its operations so that users and specialists can arrive at a common understanding of this valuable informational and networking facility;
- \_ Support and encourage national "hotlines" and the creation of networks

of "hotlines" or an international "electronic watchtower" which provide the immediate possibility for children to get help;

- \_ Develop media and Internet education, information and awareness strategies to sensitize children, parents, teachers, educational institutions, social workers, media and politicians;
- \_ Involve mothers/parents associations in this common effort and create a strategic world network of citizens and personalities, institutions and industry against paedophilia on Internet;
- \_ Develop a common long-term strategy to create a child-friendly cultural climate and promote the idea of a virtual civil society.

## II. Law and Regulation

UNESCO's role regarding law and regulations should be developed according to the following framework :

1. **Targeted regulation** to be used by those who are against child pornography including support for anti-child pornography laws covering possession.
2. **Self-regulation** to be taken as an industry response and ethical guidelines to encourage the industry's broader participation.
3. **Co-regulation**, which implies that regulation with the backing of governments, NGOs, industry and civil society should also be possible.

UNESCO in co-operation with others should set up a task force or experts committee bringing together experiences from all sectors concerned by sexual abuse and pornography to protect children on the Internet. This action-oriented body should consider the following issues:

*Prevention:*

- Promote awareness for the protection of children online among all actors concerned, and particularly including law-making bodies and law enforcement agencies

*Collecting information:*

- Collect legal information of all kinds related to child pornography online including industry definitions and terminology on children rights, child pornography and sexual abuses of children.

*Disseminating information:*

- Widely disseminate and publicize throughout the Internet the information collected on legal issues related to child pornography online, making use of international observatories or clearing houses.

*Analysis:*

- Conduct studies on legal issues related to child pornography online.

*Self-regulation:*

- Study the efficiency of self-regulation;
- Promote industry and private sector initiatives to develop codes of ethics on child pornography online working in parallel with judiciary experts worldwide;

- Study the ISP's role related to how paedophile networks are used;
- Promote dialogue among all actors concerned, governments and ISPs to balance soft-law efforts;

*Law-making :*

- Promote legal harmonization, as well as international co-operation between the legal profession and the police;
- Study the relevance and feasibility of an international legal framework to protect children online under the auspices of UNESCO, among other legal issues.

*International co-operation and law enforcement:*

- Promote appropriate standards for law enforcement and international co-operation, in co-ordination with ISPs;
- Establish some international principles or standards

UNESCO, PARIS, 19 JANUARY 1999





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