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PREPARATION BEGINS TO IMPROVE THE ONLINE SAFETY OF USERS IN INDIA

New Delhi, 27th January, 2014

Developing Internet Safe Community (DISC) foundation brings the mixed message of worrying developments in the realm of online activities in India accompanied with the promise of new set of developments that is going to be kickstarted by the observation of the Safer Internet Day in India on the 11th of February, 2014 and the launch of several activities that will follow the event focused on Internet safety.

In an exclusive conversation with representative of DISC, Mr. Mick Moran- Asst. Director, at INTERPOL revealed that at any given moment roughly 5000 unique IP addresses in India are contributing to the global distribution of known child sexual abuse content online. Much of these is happening through the easily available peer to peer file download mechanisms that is normally used by the Internet users for downloading movies, music etc. While this figure portrays the snapshot taken by Interpol at an instance, the overall scale is much wider and more extensive.

The penetration and the acceptance of the Internet and other online services are increasing rapidly and currently India is placed 3rd in the world in terms of the most number of Internet users. The growth and popularity of the mobile networks has given the reach of the Internet to a significant population of the country- and this is only going to go up. This has direct implications in the way child sexual abuse content is produced, distributed and consumed. A recent Dutch investigative study mentions the scary fact of 20000 individuals attempting to have sexual interaction online with a virtual child that was created to attract such targets.

Child sexual abuse materials portray the most horrific crimes committed against children and violation of their rights and privacy. This growing menace is a global problem that needs urgent attention and demands concerted efforts from all stakeholders. More than million images of children from all parts of the world are in circulation to feed an illegal industry and gratify the deviant sexual interest of child sex offenders. In many countries the laws are not well developed or implemented to address this problem. India is no exception and requires a concerted effort to mitigate the complex problem.

Some key facts and figures:

According to UNICEF report: **4 Million** – Estimated number of sites that feature victims that are minors (including children under the age of the age of 2)

In 2012 alone, the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children reviewed more than **19 million** images and videos. **1.8 Million** – Minimum estimated number of children that are used in commercial sex.

According to Internet Watch foundation (IWF) reports in 2012, out of **39,211** reports, **25%** were confirmed to be child sexual abuse material

UNICEF reports: **69%** - Percentage of victims in child abuse images between the ages of 0 and 10 years old

NCMEC (Nation Center for Missing and Exploited Children, USA) reports: **83%** - Percentage of individuals possessing child pornography material had images of children between the ages of 6 and **12**. **87%** had very explicit images of prepubescent children

DISC is coordinating the observation of Safer Internet Day, a global event organized by INSAFE and European Union funded project, in order to initiate a series of activities that includes awareness raising, education, capacity building and advocacy/lobbying. DISC Foundation is coordinating these activities jointly organized in collaboration with CMAI, Jharkhand Police and Cyber peace Foundation. These are planned in several metros in India with strong support of national and international experts, government representatives, civil society, celebrity participation and industry partners.

About DISC foundation:

DISC Foundation is a non-profit working in collaboration with the stakeholders like the government, religious organizations, schools, civil society, technology companies and corporate to build a robust eco system of safer Internet, more information <http://www.discfoundation.com>

Information and materials about observing Safer Internet Day is available at <http://www.saferinternetday.in> website

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