

University of Alberta High School Model United Nations 2011

United Nations Children's Fund – The Question of Coordinating International Efforts against Child Pornography on the Internet

Scope of Problem

Child pornography is a problem of international proportion. It can be defined as any means of depicting or promoting sexual abuse of a child, including print and/or audio, centered on sex acts with or the genital organs of children. Child pornography is a multi-billion dollar industry and among the fastest growing criminal segments on the Internet. The global community recognizes that children are put at risk by those who engage in the production, distribution, and consumption of child pornography, and the children involved can suffer serious negative effects throughout their lifetime as a result of this exploitation. The issue has been brought to the attention of the United Nations, and more specifically UNICEF, to develop a way to coordinate international efforts towards eradicating this crime from our society.

Child pornography affects millions of children worldwide ranging from infants, to prepubescent children and post-pubescent teenagers. The United States Department of Justice has an estimated recording of the abuse of more than one million children in the United States alone. In Asia, Japan is the most important centre for the commercial production of child pornography, producing a significant and increasing amount of "teen pornography" that depicts young Japanese girls in sexually explicit poses in teen magazines. In the early 1970's the western world was producing mass amounts of child pornography. Denmark, Holland, and, to a lesser extent, Sweden, were the main centers of this production. Many of the Caucasian children were photographed in the United States, with the pictures being published elsewhere. In the later seventies, children from countries such as India and Mexico were starting to be featured, as well as several from African countries. This multi-billion dollar industry used to be mainly controlled by organized crime units (such as the Japanese 'Yakuza'), though tough anti-mob laws have loosened these organizations' grip. Now, the industry is primarily run through pedophile entrepreneurs operating internationally through the internet. For example, in 2003, an international police investigation uncovered an immense Germany-based child pornography ring involving 26,500 suspects who swapped illegal images on the Internet in 166 different countries. In a 2006 case, US and international authorities charged 27 people in nine states and three countries in connection with a child pornography ring that US federal authorities described as "one of the worst" they have discovered. Although specific numbers are difficult to obtain for such a widespread crime, millions of children worldwide are currently subjected to this form of exploitation and abuse, while millions more who have not yet become victims remain without adequate protection. According to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, 50 per cent of sites showing children being abused are operated on a pay-per-view basis. This provides the money behind the motivation for individuals and organised crime units to continue in the

industry. Europe, Japan and the United States continue to be the main sources of commercial production, distribution, and consumption.

Possible Solutions

Seeing as they have the highest numbers of victims, the United States along with several north-eastern European countries are the forefront of the fight against child pornography. The USA Department of Justice coordinates programs to track and prosecute child pornography offenders with the international cooperation of other governments. Efforts by the Department to combat child pornography include; the National Child Victim Identification Program, the world's largest database of child pornography, their internal Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) for the purpose of identifying victims of child abuse. In Europe the CIRCAMP (Cospol Internet Related Child Abusive Material Project) is aimed at reducing the availability of abusive material on the internet, combining traditional police investigative methods and police/internet industry cooperation by blocking access to sites containing these files.

As of 2008, ninety-four of 187 Interpol member states have laws specifically addressing child pornography. Of those 94 countries, 58 criminalized possession of child pornography regardless of intent to distribute. Both distribution and possession are now criminal offenses in almost all Western countries. Furthermore, many supranational organizations, including the United Nations and the European Commission, are now working to globalize the criminalization of child pornography. Although these laws are in effect, they are often not regulated. In Japan loopholes in the wording of the law make it easy for producers to avoid prosecution. Almost every country has passed a law condemning, and prosecuting child pornography in its entirety, yet it is still a prevalent crime which continues to exploit children.

Meanwhile, UNICEF's current mission statement reads: "Protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse is an integral component of protecting their rights to survival, growth and development. UNICEF's commitment to protecting children is underlined in our Medium Term Strategic Plan and Child Protection Strategy. We draw on our Core Corporate Commitments, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Millennium Declaration, and numerous international human rights agreements as the basis for our response. UNICEF advocates and supports the creation of a protective environment for children in partnership with governments, national and international partners including the private sector, and civil society. National child protection systems, protective social practices and children's own empowerment coupled with good oversight and monitoring are among the elements of a protective environment and enable countries, communities and families to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation and abuse."

Points of Contention

Debate in committee should be focused on creating an international regime for online monitoring of content. The contentions between states should be particularly visible in issues like

cyberspace-sovereignty. The jurisdiction of a possible control agency should be debated (ex. should prosecutions be carried out at a national level, should the agency simply have advisory functions). Also, the monetary resources for such an agency should be explored.

Resources

When doing research, be aware of the content on the internet, and make should to only access sources which you trust. Below are some you can start with:

http://www.make-it-safe.net/esp/pdf/Child_pornography_internet_Carr2004.pdf

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/childporn/>

<http://www.rogerdarlington.co.uk/sexonnet.html>