

# ACT NOW!

Some highlights from children's participation in the Regional Consultations for the United Nations Secretary-General's study on Violence against Children



**Save the Children**



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Some highlights from children's participation in the Regional Consultations for the  
United Nations Secretary-General's study on Violence against Children



## **The vision**

*Save the Children works for:*

- a world which respects and values each child*
- a world which listens to children and learns*
- a world where all children have hope and opportunity*

## **The mission**

*Save the Children fights for children's rights.*

*We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.*

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“ There is a Chinese saying, ‘Gu Cheung Lan Ming,’ that means ‘no sound can be made if only one hand claps.’ We, children, are one hand. Adults are the other hand. The community is one hand. The government is one hand... We strongly believe that a community with peace, love and unity can be built if we work together for the future!”

*East Asia and the Pacific*



# Preface

THE UN STUDY AND ITS NINE NATIONAL/REGIONAL consultations held around the world during 2005 provided a platform for effective and meaningful participation of girls and boys. Children and young people have a right to be partners and their experience and resources should be utilized. It is in this spirit that the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children was able to provide a genuine opportunity for more than 260 children and young people to express their views and to be involved in decisions that can lead to concrete action.

Giving greater importance to children's voices, recognizing their concerns and recommendations, and, most importantly, providing a platform for the recognition of children's own action to end violence against girls and boys, has been central in the Study.

Children participating in the consultations represented networks of children from countries in each region. They participated in preparatory meetings prior to each of the regional consultations, thereby providing them with an opportunity to explore with peers the issues relating to violence and design the nature of their participation in the consultations that followed. I am grateful to the Save the Children Alliance, and their partners, for supporting the participation of children and young people from around the world. The process of selection, support, and the preparation meetings for the Under 18 participants was guided by practice standards on Meaningful children's participation characterised by<sup>1</sup>:

- An ethical approach and a commitment to transparency, honesty and accountability (impact on decision-making);
- A safe approach in which children's rights are safeguarded;
- A non-discriminatory approach that ensures that all children (regardless of their class, gender, ability, language, ethnicity, sexual preference, religion, et cetera) have an equal opportunity to be involved;
- A 'child-friendly' approach which enables children to contribute to the best of their abilities (good information, availability of venues, procedures and support that encourage rather than hinder children's involvement).

The participation of children and young people in the Regional Consultations was designed to ensure that girls' and boys' actively share their voices and more importantly their actions, tools and processes to stop violence. Advocating for their own recommendations alongside government representatives, planners and policy makers proved to be much more than just a meeting of minds. I personally met with the Under 18 delegates during each Regional Consultation where they expressed their ideas freely. I continue to be amazed by the children and young people I meet through the processes of the Study, and at each interaction I am further convinced

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1. Developed by International Save the Children Alliance



of the importance of their active presence in these important processes. Child participation has very concrete consequences. As one of the young participants affirmed to me during one of the consultations: “We [the children] see things that adults sometimes can’t see.” More than that, they not only see things that we ignore, but they say things in a way we can’t ignore.

The lively participation and involvement of children in all stages of the consultation brought a sense of urgency and concreteness that is crucial for the success of the study. Children and adolescents adopted their own declaration or outcome document at every Regional Consultation, identifying their own priorities which contributed directly to the working group’s discussions at the consultations, and ultimately were reflected in the final recommendations of each consultation.

I am also grateful to Save the Children and others who facilitated the participation of children. With the help of the children themselves, the key recommendations from children and young people across all regional consultations are summarized in the following pages, and this publication stands as evidence of the distinguished contribution children can make and I believe it compels all who read it to take these ideas very seriously.

*Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro*

Independent Expert

United Nations Secretary-General’s Study On Violence against Children



# Introduction

“ To guarantee the rights of children is to promote peace.”

*East and Southern Africa*



IT IS IMPORTANT THAT CHILDREN are taking part in the Study on Violence against Children, that the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General has asked for. Their participation has given greater importance to violence against children. It has provided a space for children to voice their own concerns and recommendations and for these to be taken seriously. But, most of all, it has recognised children's own actions to end violence against girls and boys.

The group of people responsible for making the study (the Study Secretariat) have tried to ensure that participation is meaningful, beneficial and safe for the children and young people involved. A total of 260 girls and boys from various backgrounds have taken part in the Regional Consultations (29 from the Caribbean, 25 from South Asia, 25 from West and Central Africa, 22 from North America, 30 from Latin America, 26 from East Asia and the Pacific, 27 from Middle East and North Africa, 24 from Europe and Central Asia and 55 from East and Southern Africa).

The recommendations from all the children and young people who took part in the Regional Consultations can be read in this document. It has been written for the UN Study Editorial Board to include children's voices in a genuine and meaningful way in the final report. However, this document can also be used by local, national, regional and international authorities and organisations. It is meant to help decision makers and policy and programme planners to follow up the children's recommendations, take concrete action and involve children in this work.

The views and recommendations from children and young people have not been divided into issues specific to background, age, gender or ability.



This report includes:

- General recommendations divided into groups such as Information systems/ Monitoring or Legislation.
- Specific recommendations for each place where violence against children takes place (settings), such as violence in schools or in the home and family.
- Specific recommendations on some of the different forms of violence which are of most common concern to the children involved. For example, physical and humiliating punishment, sexual abuse and other forms of sexual violence.

Every declaration or statement from children from each Regional Consultation is included in the Annexes.

In West and Central Africa the children asked Professor Pinheiro to transmit a very specific message in one sentence to the UN Secretary-General: “Please tell him that we need a follow up of our recommendations”.

### ***Children’s and young people’s vision for the Regional Consultation in East Asia and the Pacific***

To build international unity to fight violence against children and to see the recommendations of young people included in the solutions to lessen and eliminate violence against children.

For young people and adults to become partners in understanding the violence and to cooperate and work together in peace with adults.

### ***Their vision for the future***

To see young people expressing their views, concerns and issues affecting them, and for governments in all the countries to prioritize the issue on violence against children; giving appropriate funding and resources to immediately respond to the violence that happens and strictly implement laws to prevent violence.

**“ We urge you to activate these recommendations and others made by children in previous consultations and to involve ut when designing actions on violence against girls and boys in each country and region.”**

*South Asia CYP Consultations*



# *What should be done to end violence against children*

**– a summary of children’s recommendations from the Regional Consultations on the UN Study on Violence against Children**

“ The protection of children involves major financial resources but that the life and well-being of millions of children depend on the willingness of governments to put in place the necessary measures. In our view, violence committed against a single child is one instance of violence too many.”

*West and Central Africa*

## ***1. All settings***

In all the Regional Consultations children highlighted that they would like to see concrete actions now to prevent and deal with violence against children.

As a statement of principle the children of the West and Central Africa consultation stated that they too have duties, such as respecting their parents, teachers and adults in general. But they cannot live up to these duties if the adults do not respect the rights of children. This was taken up as one of the general recommendations formulated during this regional consultation.

### ***Information system/monitoring***

- More real actions to deal with violence against children. Make sure that research really is used to develop plans and actions to deal with violence.
- Engage children and young people to discover and explain new knowledge on violence against children. Present the results of this research in a child-friendly form directed at different age groups.
- Produce child-friendly information material in local languages - posters, leaflets, films, comic books – and make communication easy (for example, through e-groups) to help children better protect themselves against violence and to help them discuss and organise their action.
- Invite children to be part of the monitoring of programmes to end violence against them, including the development of child-led indicators. Make this easy.



- Stop the spreading of harmful (including sexualised) material to children via the media (television or the internet).
- Figure out a way to watch out for violence against children in all forms of media (media abuses or spreading of material).
- Make sure the media does not give out the names, faces, or other information that can identify children who are abused.

### **Legislation**

- Make national laws to protect children from all forms of violence at home, in schools, communities and institutions.
- Make sure that these laws are really put into practice.
- Governments should make sure that everybody knows about those laws.
- Tell the governments to talk to children when planning laws on violence against children.
- Make laws specifically against violence against girls and make sure they are put into practice nationally.

**“ Understand that one person can do something about violence but many people can stop violence.”**

*Europe and Central Asia*

### **Policy / Coordination / Resources**

- Talk to children while planning programmes to end violence against them.
- Give more aid to families in need and make sure that it reaches the children. It is important to give support to families with low income as poverty can cause stress within families. Make sure that they have enough money so their opportunities are not limited.
- Let people know about child welfare and other services so that these services are better used and can help to prevent violence against children. Make sure that these services have enough money so that they can work properly to help children.
- Give more money to stop-violence programmes, which will save money in the future.
- Build special government structures and task forces that specifically combat various types of violence that children are exposed to, especially sexual violence. These structures should be available and accessible on a national scale and should have mechanisms for regular consultation with parents, as well as children's committees and community leaders.
- Make sure that children who are victims of violence are not rejected by society.



