



13 March 2014 - "Millions of girls and boys worldwide are victims of sexual exploitation, even though this issue in recent years has gained increased visibility," stated the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, [Najat Maalla M'jid](#) during the presentation of her latest [report](#).

Children are more at risk of being sexually exploited or sold than ever, and the expert urged a global response to these crimes that are increasing in an interconnected world. Persistent demand and global criminal networks are profiting from the increasingly lucrative trade in exploiting children along social tolerance and impunity. Combined, these factors increase children's vulnerability.

Certain forms of sexual exploitation are increasing: sale and trafficking of children for sexual purposes and economic exploitation, child sex tourism and online child sexual exploitation. "The ongoing development of new technologies has made access to children in all parts of the world easier and increased exploitation," she said. "The destinations for child sex tourism are continually changing, as perpetrators tend to choose countries with weak legislation and controls."

The expert also noted, "The availability of child pornography online is growing. Child victims of online sexual exploitation are younger and younger, and the images are more and more

horrific". But these crimes can be hard to track, she noted. The true scope of the problem is not clear due to inadequate legislation, lack of reliable data, and under-reporting. "The clandestine nature of such exploitation, the fear of reprisals and stigmatisation, as well as the lack of child-sensitive complaints mechanisms, also hamper our understanding of these crimes," stated Ms. Maalla M'jid.

The impact on victims is not sufficiently understood and taken into account when addressing recovery, remedies and compensation. "Children must be involved in assessing the scale of the problem and the developing solutions", she added. But it is clear that, "All these crimes have serious and long-lasting physical, psychological and social effects, not only for the girls and boys who are the direct victims, but also for their families and communities," Ms. Maalla M'jid stressed.

Ms. Maalla M'jid urged the international community to establish a global response, through a global legal framework and sustainable transnational co-operation, to prevent and combat these evolving crimes. In addition, she called for close co-operation with the private sector, and for strong corporate social responsibility among internet service providers, telecommunications, tourism and travel industry, media and financial institutions.

"Despite significant efforts and reiterated global commitments, much still needs to be done to protect, rehabilitate and reintegrate victims, provide reparation to children for the damage they have suffered, sanction those responsible, change certain social norms, and to ultimately prevent such exploitation," she said.

The special rapporteur concluded by saying, "As the world reflects on universal development goals for the post-2015 era, bearing in mind the strong connections between economic, social, and political development and child protection issues, child-sensitive protection must be included in the Post-2015 Development Agenda".