

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

At the international conference “Combating Child Pornography on the Internet” in Vienna from 29 September to 1 October 1999, experts and representatives from governments, the Internet industry, international organizations, hotlines and non-governmental organizations gathered from around the world, aiming to address the challenges and identify joint actions against child pornography on the Internet. The conference was organized by the governments of Austria and the United States, as well as the European Commission.

As during the course of recent years the phenomenon of child pornography has grown in proportion, calls for measures to prevent and combat child pornography on the Internet have been intensified. Especially since the Stockholm conference against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in 1996, at which Governments committed themselves to criminalize the sexual exploitation of children and to condemn and penalize the offenders involved, a number of measures have been taken at national, regional and international levels to combat the spread of child pornography on the Internet.

In many countries, including Austria, child pornography on the Internet has become an issue of lively debate. Special initiatives have been undertaken - legislation prohibiting the production, distribution and, increasingly, also the possession of child pornography has been enacted or improved. Law enforcement authorities have stepped up their efforts to combat child pornography on the Internet. Several countries have established working groups on computer crime or specialized units on child pornography within their police forces contributing to a rise in prosecutions and convictions of suspects.

The Conference in Vienna last autumn concentrated on some of the major challenges and dangers:

- how to re-enforce cooperation among law enforcement officials and the judiciary
- how to elaborate elements for codes of conduct of the Internet industry
- how to increase the effectiveness of hotlines, encourage networking and the establishment of further hotlines

In a framework of open and constructive discussions between experts from the Internet industry, international organizations, hotlines and non-governmental organizations and representatives from governments and international organizations a global consensus on the best strategies to combat child pornography on the Internet emerged. The working groups elaborated and agreed upon detailed recommendations for action groups. The major, overarching conclusions can be summarised as follows:

- **Zero tolerance against child pornography on the Internet**

The conference called for an international commitment to a policy of zero tolerance against child pornography making clear to any potential perpetrator that the Internet is no longer an anonymous place for crimes and illegal activities. This requires clear and strong legislation and effective law enforcement.

- **The need for a global partnership among regions as well as all actors and stake holders**

The strengthening of partnerships at national and international levels among governments, the Internet industry, hotlines and NGOs is a "must" to promote an alliance of legal regulation, law enforcement and industry self-regulation.

- **Worldwide criminalization of child pornography**

A main outcome of the Conference was the call for the worldwide criminalization of the production, distribution, exportation, transmission, importation, intentional possession and advertising of child pornography. States which have not yet done so, are called upon to enact appropriate legislation. There must be no safe haven and progress in this area must be monitored. States and regional and international institutions were encouraged to work towards harmonization of legislation.

- **Strengthening law enforcement at national level and improving international cooperation among law enforcement agencies**

This requires in particular

-the establishment and strengthening of special units dealing with Cybercrime, in particular child pornography, which are adequately equipped with a prompt reaction capacity

-the establishment by law enforcement agencies of efficient programmes for specialized training of personnel dealing with fighting child pornography e.g., by organized regular meetings at national, regional and international levels of competent practitioners with a view to promoting general information exchange, best practices, tactical coordination and analysis of the situation

-the resolution of legal problems and impediments to effective and swift transboundary cooperation such as questions relating to jurisdiction, legal assistance, expedited procedures for evidence and search and seizure

-the creation and maintenance of a digitized central library of child pornography images

- **Closer cooperation and partnership between governments and the Internet industry**

The Internet industry is an indispensable partner of law enforcement agencies in the investigation and prosecution of child pornography but also in exchange of experience and capacity building. Clarification and harmonization of the responsibilities and liabilities of the Internet industry is necessary. Particularly the voluntary self-regulation and codes of conduct of the Internet industry should be strengthened and expanded. Such self-regulatory mechanisms must be compatible with and complementary to governmental legislation.

- **Training and capacity building**

The Conference identified training and capacity building of law enforcement officials and all other personnel involved as critical and a prerequisite for improving our tools in the fight against child pornography on the Internet. Governments, the Industry, hotlines and NGOs must join forces towards this goal. All staff involved in the combat against child pornography shall receive specialized training in child development and child rights issues.

- **Raising awareness and empowering users**

The conference emphasized the need to work towards raising worldwide awareness about this negative phenomenon. We must aim to empower every Internet user, in particular young users, to safely use the vast benefits of the Internet.

This Congress, bringing together law enforcement officials from many countries is an ideal opportunity to promote and implement the recommendations of the Conference. It is the hope of the organizers of the Conference that the UN and all delegates assembled here will take up this important issue.

Thank you

Mr President