### **Advocacy / awareness / mobilisation**

- Let there be a special independent person in all countries that speaks on behalf of children (ombudsperson). He or she must specially consider the children who cannot be easily reached.
- Teach people about human rights and children's rights, in particular by spreading information or video clips. Make sure that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is taught in schools.
- Make campaigns – for example, in the media and through workshops at school – to get more people involved in preventing and stopping violence. Make sure these are funded by governments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).
- Organise seminars 'Let's say no to violence'.
- Organise seminars in schools and in the community for children, parents and teachers to make everyone understand what violence is and to inform people that violence is wrong.
- Print and spread information about bringing up children without violence.
- Make campaigns informing parents of their children's rights. For example, establish parents' associations in the community to let them raise their voices on violence against girls and boys.
- Train children who are involved in child rights clubs or children's parliaments on children's rights so they can educate other children and young people.
- Educate children on their rights and their responsibilities at the same time. They can then understand the positive and negative of their behaviour and not abuse other children.
- Stop people in the media from making violence against children a sensational issue by training them on the facts. Sometimes the media's picture of children is violent in itself and damages the self esteem of children.
- Teach young children about the media.
- Educate parents on what programmes are available to block certain (media) sites, on how to use the internet, on how they can be involved to influence their children positively before television and video games teach them violence.
- Encourage people to get involved personally or alert the authorities when violence happens.
- Encourage bystanders to believe that they can help, and that bullying is wrong.
- Inform the public about violence against children in the family through newspapers, television, the internet, video clips, educational publications.
- Inform children where they can report violence and where they can be safe if they report it.
- Make children aware of the services and protection that are already there for them.
- Let children and adults visit residential institutions.



- Help young people who have been through the institutional systems to talk to those who haven't been through them.
- End harmful traditional practices that hold back the full, healthy development of children.
- Governments should make people more aware of violence against girls – through radio, papers, television, posters, notices and school curriculum throughout the country.



“ We want to believe that if we can unite and be one we can end violence against young people. But we must know that success is not something to wait for, we must go and seek for it.”

*East and Southern Africa*

#### **Prevention/services**

- Help families build relationships based on trust and communication. Give parents access to good parental education, social assistance, social services and counselling.
- Offer social assistance, social workers and psychologists to families who are violent or are at risk of becoming violent to ensure that checks are made on children and their welfare.
- Work against violence in sports using more rules, more information and more care of the youth teams. Make sure that players are as safe as possible.
- Support children's own initiatives to prevent violence against girls and boys.



- Set up special courts for children on violence problems and protect the child in the process.
- Make sure that everything concerning education is child-friendly.
- Don't let children who have experienced violence return to violent families. Help them integrate well into other families.

### **Response/services**

- Guarantee that the authorities always react fast when complaints are made by children and young people.
- Set up mechanisms in school and out of school where children can complain about unfair punishments or any kind of violence.
- Make certain that there are professionals or specialists that children can trust who are available for help and support both inside and outside schools. This can be social workers, psychologists or tutors who provide the bridge or connection between the child or young person, the family and the school. Help children to have access to support through help-lines or hot-lines, for example, or through supervised internet forums or chats where children can seek help, communicate and post personal messages.
- Create child help lines for children in rural areas and urban centres for taking action against violence.
- Set up child-to-child groups or other support mechanisms to help children.
- Follow up the UN Study in all countries.



### **Capacity building**

- Increase the knowledge of adults (capacity-building) in government offices, UN and NGOs on child participation.
- Increase the knowledge of children on non-violent conflict management, peace and healthy relationships for child-to-child education.
- Help young parents or young people who intend to become parents to understand the psychology and behaviour of their children.
- Organise rage-control classes.
- Support children to change the habits that get them into trouble.
- Help and support more people to speak on behalf of children and young people.



- Involve parents, teachers, NGOs and children in programmes to stop violence against children.
- Provide more training on working with children with disabilities.

“ In ‘violence against children’, children are the ones who are being hurt. We have to voice out and take action in order to protect ourselves! We are children. We can communicate with children more easily. We can help to reflect the view of the victims.”

*East Asia and the Pacific*

### **Children’s participation**

- Adults should listen to children’s suggestions on how to address violence against children and take action on the children’s suggestions.
- Make it easy for children to take part in action and make sure that children’s actions are funded.
- Help and support children’s groups, clubs, parliaments or organisations. Support their ideas and include them when planning actions to tackle violence against children.
- It is important to engage and involve young people because children can relate to other youth.
- Let children know about their rights.
- Let children be involved in family life.
- Let children’s choices be heard.
- Help children to present their views to ministers as they don’t always find it easy.

### **Resources**

- Make it easy for children with disabilities to enter buildings and vehicles.
- Lessen the cost of medication and physical aids (for example wheelchairs) for children with disabilities.
- Offer funds to help children participate in a meaningful way.
- Offer funds to make child-friendly information and develop child-friendly services.
- Make it economically possible for all children to get an education.
- Set up activities outside school to help children come together and exchange experiences and make sure these are funded by governments and NGOs.





## 2. Specific settings

The UN Study on Violence against Children is looking at the following places where violence occurs:

- in the home and family
- in schools and educational environments
- in other institutional situations, including children in conflict with the law
- in the community and on the streets
- in work places

Each regional consultation discussed the places where violence is most common in that region. The children formulated recommendations on violence against girls and boys in schools, street and community, home and family, residential facilities/juvenile justice settings and in the work-place. Some regions looked at more specific issues – for example, the girls and boys in East Asia and the Pacific discussed violence against children in cyberspace.

### **Schools**

- Forbid every kind of violence that happens in schools in every country.
- Make schools happy places where children are eager to learn.
- Make sure that teachers are good at what they do and trained in child-friendly methods. Offer other non-violent discipline methods in teacher training or orientation (list and category to be drawn up in consultation with children).
- Train the teachers to see that hitting, or any other form of physical punishment, is not an acceptable form of control.
- Include child-rights education in the school curricula and combine it with orientation programmes for teachers on children's rights.
- Introduce mentoring and teacher training programmes which include studies in psychology, communication skills and conflict resolution.



- Increase the number of counsellors in schools who are trained in child centred psychosocial support, in children's rights and to listen to and advise children who are victims of violence.
- Educate school inspectors on the consequences of violence in schools.
- Encourage parents to take part in their child's education, for example by becoming involved in school activities.
- Help parents learn other ways of practising discipline.
- Inform children where they can report violence in schools.
- Help school students train and talk to younger pupils on how to prevent and stop violence.
- Set up award systems that offer praise, prizes and positive feedback.
- Check regularly among school students to see if there has been positive change.

### ***Street and community***

- Understand that all the problems of violence are connected – the school is part of our community and the home is part of our community.
- Organise spare time activities to prevent boredom, including life skills activities that help children and young people to solve problems and resolve conflict situations - for example, clubs and centres for children and young people.
- Get activities started to keep those who make trouble off the streets.
- Young people should be provided with outlets that focus their minds and energies towards more positive and productive activities as alternatives to the pull of violence and destructive forces within their communities.
- Make the streets safe where children play.
- Children should be taught about violence in communities so that they know where to go for help and feel able to report it to the authorities.
- Educate children to embrace other cultures, styles, and interests, so they don't feel afraid or have to pick on someone to bully.
- Provide shelters for street children.

**“ We feel that primary prevention begins in the home – with proper communication between parents and children – and with proper implementation on a personal, direct and engaging level in schools. With proper education and preparation, children will be less likely to react violently to situations as they grow.”**

*North America*



## **Home and family**

- Take action against physical punishment in families by encouraging parents/guardians to have an open dialogue with their children – to listen to them and see things from their point of view.
- Parents and guardians must be educated in non-violent means of bringing up, communicating with and disciplining their children.
- Family-support institutions need to be looked at in a new light, changed and reorganized to make sure that parents get the tools to become better guardians and role models.
- Adults should show love to children and act as examples because children learn from them.
- Help parents be good role models so their child can develop positive relationships rather than some sort of power relationship.
- Make parents understand what violence is and that it's wrong.
- Help parents accept their children for who they are – children – and to understand and listen to their problems.
- Organise information campaigns about violence in families as it is an unknown subject or one that is not talked about.
- Encourage and help people to report on violence in families that they may know about or witness – for example, neighbours who see that children are beaten or neglected.
- Offer different sorts of training for parents – for example, on being better parents.

**“ We feel our juvenile justice systems have the responsibility to rehabilitate youth and integrate them back into society rather than subject them to more violence.”**

*North America*

## **Residential facilities/juvenile justice settings**

- The judicial system needs to be reformed so the children do not feel threatened and intimidated when reporting instances of abuse.
- Fight the physical, sexual, mental and emotional ill-treatment of children and young people in conflict with the law by
  - offering daily counselling sessions for children and young people in custody,
  - making rehabilitation programmes better so the lives of convicted children and young people can improve,
  - guaranteeing a direct answer to a complaint by children and young people. Maybe transfer of staff is necessary, or training on how to deal correctly with children and young people.
- Try not to place young offenders in jail. Offer something else, for example com-



munity service. Do away with life sentences without parole for young people.

