



World YWCA

## JOINT NGO STATEMENT

World YWCA  
World Alliance of YMCAs  
UN Watch  
WWSF Women's World Summit Foundation

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Sexual Exploitation and Child Pornography

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*Delivered by Carina Söderlund, 25 September 2006*

**Mr. Chairperson,**

Today far too many children are sexually exploited and abused causing life-long damage. More than two million children are exploited in the multibillion-dollar sex industry each year and 1.2 million children are trafficked annually, mostly girls, but also a significant number of boys. Girls as young as 13, mainly from Asia and Eastern Europe are trafficked as 'mail-order brides' and child pornography is a growing problem on Internet.

The consequences are devastating. Children that are exposed to violence and sexual exploitation are hurt physically, psychologically and mentally and many lose all hope for the future.

We must recognize that cross-generational sex and transactional sex with minors are adult crimes against children. Today we urge you to take action to end violence against children and to bring the offenders to justice. The punishment should be as severe as the crime.

**There should be no limitation period to bring child abusers to justice.** Whether a crime against a child was committed months or years ago should not preclude prosecution. An abused child must be entitled to justice even if the accusation comes many years later. The child might be young at the time

of the rape but in the case of child pornography, he or she is violated every time someone looks at and finds pleasure in those images. Furthermore, living with the knowledge that their images are being circulated on the Internet or in movies could bring further damage and constitute lifelong trauma for the child.

**National justice systems must apply the UN definition of a child.**

Too often there are cases where charges are dropped following a defence by the perpetrator that the victim "looked older" than her actual age. Horrific crimes of sexual abuse should not be acquitted or ignored simply because the child appears older than his or her actual age.

**Ensure that children have knowledge and understanding of their basic human rights.** Governments and civil society organisations should undertake a massive education campaign on human rights education and, specifically, on the rights on the child, among children.

**Enhance the international cooperation among police forces against child pornography and trafficking of children for sexual exploitation.**

Governments need to coordinate their identification of children and perpetrators appearing in pornography and share information among each other in a systematic way, to bring to an end to the sexual abuse of children.

**Thank you. Mr Chairperson.**