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**“Lessons Learned from Super Bowl Preparations: Preventing International Human Trafficking at Major Sporting Events”
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and
International Organizations
Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), Chairman**

**Testimony presented by Carol Smolenski
Executive Director, ECPAT-USA
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Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you so much for this opportunity to talk to you about preventing human trafficking during major sporting events. My name is Carol Smolenski, Executive Director of ECPAT-USA based in New York. ECPAT-USA is the U.S. branch of an international organization working in 75 countries to protect every child’s right to grow up free from commercial sexual exploitation in all its forms including prostitution, pornography and trafficking.

I am so pleased that you are holding this hearing to begin to examine the need for enhanced protections for children from sex trafficking, and to explore the connections between major sporting events and child protection.

Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Bass, as you both know, one of the major barriers we face as advocates to protect people, and in our case children, from human trafficking is the dearth of solid statistics and evidence about the size and scope of the problem. We are often asked, has there been an increase in child sex trafficking? How many victims are there? Which are the worst geographic areas? How much does it increase during major conventions, sporting events or other gatherings? The answer to all of these questions too often is “we are not sure.”

What we are sure about is that children are bought and sold in the commercial sex trade in the United States. These are children who are brought in from other countries and also American children who are caught up in the sex industry, sometimes very young children. Adolescent children, from age 12 to 17, are integrated into the adult commercial sex market. Best estimates are that at least 100,000 American children are involved and that hundreds of thousands more, both U.S. and international victims, are at risk for sexual exploitation every year. It is important to remember that this includes both girls and *boys*. Because this is a market in human bodies, with a supply side and a demand side, we focus our time and attention on advocacy during major

events when the demand side becomes more concentrated in one geographic location for a short period of time, before then dispersing again when the event is over.

I want to first acknowledge the extensive prevention, training, awareness raising and other activities for the 48th annual Super Bowl taking place in Northern New Jersey. I am so pleased that we have been able to be a part of the multi-stakeholder groups working on this since February, particularly the New Jersey Anti-Trafficking Coalition and the Tri-State Coalition for Responsible Investing. There are also training and awareness initiatives coming from the New Jersey Attorney General's office. As part of this hard working, energetic and creative team I am pleased to report the specific projects ECPAT-USA has undertaken.

ECPAT is a leader in the U.S. and around the world in working with the hospitality industry on child sexual exploitation. With the use of online classified ads, child trafficking has moved off the streets and onto the Internet. Traffickers rent rooms in hotels, go online to create an ad in adult sexual services pages, and sell victims right out of the hotel or have victims meet purchasers at nearby hotels. Hotel rooms are a preferred venue for the sale of children because exploiters believe they are anonymous at hotels, giving them a sense that there is little risk in their behavior. In a study by John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the Center for Court Innovation on commercial sexual exploitation in New York City, researchers found that 45% of surveyed youth were exploited in hotels.

ECPAT-USA promotes the Tourism Child-Protection Code of Conduct, an internationally accepted Code with six steps that companies can take to protect children from sexual exploitation. More than 20 U.S. companies and associations have signed the Code of Conduct, including Delta Air Lines. Hundreds more companies around the world are implementing it as well. The advantage of obtaining corporate support for the Code of Conduct is that it calls for companies to use their own private resources to train staff and raise awareness about child trafficking. ECPAT-USA could never get this work done without these committed partners putting all of their energy and strength to meeting our goals. This is the most effective way to ensure that the message is spread as far and wide as possible: everyone can get involved in fighting child sexual exploitation.

Because of our powerful connections with the hospitality industry, ECPAT-USA focuses so much of its attention on training and awareness raising in the hotel sector in preparation for the Super Bowl. In November we co-sponsored a training session in New Jersey in conjunction with the New Jersey Hotel and Lodging Association. Michelle Guelbart, ECPAT-USA's Director of Private Sector Engagement gave a presentation entitled Hospitality's Role in Identifying and Reacting to Child Sex Trafficking. Later that month we were invited by the NYC Hotel and Lodging Association's Security Committee to train security representatives of major hotels in New York City and local law enforcement on the same topic. That was attended by about 40 law enforcement and industry personnel.

On January 10 we were invited by Jersey City Mayor Steven M. Fulop, the Jersey City Municipal Council, and the Resident Response Center to give the same presentation during the Human Trafficking Symposium in observance of Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Day. One hundred percent of Jersey City's hotels were in attendance, around 25 people

We are happy that our industry partners put a special emphasis on preventative measures by reaching out to the local hotels in cities prior to large events. Among the activities the industry has undertaken for this year's Super Bowl:

1. Carlson Rezidor, which has been a member of the Tourism Child-Protection Code of Conduct since 2004 has a policy of contacting hotels in cities prior to major events and asking properties to ensure Responsible Business training is up to date or to offer a refresher of Carlson Rezidor's child protection training module.
2. Hilton Worldwide, which is also a member of the Code, reported that they completed training of hotels in New Jersey and New York in December and have done follow-up in January. They trained over 250 team members that then cascaded the training to their teams.

Some non-Code companies are also stepping up. Like Carlson Rezidor, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. has a practice of contacting hotels in cities prior to major events to provide them with the company's Human Trafficking Awareness Training. In 2013, ECPAT-USA provided subject matter comments and suggestions for Starwood's e-learning module for their human trafficking awareness training, which was piloted in the Starwood hotels of New York and New Jersey in December and January in advance of the Super Bowl.

