



**THEIR PROTECTION  
IS IN OUR HANDS**

**SUMMARY REPORT**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### THEIR PROTECTION IS IN OUR HANDS

#### The State of Global Child Trafficking for Sexual Purposes

The full Global Report was compiled by a number of ECPAT International Secretariat staff (Alessia Altamura, Sendrine Constant, Patchareeboon Sakulpitakphon, Vimala Crispin, Manida Naebklang, Mark Capaldi and Carmen Madriñan).

Special thanks are extended to Muireann O' Briain, Theo Noten and Maria Eugenia Villareal for their technical review of this report.

ECPAT International also wishes to gratefully acknowledge the feedback given by Christopher Davis and Myriam Galopin of the International Campaigns Team of The Body Shop International.



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# THEIR PROTECTION IS IN OUR HANDS

## SUMMARY REPORT

### OVERVIEW/ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document is a summary of 'Their Protection is in Our Hands – The State of Global Child Trafficking for Sexual Purposes', an in-depth report that compiles the most up-to-date information about the trafficking of children and young people for sexual exploitation around the world.

As well as covering specialist research data, the campaign strategy is to monitor the measures that 40 nation states are taking to tackle child sex trafficking, and their level of compliance with relevant international protocols. This dual approach allows detailed analysis of the latest trends, challenges and potential solutions to child sex trafficking, and addresses the current lack of awareness and understanding of this global problem.

The report is published by ECPAT International and The Body Shop as part of a three-year global awareness-raising and advocacy campaign, 'Stop the Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People', launched in August 2009. Campaign aims and activities are outlined in the following pages. The full report and additional campaign information are available at [www.thebodyshop.com/stop](http://www.thebodyshop.com/stop).

ECPAT International (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) is a global network of grassroots organisations working in 75 countries to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children while supporting and protecting children.

The Body Shop is the original ethical and natural beauty brand. It has an established track record in campaigning for social justice and it has never shied away from tackling the issues others avoid.

### KEY TERMS

- **Child Sex Trafficking:** The trafficking of children for sexual exploitation is a complex issue that varies by region or country. It includes a wide range of situations involving the recruitment and transportation of children for sexually exploitative practices, including prostitution, the making of pornography and forced marriages. Children may be taken away from their home by deception or force. Occasionally, desperate parents sell children to traffickers. Trafficked children often experience dangerous and uncomfortable journeys, and may be hidden in cramped conditions. After being moved, child victims of trafficking are often abused, beaten or raped into submission and may be repeatedly sold. They are psychologically and physically damaged but often too frightened or ashamed to ask for help. Their lives or the lives of their families may be threatened if they try to escape. Authorities may not provide adequate protection for children who escape their abusers, leaving them vulnerable to further exploitation.
- By 'children', we mean people under the age of 18, in agreement with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is also referred to as "children and young people" in our campaign title and materials. While children under 18 are legally able to consent to sexual acts in some jurisdictions, they are not legally adults and so are not in a position to consent to paid sex. Children may be easier for traffickers to deceive, manipulate and control.

## 1) INTRODUCTION

The '21st century slave trade'. Three days before her death in September 2007, Dame Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop, used these words to describe the trafficking of children and young people for sexual exploitation. She wanted to find a way for The Body Shop and its customers to bring about positive change and end this global human rights abuse.

Millions of children and young people under 18 are trafficked every year. The majority of these minors are affected by sexual exploitation. In partnership with ECPAT International, a world leader in tackling this issue, The Body Shop is launching a global campaign to Stop the Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People.

Launching in August 2009, our three-year campaign aims to end this abusive practice for good by urging decision-makers around the world to honour their commitments to give children greater protection. Our campaign will increase public awareness of this global issue and will raise funding for vulnerable children at risk of, or exploited by, sex trafficking.

The first step in our campaign is the publication of a groundbreaking global report, 'Their Protection is in Our Hands - The State of Global Child Trafficking for Sexual Purposes'.<sup>1</sup> This report provides the most up-to-date information on child sex trafficking around the world to increase awareness and understanding of the problem. Key findings from the report are outlined in this document.

