

Stockholm Congress: CLOSING ADDRESS **H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden**

It is of great importance to me, as the Patron of this Congress and also as a mother and a world citizen, to have the opportunity to close this first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

It gives me enormous hope to see you all and to know that you, like myself, are personally deeply committed to the cause of abolishing commercial sexual exploitation of children. Together we are dedicating our time, energy and creativity to the complex problem of eliminating this atrocious and horrifying business with innocent and unshielded children around the world.

This has been a unique Congress. First of all because of its structure. Governments, United Nations agencies, Interpol, non-governmental organizations and individuals have all participated on equal conditions -- each offering a unique perspective and expertise to the proceedings. This is also the very first time that commercial sexual exploitation of children has been the focus of an international conference on top level. This global problem has finally been acknowledged and put on the international political agenda. And indeed, this is where it belongs.

I am therefore extremely pleased to see that so many governments have recognized the significance of the Congress and have sent representatives from their ministries of justice, of social affairs, of education, defense, health, labour and foreign affairs. I am also overwhelmed by the commitment and participation of hundreds and hundreds of representatives from so many other sectors of society. Lawyers, prosecutors, police, customs officials, representatives from the travel and tourism industry, social workers, members of the business community, journalists, parliamentarians, child rights advocates, health professionals, psychologists, religious leaders and the youth groups have come to offer themselves as important allies in this endeavour. The diversity is a reflection of the complex nature of the problem that confronts us. It also illustrates the necessity for further global action by these sectors in order to eliminate child prostitution, child sex tourism, child pornography and trafficking in children for sexual purposes.

Much has been accomplished during these few days in Stockholm:

- You have adopted a Declaration and an Agenda for Action. This instrument will be an invaluable practical tool in setting priorities and in structuring the work that needs to be done.
- You have had the opportunity to exchange a multitude of information and a variety of experiences which you will be able to use in your continued efforts to assist abused children and to prevent others from being exploited.
- You have been encouraged and inspired to continue and intensify your daily work against the commercial sexual exploitation of children.
- You have come to the conclusion that forceful action must be taken in a number of areas and on all levels of society in order to reach our goals. Coordination, collaboration and cooperation are vital.

Much has been achieved during this Congress, but the most important work remains to be done. When you return home you must make the words of the Declaration and Agenda for Action come alive. Implementation units which provide for the broadest possible participation should be

established, as well as coalitions which build bridges between NGOs, governments, the private sector and all other disciplines represented in this great hall today.

You can bring home with you all the signs of hope that have become apparent during this Congress. Several countries are adopting legislation which makes it clear that the sexual exploitation of children will not be tolerated neither in local communities nor in the global community. Nations are beginning to take responsibility for the action of their own citizens abroad. The formation of organizations like the Interpol Standing Working Party on Offences against Minors offers welcome evidence of new levels of global cooperation. More and more governments are following the international trends of legislation which outlaws the production, distribution and possession of child pornography. Computer experts are finding new ways to use technology in order to identify and apprehend criminals who operate in cyberspace. And in the vital area of mental health, professionals are developing new methods of treatment for both child, victims and offenders.

I wish to extend my personal and deep gratitude to the four organizers of the Congress: UNICEF, ECPAT, the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Swedish Government. I know that it has taken an enormous amount of work and personal commitment to make this Congress and its achievements a reality.

I particularly wish to express my appreciation for the devoted and tireless efforts of the non-governmental organizations and child advocates who brought this issue to the world's attention. It is the spark of your dedication, determination and vision that has ignited this World Congress.

We who are here today, and many, many more, are now a part of a global network which includes governments and every sector of society. We know that as long as there is any child who is being sexually exploited, there is work to do. We can never let our vision of what is possible be limited by what appear to be invincible obstacles. Much can be achieved in no time if there is commitment, dedication and cooperation.

To me it is of great importance that the Declaration and Agenda for Action has been unanimously adopted. This document is based upon relevant articles in the legally binding UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by 188 nations. I am also pleased that you have agreed on a deadline for the implementation of the stipulated actions. This reflects the sense of urgency which must accompany our efforts. We have to act now and we have to act forcefully.

In doing so we shall, according to the Declaration and Agenda for Action, call upon all sectors of society concerned, to join forces and to cooperate on national, regional and international levels. We owe this to the children that have been abused, tortured and even killed by sex offenders and to the children who are at risk of becoming victims.

But we also owe it to ourselves if we want to call this world a civilized one. This modern form of slavery has to be stopped!