- Make sure that correctional institutions are not places of punishment for children and young people.
- Make sure that children in residential institutions are thought of as children and not as 'criminals' if they have done something criminal.
- Continue to offer support to children when they are out of the institution so that they have a place to live, a place to work and can continue their education.
- Help young people who have been through the system talk to each other.
- Have outside specialists report at regular intervals on the situation of children and young people in institutions. They should have access to the institutions and their reports should include the views and experiences of children and young people and staff.
- Provide youth worker support,
- Place residential institutions more centrally and make them visible.
- Let the media visit the institutions every so often so they can let people know what it is like for children and young people.
- Help young people in institutions report on their situations and write about their experiences.
- Government should fund organisations where children can participate and discuss violence in institutions.

### **Work-place**

- Plan regulations to improve the working conditions of children, including minimum age requirements. Put them into practice.
- Create tougher laws forbidding employers to abuse and exploit children and giving tough sentences for those who abuse children.
- Help working children go to school and get professional training. Build up different educational programmes for working children.
- Give working children priority to health-care and social services.
- Prevent children from working in dangerous environments.
- Give children the right to work in safety and in tasks that match their strength.
- Protect children from labour misuse by making sure that the police check children's age before they start work.

### **3. Specific forms of violence**

In each of the regions some specific forms of violence were highlighted that were particularly relevant to that region. For example

- female genital mutilation in Middle East and North Africa,
- honour killing in South Asia,
- abduction of children in Southern and Eastern Central Africa,



- violence against children in cyber space in East Asia and Pacific,
- violence against children in sport in North America.

However in each region issues related to physical and humiliating punishment, sexual abuse and other forms of sexual violence were highlighted by girls and boys. Some of their specific recommendations on these forms of violence are recorded below.

### ***Physical and humiliating punishment***

- There should be an end to physical punishment. Encourage instead the use of non-violent discipline.
- Governments should create national laws against all forms of physical and humiliating punishment and find ways to put them into practice and properly monitor these.
- Forbid physical and psychological punishment of children in all settings (in homes, schools and as punishment in the justice system).
- Teach parents, teachers, employers and adults in general on the consequences of physical punishment.
- Adults (parents, teachers, law enforcement professionals, for example) should behave lovingly and affectionately towards children by practising positive discipline and not physical and humiliating punishment.

**“Caribbean youths need mentorship, not dictatorship; education, not degradation; more encouragement, not more punishment.”**

*Caribbean*

### ***Sexual abuse and other forms of sexual violence***

- Create and use laws to protect young people from adults who expose them to sexual or other exploitation.
- Put strict laws into practice for those who sexually abuse children.
- Children should be able to get counselling and other support in the community.
- Form Child Task Forces or local committees to prevent child sexual abuse.
- Work with international and local partners (especially communities) to share information and work cooperatively in order to prevent sexual violence in the family.
- Create telephone numbers free of charge in order to break the wall of silence.
- Organise information campaigns in order to break down the taboos about sexual violence.
- Teach the children in school how to stop child sexual abuse – and offer safety education from an early age.



**“ Although this topic is serious and wide-ranging,  
we feel passionate about making a difference and  
we are not afraid to carry the responsibility of  
representing our peers!”**

*East Asia and the Pacific*

A complete set of the children's recommendations, where produced, from each Regional Consultation is available at:

[www.violencestudy.org](http://www.violencestudy.org)  
[www.childrenandviolence.org](http://www.childrenandviolence.org)  
[www.savethechildren.net](http://www.savethechildren.net)

### ***Annex: The Children's Consultation Statements***

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. The Caribbean                | 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2005, Port of Spain               |
| 2. South Asia                   | 17 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2005, Islamabad |
| 3. West and Central Africa      | 23 <sup>rd</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2005, Bamako    |
| 4. The Americas                 | 30 <sup>th</sup> May – 1st June 2005, Buenos Aires      |
| 5. North America                | 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2005, Toronto                      |
| 6. East Asia and the Pacific    | 11 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2005, Bangkok  |
| 7. Middle East and North Africa | 27 <sup>th</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2005, Cairo    |
| 8. Europe and Central Asia      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2005, Ljubljana  |
| 9. East and Southern Africa     | 20 <sup>th</sup> July, 2005 Jonesburg                   |



# *1. The Caribbean*

*10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> March 2005, Port of Spain, Trinidad*

## ***Declaration of the children and youth of the Caribbean***

We the youths and children of the Caribbean realize that we are by-products of our society and that given the proper encouragement and nourishment we have the potential to blossom into strong, beautiful and productive human beings – persons who can be true credits to their societies.

Violence is a harsh and daily reality for Caribbean youths, but it is not a reality which we will accept. Standing alone, either as a young person victimized by the proliferation of violence or as individual nations reeling from its pandemics, our voices are not heard; but, in standing together as a unified Caribbean, as a unified body of young people, our voices can be, must be, will be heard. In bringing to light the many issues of children facing violence, we realize that our plight is part of a larger worldwide struggle for the realization of human rights. Our cry is not to be treated specially but rather, humanely in accordance with the core values of human dignity that are the cornerstones of the United Nations Declaration. As global citizens we demand to be acknowledged as first- and not second-class human beings.

We accept that in order for change to occur we must first agree that there are solid grounds for change. We must then diligently work to see this transformation through. Within our society persists the phenomena of the “visibly invisible”; every day we are cognizant of the challenges which face us: abuse, homelessness and exploitation of young people. Yet, society diverts their eyes and shuts its heart, feeling that intervening is inappropriate or that they are powerless to do so. Society can do better! Every day we are exploited and used as proxies for the deviance and perversion of adults whose real duty is to shelter and positively influence us. Caribbean youths need mentorship, not dictatorship; education, not degradation; more encouragement, not more punishment.

In staking our claim we call on all members of society to join us as we strive to regain our world by enforcing the following recommendations.

### ***Violence in schools***

There should be an end to corporal punishment. Instead, the use of non-violent disciplinary measures should be encouraged.

Mentoring & teacher training programmes which include studies in psychology, communication skills and conflict resolution should be introduced into our schools as an ongoing process.

Young people should be educated about their rights and responsibilities so that they can understand the positive and negative implications of their behavior.



### ***Violence in institutions***

The judicial system needs to be reformed so that we do not feel threatened and intimidated when reporting instances of abuse against us.

Legislation should be created and enforced to protect young people from adults who expose them to sexual or other exploitation.

### ***Violence in the home and family***

Parents and guardians must be educated in non-violent means of communicating with and disciplining their children.

Family-support institutions need to be revisited, revamped and restructured, ensuring that these institutions' core objectives meet the goals of more adequately equipping our parents to become better guardians and role models.

### ***Violence in work situations***

By propagating the rights of the child, society can confront traditional 'apprenticeship' practices and complacent attitudes towards child labour which deprive children of their right to education and play.

Inter-governmental organizations with responsibilities for children's and human rights should establish and enforce clearly defined international laws towards eliminating child labour, pressing national governments to enact these laws within their own countries.

### ***Violence in communities and streets***

Young people should be provided with, as alternatives to the pull of violence and destructive forces within our communities, outlets that focus our minds and energies towards more positive and productive activities.

Investigation and research, with greater focus on utilizing the intimate knowledge of local peoples, should focus more on unearthing the hidden forms of child labour that result from illegal adoption, trafficking in persons, etc.

As youth leaders it is our responsibility to change the status quo, transforming the role of youth from that of victims to stewards of our peers, our brothers and our sisters. Indeed all stakeholders need to invest their energies and resources towards achieving this ideal.

Finally, we the young people of the Caribbean call on CARICOM, regional and governmental bodies to facilitate a follow up to this consultation which will ensure our that views and expectations are well represented.

*All the children and young people participating in Trinidad*



## 2. South Asia

**17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> May 2005, Islamabad, Pakistan**

*Partners in change – statement by children and young people*

### **Who we are**

We are children from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka who have made this statement. We are 13 girls and 12 boys who have discussed issues of violence against children, which takes place in our countries and in the region. In the last two days we have shared our experiences, concerns and achievements in taking action against violence. We looked at gaps and made recommendations. Our discussions focused on three types of violence: physical and psychological punishment, gender based violence and child sexual abuse. We then prepared our own initiatives and actions to address these issues.

