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Press Release

Tireless champion for children's rights dies

Ron O'Grady died yesterday at the age of 83 following a battle with cancer. Founder of what is now known as ECPAT (a global network of child protection agencies in over 75 countries around the world) Ron was a fearless and determined advocate who managed to galvanise world leaders and groups of activists to take a stand against the sexual exploitation of children.

Through his work in Asia Ron was confronted in 1990 by the staggering number of children being abused through commercial sexual exploitation in Thailand and surrounding countries. With a small band of helpers he set out to focus world attention on the plight of vulnerable children. Initially addressing children being sexually abused by tourists the global organisation now works to prevent all forms of child sex abuse including child prostitution, child pornography and child trafficking.

Sandy Thompson, Chair of ECPAT in New Zealand states *"The world owes Ron O'Grady a huge vote of thanks. Through his passion and vision countless children around the world have been saved from abuse. Although this criminal activity continues there is no doubt that Ron has made a very significant contribution towards protecting children everywhere. A scholar and diplomat he was able to influence those in the corridors of power as well as those in communities across the globe."*

O'Grady took a lead in organising three World Congresses in Copenhagen, Tokyo and Rio de Janeiro over a span of 20 years drawing attention of governments to form action plans and strengthen legislation to prevent the sexual exploitation of children. In latter years he was the Honorary President of ECPAT International based in Bangkok and Patron of ECPAT Child ALERT here in New Zealand.

*"Ron has been a tremendous driving force with a determination to seek justice and to defend the rights of children."* says the Director of ECPAT Child ALERT *"He has been an inspiration to this organisation and helped to make it a well-respected child protection agency that will now ensure that his vision lives on."*

ECPAT Child ALERT is a registered charitable trust working in New Zealand and around the world to prevent all forms of child sexual abuse.

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