We have also defined three goals for nation states to help eradicate child sex trafficking and improve support for child victims by 2012 (see p.9 and p.10). These 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.

Throughout the campaign, ECPAT International and The Body Shop will assess and update performance against these three goals on a country-by-country basis. In 2012, we will present an updated report to the UN Human Rights Council and the relevant UN Special Rapporteur.

**Figure 1. Global Overview - Child Trafficking Routes**



1. The Body Shop and ECPAT International, Their Protection is in our Hands - The State of Global Child Trafficking for Sexual Purposes, 2009, available at [www.thebodyshop.com/stop](http://www.thebodyshop.com/stop) and <http://www.ecpat.net>

## 2) A WORLDWIDE PHENOMENON AFFECTING MILLIONS

Every year, an estimated 1.2 million child victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation or cheap labour.<sup>2</sup> Human trafficking, the third largest international crime (after illegal drugs and arms trafficking) is believed to be worth billions of dollars each year.<sup>3</sup> The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) asserted that human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal activities in the world.<sup>4</sup>

Our findings challenge the perception that child sex trade is a phenomenon confined to developing areas of the world, and reveals that children are trafficked for sexual exploitation in - or through - virtually all countries of the world.

The trafficking of children for sexual purposes reduces victims to commodities to be bought, sold, transported and re-sold for sexual exploitation, including prostitution, the making of pornography and forced marriages. Child victims of trafficking suffer severe and long-lasting damage to their physical, emotional, psychological, and social development.

Quantifying the number of children trafficked into the global sex market every year is a challenge. The latest official figures released by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime quote a total of 21,400 human trafficking victims that were identified through the criminal justice process and through victims' assistance organisations in 111 countries. Nearly 80% of all trafficking worldwide is for sexual exploitation.



**79% OF ALL GLOBAL  
TRAFFICKING IS FOR  
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

UNODC

**Among identified cases, the proportion of minors involved in all forms of human trafficking has increased between 2003 and 2007 from about 15% to nearly 22%.<sup>5</sup>**

However, we believe that the illegal and clandestine nature of trafficking, the limited reports of this crime and the insufficient prosecution of traffickers mean that most official statistics underestimate a largely hidden phenomenon and are likely to represent only the tip of the iceberg.

## 3) RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILD TRAFFICKING FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES/THE GLOBAL CHILD TRAFFICKING CONTEXT

Rather than witnessing a decline in the incidence of trafficking, we have identified developments that cause grave concern among those fighting the exploitation of children and young people.

### 3.1. Increased recognition and incidence of domestic trafficking

The world has paid more attention to the trafficking of children between nation states but we have found that the number of children trafficked within some countries ('domestic trafficking') is increasing. Such trafficking may involve movement from rural to urban areas or from one city to another. Children may be moved from poorer and unprivileged places to tourist locations, or to areas where there is a concentration of male workers.

**A recent review of trafficking flows shows that domestic trafficking was identified as a problem in 64% of the 170 countries reviewed.<sup>6</sup>**

Domestic trafficking may present an attractive and profitable opportunity for traffickers - in the absence of a border crossing, the child may not need travel identification documents, is likely to speak the same language, and may be less likely to get in contact with authorities who can identify the child as a victim of trafficking. These factors enable the trafficking process to be organised at a more local level, involving a range of people based within the community, such as local taxis or buses transporting child victims to locations near to where they were recruited or abducted.

In several countries in Central and South America and in Africa, internal trafficking appears to be more prevalent than cross-border trafficking, especially when the victims are children. However, targeted actions to counteract and prevent internal trafficking are yet to be developed, due to a lack of recognition of the problem by national governments.

