

Crimes against the Child

Crimes against Humanity

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

25-26 April 2003
Monaco

**Welcome and Greetings
by Mr Jacques DANOIS,
Secretary-General of AMADE**

Your Royal Highness,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is the role of the Secretary-General of the World Association of Children's Friends to wish you a warm welcome on behalf of our organisation. I do so willingly and with great pleasure.

The reality of AMADE goes beyond the letters and words that compose the acronym of our association.

Children are with us, among us at all times. They are the ones who welcome you here today, in the hope that their suffering will come to an end thanks to your efforts to develop a more compassionate and understanding approach that will protect them from becoming yet other victims of horrendous crimes.

AMADE advocates for the rights of the child. AMADE began its struggle for the protection of children forty years ago by initiating humanitarian programmes in over 25 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin-America and Europe. More recently, we have reinforced our action by addressing the international community.

In May last year, His Serene Highness Crown Prince ALBERT of Monaco led a Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children, in New York, in which I had the honour of participating.

Our call for the qualification of crimes against children as crimes against humanity was proclaimed twice: first by the Prince of Monaco at the General Assembly; second by the Secretary-General of AMADE on the occasion of the Plenary Committee of the Special Session.

Her Royal Highness the Princess of HANOVER subsequently expressed the wish that this Declaration, which was signed by all our national affiliates, would not fade into oblivion. She called for the organisation of the Round Table in which you are doing AMADE the honour of participating.

Together we will unite behind this cry of alarm given to all political, military and civilian leaders of the international community: “stop, these are children you are harming!”.

It is important we recognise that, regardless of the progress the world makes in the betterment of our society, the plight of children must not be abandoned or neglected in this pursuit. It must be remembered that a child does not play a token role in our society, he is a priority. As such, it is crucial that we continuously do all we can to stop any violence that is perpetrated against them.

It is a truism that there can be no society without children. Therefore it has to be admitted that every attack on a child's life, health or future is a crime. To deny this would simply be absurd.

As a species we must consider our young as the most important beings among our group of men and women.

This Round Table was set up for the purpose of benefiting from your expertise and suggestions in order to obtain from the international community the recognition that every physical or moral crime committed against children is horror that must not go unpunished.

AMADE wishes you a fruitful day of work for such a noble and generous cause.

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Information

AMADE Mondiale
16, Boulevard de Suisse
MC 98000 MONACO

Phone: +377.97.70.52.60

Fax: +377.97.70.52.72

amade@monte-carlo.mc

<http://www.amademoniale.org/>



AMADE is an internationally recognised non-governmental organisation with consultative status with UNICEF, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the United Nations Economic and Social Council.