

Human Rights Council – 7th session

RRI – SR Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography

Geneva, 13 March 2008

Joint NGO Oral Statement by :

Defence for Children International, ECPAT International, International Alliance of Women, International Catholic Child Bureau (Bice), International Federation of Social Workers, International Save the Children Alliance, Myochikai - Arigatou Foundation, Plan International, SOS-Kinderdorf International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, Women's World Summit Foundation, World Alliance of YMCAs, World Movement of Mothers, World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), World Vision International, in consultative status with ECOSOC.

Thank you Mr President.

This statement is delivered on behalf of 15 child focused NGOs.

Mr. President,

We are very pleased to participate in the Review, Rationalisation and Improvement of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children. We have strongly appreciated the work of the Special Rapporteur, its quality and comprehensiveness. We have also enjoyed and benefited from the ease of access to and close working relationship with the mandate holder. We are committed to keeping that relationship alive so that children benefit from our combined efforts.

Members of the Council,

The Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, with its specific focus on children, has been key in keeping child rights on the agenda of the Council during its first year of work. We expect that this focus will be kept and further strengthened in the future.

Millions of children, of all ages, from around the world are victims of sexual exploitation, very often by those that have the primary responsibility to protect them. We therefore strongly believe that the mandate, which demonstrates a commitment to the elimination of these abuses, must be renewed and the scope of it maintained if all children are to be protected from sexual exploitation in all its many and different manifestations.

The Council should be entrusted with promoting urgent and systematic action to prevent and eliminate all forms of Sexual Exploitation of Children and to ensure effective implementation of treaties/legislation/mechanisms established to prosecute and punish offenders.

The mandate has demonstrated that the linkages between the different forms of sexual exploitation of children – the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography – are becoming more complicated in their manifestations and scope. It is essential that the sexual exploitation of children be addressed from:

- a) a child-rights perspective recognizing the particular dependency and vulnerability of children, as well as their evolving capacity and resilience
- b) a gender perspective – how sexual exploitation impacts differently on boys and girls and the different measures needed to prevent, protect from and prosecute those violations.
- c) the obligation of all States to realize their accountability to the relevant international legal instruments and their responsibility to provide comprehensive prevention, protection and recovery services for children who have been sexually exploited.

The Special Rapporteur should collaborate with all other existing mandates, especially with the SRSG on Violence against Children once appointed, to ensure constant attention is given to the link between sexual exploitation and other forms of violence and effective action taken.

Mr President,

We not only hope to see the mandate renewed but further strengthened in its capacity to promote and protect the right of children to be free from all forms of sexual exploitation. We look forward to welcoming the new Special Rapporteur and would like to assure the new mandate holder of our fullest support.

Thank you for your attention.