

**UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal
Justice**

31st session, 16–20 May 2022, Vienna

Agenda item 3, General Debate:

New Zealand national statement

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Mr Chair,

At the outset let me express New Zealand's full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. New Zealand condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine. Russia's aggression is a gross violation of international law and the United Nations Charter and undermines international security and stability. We are alarmed at the egregious human rights abuses inside Ukraine and a worsening humanitarian crisis, particularly the attacks on

humanitarian corridors. Targeting of densely populated areas and civilian infrastructure is not acceptable and we are deeply concerned to see reports of mounting casualties and widespread damage. New Zealand calls on Russia to cease its military operations in Ukraine and immediately withdraw. We are united with the international community in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr Chair,

The thematic discussion of this session of the Commission is countering cybercrime, and specifically, the abuse and exploitation of minors online. This thematic focus comes at a critically important moment as more of our young people are regularly online. It is estimated that two thirds of the world's population

accesses the internet, and among those connected, 60 per cent live in developing countries with 45 percent of those aged 25 or younger. These figures, coupled with the last two years of COVID-19 and the related restrictive measures on peoples' movements, has alarmingly accelerated the rise in online child sexual abuse material and exploitation. In short, it has increased the risks to our children.

Mr Chair,

Cybercrime, especially online child abuse and exploitation, where victims and offenders can be, and often are, in different countries, is an extremely complex crime to tackle. New Zealand, unfortunately, has not been spared from these heinous crimes.

An international operation led by our Department of Internal Affairs over the past two-years called "Operation H" identified more than 90,000 online accounts that have possessed or traded child sexual abuse material. This operation spanned some 13 countries has been one of the largest and most challenging online child exploitation operations led out of New Zealand. It could not have been achieved without the cooperation of our international partners and frontline organisations.

New Zealand's efforts to tackle cybercrime form part of our ongoing focus to prevent, detect and dismantle organised crime through implementation of New Zealand's cross-agency Transnational Organised Crime Strategy.

Mr Chair,

New Zealand welcomes the efforts of this Commission and the resolution led by the United Kingdom to develop responses to prevent and protect our children from these horrific crimes. Cybercrime is a multifaceted threat that requires a multi-stakeholder response. Public and private sectors, together with civil society play vital roles in prevention and investigation. Effectively combating the borderless threat of cybercrime requires the combined efforts and commitment of different actors, which is what we all want to achieve.

I thank you Mr Chair.