



Historic Cairo Meeting Calls for Global Action to Protect Children



(L-R) Daniel Cardon, Chairman ICMEC; Governor Valentina Matvienko; Mrs. Margarida Sousa Uva Barroso; Queen Paola of Belgium; First Lady Suzanne Mubarak; Shaikha Sabeeka, Wife of the King of Bahrain; Princess Lalla Meryem; Former First Lady Bernadette Chirac; and Ernie Allen, President ICMEC.

The Honorary Board of Directors for the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC) met in February in Cairo, Egypt. The meeting was hosted by Her Excellency Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, First Lady of the Arab Republic of Egypt. A historic communiqué, the Cairo Declaration, was issued at the meeting which calls for global action to protect children from sexual exploitation and victimization.

The ICMEC Honorary Board meeting included a conference attended by nearly 400 Arab leaders, entitled "Crossing Borders to Protect the Children of the World."

Mrs. Mubarak and six other members of the Honorary Board met in Cairo to review the progress of the International Centre and to explore new regional and global cooperation in attacking child victimization.

Other Honorary Board members attending the meeting included Her Majesty, The Queen of the Belgians; Her Royal Highness, Princess Lalla Meryem of the Kingdom of Morocco; Her Highness, Shaikha Sabeeka Bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Wife of the King of Bahrain; Mrs. Margarida Sousa Uva Barroso, Wife of the President of the European Commission; Mrs. Bernadette

Chirac, Former First Lady of the French Republic; and The Honorable Valentina Matvienko, Governor of Saint-Petersburg.

The Cairo Declaration calls for the creation of a global movement and awareness campaign; urges international organizations and leaders to join together to make child abuse and exploitation a priority; calls for the enactment of new legislation and the development of new technologies; urges expanding efforts to build new national and regional centers around the world to better address the problems of child

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abduction and exploitation; and cites the need for bilateral and multilateral approaches to resolving family disputes.

“The problem of abused and exploited children has remained in the shadows for too long.”

**Suzanne Mubarak,
First Lady of Egypt**

The growth of Internet-related crimes was a particular concern. Princess Lalla Meryem of Morocco said, “in a world made borderless and more penetrable by the Internet, it has become incumbent on us to seriously combat the misuse of the Internet and the sexual exploitation of children through this medium.” Governor Valentina Matvienko of Russia urged action “to construct tough barriers against child pornography,” and cited the need for “international bodies of financial control to cut off illegal financial streams and stop such activity.”

ICMEC President Ernie Allen reported to the board on the progress that has been made, but cautioned that “the problem of missing, abducted, trafficked and sexually exploited children is large, growing, under-recognized and under-reported. Now more than ever, we must challenge the world to act.” In issuing this call to action, Mrs. Mubarak said, “the problem of abused and exploited children has remained in the shadows for too long. This issue is a global phenomenon. If not attended to, it may reach epidemic proportions.”

Financial Coalition Goes Global

Created in 2006, the Financial Coalition Against Child Pornography, (FCACP) is a unique alliance of financial and internet companies working together to eliminate commercial child pornography.

Earlier this year, The European Financial Coalition was created.

The NGO, ECPAT, in Sweden has initiated a partnership with law enforcement and SkandiaBanken. And the Swedish Bankers Association and ECPAT announced that all Swedish banks would be supporting the effort.

An Asia Pacific Financial Coalition Against Child Pornography is also being created. A new ICMEC Singapore office will play a key role in building the Coalition’s efforts in the region.

Banco Bradesco, the largest private bank in Brazil, has joined the Coalition, extending the reach into Latin America.

The FCACP in the U.S. is composed of leading banks, credit card companies, electronic payment networks, third party payments companies, and Internet services companies. It represents nearly 90% of the U.S. payments industry. Its mission is to follow the flow of funds and shut down the payments accounts used by illicit enterprises.

Since its launch in 2006, there has been a 50% drop in the number of unique commercial child pornography websites reported into the CyberTipline in the United States and some commercial child pornography sites are no longer accepting credit cards issued in the United States.

There has also been a significant increase in the purchase price of child pornography. In 2006, subscription prices were \$29.95 per month. Today, prices are up to \$1,200 per month.

The FCACP is having an impact and needs to maintain the pressure.

Police Trained in 114 Countries

Five years ago, in partnership with Interpol and with the generous support of the Microsoft Corporation, ICMEC launched an international law enforcement training initiative. Training was provided for law enforcement, prosecutors, and other professionals from around the world on how to investigate Internet-related child exploitation cases.

