



PONTIFICIA
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Centre for Child Protection



Child Dignity
in the Digital World

World Congress
October 3-6, 2017

Press release 5 October

Congress to present declaration to Pope Francis

Closing press conference 16:30 Friday 6 October

Over 30 speeches, technical reports and a series of workshops have been delivered by experts, Church and political leaders to develop a strategy that will take on the work of the Congress on Child Dignity in the Digital World, which has taken place this week at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

President Grasso, president of the Italian Senate, and Minister Valeria Fedeli, Italian minister of education, university and research, State Secretary Cornelia Quennet-Thielen of the German federal ministry of education and research addressed the 150 delegates, who included ambassadors, representatives from the United Nations, the Council of Europe and other supranational bodies.

In addition to presentations of technical and academic research, Dr Tim Morris, executive director police services Interpol, put forward the perspective from law enforcement and Dr Antigone Davis, head of global safety policy Facebook, and Microsoft chief online safety officer Jacqueline Beauchere how leading tech providers were engaging with safeguarding and the emerging threats to children.

Some of the emerging themes included how the epidemiology of child exploitation and abuse offered new ways of tackling online victimisation, as presented by Prof Michelle Anne Williams from Harvard University; the long-term effects on the brains of children through exposure to online pornography; the responsibilities of different stakeholders as society struggles to balance freedom and safeguarding responsibilities. These issues have taken on increased urgency as delegates were told that in India alone 500 million people will go online for the first time over the next couple of years. Perspectives from the developing world were also offered from Africa and Asia by Cardinal John Njue and Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle.

Child Dignity World Congress 2017

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This afternoon, 5 October, the final declaration of the Conference was discussed. This declaration will be presented to the Pope tomorrow at midday. The declaration will be published during the Papal Audience.

The concluding press conference takes place at 1630 on Friday 6 October at the media centre at the Gregorian Pontifical University.

ENDs