### **Where and how children face violence**

Physical and psychological violence, gender based violence and sexual abuse happen in different degrees in all countries in the region. Violence not only has physical consequences, but also psychological/emotional consequences, which might even affect children more severely. Adults seldom listen to children when they talk about abuse. Some forms of violence are considered taboo. For example if children try to talk about child sexual abuse, adults are afraid that the community will know about it and they might be discriminated against. When children tell their family that they have been sexually abused the family may feel dishonoured and it may even lead to honour killing. If children are abused in school or at home they do not talk to their friends because they feel ashamed about it. Some adults also abuse children for their own pleasure.

In other cases adults think that punishment is good for children and do not see it as abuse. Since many adults themselves were beaten or psychologically punished as children they may believe it is necessary for adults to punish children for the children's own good. Also, parents may not know different ways of bringing up children. In many countries parents think it is their duty to get girls married at a young age. Young brides may be tortured and harassed by their husband's family for not understanding family matters. We also discussed many other forms of gender-based violence. When children suffer violence, they sometimes learn to fight violence with violence. This is how cycles of violence are continued.

### **We also discussed causes of violence**

Sometimes cultural, traditional and / or religious practices can be harmful for children. At times poverty can cause neglect and violence since parents do not have enough money to fulfil their needs or educate their children. Patterns of violence are also



reproduced from one generation to another, making a cycle. Adults like teachers, may lack knowledge of children's rights or the affect of physical and psychological punishment. Discrimination and unequal power relations in society also makes violence against children worse. Some countries do not have laws on violence against children, or their laws may not be enough to protect children. Often children are not aware of how to get legal help. There are not enough counselling and psycho-social services to rehabilitate children who have been abused.

### ***We would like to share some actions taken by children***

#### ***We can keep a watch***

For example, in some countries in the region, National Task Forces of Children have been formed. These monitor situations related to violence against children within the country and report to governments and NGOs about it.

#### ***We can Help***

Girls have developed centres to help other girls who are facing problems such as abuse or threat of forced and early marriage.

#### ***We are a part of awareness raising***

- Street Plays are used for making the community aware of abuse by teachers and parents and its negative impact.
- Radio shows, monthly newspapers and movies made by children for children.
- Child-to-Child forums are creating awareness of child rights.
- Children are involved in making visual arts and creating posters.
- Children make monthly bulletins that are displayed in their clubs and in public places.
- Children have made documentaries on child abuse that have been broadcast on satellite channels.

#### ***We recommend***

- Adults should listen to children's suggestions on how to address violence against children and activate them
- Governments make the laws concerning children in line with the CRC and make sure that they are strictly implemented
- Create and have special task forces all over the country to end violence
- Create and hold regular consultations with the parents' as well as children's committees and community leaders
- Create child-related laws and stop violence against children
- Involve parents, teachers, NGOs and children in programs to address violence



against children. Community should pressurise government administration to stop violence.

- Government should also use the existing government and NGO bodies for stopping violence against children
- Raise parents' awareness of the CRC by establishing a parents association in the community so that they can raise their voices on violence against girls/boys
- Parents should be more connected with their children – listen to them and see things from their point of view
- Media should not use names, pictures and addresses of children who have been abused
- Produce more child friendly information and materials on violence against girls and boys and its prevention
- Children who are a part of children's clubs, task forces, child parliaments and child media groups should be trained on violence against children so that they can train more children to end violence
- Children need to be informed of the responsibilities that come along with rights so that they also do not abuse other children

### ***End Physical and psychological/emotional punishment and promote love and affection for children***

- Governments should create national laws against physical and psychological punishment and make systems to implement and properly monitor these
- Teachers should behave lovingly and affectionately towards children
- Governments should ensure that laws are widely known by everybody
- Teachers should be given proper teacher's training and training on positive discipline and parents on parental education
- There should be mechanisms in school and out of school where children can complain about severe punishment

### ***End Gender Based Violence***

- Parents should know about children's rights and treat girls and boys equally
- The government should make laws for violence against girls specifically and implement them strictly throughout the country
- Governments should raise awareness frequently and regularly on violence against girls- through media, such as radio, papers, television, posters, notices and school curriculum throughout the country

### ***End Child Sexual Abuse***

- Try to implement the laws of the CRC relating to sexual abuse for children and abusers



- Counselling and other support should be accessible in the community for the children
- Forming Child Task Forces which will work on preventing child sexual abuse
- Include prevention of child sexual abuse education in the curriculum – provide safety education from a young age

*We urge you to activate these recommendations and others made by children in previous consultations and to involve ut when designing actions on violence against girls and boys in each country and region.*

*All the children and young people participating in Pakistan*



### 3. *West and Central Africa*

**23<sup>rd</sup>–25<sup>th</sup> May 2005, Bamako, Mali**

#### ***Synthesis of the work and recommendations by children delegates***

Under the aegis of the West Africa Regional Office for Save the Children Sweden, twenty (20) children delegates from Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal met together on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2005 at the “Nord Sud” hotel in Bamako for a preparatory session for the regional consultation for West and Central Africa on violence against children. These children represented both children in education (10) and children who are working or apprenticed (10<sup>3</sup>).

After a review of the situation of violence against children in their respective countries based on the surveys and research carried out by groups of children, the following statements and recommendations were made:

1. Children are the victims of all forms of violence in West and Central Africa and this phenomenon is taking on alarming proportions with situations of crisis and armed conflict that continue in the region.
2. Children are the victims of physical and psychological violence and sexual abuse in the family, at school and in the workplace, in children institutions and in armed conflicts.
3. In families children are beaten violently for bad behaviour, disrespect of adults and rules, theft etc...
4. At school, children are the object of physical violence, insults, humiliation for lateness, lessons not learnt, homework not done, chatting and fighting amongst children, non-respect of rules, unjustified absences etc...
5. In the work place and apprenticeships, children are beaten for poor execution out of tasks, lateness in obeying of instructions,
6. On the streets, children are the object of all sorts of aggression, they are bullied, “tapped up”, abused, exploited by adults and beaten to a pulp when they commit a crime,

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2. The Benin delegate could not make the journey.



7. Sexual violence is becoming widespread in families, at school and in institutions as well as on the streets. Incest, paedophilia and child prostitution are taking on worrying proportions in the face of general indifference,
8. Children are enrolled by armed forces in total disregard of their rights and international conventions that are nevertheless ratified by states
9. Some categories of children such as girls, handicapped children, children affected by HIV/AIDS are subject to discrimination and exclusion, which makes them even more vulnerable
10. Some religious and traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), early marriage, placement to repay debt, exploitation of children by the worst forms of work which constitute serious violations of the rights of the child are becoming more and more widespread,
11. Adults contend that physical violence and corporal punishment are means for educating children and that the fear of being punished particularly physically makes children behave well. The community accepts and tolerates these violations of the rights of children.
12. The consequences of violence are serious and dramatic for children. They range from trauma to loss of human life and also include injuries, physical handicap, psychological after-effects, with reproduction of violence by the child victims, dropping out and failing at school, family and social break down, juvenile delinquency, health problems and even suicide.

This violence against children is therefore prejudicial to their health, their development, their growth and their well being.

The child delegates at the preparatory meeting also compiled a list of the actions being carried out by children's organisations and movements to fight against violence against children in their country:

- The creation of clubs, associations and organisations for children for the promotion and defence of their rights
- The carrying out of awareness campaigns on the rights of children particularly with the participation of children,
- Training of children leaders and the promotion of defending the rights of children

After analysing the forms of violence suffered by children, exchanging experiences, discussions as well as working in groups and plenary sessions, the children delegates drew the following conclusions and recommendations:



## **Corporal punishment**

### **Children**

- Respect parents
- Respect the school authorities
- Respect rules and regulations
- Help parents with household chores.
- Work hard at school
- Give their opinions and denounce cases of violence

### **Parents**

- Love their children
- Promote dialogue with children
- Propose alternative punishments
- Know their children better and the causes of misbehaviour.
- Parents should accompany the smallest children to school and safeguard their protection
- Take part in school life

### **The State**

- Fight against poverty by extending family grants for children
- Draft and apply laws that tackle violence against children
- Support children's' organisations in their initiatives to reduce violence against children

### **Teachers and Education Authorities**

- Check professional qualifications of teachers
- Increase the number of education counsellors in schools
- Raise awareness amongst teachers (against corporal punishment and insults)
- Create disciplinary boards in schools and involve children delegates.
- Draft and distribute internal regulations in schools in conjunction with the children.
- Raise awareness amongst school inspectors on the consequences for children of violence in school
- Ensure the security of children in school
- Propose alternative punishments (list and category to be established with the children)

### **NGOs**

- Raise awareness amongst parents on the consequences of violence for children (media campaign using stories and proverbs)
- Teach parents how to communicate with children (parenting classes)



- Train in education without violence
- Inform parents regarding the rights of children and the laws that forbid corporal punishment
- Educate pupils on their rights and duties
- Support the creation of advice centres

## **Sexual violence**

### **Children**

- Refuse all suspicious propositions and speak about them to parents
- Denounce perpetrators
- Be careful and avoid bad company
- Avoid being provocative by wearing provocative clothing
- Participate in initiatives to reduce sexual violence (coalition)
- Behave responsibly

### **Parents**

- Educate children regarding sexual violence
- Ensure the security of children
- Occupy children's free time with healthy activities
- Control the kinds of films shown to children by video clubs

### **The State**

- Punish the perpetrators and witnesses who keep silent (increase the sentences)
- Create reception centres for victims (free of charge)
- Create toll free telephone numbers to break the wall of silence
- Ratify the conventions protecting children and make sure the country's law conforms to them
- Control video club films
- Regulate the distribution of pornographic material

### **Teachers and educational authorities**

- Raise awareness amongst children of the risks
- Sex education for children
- Ensure children's security

### **NGOs**

- Organise information and awareness campaigns to break down taboos
- Create committees to combat violence against children, particularly sexual violence



## ***Violence in the work place***

### ***Children***

- Respect bosses and orders at work
- Behave properly and learn the trade well
- Know ones rights but also ones duties

### ***Parents***

- Respect children and take into account their opinion
- Help children in their professional training by ensuring they have the means which they require.