Since the program began, more than 3,000 officials from 114 countries have received training including China; Russia; South Africa; Croatia; Jordan; Colombia; and many others.

New Singapore Office Opens

The International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children has opened a regional office in Singapore to serve the Asia/Pacific region. Office space was donated by Fondation Mérieux. Alain Mérieux, the Chairman of bioMérieux, is an ICMEC board member and long-time supporter.

ICMEC also has a regional office located in Brussels that serves Europe and the Middle East. A third regional office is planned for Brazil, which will serve Latin America.

Ten Nations Enact New Child Pornography Laws

In 2004, ICMEC identified 5 key elements necessary for an effective global legislative strategy to combat child pornography.

First released in 2006 and now in its fifth edition, the results were shocking and found that:

- 29 countries have legislation sufficient to combat child pornography offenses (six countries meet all five criteria; the remainder meet all but the last, pertaining to ISP reporting);
- 93 have no legislation at all that specifically addresses child pornography

Of the remaining countries that do have legislation specifically addressing child pornography:

- 54 countries do not define child pornography;
- 24 countries do not provide for computer facilitated offenses; and
- 36 countries do not criminalize possession of child pornography, regardless of the intent to distribute.

Since 2006, there has been progress in getting national leaders to enact and enhance legislation criminalizing child pornography: Argentina has enacted legislation criminalizing computer-facilitated offenses; Brazil, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Moldova and Portugal have enacted legislation criminalizing simple possession of child pornography; Egypt and India have passed legislation specifically criminalizing child pornography offenses, which also include simple possession; and legislation has been strengthened in the Dominican Republic and Hungary.

New Partnership with Russia

The International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children is working closely with Russian leaders on proposed changes in the law and on the possible creation of a Russian center on missing and exploited children. Five delegations of Russian leaders have visited and toured the NCMEC and ICMEC U.S. headquarters.

Russia's former First Lady, Lyudmila Putin, and Governor of St. Petersburg, Valentina Matvienko both serve as members of the Honorary Board.

In June, the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children presented testimony before the State Duma, the lower house of the Russian Parliament, on "Legislation Directed at the Fight Against Child Pornography, Prostitution and Other Forms of Abuse." The hearing was hosted by Elena Borisovna Mizulina, Chairperson of the Committee on Family, Women and Children. Mrs. Mizulina had just led a delegation to visit NCMEC and ICMEC.

Legislation has been introduced. While the legislation does not contain strong measures against child pornography, it does amend the Russian criminal

code to increase penalties for rape, depraved acts, murder when committed against a minor, and other provisions.

Work with Russia began in 2006 when ICMEC President Ernie Allen and Belgian Senator and ICMEC board member Anne-Marie Lizin met with a delegation from the Russian Parliament in Brussels, Belgium. Allen and Lizin both expressed concern about the growth of child pornography and sexual exploitation and the reported role of Russian organized crime in it. They urged Russian leaders to work with ICMEC in addressing it. At that meeting, Russian Senator Ludmila Narusova said, "we will help, but you need to do something about the demand, because it is Americans who are the primary consumers of this content."

In response to Senator Narusova's comment, ICMEC has been working to attack demand in the United States and worldwide. Efforts include the Financial Coalition Against Child Pornography which works with financial industry leaders to eliminate payment systems.

Dialogue Begins With Japan

Japan is a respected world leader in many areas. However, two areas where Japan needs to do more include international child abduction and child pornography.

Japan is not a signatory to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction and Japanese courts are generally viewed as not responsive in difficult international child abduction cases.

ICMEC is working with Japanese leaders to address this in an effort to

persuade the parliament to criminalize the possession of child pornography.

Recently, ICMEC participated in several forums to address government officials, journalists and community activists on the issue.

Recently the Japan National Police Agency dedicated a team to crack down on Internet child pornography. The team will analyze child pornography images, try to identify child victims, and monitor websites that display child pornography.

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New Southeastern Europe Center

A new Southeastern Europe Center for Missing & Exploited Children, located in Athens, Greece is scheduled to open the fall of 2009. The new center is a joint effort between The Smile of the Child, a Greek NGO, and the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children.

Countries that will be served by the new center include Albania, Bosnia-

Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.

The new Southeastern Europe center will be based in Athens, but will explore ways to develop mobile service delivery mechanisms to provide on-site support in every participating country.

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ICMEC President and CEO

The International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC) works with government leaders, NGOs and law enforcement to create national and regional centers around the world to build a strong network of organizations and programs to combat child abduction and exploitation. ICMEC is a 501(c)(3) nongovernmental organization.

[For more information or to make a donation contact:](#)

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