2. UNICEF, 2007, see: [http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_40002.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_40002.html)

3. UNODC, 2009, see: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>

4. Associated Foreign Press (AFP), "UN to Host First Human Trafficking Conference" January 29, 2008. [http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5iqltLWA-\\_F\\_u4xJTLRGYm3yxxc1A](http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5iqltLWA-_F_u4xJTLRGYm3yxxc1A)

5. UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2009, available from: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>

6. US State Department, Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2008

### 3.2. Concern over 'regionalised' cross-border trafficking

Our review of the flows, routes and changes in patterns in child trafficking highlights the fact that most of this activity takes place over relatively short distances, either within regions or sub-regions. This appears particularly prevalent in South Asia, the West and Central African region, the Mekong sub-region in East Asia, and among some countries in Central and South America.

The trafficking of children across continents often involves larger-scale criminal networks and can be more risky and less lucrative for perpetrators. In addition, checks at border controls may be stricter than between neighbouring countries where crossing land borders is frequent.

### 3.3. Children missing from care centres

A growing problem reported in Western Europe is the number of unaccompanied foreign minors who disappear from the shelters where they are placed upon their arrival in a new country. Experts believe these children are either trafficked and sexually exploited in their country of arrival, or moved within Europe through regional prostitution and trafficking networks. For example, a 2005 study and recent media reports highlight the trafficking and sexual exploitation of separated children seeking asylum in Ireland, as gangs exploit the children's vulnerability and the lack of adequate official supervision.

## 4) VULNERABILITIES AND RISKS FOR CHILDREN

### 4.1. An ever-present danger

There is no such thing as a 'typical' child victim of trafficking for sexual exploitation. Data from around the world suggests that a number of factors make children particularly vulnerable to this crime.

**Factors that can heighten the risk of trafficking include:**

- Poverty;
- A low level of education;
- Socio-cultural norms and circumstances including gender and minority discrimination, harmful traditional practices and cultural values which fuel child sexual exploitation or push children into labour or survival migration;
- Volatile family environments, such as domestic violence or parents having drug or alcohol addictions;
- Separation from families, perhaps because of family breakdown, natural disaster, armed conflict or migration; and
- Low self-esteem.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic, especially in Africa, makes many children more vulnerable to all forms of exploitation as they may have to supplement family income while being exposed to the stigma of having relatives with HIV or AIDS. In areas where HIV/AIDS is widespread, men may prefer to pay for sex with children under the false belief that children are free from the disease. Humanitarian crises such as floods, drought or armed conflicts also contribute to leaving children without the necessary care and protection, thus increasing their vulnerability to trafficking and sexual exploitation.

### 4.2. Demand for sex with children

The demand for sex with children and young people must be acknowledged as a main factor contributing to the sex trafficking of minors. However, the issue of demand remains largely unaddressed by governments. Contrary to popular misconceptions, the demand for sex with children comes not only from paedophiles but also from people who pay for sex. Both nationals and foreigners who patronise the commercial sex market may end up sexually exploiting a child without necessarily realising that they are under 18. Child sex exploiters come from of all ages, marital statuses, socio-economic backgrounds and professions.

### 4.3. The global economic crisis

**Our research suggests that the current global recession is likely to increase the risk of vulnerable children and can result in a further rise in child trafficking for sexual purposes.**

Increasing levels of poverty in children's countries of origin, a reduction in budget allocations for social services and more restrictive immigration laws in 'destination countries' will all heighten vulnerability. Deterioration in the living conditions of entire households may induce children to abandon school in order to contribute to the family income, exposing them to harmful situations including sexual exploitation in prostitution. Some children may end up living or spending a long time on the streets or be forced to seek livelihood options that entrap them in illegal and dangerous migration.

The economic crisis also means that prostitution clients have less disposable income, which may drive exploiters to look for cheaper options. Since children trafficked for sexual exploitation have few alternatives and little negotiating power, they are likely to be pushed into even more exploitative situations as their exploiters attempt to maintain the level of income arising from these criminal activities.

