

Dear Japanese Friends,

UNICEF is mandated to bring about the universal realisation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, including the one on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Protecting children from sexual exploitation has been one of UNICEF's major concerns since 1996. In this spirit, UNICEF has just launched a global campaign for the universal ratification of the Protocols. We and our partner organisations have also organised three world congresses against commercial sexual exploitation of children, and have worked to increase penalties for offenders and to enhance protections for children in the world.

Nevertheless, child pornography on the Internet is getting worse as a result of the rapid development of software that enables easy and widespread distribution of images. Preventing its dissemination and controlling it in every way possible, including through legislation, is an urgent international priority for every government.

It is quite encouraging to learn that Japan Committee for UNICEF is about to inaugurate a national movement to increase protections for children from child pornography, through establishing a nationwide alliance. I have been told that organisations such as the National Association of Upper Secondary School Principals and the National Congress of Parents & Teachers Association of Japan, the Girl Scouts of Japan, the National Council of YMCAs of Japan, and the Internet Association Japan, in addition to more than sixty other organizations, have already agreed with the urgent appeal of the Japan Committee and indicated their willingness to support the campaign.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to Japanese civil society for the continued generous support for UNICEF over many years, enabling UNICEF to support governments in their efforts to improve the protection for millions of children against violence and exploitation.

Thank you very much



Anthony Lake
Executive Director