

# Crimes against the Child

## Crimes against Humanity

**International Round Table organised by AMADE  
Under the Patronage of UNESCO**

25-26 April 2003  
Monaco

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**Opening Address**  
**by Her Royal Highness the Princess of HANOVER, President of AMADE**

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to express my delight at being here today, in this magnificent conference hall of the Oceanographic Museum, to open a day of debate and exchange on the crucial issue of crimes against children, their identification and their more efficient and just sanction.

I would like to begin by thanking sincerely all the experts who have accepted our invitation to Monaco and kindly agreed to devote some of their time to stimulate reflection on issues of the utmost importance not only to AMADE but also to all who are truly concerned with the protection of the fundamental rights of the child.

This year, AMADE celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary: forty long years of fighting for the cause of children since the creation of our organisation by Her Serene Highness Princess Grace of Monaco, my mother. For four decades, members of our association, with the help of all our parent local organisations worldwide, have constantly and courageously denounced all forms of moral and physical infringement of the rights of the most vulnerable and most precious amongst us, the world's children.

Over the past few months, this great sense of indignation has fuelled our energy in order to make possible the project open to debate here today. I wish to pay tribute to our friends from the AMADE-Philippines, Dominique LEMAY et Eric MALLONGA, for their crucial contribution to the project in laying the foundations for this juridical reflection on how to ensure that the most horrendous crimes against children are qualified as crimes against humanity, and that their perpetrators receive a punishment commensurate with the atrocity of their crimes.

Faithful to its commitment to the rights of the child at an international level, the Principality of Monaco has shown its determination in pursuing this cause by delivering this message to the international community through the Declaration by His Serene Highness Crown Prince ALBERT, my brother, at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children, in New York in May 2002.

I wish to avail of the presence here today of His Excellency Mr Patrick LECLERCQ, the Minister of State, and His Excellency Mr Jacques BOISSON, Ambassador of Monaco to the United Nations, to express our gratitude to the Government of Monaco for lending its support to our initiative.

My dismay and horror, shared by all here, at the terrible conditions of children throughout the world, lead me to express the wish that the idea contained in the Declaration by His Serene Highness Crown Prince ALBERT, and subsequently discussed during the Plenary Committee of the Special Session on the initiative of Jacques DANOIS, Secretary General of AMADE, be translated into reality and become a major theme for our organisation to pursue in the future.

As is evident to us all, there continues to be systematic and repeated violations of children's rights, from child slavery to commercial sexual exploitation of children and all forms of mass infringement of those rights such as child organ trafficking or the recruitment and enrolment of children for military operations, and their use as military targets, to cite only a small number of examples from this dreadful inventory.

We need a better understanding of the mechanisms of this new global money-driven criminality which trades children as goods for an estimated yearly profit that seems to me as staggering as the horror of the crimes committed against helpless children.

I believe it is our duty to endeavour to put an end to impunity for those whose heinous crimes are a brutal reminder that humanity has not yet left the dark ages of barbarity. We must seek all necessary means to obtain the imprescriptibility of crimes that irreversibly wound children both physically and mentally, and which can neither be forgotten nor forgiven. Lastly, we shall strive for the reinforcement of all existing international conventions and texts of criminal law pertinent to the rights of the child, at national, regional and international levels, particularly in the context of the United Nations and their newly established International Criminal Court.

In a few moments, it will be our privilege to listen to the report on the preliminary work conducted by the panel of experts gathered by AMADE for the purpose of examining those issues. I am certain that the results of their work will trigger a fruitful and thought-provoking discussion throughout the day.

As President of AMADE, I will remain ever vigilant and attentive to the silent plea of these helpless tormented children. Every one of these young innocent victims is a part of humanity. Yes, we must never cease to repeat this with determination: crimes against children are crimes against humanity. It is up to us to explore every possible avenue to ensure that this heartfelt principle is translated into the reality of international law.

26 April 2003

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