#### **POTENTIAL INDICATORS FOR IDENTIFYING CHILD TRAFFICKED VICTIMS:**

- Not having possession of his/her own travel documents;
- Illegal entry into a country;
- False papers, provided by another person;
- Fear of being expelled;
- Required to earn a minimum amount of money every day;
- Must pay off an exorbitant debt, perhaps for travel costs, before being able to control his/her own earnings;
- A large part of their earnings is handed over to another person;
- Limited freedom of movement; and
- Has been abused, or works under threat of violence;

Source: ECPAT Europe Law Enforcement Group Programme against Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes in Europe. "Combating The Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes: Questions and Answers Booklet" Bangkok, 2006

## 5) PROFILING TRAFFICKERS AND VICTIMS

### 5.1. Trafficked children

Studies conducted in several countries have shown that children can become victims of a trafficking operation at any time in their life and the form of exploitation they are subjected usually varies according to their age.

Young children are frequently trafficked for begging, child labour, illegal adoption or involvement in criminal activities, while teenagers, mainly aged 14-17, are often trafficked for sexual exploitation (this includes situations in developed countries where the child is over the age of sexual consent and mistakenly perceived as able to consent to involvement in prostitution).<sup>7</sup> In contexts where gender stereotypes have resulted in children being considered to be sexually mature at a younger age, trafficking for exploitation in prostitution may also affect children aged 11-12, or even younger.

In recent years there has been an increased recognition that despite boys being mainly trafficked for labour exploitation, they may be trafficked for sexual exploitation as well (though to a lesser extent than girls). The trafficking of boys for sexual purposes is still largely unrecognised because of misconceptions and widespread social denial of its existence. The lack of information and understanding around this issue means that victim support structures are most often not tailored to meet their needs.

### 5.2. Child traffickers

The profits generated by child sex trafficking are enormous. It is estimated that the global profits made from trafficking of people (men, women and children) into forced commercial sex amount to US \$27.8 billion per year.<sup>8</sup> Almost half of these profits - US \$13.3 billion - are made from people trafficked into or within industrialised countries.<sup>9</sup>

**The annual profit per victim per year can be as high as US \$67,200 in industrialised countries or US \$10,000 in the Asia and Pacific region and Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>10</sup>**

Many people profit from the trafficking of 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. Evidence suggests they are likely to come from the same ethnic or national background as the child victim. In some cases, someone familiar to the child - such as a neighbour or extended family member - may be involved. In an increasing number of cases, traffickers are women or girls previously engaged in the commercial sex trade (especially in Eastern Europe and Central Asia).<sup>11</sup> UNODC recently reported that females account for more than 60% of convictions for human trafficking in these regions.<sup>12</sup>

The participation of highly-organised traffickers and large-scale criminal groups including mafia-type organisations has been demonstrated in several countries. However, evidence collected in recent years suggests that most trafficking operations are run by individuals and small groups that collaborate on a less structured basis to take children from places where they are available and vulnerable, to locations where there is a demand for such exploitation.

## 6) HOPELESS CAUSE OR CAUSE FOR HOPE?

The trafficking of children and young people is a largely hidden and highly complex activity that may involve numerous jurisdictions. The lack of a comprehensive response and the low priority given to the issue by many governments has resulted in poor coordination of actions between stakeholders and across countries. This lack of engagement has resulted in a worldwide failure to uphold children's right to protection, as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and ratified by 191 countries.

However, our findings suggest that there is cause for hope. Reducing the number of children who are trafficked, or at risk of being trafficked, for sexual exploitation is not impossible. Real progress can be achieved through a wide collaboration between countries of origin, transit and destination, and by effective cooperation and coordination among relevant stakeholders.

Following the recent World Congress III against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, 137 participating governments signed up to the *Rio Declaration and Plan for Action*, which outlines specific targets that all states must achieve to ensure the right of every child to protection from sexual exploitation. This demonstrates widespread awareness of the issue of child sex trafficking, and high-level commitment to addressing the issue.