### ***The State***

- Ensure the security of children who work
- Promote access to health centres for children who work and apprentices
- Develop alternative education programmes for children who work

### ***Employers and Apprentice masters***

- Avoid exploiting children's work
- Do not give children dangerous work to do
- Ensure the security of children
- Do not discriminate between children
- Take care of children who are sick and grant them sick leave

### ***NGOs***

- Raise awareness amongst employers on the rights of children and the consequences of corporal punishment for children
- Educate bosses on listening to children
- Help and support the process of self organisation by children
- Carry out awareness campaigns on the rights of children

*All the children and young people participating in Mali*







## 4. *Latin America*

**30<sup>th</sup> May–1<sup>st</sup> June 2005, Buenos Aires, Argentina**

Latin America had a rich in-country process of consultation with children. These consultations were held in 17 different countries, reaching over 2000 girls and boys from 9 to 17 years of age. Children consulted were not engaged in social projects, therefore had never had the opportunity to express themselves before. They came from different cultural, ethnical, social-economic background and included children with disabilities. A regional Children's voices report is being edited and will also be released in a child friendly format. National reports will be used to feed-back to children, engaging them in different initiatives on violence against children.

An Argentinean NGO organized the participation of a group of approximately 30 Argentinean children in the opening session of the regional consultation, where they expressed, through role-playing, the different forms of violence affecting them. These children met with Prof. Paulo Pinheiro, to whom they explained the particular difficulties and violence they face with the police and justice forces in Argentina. They also highlighted the discrimination affecting children with disabilities in their country. One representative of this group attended the press conference and spoke about his experience with violence in his community.







## 5. North America

**2<sup>nd</sup> June 2005, Toronto, Canada**

Good afternoon Honourable Senator Landon Pearson, Youth Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen. In our ever-changing world today we are faced with many obstacles and challenges. A prominent issue is violence against children and youth.

From Saskatchewan to Nova Scotia, New York to Mississippi, we gather from across North America to discuss our views, the youth perspective on violence against children. Through the North American Regional Consultation for the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children, we discussed several areas of violence against children, and here are our resolutions:

### ***Operating in a Federal System***

Our theme was operating in a federal system, a conflict of jurisdictions. Seeing as though this is a broad topic, we went with questions instead of key messages. We learned about the current system in Canada and the United States and relationships between provincial/state governments and federal policy making.

The key messages that came out of our discussion are:

- To engage youth in policy making
- Working with cooperation and coordination between jurisdictions
- How to take knowledge and implement it in a productive way

During our discussion Senator Pearson said, "no talking about us, without us!" We think that this is especially important when it comes to making decisions that affect today's youth.

### ***Models for Offices of the Children's Advocate, Children's Commissioner or Children's Ombudsperson.***

In order for the mental, moral, emotional, spiritual and physical rights of children to be respected and upheld, there must be a permanent system to ensure children's protection. Within this system, children's opinions and feelings must always be considered just as important as those of adults. The top priority of this system must be for the best interest of the child.

### ***Violence in the Home***

We, the youth, agree that violence in the home is a growing problem. In our group, we talked about violence in homes and the most common reasons for violence. We



think that a major cause of family and home violence is lack of trust and communications by adults and children. Our recommendation is:

To provide programs for families to build relationships based on trust and communication.

### **Peer Aggression (Bullying)**

Bullying is a relationship problem. We need to teach children how to relate to other people – this begins at home. Parents need to be good role models to ensure their child can develop positive relationships rather than some sort of power relationship.

A lot of bullying is school based but we tend to overlook other areas where this may occur, such as in families or neighbourhoods.

We need to educate children to embrace other cultures, styles, and interests – to not feel intimidated or to pick these individuals to be victims.

Youth engagement and interventions are key because children can relate to other youth. Other youth give them a sense of normality and acceptance, making it easier to help the child. In the school system, the bully is usually overlooked. We need to pay attention to these kids. We need to provide the resources to help them. A lot of research needs to be done especially when it comes to bystanders.

Bystanders need to believe in themselves and need to believe that they can help, and that bullying is wrong.

### **Epidemiology and Surveillance of Violence Against Children**

So, putting this into youth friendly terms, it means getting information. How we get information and what we do with the information were key points throughout the discussion. Many studies have been conducted on violence against children and the best way to get this information is always a hot topic.

Some of the key points and recommendations that emerged were:

- Closing the gap between research and recommendations
- Effectiveness of current dissemination and making it youth-friendly
- Youth engagement in the research process

### **Child Welfare Legislation, Policy and Practice**

We, the youth of today, feel that child welfare legislation, policies and practice are not accessible and hidden within cities. Children should have the right to voice their opinion on how they feel the services should be run, considering the services are supposed to be for the children.

We believe that if there were more awareness and funding, the services in place would be put to better use and would help prevent violence against children.



## ***Violence Against Children in Juvenile Justice Settings***

When taking a closer look at children in juvenile justice settings, the resounding question “what happens to youth once they are in custody?” becomes a very prominent issue. A general observation made by youth at this meeting is that more and more youth in juvenile justice settings are being abused by authorities as well as experiencing peer-on-peer violence. In order to combat this physical, sexual, mental and emotional abuse, we propose:

- Providing daily counselling sessions for youth in custody
- Upgrading rehabilitation programs to improve the quality of life for convicted youth
- Immediate response to a complaint made by youth – possible transfer or training staff how to deal with the youth appropriately
- An alternative to jail time (community service, outreach projects, restorative justice)
- Eliminating life without parole for youth

We feel our juvenile justice systems have the responsibility to rehabilitate youth and integrate them back into society rather than subject them to more violence.

## ***Violence Against Children with Disabilities***

There are thousands of people with disabilities in North America. Many of these people are youth. They need special attention, and the last thing they need is to be hurt physically and emotionally.

We need to create more buildings for them. By doing this we will encourage them to explore places they could not access before. This is where we would need the cost of electric wheelchairs to be lower as well as the price of medicines.

On top of that it would also be nice to have more disabled-friendly vehicles.

## ***Violence Against Aboriginal and Native American Children***

Aboriginal children and Native American children are a disenfranchised group in society. They are not treated or seen in the same respect as anyone else. They are carted around from one reserve to the other, governments neglect their situations and they were assimilated. There are problems with substance abuse, which cause parents, relatives and friends to physically, mentally and emotionally abuse the children.

There are many solutions that the youth have come up with; there should be counselling for substance abuse, also the governments should give more funds to education on reserves and provide basic human needs, such as housing and education.



## ***Violence Against Children in the Media***

Violence in the media is an urgent social health issue. This subject requires a lot of research, youth on youth engagement, media awareness education at an early age and media awareness education for parents.

Video games, movies, music videos, music, magazines and cyber bullying are all becoming more violent due to the demand of society in North America. Children have become desensitized. They are unable to differentiate between what is fantasy and what is reality. Parents sometimes don't realize how much they can do to stop negative media influence on their child's mind. A lot of parents don't know how to, therefore parents need to be educated on what programs are available to block certain sites, they need to know how to use the Internet, they need to be involved. Parents need to influence their children positively before television or games can teach it to them.

## ***Violence Against Children in Sport***

We believe that violence within sport is becoming a very common issue that is not always recognized. A key problem is that the coaches feel that they have power over the children and may abuse this power in the form of physical, emotional or even sexual abuse.

Often violence in certain sports, such as hockey, is glorified and seen as "no big deal".

We think that a solution and preventative measure would be to increase supervision among youth teams, to ensure that players are safe and not being taken advantage of. Also, rules and regulations for coaches must be increased and enforced by authorities, rather than just by schools. Finally, children should be encouraged by everyone involved to play fairly rather than roughly.

