

**COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT  
(CSTD)**

**Twenty-first session  
Geneva, 14 to 18 May 2018**

**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on  
their efforts in 2017 to implement the outcome of the WSIS**

**Submission by**

ECPAT International

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

**DISCLAIMER:** The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.



**Part One: An executive summary (half a page) of activities undertaken by all stakeholders, progress made, and any obstacles encountered.**

ECPAT International's principal area of activity in the WSIS process has revolved around the implementation of Action Line C5 "Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs".

We have been active members of the ITU's COP initiative from the very outset and were a contributing partner to each of the four guides to online child safety that the ITU published, most recently in conjunction with UNICEF.

ECPAT International has been active in promoting the ITU's COP guides and the principles which they enunciate in a broad range of activities undertaken across our membership in all parts of the world. ECPAT values very highly its engagement with the COP which it sees as being a highly influential neutral platform allowing stakeholders to collaborate in the development of initiatives designed to make the internet a better and safer place for children.

The COP initiative nevertheless falls short of its potential because of a lack of resources. It should be strengthened by the provision of additional staffing and other assets. At the moment there is an over-reliance on securing the co-operation of private sector actors and a comparatively narrow range of NGOs. This means too many groups are excluded for financial reasons.

One of the persistent problems which has hindered international and inter-agency co-operation at both an international and regional level, and even sometimes within individual countries, has been the lack of an agreed taxonomy of online child exploitation and abuse. 2016 saw the completion of a substantial project which was led by ECPAT International involving more than 20 international and regional agencies under the umbrella of an Interagency Working Group in which we agreed a series of definitions and descriptions of

all currently known forms and manifestations of such abuse. The new guidelines, for convenience referred to as the “Luxembourg Guidelines”.<sup>1</sup> 2017 has seen the number of references to the guidelines increasing as they continue their trajectory to becoming the standard reference work.

**Part Two: A brief (1–2 pages) analytical overview of trends and experiences in implementation at the national, regional and international levels and by all stakeholders, highlighting achievements and obstacles since WSIS and taking into account the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This could include information on the facilitation process of implementation, monitoring and cooperation among stakeholders.**

The remit of ECPAT International is linked to SDGs 16.2, 5.3 and 8.7

Even in countries with comparatively well-developed social services, law enforcement and educational infrastructures, the authorities and civil society have been struggling to cope with the pace and nature of the changes which have been the result of the large-scale adoption of the internet. In countries with a less well-developed infrastructure the position is worse and this therefore opens up the possibility of them being disproportionately adversely affected as internet penetration rates and connection speeds increase.

It is apparent from intelligence gathered through our network that in all parts of the world initiatives are underway which are reaching out to parents, teachers and children themselves promoting a range of safety messages. However, there are two important points to make about that:

1. The spread of activities is very uneven.
2. In general in most countries there is insufficient emphasis being given to the empowering and enabling aspects of the internet in terms of its ability to enhance children’s rights.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://luxembourguidelines.org/english-version/>

Having made the point about the differences between countries with greater or less well-developed infrastructures, it also needs to be said that even in high income countries, law enforcement agencies are currently facing overwhelming difficulties caused by the scale of criminal activities directly affecting children over the internet.

The police services in England and Wales have been unusually open and frank about the problems they are confronting but anecdotally it is known that pretty much every police force is in a very similar position.

In October, 2012, the UK's National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children published the results of a Freedom of Information enquiry they had made of the police. The police were asked to report the number of child sexual abuse images they had seized in arrests made during the period March, 2010 to April, 2012. Within the allotted timeframe five forces replied reporting that they had seized 26 million images of child sexual abuse. The catchment area of the five forces contained 7.25% of the entire population of England and Wales. This allowed statisticians to calculate that in all likelihood the total volume of images could well be in excess of 300 million. Based on that projection it would not be difficult, in turn, to make reasonable estimates of the likely volumes circulating globally on the internet as whole. The challenge this presents to law enforcement can hardly be overstated and as the volume of child abuse videos continues to grow the immediate prospects are far from encouraging.

In October, 2014, Keith Bristow, Director General of the UK's National Crime Agency publicly confirmed that in a recent surveillance exercise the police had reason to believe upwards of 50,000 individuals were involving themselves with child sexual abuse images. Bristow added:

*I don't believe that all 50,000 will end up in the criminal justice system being brought to justice-*

On other occasions Bristow and other senior police officers have put it slightly differently

*We cannot arrest our way out of this problem.*

In 2016 and again in 2017, Chief Constable Simon Bailey, national lead police officer [indicated](#) that as many as 100,000 men may be involved in downloading or exchanging child abuse images.