7. The age of consent typically refers to the minimum age at which a person is considered legally competent of consenting to sexual acts. This age should not be confused with the age of majority, when a person becomes a legal adult. The age of consent should never be considered in relation to sexual exploitation, as a child is never in a position to consent.

8. P Belsler, *Forced Labour and Human Trafficking: Estimating the Profits*, International Labour Organization, 2005, p14. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1016&context=forcedlabor>

9. Ibid

10. Ibid

11. UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, 2009, available from: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>

12. UNODC, 'Denial and Neglect Undermine the Fight against Human Trafficking', says UNODC Director. Press release dated 12 February 2009, accessed on 7 April 2009 from: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2009-02.12.html>

## 7) THE WAY FORWARD

The Body Shop and ECPAT International believe that now is the time for concerted action against child sex trafficking by building on the momentum created by the World Congress III and putting pressure on governments to honour their commitments to children. Inspired by the *Rio Declaration*,<sup>13</sup> we have identified **three key goals**, which all states need to achieve to create positive, long-term change. Progress towards each goal will be measured by using four specific indicators, as outlined below.

The Stop the Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People campaign is adopting **three key goals** and calling for states to take action immediately. Successful implementation of action to achieve these goals will have a significant impact on the prevention of child sex trafficking and will help to ensure that children receive appropriate care and support if they fall victim to these violations.

Progress towards these goals will be monitored through the use of a specially-developed progress card which uses a colour code to illustrate performance against our selected indicators. Throughout the three-year campaign The Body Shop and ECPAT International will monitor and publicise progress towards these goals on a country-by-country basis.

**Figure 2. Progress Cards Measuring State Action**

Countries	Ratified the Trafficking Protocol	Ratified the Optional Protocol	National legislation harmonised with Trafficking Protocol	Special Police Unit
Czech Republic	Progress	Progress	No Progress	Compliance
Thailand	Progress	Compliance	No Progress	Progress

■ Compliance   ■ Progress   ■ No Progress

### 7.1. Campaign goals and indicators of success

#### GOAL 1 ▶

Community-based prevention programmes to stop child trafficking are reaching at-risk populations

#### Indicators:

- A** The state legislation and/or policy provides for implementation of community-based programmes to prevent child trafficking.
- B** The state legislation and/or policy provides for implementation of community-based programmes to prevent child trafficking with wide stakeholder collaboration.
- C** The state implements or fully supports awareness-raising programmes on child trafficking.
- D** The state has established policy provision for teacher training curricula to include information on child sexual exploitation, including trafficking.

Community-based prevention programmes are essential because preventing children from falling prey to sex traffickers is the first step towards guaranteeing the protection of children. As our indicators explain, prevention encompasses a range of different activities, from mobilisation and awareness-building among families and the general public to more targeted and specific interventions that reach vulnerable and at-risk children.

In 56% of the countries studied, prevention campaigns were organised by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) without state support. This is reinforced by the troubling finding that less than one-third of the states we reviewed have adopted a policy for the implementation of community-based programmes specifically relating to the sexual exploitation of children, including child trafficking for sexual purposes

By achieving Goal 1 and fulfilling the four related indicators, the world can take an important step to Stop the Trafficking of Children and Young People.

13. "The Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call to Action" available at: [http://www.ecpat.net/world Congress III/index.php](http://www.ecpat.net/world%20Congress%20III/index.php)

### GOAL 2

**International legal standards for protecting children from trafficking have been incorporated in the national legal framework**

#### Indicators:

- A** The state has ratified the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.
- B** The state has ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.
- C** The state has harmonised national law in line with the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.
- D** The state has established a special police unit to combat crimes against children, including trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Every state's legal framework should be in line with the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (the 'Trafficking Protocol')<sup>14</sup> and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (the 'Optional Protocol')<sup>15</sup> - the two international standards relating to child trafficking.

