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and

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for the

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

(HELSINKI COMMISSION)

**“Combating Sexual Exploitation of Children: Strengthening International Law
Enforcement Cooperation”**

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Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Commission, as President of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and its sister organization, the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC), I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you to discuss our efforts in the fight against child sexual exploitation and how we can continue to strengthen international law enforcement cooperation in this arena. Chairman Hastings and Co-Chairman Cardin, I commend you and your colleagues for being tireless advocates for children, for your leadership and initiative, and for bringing us together today to discuss what more we can do to protect the world's children from those who seek to prey upon them.

ICMEC works to identify and coordinate a global network of organizations fighting child sexual exploitation and abduction. ICMEC's work brings promise to children and families by: establishing global resources to find missing children and prevent child-sexual exploitation; creating national centers and affiliates worldwide; building an international network to disseminate images of and information about missing and exploited children; providing training to law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, legal professionals, nongovernmental organizations, and government officials; and advocating for changes in laws, treaties, and systems to protect children worldwide.

NCMEC is a not-for-profit corporation, mandated by Congress and working in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice. NCMEC is a true public-private partnership, funded in part by Congress and in part by the private sector. For 24 years, NCMEC has operated under Congressional mandate to serve as the national resource center and clearinghouse on missing and exploited children. This statutory mandate includes specific operational functions mandated by Congress, including: a national 24-hour toll-free hotline for reporting information about missing and exploited children; a system of case management for law enforcement and families; technical assistance to law enforcement agencies in identifying and locating non-compliant sex offenders; and our various programs to stop the sexual exploitation of children.

As the prevalence of child sexual exploitation has grown over the years, so has the range of services offered by NCMEC and ICMEC to address this problem.

NMCEC's longest-running program to prevent the sexual exploitation of children is the CyberTipline, the "9-1-1 for the Internet," which serves as the national clearinghouse for investigative leads and tips regarding crimes against children on the Internet. The Internet has become a primary tool to victimize children today, due to its widespread use and the relative anonymity that it offers child predators, even across international borders. Mandated by Congress, the CyberTipline is operated in partnership with the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces ("ICAC"), the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Department of Justice's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, as well as other state and local law enforcement. We receive reports regarding seven categories of crimes against children:

- possession, manufacture and distribution of child pornography;
- online enticement of children for sexual acts;
- child prostitution;
- child-sex tourism;
- child sexual molestation (not in the family);
- unsolicited obscene material sent to a child; and
- misleading domain names.

These reports are made by both the public and by Electronic Service Providers (ESPs), who are required by law to report to the CyberTipline. The leads are reviewed by NCMEC analysts, who examine and evaluate the content, add related information that would be useful to law enforcement, use publicly-available search tools to determine the geographic location of the apparent criminal act, and provide all information to the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation. These reports are also triaged to ensure that children in imminent danger get first priority.

The FBI, ICE and Postal Inspection Service have "real time" access to the CyberTipline, and all three agencies assign agents and analysts to work at NCMEC. In the 10 years since the

CyberTipline began operation, NCMEC has received and processed more than 595,000 reports. To date, electronic service providers have reported to the CyberTipline more than 5 million images of sexually exploited children. In 2007 we saw an increase in reports for nearly all our categories: 23% increase in child pornography reports, 66% increase in online enticement reports, 58% increase in child prostitution reports, 10% increase in child sex tourism, 9% increase in child molestation and 31% increase in misleading domain names.

ICE forwards CyberTipline reports about child pornography to law enforcement agencies in other countries. ICE attaches stationed abroad access the CyberTipline via a Virtual Private Network. Under this system, law enforcement agencies in 21 countries receive CyberTipline reports. Law enforcement agencies in at least three other countries have recently expressed interest in participating in this program.

The CyberTipline also receives reports from members of the International Association of Internet Hotline Providers (INHOPE).¹ To date, members have sent almost 50,000 reports of apparent child pornography to the CyberTipline. There are 33 INHOPE member hotlines in 29 countries² fighting to remove illegal content from the Internet.

Another one of NCMEC's programs to assist law enforcement is our congressionally mandated Child Victim Identification Program (CVIP). CVIP analysts work with our federal law enforcement partners and the ICAC task forces to fulfill our dual mission: (1) to help prosecutors get convictions by proving that a real child is depicted in child pornography images; and (2) to locate and rescue newly identified child victims. To date, CVIP analysts have reviewed 14 million images. NCMEC shares these images with international law enforcement officers who provide valuable information that helps identify and rescue child victims around the world. Without such international cooperation, many of these victims would never be found.

¹ NCMEC's CyberTipline is a member of INHOPE; visit <http://www.inhope.org> for more information.

² Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, China (Taiwan), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

In addition to working in close partnership with law enforcement, per its Congressional mandate, NCMEC is also attacking the global problem of child sexual exploitation by partnering with key industry leaders. As a member of the Technology Coalition, NCMEC works with Internet industry leaders AOL, Earthlink, Google, Microsoft, United Online and Yahoo. The Technology Coalition is working to develop and deploy technology that identifies specific illegal images in order to disrupt the transmission of those images over the Internet to would-be consumers. Bringing together the collective experience, knowledge and expertise of the members of this Coalition is a significant step toward progress in the fight against child sexual exploitation.

We are also working on an initiative with ISPs and international law enforcement agencies to limit access to websites containing apparent child pornography. CyberTipline analysts identify active websites with illegal content and compile a list of the sites' Uniform Resource Locators (URLs). ISPs participating in the program can use this URL list to limit the availability of these sexually abusive websites, reducing the continued re-victimization of the child victims. A similar technique being implemented in the United Kingdom, Canada and several European countries has proven to be very effective. The NCMEC URL list is also being shared with international law enforcement agencies in Australia, Denmark, and Norway (pending with Canada and the United Kingdom).