## ***The Role of Primary Prevention***

The majority of anti-violence funding in both Canada and the U.S. goes towards dealing with the effects and repercussions of violence, rather than preventing violence in the first place.

We believe, if children are taught when they are young about the reality of violence and the alternatives, then much of the violence caused by youth could be prevented. We feel that primary prevention begins in the home – with proper communication between parents and children - and with proper implementation on a personal, direct and engaging level in schools. With proper education and preparation, children will be less likely to react violently to situations as they grow.

## ***Violence Against Ethno-cultural Minorities, Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Children***

Plato once said, "Let us suppose the world to be the very image of that whole of which all other animals both individually and in their tribes are portions."



Given that scenario, we in North America should reach a caring hand to cries of help from children around the world. There should be more government funding to provide for the basic necessities and ensure living standards are met for refugees. We need to ensure that these children are not being abused by people in power by putting stricter rules in place about their treatment and handling.

There are uncountable numbers of children suffering trauma and violence every-day – in their homes, schools and families.

Someone once said, “A child can ask questions that a wise man cannot answer.” Indeed, children and youth are the curious wonderers of today and the voices of tomorrow – no, of today!

We hope that through this meeting we provided the UN and all participants with constructive ideas and suggestions to diminish violence against children in North America. Perhaps it is very soon that children everywhere will live in a more compassionate, peaceful and harmonious world.

Thank you.

*All the children and young people participating in Canada*







## ***6. East Asia and the Pacific***

***11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> June 2005, Bangkok, Thailand***

### ***Under 18 Delegates' Keynote Address***

Our region the “South East Asia Pacific” consists of 13 countries coming as far as New Zealand to Mongolia to attend this conference. There are two delegates from every country with an equal number of boys and girls participating in the forum. For the last two days we have been working together in thematic groups, discussing the priority issues for children as well as recommendations to lessen the violence against children in our region.

Our keynote presentation includes:

- Importance of child participation
- What we did in our forum
- Main issues concerning children of the region
- Short and long term goals

### ***How will the Under 18 delegates continue to participate in the UN study on violence against children?***

By keeping ourselves informed as researchers and by sharing our experiences and views specific to our countries.

Participation in the national and regional consultation, in planning of the research for the study and examining what the information collected means and being part of the implementation of the outcomes.

### ***Why is children's participation so important?***

We believe that when a child participates we can contribute new insights into the issues children find most important, and provide an improved understanding about the rights of children. We are able to give recommendations, and will become partners in the future implementation of strategies.

### ***How can young people's participation be meaningful?***

Participation is meaningful when we involve children in different levels of consultations; recognizing young people's opinions. Also involvement in planning, advocacy, decision making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.



### ***What we have been doing in our forum?***

As a group we have come a long way in a very short amount of time. There was the initial cautious nervousness, quickly broken by ice breaker games, and even performing a haka together! Mixing 14 different countries and cultures together resulted in an atmosphere of trust and friendship because of the respect we treated each other with. We shared knowledge of violence against children in our respective countries and discovered that while our countries may be very different, the issues affecting our peers are the same.

Communicating in English through translators, we discussed violence against children before breaking out into the 7 thematic groups of the conference in which we went into greater depth; creating recommendations to the issues we find the most important

### ***Why has our participation been unique?***

We are all under 18! We are pure! We just say what we think without filtering. We are representing the children of our countries. We bring our ideas, as well as their ideas, to the forum. And discuss them with children from other countries.

In “violence against children”, children are the ones who are being hurt. We have to voice out and take action in order to protect ourselves! We are children. We can communicate with children more easily. We can help to reflect the view of the victims.

It is more difficult for us to participate in an international forum than an adult participating in such a forum because most of us do not know English. We need our parent’s consent. We need the support from the community, from our parents / guardians and from you! And the chance for children to participate in an international forum is limited.

Although this topic is serious and wide-ranging, we feel passionate about making a difference and we are not afraid to carry the responsibility of representing our peers!

### ***These are the issues we found to be the most important in the 7 thematic groups:***

#### ***1. Violence against children in the home***

In many cases in different cultures and traditions there is conflict with the ever changing technology and society reforms of the 21<sup>st</sup> century thus contributing to the violence against children in the home and family.

Issues:

- Divorce or marriage break-up
- Child Labour
- Verbal Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Neglect



## **2. Violence against children in the street and community**

The priority issues include:

- Drugs, alcohol, crime etc related to “GANGS”.
- All forms of child abuse of children on the streets and in the community
- Pornography on the streets
- Discrimination, cultural and custom conflicts
- Hunger on the streets
- Maltreatment from shop owners, bus drivers, police officers especially towards street children.
- No freedom of expression
- Child trafficking.

## **3. Violence against children in school**

Issues:

- Corporal punishment by teachers and other school personal. Example: Teachers threatening students.
- School bullying by peers, both physical and mental. Example: students fighting each other.
- Mental abuse by teachers. Example: Discrimination by teachers.
- Sexual abuse by teachers. Example : Molestation of students by teachers

*Examples of what is already happening:*

- Partnership of children’s association and UNICEF to create a child friendly school (Philippines)
- Workshop on violence against children (in Indonesia and across this region)

## **4. Violence against children in work situations**

The priority issues are:

- Lack of education about children’s rights
- No opportunities for working children to study

## **5. Violence against children in conflict with the law**

Priority Issues are:

- In all 14 countries represented at our Regional Consultation, corporal punishment is permitted in the home.
- Children are convicted through the adult justice system and often imprisoned with adults
- Children are abused or feel threatened during the Police interrogation process



## **6. Violence against children in institutions**

Priority Issues are:

- Staff are saying bad hurting words to children
- Sometimes when children do not do their work, they are punished and not allowed to eat
- Older children make younger children as personal servant

## **7. Violence against children in cyberspace**

Definition:

- On the Internet
- New technology (e.g. mobile phone)

Priority Issues are:

- Children are cheated by bad people online
- Children meet up with the person they know online
- Sexual and Violent content online
- Hateful language and abusive messages sent online and through mobile phones
- Icky things (e.g. weapons, drug, etc.) can be bought from online shops easily

## **Key recommendations for issues**

- Corporal punishment **MUST** be banned in homes, schools and as a punishment in the justice system. Children need to be treated the same as adults.
- Government should fund organisations where children can participate and discuss the violence in institutions.
- Have the UN, Governments and communities share information and work together to prevent sexual violence happening to children in the family. The UN, Governments and communities should help children who have been victims of sexual violence. Implement strategies into our governments and traditional societies. Implement strict laws for those who commit sexual abuse.
- Draft regulations on child working conditions and minimum age requirements and stronger provisions for punishment of perpetrators then conduct trainings for adults about the UNCRC.
- Educate the children's rights at school then every school should have monitoring and implementation of legislations, regulations concerning the torture of students, then orientation on children's rights to teachers.

## **Vision for regional consultation**

To build international unity to fight violence against children and to see the recommendations of young people included in the solutions to lessen and eliminate violence against children.



For young people and adults to become partners in understanding the violence and to cooperate and work together in peace with adults

### ***Vision for the future***

To see young people expressing their views, concerns and issues affecting them, and for governments in all the countries to prioritize the issue on violence against children; giving appropriate funding and resources to immediately respond to the violence that happens and strictly implement laws to prevent violence.

### ***Conclusion***

This was our chance over 2 days together, to represent the 24 Under 18 delegates from East Asia and the Pacific, and to promote and convey the issues that are most important to us and the millions of children we are representing back in our home countries.

We need your support to stop violence against children, not just in our region, but all over the world. There is a Chinese saying, “Gu Cheung Lan Ming,” that means “no sound can be made if only one hand claps.” We, children, are one hand. Adults are the other hand. The community is one hand. The government is one hand... We strongly believe that a community with peace, love and unity can be built if we work together for the future!

*All the children and young people participating in Thailand*







## 7. *Middle East and North Africa*

**27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> June 2005, Cairo, Egypt**

### ***Children's Final Statement***

We, 28 Arab children (14 girls and 14 boys), representatives of nine countries in North Africa and the Middle East (Yemen/Qatar / Bahrain/ Jordan/ Lebanon/ Egypt/ Sudan/ Algeria/ Tunisia) have agreed, over three working days from 24 to 26 June 2005, to close ranks under one slogan namely "rejection of violence against children".

We organized and participated in many national activities in our countries as preparation for this conference. Here, in Cairo, we delved into lengthy workshops about (32 hours) where we listen to different presentations from group of experts. Then we work in four small groups. Each group assigned one participant to run the discussion, other as timekeeper, third write down our idea in proposal, which presented to all group members. All group members participated in the discussion.

Then we met in plenary to present our ideas, discuss, comment, and persuade each other. We form drafting committee to review the recommendations came out from the groups, so that we can vote on them.

We based our recommendations on persuading, modifying and voting, if there is no consensus on a proposal, we exclude it.

