

March 30, 2022

The Honorable Barbara Lee, Chairwoman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Hal Rogers, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Chris Coons, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Lindsey Graham, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

Dear Chairwoman Lee and Chairman Coons and Ranking Members Rogers and Graham,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to respectfully request \$15 million for the Child Protection Compacts (CPC) program in the Fiscal Year 2023 State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill. Online sexual exploitation and abuse of children (OSEAC) is one of the fastest growing crimes and threats against children. The [US Sentencing Commission's October 2021 report](#), which studied child sexual abuse image producers, found that the number of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) producers sentenced between 2005 and 2019 increased by 422%.

- **Transformations in Education:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, children [spent more time online in 2021](#) - both unsupervised and during traditional school hours. As a result, children have become more vulnerable to exploitative and potentially violent interactions with cybercriminals.
- **Online Predation:** Researchers have observed a [“three-fold” increase](#) in self-generated imagery depicting 7 to -10-year-olds, as they were increasingly targeted and groomed by internet predators on an industrial scale.
- **Cyber Exploitation:** In 2021, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) received more than [29.3 million CyberTipline reports containing over 84.9 million images](#), videos, and other content related to suspected child sexual exploitation.
- **Reduced Perceptions of Child Safety:** Some [80% of children in 25 countries](#) report feeling in danger of sexual abuse or exploitation online. For a child victim, this may result in social isolation, mental health issues, substance abuse, self-harm or suicide, as well as an increased likelihood of exhibiting abusive behaviors themselves in adulthood.
- **Abuse of Digital Technologies:** As faster broadband connections, mobile devices, and social media platforms have become more widely accessible, the production and dissemination of child sexual abuse materials (CSAM) has increased in volume, providing offenders with additional technical possibilities to produce and share CSAM content.

Despite the exponential increase in OSEAC globally, many governments around the world do not have the infrastructure and capacity necessary to adequately respond to and investigate suspected cases. CPCs are \$5 million, multi-year bilateral agreements negotiated by the U.S. State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP) and partner governments to support the sustainable

development of partner governments' capacity to prevent and respond to child trafficking, including OSEAC, through a multi-year strategic plan.

From 2017-2021, the U.S.-Philippines Child Protection Compact Partnership supported the Philippine government's efforts to effectively understand, prevent, respond to, and combat the growing and borderless crime of OSEAC through capacity-building and scaling of its NGO partners' collective efforts. Specifically, the compact enabled the Philippine government and its partners to:

- Train 241 law enforcement agents, 100 public prosecutors and 110 aftercare service providers on how to appropriately handle OSEAC cases.
- Develop and implement best practices in victim-centered prosecutions, including plea bargains, which protected 100 survivors from the challenges of a full trial.
- Establish the Philippine Internet Crimes Against Children Center (PICACC) to forge greater collaboration and cooperation between Philippine units and foreign law enforcement.
- Increase the number of victim-centered OSEAC and child labor trafficking investigations, prosecutions, and convictions, including the rescue of 391 victims.
- Strengthen capacity to identify and provide comprehensive services for victims of OSEAC and child labor trafficking, including through the formation of the Foster Care Working Group.
- Strengthen existing community-based mechanisms for identifying and protecting child victims of OSEAC and child labor trafficking, including domestic servitude, and preventing these crimes.

We express gratitude to the subcommittee for funding the CPCs at the level of \$10M in FY22. An allocation of at least \$15 million for the CPC program will allow for three more compacts with additional countries and would support the development of their infrastructure and capacity to respond to OSEAC and other horrible forms of child trafficking.

The State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs subcommittee has a long-standing record of supporting investments that protect children and youth. Increased U.S. government funding for the CPC program will send a strong signal that the U.S. prioritizes the health, protection, and safety of all children, whether interacting in the digital or physical world.

Sincerely,

ChildFund International
ECPAT-USA
International Justice Mission
Lynn's Warriors
National Children's Alliance
The National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College
ParentsTogether
Protect Young Eyes
Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)
Thorn
UNICEF USA