In other words, the historic or traditional ways of policing these issues are no longer fit for purpose. Increasingly we are going to have to look to the internet industry and high tech companies to help find answers. ECPAT International has observed that many of them appear to be more than willing so to do as part of a multi-stakeholder approach.

**Part Three: A brief description (1–2 pages) of:**

**(a) Innovative policies, programmes and projects which have been undertaken by all stakeholders to implement the outcomes. Where specific targets or strategies have been set, progress in achieving those targets and strategies should be reported.**

**(b) Future actions or initiatives to be taken, regionally and/or internationally, and by all stakeholders, to improve the facilitation and ensure full implementation in each of the action lines and themes, especially with regard to overcoming those obstacles identified in Part Two above. You are encouraged to indicate any new commitments made to further implement the outcomes.**

Today, 103 ECPAT members across 93 countries are part of a dynamic and expanding network of organisations and individuals united in one common cause: the elimination of the sexual exploitation of children.

It has been a watershed year for the fight against sexual exploitation of children (SEC), for ECPAT International and for ECPAT members worldwide. The fight against SEC has been galvanised by the inclusion of child protection in the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by world leaders in September 2015. At last, there is a global commitment to exploited and abused children and ECPAT members can be proud of their role in the advocacy that made this possible.

The commitment is captured in three SDG targets. Target 5.2 requires the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls. Target 8.7 addresses the worst forms of child labour. Target 16.2 is the main clarion call, aiming to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children. As a result of collective advocacy campaign by partners worldwide, including ECPAT International and ECPAT Network members, the SDGs contain targets to end all forms of violence against children, including their sexual exploitation. It is an official mandate for action, endorsed at the highest international level. It is an unprecedented opportunity to strengthen collective action to curb SEC, to ramp up advocacy and partnerships and to pursue the resources needed to end this crime.

The ECPAT Network is now entering a new era. The adoption of the SDGs has given the ECPAT family a hard deadline of 14 years in which to put itself out of business, given that 2030 is the deadline for the elimination of child exploitation.

There has been a major shift over the past year from talking about the problem of SEC to concerted action and solutions – a shift motivated by the inclusion of child sexual exploitation within the SDGs. ECPAT members and partners have come together to develop a multi-year global campaign to end SEC, aiming to create public pressure on governments to meet their commitments, generate political space for stronger action, and change the ideas, values and beliefs that ‘permit’ SEC to flourish. The multi-year Global Campaign launches in 2016, and will be fully operational by 2018, with a strong focus on ECPAT members’ regional strategies to support the pursuit of the SDGs.

ECPAT works closely with the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC). In March 2016, ECPAT, SAIEVAC and UNICEF’s Regional Office for South Asia co-organised the High-level Roundtable Meeting on the Implementation of the SDGs relating to Violence against Children in South Asia in Colombo, Sri Lanka, hosted by the Sri Lankan Government. The meeting stressed the need for wider partnerships, stronger systems to address the intersecting challenges around violence against children, investment in data, and the positioning of regional mechanisms like SAIEVAC as ‘regional pathfinders’ for the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.

In 2014, ECPAT International established a formal global programme specifically

focused on combating the sexual exploitation of children online. In the context of these modalities of exploitation, internet and associated technologies are used for illegal ends. Developing strategies to reduce crimes in digital environments in turn contributes to building confidence and trust in the use of ICTs among internet users and business oriented entities seeking to seize opportunities technologies offer for growth and development.

The three main action lines of the programme are: promoting adequate international and regional legal frameworks and a better implementation; promoting a positive use of technologies to combat exploitation, and finally supporting law enforcement agencies specialized in the field.

Those objectives are achieved through the execution of comprehensive research projects, high level advocacy at international and regional levels, and building the capacity of our network members and partners.

ECPAT International is currently aiming to consolidate and expand the programme as a way of securing the sustainability of its impact. One of the projects implemented by this programme is a research project in partnership with INTERPOL to produce a Global Imperative Indicator, a set of metrics documenting the trends with regards to unidentified victims portrayed on Child Sexual Abuse Images stored on the INTERPOL database of images called ICSE.

In 2017 in Rome the We Protect Global Alliance, in conjunction with the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome convened an important conference which addressed [“Child Dignity in the Digital World”](#). This brought together an impressive array of actors, including ECPAT International and the final statement of the conference was signed and supported by the Pope. This should give an important added impetus to the work of many different kinds of group in all parts of the world.