Another of NCMEC's industry initiatives is the Financial Coalition Against Child Pornography (the Financial Coalition). Created in response to the concerns of the Senate Banking Committee about the use of credit cards and other payment methods to purchase child pornography online, the Financial Coalition seeks to eradicate the commercial viability of child pornography. The Financial Coalition is made up of 30 companies, including MasterCard, Visa, American Express, Bank of America, Citigroup, Internet industry leaders and others, and represents 95% of the U.S. payments industry. Based on tips to the CyberTipline, NCMEC identifies websites containing illegal images along with method of payment information. We forward this information to law enforcement, who make purchases on a particular site, enabling law enforcement to identify the merchant account. If law enforcement does not proceed with prosecution, the financial company is notified and will take appropriate action on the account based on their terms of service. Already we're seeing progress – in less than 2 years, credit cards are becoming less frequently

accepted and there has been an increase in the use of alternative payment methods. And the purchase price for these images of sexually exploited children has risen dramatically – an indication that our efforts may be affecting the profitability of these sites. ICMEC is currently working to expand the work of the Financial Coalition on the international level, with efforts underway in Asia Pacific and the European Union to create regional stakeholder coalitions to eradicate commercial child pornography.

This multi-faceted approach to fighting child sexual exploitation is enhanced by NCMEC/ICMEC's numerous programs to educate law enforcement officers, both domestically and abroad.

ICMEC has been providing training to law enforcement officers from around the world since December of 2003.³ In partnership with the Microsoft Corporation, and in conjunction with Interpol, we have trained almost 3,000 officers from 111 countries on how to properly and effectively investigate Internet crimes against children. We have built capacity on a global level by helping to create a worldwide network of officers who have the knowledge and skills necessary to investigate these unique cases.

The global nature of both the Internet and child sexual exploitation demands a coordinated response by law enforcement at the local, state, national, and international levels. Much is already being done by law enforcement. I would like to highlight some recommendations for what we can do to build upon existing efforts.

First, every country in the world should criminalize the possession of child pornography and other child pornography offenses. As you know, our 2006 report, "Child Pornography: Model Legislation & Global Review," revealed that in 95 out of the 186 Interpol Member Countries,

³ This initiative was launched in December 2003 at INTERPOL Headquarters in Lyon, France. ICMEC has organized trainings in 29 other cities including: San Jose, Costa Rica; Brasilia, Brazil; Paarl, South Africa; Zagreb, Croatia; Hong Kong, China; Bucharest, Romania; Madrid, Spain; Amman, Jordan; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Moscow, Russia; Wellington, New Zealand; Bangkok, Thailand; Istanbul, Turkey; Tokyo, Japan; Oslo, Norway; Dalian, China; Sofia, Bulgaria; Brisbane, Australia; Muscat, Oman; New Delhi, India; Vilnius, Lithuania; Rabat, Morocco; Doha, Qatar; Panama City, Panama; Manila, Philippines; Warsaw, Poland; Lima, Peru; Prague, Czech Republic; and Athens, Greece. The remaining trainings for 2008 include: Cairo, Egypt; Seoul, South Korea; Bogota, Colombia; and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

child pornography is not even a crime; and 135 do not criminalize possession of child pornography. If there is no crime, there is nothing for law enforcement to investigate. This Commission has been instrumental in changing these laws through your work with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and we hope that you continue to campaign for the adoption of more stringent child-protection laws worldwide.

Second, law enforcement agencies and NGOs around the world should prioritize crimes against children on their national agendas. Even if countries have adequate child-protection laws in place, if these governments do not make the fight against child sexual exploitation a national priority, law enforcement must struggle to investigate and prosecute these crimes without sufficient funding or a proper infrastructure. Many governments focus on financial crimes and terrorism, not realizing that child sexual exploitation has elements of both. We must educate other governments and regional organization such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations),⁴ SADC (South African Development Community),⁵ and MERCOSUL (Mercado Común del Sur; Southern Common Market)⁶ about the severity of this problem around the world and encourage them to prioritize this issue.

Third, we should dedicate additional resources to provide training for law enforcement officers around the world and hold international conferences to discuss the global implications of this issue. Educating international law enforcement on how best to investigate and prosecute these unique crimes builds capacity in the fight against child sexual exploitation worldwide. Similarly, international conferences provide a forum for law enforcement and government officials from around the globe to share best practices and discuss ways to cooperate and share information more effectively.

Fourth, countries that have built capacity and expressed an interest in prosecuting these crimes should be encouraged to coordinate with ICE so that they are able to receive CyberTipline

⁴ ASEAN Member States are: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

⁵ SADC Member States are: Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

⁶ MERCOSUL Members States are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

reports via the VPN. These CyberTipline reports contain valuable lead information about crimes against children that are being committed abroad and law enforcement agencies can use them to help prosecute offenders in their own countries.

Fifth, as you are aware, child sex tourism is a devastating problem in many countries around the world. We should ensure that necessary resources are provided to those countries whose children are most at-risk. Such resources can be used for public education campaigns and counseling and medical services for the victims. In addition, to the extent possible, international law enforcement should share information that would enable them to better track those offenders who are traveling abroad to prey on children.

Finally, we commend the U.S. Senate for ratifying the Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime and must encourage other countries to follow suit.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, I do not come before you today with a quick, easy solution to the problem of child sexual exploitation or international cooperation among law enforcement authorities. However, I can unequivocally state that no country is immune from child sexual exploitation, and it will take a concerted effort from all parties to ensure that the world's children are protected.

We must act, for the children of the United States and for the children of the world.

Thank you.