### ***Here is our statement as children for the conference:***

- Recognising that violence (physical, sexual, emotional or neglect) is a common problem in the MENA region.
- Regretting the fact that despite the laws concerning child protection have been set up in the MENA region, many of them are not being implemented.
- Reminding countries of the MENA region that they have ratified the UN.
- Convention of the Rights of the Child, they have agreed to implement its provisions including right of the child to be protected from violence, abuse, exploitation.
- Considering that, many children in the MENA region suffer from violence (in all forms) due to war and occupation in some countries including Iraq, Palestine and Sudan.
- Taking due account of the fact that violence negatively affects a child psychologically, physically and emotionally.
- Fully aware of the fact that violence is happened in homes, schools, communities and institutions as orphanages and alternative care centers.
- Acknowledging many countries put large amount of effort in trying to eliminate violence against children.
- Reminding all countries of the fact that the first step to solve the problem of violence against children is admitting to it.
- Emphasizing the importance of our participation -as children- and our effective role to encounter our problems, we are capable and willing to be part of the solution.



### ***Here is our proposed plan of actions:***

#### ***First: Policy and legislation:***

1. Enact laws protecting children from violence at schools, homes, communities and institutions.
2. Enact national and international laws banning violence in institutions completely and setting mechanism to follow up its implementation combating the violations acts against children.
3. Enacting a law that prohibits employers from exploiting children (under legal age), while intensifying control thereon.
4. Providing free schools and rendering children's education compulsory, while earmarking a portion of the state budget for homeless children.
5. Establish monitoring system for media on violence issues.
6. Establish special child courts on violence issues, and assign officials to protect the complaint applicant and recover the rights of the child subject of violence
7. Detach the party responsible for the act of violence from the family for psychological treatment forcing him/her to provide for the family during that period - if he/she were the family provider. Treat the victimized child psychologically without separation from the family
8. Set up a specialized committee to identify problems related to children subject to domestic violence and their recording on video tapes to use them as a testimony of those children before court without having to repeat demonstration of this problem or giving this testimony more than once, so as to minimize child embarrassment and help soothe his psychological disturbances.

#### ***Second: Awareness:***

1. Preparing awareness publications (posters, wall magazines, lectures, flyers... etc) that raise children's awareness on harmful consequences of violence;
2. Setting up websites and media channels (internet, Radio... etc) concerned with protecting children against violence and allowing them to pose their problems and seek appropriate solutions;
3. Combating all uncivilized and violent behavior, such as discrimination and exclusion;
4. Produce drama works aiming to reject violence that are spontaneously assimilated by all children;
5. Activate the positive media role (audio-visual-print), and harness the various media to educate and change false ideas
6. Exchange the treatment of drama about good and evil conflict with non-violent solutions. At the same time, set up warning/ banning code to protect children's mentality.
7. Emphasizing the role of media on raising the awareness of families and communities about harmful consequences of violence;
8. Preparing plays and films for distribution on all schools, clubs... etc which promoting culture of peace and dialogue to raise the awareness of the society as whole.
9. Organize awareness workshops highlighting the need for child care.



### ***Third: Services:***

1. Setting up shelters for homeless children, and the children victims of violence to rehabilitate them;
2. Setting up special centers for handing out assistance, and preparing programs for sponsoring orphans and street children, while allowing them to help in running them.
3. Establish a specialized centers accessible for the child exposed to any form of violence.
4. Appointing multi-disciplinary team (medical, psychological, social) in the institutions and activate its rehabilitation role.
5. Training teachers pedagogically, and culturally to become more efficient in
6. treating pupils;

### ***Fourth: Monitoring and follow-up:***

1. Appoint a representative for child protection at the local level to receive the complaints of children and to work out their solutions seriously.
2. Establish associations in the local level to follow up the approved plan of actions and to report regularly to central association.
3. Monitor the implementation of the strategies and decisions taken by the government to guarantee full implantation.
4. Supervise and monitor the schools and institutions to guarantee to its commitment to combat violence and implement other alternatives.
5. Prepare reports from children and experts and present them to officials hoping to take them into consideration (not put aside as former conferences).

*All the children and young people participating in Egypt*







## 8. *Europe and Central Asia*

**2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> July 2005, Ljubljana, Slovenia**

### **Opening session speech**

*Tirill Sjøvoll*

We are here to fight violence against children. We know what the problem is, and we know that we have to do something. In this conference we need to find solutions and put them into action.

We represent a group of 24 children who the last couple of days have been discussing the problem with violence against children, and preparing to this conference. And those 24 children represent children all over Europe and central Asia. Just like you represent governments and NGOs from 50 different countries.

At this conference there are children and adults participating as equal partners. You rely on our expertise like we rely on your power and commitment. We have solutions and you have the power to implement them. Through dialogs and cooperation we must act together and act now!

During the last few days we have been discussing four main subjects about violence in our workshop. Violence in the family, violence in the community, violence at school and violence in residential institutions. And as you know children are very good at expressing themselves in a variety of ways. So now after this slide show we will show you a few short movies written, filmed and produced by children from this region as a part of a UNICEF project focusing on the four main subjects. Enjoy it!

### **Key recommendations**

#### **Violence in schools – Act Now!**

- To prohibit every kind of violence that happens in schools in every country
- To make schools happy places in which children are eager to learn

#### **Taking action**

- To inform children where they can report violence in schools
- To intervene personally or alert the authorities when violence happens

#### **Awareness raising**

- To raise public awareness about human rights and children's rights, in particular by developing and distributing educational publications, video clips and ensuring that the CRC is on the educational curriculum in schools
- To initiate campaigns – for example, in the media and through workshops at school – to get more people involved in preventing and stopping violence and to make sure these are funded by governments and NGOs



### ***Specialist support and counselling***

- To help school students train and talk to younger pupils on how to prevent and stop violence
- To ensure that there are professionals or specialists that children can trust who are available for help and support both inside and outside schools (for example, through help-lines or hot-lines, through supervised internet forums or chats where children can seek help, communicate and post personal messages, as social workers, psychologists or tutors who provide the bridge or connection between the child or young person, the family and the school)
- To set up peer counselling or support mechanisms to help children

### ***Providing skills and incentives***

- To set up extra-curricular activities that help children to interact with each other and to make sure these are funded by governments and NGOs
- To set up award systems that offer positive incentives such as praise, prizes, positive feedback

### ***Educating parents and teachers***

- To involve parents in meetings at school and to help them learn other ways of practising discipline
- To help teachers learn other ways of practising discipline

### ***Monitoring change***

- To set up a system of regular monitoring among school students to see if there has been positive change

### ***Violence in the community – Act Now!***

‘Understand that one person can do something about violence but many people can stop violence’

- To understand that all the problems of violence are connected – the school is part of our community and the home is part of our community
- To recognise that children have equal rights regardless of language, background or colour

### ***Training/education***

- To organise seminars ‘Let’s say no to violence’
- To help young parents or young people who intend to become parents to understand the psychology and behaviour of their children



- To understand more about the causes and overall effects and consequences of violent behaviour
- To organise rage-control classes
- To have more training centres for volunteers

### ***Spare time***

- To organise spare time activities to prevent boredom, including life skills activities that help children and young people to solve problems and resolve conflict situations
- To make sure that there are more opportunities for spare time activities – for example, clubs and centres for children and young people
- To get activities started to keep those who make trouble off the streets

### ***On the street***

- To provide shelters for street children
- To make the streets where children play safe

### ***At work***

- To protect children from labour exploitation by ensuring that the police check children's age before they start work

### ***Media***

- To reduce violence in the media to stop trends of violence developing
- To train people in the media to reflect the facts about violence against children so that they stop sensationalising it as an issue. Sometimes the portrayal of children by the media is violent in itself and damages the self esteem of children
- To make sure that media abuses are recognised and that these are better monitored and controlled

### ***In general***

- To make efficient laws
- To reduce poverty
- To see violence as a global problem
- To act against violence together



## **Violence in the family – Act Now!**

*'We value every minute spent in family'*

*'All the people in the world are responsible for violence'*

*'Stop violence in the family'*

### **Parents**

- To make parents understand what violence is and that it's wrong
- To help parents learn about bringing up their children without violence and to discipline them in other ways
- To accept their children for who they are – children – and to understand and listen to their children's problems
- To help parents to avoid using any form of violence, argument, abusive or inappropriate behaviour against their children

### **Children**

- To let children know about their rights
- To let children be involved in family life
- To provide children with information where they can report violence and where they can be safe if they report violence
- To support children to change their habits that get them into trouble

### **Governments & society**

- To organise seminars in schools and in the community for children, parents and teachers so that everyone understands what violence is and to inform people that violence is wrong
- To provide different sorts of training for parents – for example, on being better parents
- To organise information and awareness raising campaigns about violence in families as it is an unknown subject or one that is not talked about
- To produce and distribute publications and information about bringing up children without violence
- To prevent children who have been subjected to violence from returning to violent families and to help them integrate well into other families
- To make sure that children who are victims of violence are not rejected by society
- To provide social assistance, social workers and psychologists to families who are violent or are at risk of becoming violent so that checks can be made on children and their welfare
- To reduce poverty as poverty can cause stress within families
- To give support to low income families to make sure that they have enough economic resources so that their opportunities are not limited



- To report on violence in families that they may know about or witness – for example, neighbours who see that children are beaten or neglected

### **The media**

*‘The media has a key role to play’*

- To inform the public about violence against children in the family through newspapers, television, the internet, video clips, educational publications

### **Violence in residential institutions – Act Now!**

Residential institutions are a bad environment for children to be in especially if they are missing education and not having opportunities to better themselves in the future.