As for awareness raising, ECPAT-USA is cosponsor of the UN GIFT Box project now installed in New York City near Union Square to raise awareness about human trafficking. UNGIFT (Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking) boxes are walk-in pieces of public art that people encounter at street level that invite them inside with promises and offers like "Earn more money and support your family." Once inside visitors are presented with a different reality and exposed to the dangers of human trafficking. Survivor stories are prominently featured in the interior. The box will be on display in New York through February 2.

Finally, ECPAT-USA has been working with the New York City Port Authority to bring the Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign awareness raising posters to the New York-New Jersey area. This is particularly important because we know that child trafficking victims will often find themselves at bus terminals, either brought there by their traffickers or seeking a way to escape from exploitive situations. We are pleased to announce that the Port Authority Bus Terminal has installed 25 of the Blue Campaign posters and we are working on identifying space in the three New York-New Jersey area airports to do the same.

We can also learn a great deal from the international efforts to fight human trafficking at sporting events. In preparation for World Cup in Germany in 2006 and again in South Africa in 2010 and in preparation for the London Olympics in 2012, there was a fear and expectation that large numbers of trafficking victims would be brought to those destinations to meet demand. Most of the focus during those times was placed on international sex trafficking of women. It would appear that this big expected increase in trafficking of women did not turn out to be the case. However, last year in June an International Expert meeting on Sporting Events and Child Protection was held in Warsaw, Poland, sponsored by the European Union, and the NGOs ECPAT, Defense for Children International and Social Services for Industry Brazil to discuss lessons learned from preparations for other major sporting events.. The report from the

conference is extremely informative. Participants acknowledge that estimates of the scope of international sex trafficking of women that would accompany these events were wildly exaggerated. However, most participants at the conference in Warsaw also said that there is much that is not known because of the underground nature and invisibility of the child sex industry in particular. Participants also said that the focus of prevention and intervention strategies should be on local children and not on children trafficked from abroad because they are the ones who are consistently vulnerable to sexual exploitation, whether or not a major event is being organized.

Discussants at the June conference described the increased prevention, public awareness campaigning, enhanced services and strategic cooperation among NGOs, law enforcement, private sector and other stakeholders that were put in place during the preparations for the events. The conclusions from that conference were many but I will mention just two here: 1) Major sporting events are a good opportunity to form multidisciplinary groups to listen to experts from different backgrounds whether it is in the social area, police or health care and 2) multi-stakeholder cooperation during sporting events is a good opportunity to build trust among various actors which is particularly important for NGO and law enforcement agencies. What was crucially important about all that work is that in some cases it carried over after the end of the games leading to increased child protection in the long run. This is really important to keep in mind as we talk about the broad cooperation and preparation that has been going on in New Jersey during this last year. The full report about lessons learned about preventing sex trafficking at major sporting events is available online: <http://www.defenceforchildren.nl/images/13/2584.pdf>.

The federal government of Brazil is gearing up for major sporting events planned there in the next two years. The Brazil Federal government, along with the Ministry of Tourism and the Special Secretary for Human Rights have designed and are carrying out the “Pró Copa” Program to promote the rights of children and adolescents during the Olympic games in 2016 and the World Cup this year, both of which will be hosted in Rio de Janeiro. ECPAT partners in Brazil are advisors and participants in the extensive activities being organized as part of this campaign. ECPAT Brazil coordinator Tiana Sento Se says Brazil started planning in 2012 for these events. The National Committee was created in Rio Janeiro followed by local committees in five cities. Its first milestone was to draft a common strategic plan, identify main priorities, and create a common agenda. The focus was on local needs, therefore local agendas and action plans were set up in order to make sure that all the stakeholders know what to do in case of violations of the rights of children. These committees include local NGOs and local government representatives with a common agenda of creating educational, informational and awareness-raising awareness actions. One of the projects is a mobile application based on GPS technology, mapping points where help and assistance will be provided. Another one “Adolescentes conect@dos por uma copa sem Violencia” addresses young people through Internet and social media raising their awareness on the risks related to the World Cup and prevention measures. Other actions target tourism and hospitality businesses aimed at protecting children against sexual violence and exploitation.

In addition, according to Dr. Mauro Mendonça Magliano of the Brazil Justice Ministry’s Secretariat for Major Event Security for the World Cup, there will be close to 5000 security

agents from the host cities trained in the field of child protection against sexual exploitation. There will also be special focus on the training and raising awareness of the staff of hospitality and tourism industry on child protection. In the stadium security zones there will human rights observers in direct contact with local Command and Control Networks and Protection Committees.

ECPAT-USA has been involved in the fight against child trafficking for 23 years and we have seen enormous changes for the better in: our society's willingness to acknowledge that child sex trafficking exists; our legislator's commitment to pass legislation to combat it; our criminal justice system's ability to identify exploited children; our child welfare system's ability to help exploited children; and the private sector's acceptance of their role in protecting children. This is a fantastic start. I consider the major sporting events like the Super Bowl to be an opportunity for us advocates to further move the ball down the field to our goal: a world in which all children are free from commercial sexual exploitation.