Furthermore, it is essential that states establish a protective environment for children via an appropriate legal framework which prohibits child trafficking and ensures child victims are not penalised as criminals or further victimised through the justice system. Our report also outlines the need for appropriately trained police units that can respond to the special needs of trafficked children and ensure proper and effective protection.

We found that 66% of the countries examined in East Asia and Pacific have not yet ratified the Trafficking Protocol. Similarly, more than half of the countries considered in the East Asia and Pacific region (55% of nine countries examined) have not ratified the Optional Protocol. Almost a quarter (22% of 22 countries examined) have not ratified the Optional Protocol in the European and Commonwealth of Independent States region. And only one-third of the 40 countries we reviewed have adopted adequate national legislation against child trafficking for sexual exploitation that is in line with the requirements of the Trafficking Protocol.

By achieving Goal 2, and incorporating international legal standards for protecting children from trafficking, countries are establishing the necessary legal framework to Stop the Trafficking of Children and Young People.

### GOAL 3

**Specialised government services for child victims of trafficking are integrated in national policies**

#### Indicators:

- A** The state has established a telephone helpline for child victims of trafficking.
- B** The state has established shelters for child victims of sexual exploitation, including trafficking.
- C** The state has established medical services for child victims of sexual exploitation, including trafficking.
- D** The state has established psychological counselling services for child victims of sexual exploitation, including trafficking.

Appropriate care should always prioritise the best interest of the child victim and be developed in consultation with the child. A wide range of specialist services are necessary to support each trafficked child through the post-rescue phase, recovery and repatriation or reintegration. Assistance should include: placing the child in specialist children's care/shelter homes or appropriate alternatives; providing healthcare services, psychological support, educational opportunities, vocational and livelihood training; and access to justice (including compensation) through specially trained personnel that understand the harm experienced by child survivors and can adapt their services for their best benefit.

Through a review of measures promoted by the 40 states examined in the report we found that most have not prioritised their efforts to ensure that child victims receive comprehensive assistance and care. More specifically, only 41% of countries examined in Asia Pacific and 50% of countries in Europe region have state-established helplines to assist victims of trafficking. Additionally, in 82% of the countries we studied, shelters and accommodation services tended to be run by NGOs and other partners, with no or little support from the state.

By achieving Goal 3 and delivering specialist government services for child victims of trafficking and ensuring their integration into national policies, countries are demonstrating their commitment to ensure that children receive comprehensive assistance and care.

14. The Trafficking Protocol is the main international convention that provides a comprehensive definition of trafficking in children and details all acts related to the trafficking process that must be criminalised by the states who have ratified it.

15. The Optional Protocol is an international convention that provides for a number of measures to be adopted by the states who ratify it in order to protect children. These measures include: amending national legislation so that the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography are fully covered by the state's criminal or penal law; providing support to child survivors of commercial sexual exploitation; encouraging international cooperation between states in pursuing offenders; and promoting preventive measures through education, training and information.



## 8) CONCLUSION - A CALL TO ACTION

The trafficking of children for sexual exploitation may be a largely hidden problem, but it is on all of our doorsteps. Recent research suggests the problem is getting worse rather than better, and that governments simply are not doing enough to tackle the problems and protect children. Through concerted effort, The Body Shop and ECPAT International believe we can all help to stop child sex trafficking.

Through our Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People campaign, The Body Shop and ECPAT International are calling on governments to act now to honour their commitments outlined in the Rio Declaration and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Over the next three years we will help to achieve change by measuring and publicising countries' progress towards our three strategic goals and performance indicators.

The Body Shop and ECPAT International have already shone light on the issue of child sex trafficking by collating, analysing and publicising global research from reputable sources around the world, helping to increase understanding of key trends and challenges. We will continue to publicise appropriate information to keep this issue on the global agenda. In the meantime, we will continue to work together to raise money to provide care and support for child victims of sex trafficking.

Using ECPAT International's global expertise and The Body Shop's worldwide presence, we are committed to working with customers, supporters, activists, states and decision-makers around the world to Stop the Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People. We welcome your involvement in this urgent campaign.

