

# THE BODY SHOP.

## **ECPAT AND THE BODY SHOP DEMAND END TO SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Thailand, Bangkok 13<sup>th</sup> August 2009** - The Body Shop and ECPAT International unveil findings on the scale of sex trafficking of children and young people around the world. The report by ECPAT and The Body Shop, **Their Protection is in Our Hands – The State of Global Trafficking of Children and Young People for Sexual Purposes** was unveiled, revealing that the trafficking of children and young people for sexual purposes in many countries is increasing and governments simply are not doing enough to tackle the problems and protect children and young people.

The Body Shop and ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) are partnering to bring the underground exploitation of children and young people to an end. Also supporting the launch of the report and campaign is Ms Najat M'Jid (UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography).

*“The recent economic downturn is set to drive more vulnerable children and young people to be exploited by the global sex trade”* said Ms. Carmen M. Madriñán, Executive Director of ECPAT International. *“In addition, trafficking is not only significant across international borders, but is increasing within country borders. The indifference that sustains the criminality, greed and perverse demands of adults for sex with children and young people needs to end.*

*Governments have to do more to guarantee children and young people their right to protection from trafficking. There is hope, and real and practical solutions exist. Trafficking of children for sexual purposes happens in virtually every country in the world – developed and developing – and we must see governments uphold their commitments to those solutions. The current economic crisis has added yet more urgency to this call,”* added Madriñán.

### **Their Protection is in Our Hands Report - Key Findings:**

- Disturbingly, the world's leading global network on the issue of child trafficking for sexual purposes, ECPAT, state that the current global recession is increasing the vulnerability of children and young people at the hands of traffickers.

The increasing poverty in children's countries of origin, reduced budgets for social services, restrictive immigration laws in 'destination countries' which encourage children to avoid detection, each heighten the vulnerability of children and young people to profiteering traffickers. Deterioration in the living conditions of entire households can induce children and young people to abandon school in order to contribute to the family income, exposing them to harmful situations as they become at risk of seeking livelihood options that lead to their being sexual exploited in prostitution, child pornography and in other forms.

- The economic crisis also means that adults who pay for sex have less disposable income, which can drive exploiters to look for cheaper ways of accommodating this demand. Children and young people trafficked for sexual exploitation have few alternatives or power, and the Report suggests that traffickers intent on maintaining their level of income are therefore more likely to exploit them. Indeed, The Body Shop and ECPAT Report demonstrates that demand for sex with children and young people comes from both paedophiles and from people who pay for sex - those patronising the commercial sex market may therefore end up

sexually exploiting a child under 18.

- The Report also highlights that the numbers of children and young people trafficked within their own country is increasing, as opposed to the main focus of anti-trafficking measures and agencies primarily being on cross-border trafficking. Such trafficking frequently involves movement from rural to urban areas or from one city or town to another, without the need for travel documentation. Targeted actions to counteract and prevent this are yet to be widely implemented, due to a lack of recognition of how children and young people are specifically impacted by the problem.
- This exploitation is likely to continue proliferating due to the profits generated by sex trafficking. Global profits made from trafficking of people (men, women and children) into forced commercial sex, are estimated at US\$27.8 billion per year. Almost half of these profits are estimated to come from people trafficked into or within industrialised countries. The annual profit per victim per year can be as high as US\$67,200.

### **Family and community members involved in trafficking**

- Contrary to perceptions, evidence suggests that the traffickers are likely to come from the same ethnic or national background as the victim, in some cases neighbours or extended family members may be involved. Many people profit from trafficking children and young people for sexual exploitation. Document forgers, corrupt officials, transport workers, sex trade profiteers and even the tourist trade may be involved in some cases. The participation of highly-organised traffickers and large-scale criminal groups including mafia-type organisations has been demonstrated in several countries.
- The Report highlights the factors that heighten the risk of trafficking, such as: poverty; low levels of education; lack of employment opportunities; socio-cultural norms and circumstances including gender and minority discrimination. Other factors include: harmful traditional practices and cultural values which fuel child sexual exploitation or push children and young people into labour or survival migration; volatile family environments, such as domestic violence or parents with drug or alcohol addictions; separation from families, perhaps because of family breakdown, natural disaster, armed conflict or migration.

Christopher Davis, International Campaigns Director from The Body Shop says:

*"We partnered with ECPAT International to reveal the true picture on the real extent of sex trafficking of children and young people. We wanted to help find a solution to this terrible exploitation of the young and vulnerable. We believe there is hope and that with public support and effort we can effect change. This campaign with ECPAT enables each of us to inspire real change on an issue which, until now, has been largely hidden from the world.*

*If people can find it in their hearts to join us in this campaign we can bring hope to this generation of vulnerable children, and truly make a difference for future generations through positive change. Step by step we believe we can help bring an end to the trafficking of children and young people for sex."*

The use of children as commodities to be bought, sold, transported and re-sold for sexual exploitation, prostitution, pornography and forced marriage, was described by Dame Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop as a 'modern-day slave trade', just three days before her death in 2007. Her passion is what has led directly to The Body Shop launching a global campaign to Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People in partnership with ECPAT. The campaign aims to bring about Anita's vision of empowering people to end this global human rights abuse.

### **How together we can eradicate sex trafficking of children and young people**

Rather than suggesting a hopeless cause, the Report delivers a message of hope to stop sex trafficking of children and young people. The Body Shop and ECPAT have together identified three

campaign goals and calling for states to take action immediately on their existing commitments. These goals are:

1. To ensure that community-based prevention programmes to stop trafficking of children and young people are reaching at-risk populations
2. To ensure that international legal standards for protecting children and young people from trafficking have been incorporated in the national legal framework policies
3. That specialised government services for children and young people who are victims of trafficking are integrated in national policies

These three goals are closely linked to the global commitments agreed by 137 governments at the World Congress III against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in November 2008 and will guide The Body Shop and ECPAT as the Stop the Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People reaches The Body Shop® stores and customers over the next 3 years.

The Body Shop customers can purchase a specially developed “Soft Hands Kind Heart Hand Cream” with proceeds going to ECPAT, to help stop the trafficking of children and young people for sex. The report marks the first step of the “Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People” campaign to bring this underground exploitation of children and young people to an end, to view the full report visit [www.thebodyshop.com/stop](http://www.thebodyshop.com/stop).

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

Journalists requiring more information should contact The Body Shop International, Róisín Long. Telephone: 0044 1903 844 040.

Every year, an estimated 1.2 million child victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation or cheap labour. Human trafficking, the third largest international crime (after illegal drugs and arms trafficking) is believed to be worth billions of dollars each year, and according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal activities in the world.

ECPAT International – which stands for End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes - is a global network made up of independent grassroots organisations, working in 75 countries world wide to combat child sexual exploitation. Activist-driven, often operating with very limited funding, ECPAT support and protect trafficked children whilst working with governments and decision makers, advocating changes to offer children greater protection from trafficking. For further information, see [www.ecpat.net](http://www.ecpat.net).

The entire The Body Shop network across 64 countries is supporting the Stop Trafficking campaign. The Body Shop has been involved in this issue since 2007, participating at the World Congress III Against Sexual Exploitation of Children, which took place in November 2008 in Brazil. The Body Shop and ECPAT International introduced the world’s leading experts on the issue, international governments, NGOs and activists to the “Stop Sex Trafficking of Young People and Children” campaign.