Children in institutions must know their rights  
The staff must be aware of children’s rights  
Children must know that their voice is heard

Key issues:

- Violation of children’s rights
- Environment
- Location
- Staff
- Not sufficient information
- Lack of education
- Isolation
- Depression
- Low Self – esteem
- Lack of trust and confidence
- Discrimination
- Social stigma

Putting children with different types of mental problems together can also be a problem, there is a lack of space and bad environment for children in these environments, lack of privacy. In many places you have to live with many people you don’t know.

### **Training and education**

- To help adults and young people deliver sessions on controlling rage and anger management



- To give training for specialists in particular areas
- To provide training for young people so that they can carry out peer mentoring effectively

### ***Awareness raising***

- To make residential institutions become more visible and in more centralised locations.
- To help young people who have been through the systems to talk to those who haven't been through the systems
- To let children and adults visit residential institutions
- To let more young people Act Now together so that they can communicate together.
- To support employers to be open minded
- To change the mentality of the community by giving them information, because they do not know much about it, by the media.
- To encourage co-operation and involvement of all tiers in the community
- To recognise that the community is everyone and needs to include children and young people and be child friendly.
- To have agreements between the media, the community and the government, to create activities that reduce stigma and help integration.

### ***Specialist support***

- To help young people who have been through the systems to talk to each other
- To have peer education and support from children to reduce the stigma
- To have more qualified staff, who are specialists in working with children and educated. Need to be confidential and tactful to respect young people's needs.
- To have outside individuals who are specialised staff to go into institutions to periodically report on the situation of children and young people in institutions. This must include the views and experiences of children and young people and staff so that children can reflect.
- To have youth worker support.
- To provide more training on working with children with disabilities

### ***Child friendly spaces and systems***

- To make sure that correctional institutions are not places of punishment
- To take children outside of the centres because of the change of environment works for them
- To give future support of children when they are out of the institution so that they have a place to live, a place to work and continuing education.



- To let children's choices be heard
- To give support to children to go in front of ministers to speak their views as they don't always find it easy
- To help more people to speak on behalf and to support children and young people.
- To make sure that children in residential institutions are thought of as children and not as 'criminal' if they have done something criminal.
- To produce periodical reports to hear both sides of the story, how children feel and the official side of the story. This should be a permanent situation

### **Media**

- To make sure media respect the privacy of the child, child friendly laws.
- To take a journalist into institution to let them see how it is.
- To allow periodical visits to institutions by the media to let people know, it is about transparency, young people reporting on their situations and writing on their experiences.
- To make sure media plays a part by not criminalising and excluding people

### **Government**

- To make laws that prohibit violence, need to be the foundation so that can move forward, corporal punishment still legal in some institutions.
- To provide financial support for education of young people who are unable to afford.
- To provide non-residential solutions for example placing children with families
- To create a child friendly state, more focus on children's rights taking care of them in all parts of community
- To make the state responsible to find the solution
- To make sure that governments do not just push their own agenda but children's agenda.



### ***Did you know that...***

1. ... patronising is a form of mental violence?
2. ... children are often called bad names by their teachers?
3. ... there are Roma communities that are organizing “baby fights”?
4. ... in England there is a trend called “happy slaps”?
5. ... some citizens of Azerbaijan make their children aged between 3 and 10 build houses?
6. ... in Slovenia parents can hit their children?
7. ... in Norway children with disabilities are put in the same place as old people?
8. ... there are people in the community that can be aggressive to children if they refuse to pay the protection tax?
9. ... in Norway unaccompanied minor asylum seekers disappear from centres without any form of interrogation from the police
10. ... there are countries where the first juridical step is to re-integrate children in their own families even if that is not the best solution?
11. ... in the UK under anti-social behaviour laws young people can have their photograph and details distributed to the community in the local media and on flyers?
12. ... in Northern Ireland a group of people form a circle and two people stand in the middle and fight until one of them bleeds and then the circle breaks?
13. ... all children need love, care and support?

*All the children and young people participating in Slovenia*



## 9. *East and Southern Africa*

**20<sup>th</sup> July 2005, Johannesburg, South Africa**

### ***Violence in schools***

The school, a place of learning has turned out to be a nightmare because there is violence and it is unbearable.

To be punished mentally, emotionally and physically. Being severely beaten up, made to dig pits as deep as your height as well as being forced to go to bed with teachers leaving us in a position with no one to talk to. It is hard to tell anybody for fear of losing our education. When we came to this consultation we had many expectations and we are proud to say that at least a big step has been taken to address our problems, because it is true that education is the key to our future.

### ***Violence in institutions***

Most African countries suffer the problem of poverty; as a result children are most affected. Most parents in such situations are not able to provide adequately.

For their children hence these children opt to go and earn a living for themselves.

This causes children to go and look for employment in institutions such as factories, mines and so on. Other children are just abandoned or just transferred to other countries to work as slaves. In the past few days we the children have been deliberating and coming up with recommendations to these already mentioned problems.

We have discussed these problems of child abuse and child labour. Most countries have signed the convention on the eradication of the worst forms of child labour, the law is there but it is not enforced. Children gave their various experiences such as working in mines and factories and others being child soldiers.

As the children we are appealing to the private sector and the UN to make awareness in communities to eradicate child labour. We are also appealing to the government to reinforce the laws on child labour in institutions. Government should abolish all form of child prostitution and make brothels illegal.

Violence against children is not only in workplace but also in institutions such as orphanages, youth centre and rehabilitation centre. As the children we are urging the the govt and private sector to empower the social workers to monitor orphanages NGO's should see to it that children in institutions such as orphanages are not sexually exploited in any way. Govt should sensitize parents and the rights of the child. Parents in Somalia overload girls with a lot of house chores. We the children demand that this should be stopped.

Lastly govt. and the private sector should provide food, clothing and other necessities to institutions where children are kept. It is the plight of every African child that our recommendations are taken into consideration because we are the future.



## ***Violence in the workplace***

In Africa, where each day more and more children are beginning to take upon themselves, great responsibilities to sustain their lives, the workplace cannot be avoided. However, measures must be taken to avoid the exploitation of children in these areas:

We want a minimum age for children to work to be enforced at 16 years old. No child should have to fight a war or carry heavy loads and neither should a child have to work long hours without pay or be abused or treated unfairly. Children deserve to be treated as equals in the work place and those who abuse us should be severely punished. Equality and quality in the work place is what the children want.

## ***Violence in the home, family and the community***

The home, the family, the community these are the places we find joy and love in.

Being here has not only been a privilege but has left us as the children expectant

As to what is yet to come. Some of our objectives are that when we go back home we will be able to tell our parents about what we have learnt and hope that from here we will build an open relationship with them including the community at large.

Hopefully from here our right will be recognized and that those kids that are undergoing any form of abuse will be attended to as soon as possible, And lastly we ask that you look at us not as a stumbling stone but as, as a building block for the future.

For it is true that we as the children do not just belong to the family but to you the community at large.

## ***Children's opinion***

I am a refugee from DRC and I live in South Africa now.

All the children who have attended the conference are greatly thankful to the government, to all the ministers and to the members of UNICEF for giving us the opportunity to express ourselves and give our opinion about the violence that we face in schools, the community, the institution and the workplace and also in the family and how this violence affects us.

We discussed everything in our groups and some of the recommendations that we came to were really amazing. We would like you to think about our recommendations intensively. We would to consider refugees in any programs that you make about violence against children. We do not want violence we just want education to make our continent a better place for life.

On another note we would like to thank Joyce and Pat from NCRC and all the chaperones and facilitators. We would also like to thank Advocate Thoko Majokwene from the National Prosecuting Authority for her generosity as well as the Government of South Africa for their help. We thank too the staff of Kopanong hotel as they have treated us in the utmost respect and humanity. The food was okay, although we could have done with a bit more sporting facilities, however we survived. To everyone involved we say keep up the good work and remember peace brings happiness. Thank You.

*All the children and young people participating in South Africa*



*Save the Children fights for children's rights.  
We deliver immediate and lasting improvements  
to children's lives worldwide.*



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