



Report from High-level Conference November 2018, Stockholm:

Changing the World: Making Non-Violent Childhoods a Reality



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More information on the reports and campaign can be accessed at www.childrenatrisk.eu/nonviolence

Change of attitudes and behavior is possible - all over the world

The conversation about children's rights has been a long one. Many people understood that it was not acceptable to punish children physically at school and in public spaces before understanding the harm this caused to children in domestic settings. Discussions and actions which got a stronger focus in the Baltic Sea region in the late 70s have since led to many countries introducing laws against corporal punishment in all settings. This led to an overall reduction in corporal punishment and a greater understanding that these actions are not acceptable to society at large. This is of course to be applauded.

The Baltic Sea region is a model region in the world with 10 out of 11 countries having a legal prohibition against corporal punishment. However, too many children are still being beaten, smacked, threatened and humiliated and corporal punishment against children remains a huge challenge. Only 10 percent of the world's one billion children live in countries where the law fully protects them from violent discipline and at least half of the world's children experience violence during childhood. Some studies estimate the cost of violence against children at a staggering 7 trillion USD a year.

At a high-level conference in November 2018 in Stockholm one president, ministers, policy-makers and representatives from child ombudsmen's offices, academia and international and national organizations and institutions reflected upon the regional and global situation and gave their recommendations. Six guidance reports, a comic book and a campaign were launched at the conference. The main recommendations, key messages and excerpts from the speeches are included in this report. Full versions of the speeches and photos from the conference are available on the website: www.childrenatrisk.eu/nonviolence.

The conference was an important milestone marking the achievements the Baltic Sea region has made in inspiring other regions and countries to act on this issue. It also marked the mid-point between the last global conference organized by the government of Malta in May 2018, and the next in Tunisia in 2020. The high-level conference was organized by the Council of the Baltic Sea States and co-hosted by the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and the Swedish Government.

The Non-Violent Childhoods programme was developed to promote the full implementation of the ban on corporal punishment of children in the Baltic Sea Region through collaborative, multi-stakeholder planning and action at national level. Its program of work is managed by the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat with co-funding from the European Commission. National partners from Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Sweden were the main actors of the Non-violent Childhoods programme, while experts from the other countries of the region contributed significantly. The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children was the international partner.

The guidance reports, the comic book and the campaign are aimed at parents, children, practitioners, advocates and policy makers. While the reports are based on the experience of the Baltic Sea Region, they convey key messages and highlight best practices that have relevance also to Europe and beyond. Each report focuses on a specific theme; a step-by-step guide, implementing the ban in the domestic setting, positive parenting, awareness-raising campaigns, service provision and tracking progress. In addition, the comic book aims to raise awareness of the harmful impact of corporal punishment and the importance for children to have trusted adults to turn to.

In 2018, the world community celebrated the 70-year anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in 2019 it will celebrate the 30-year anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, in 2019, the UN General Assembly will host its first overall review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including target 16.2 on ending all forms of violence against children. The promotion of non-violent childhoods must be at the heart of this process. On all these occasions, actors at national levels can support each other and encourage governments to collect and disseminate data, knowledge and arguments to end corporal punishment of children.

A good practice: the Swedish example

Staffan Janson, Professor of pediatrics introduced the participants to the good practice of Sweden and informed about the background for the Swedish law and the significant change in attitudes and behavior. Through a range of changes in the law to prevent corporal punishment Sweden, as the first country in the world, in 1979 prohibited corporal punishment of children in the Parental Act. Professor Janson explained that it was a gradual process from 1858 when it was prohibited to beat grown-up servants, in 1920 children servants was also included and in 1958 corporal punishment was prohibited in all Swedish schools.

Gradually, from corporal punishment being common in the 60'ies the attitude and practice of corporal punishment changed. Today, less than 5% of children are severely harmed by corporal punishment. The change is a result of changes in the law, effective information campaigns and research showing the harm of violence and the good effects of positive parenting. The welfare state, technical development making life easier and an early political consensus are all elements working in favor of changing adult attitudes and behavior towards children. The high level of education, preventive health care and preschools are other important factors in this positive process.

Future challenges for Sweden are to strengthen the preventive efforts and special interventions towards families with multi-problems. Infants and toddlers, in particular, must be better protected against severe maltreatment and a general competence about abuse and neglect must be better in the health sector, in schools, by the social services and the police. New citizens (migrants and refugees) and minority groups are specific target groups for information about the Swedish Parental Act. Most importantly, advocacy for children's rights and awareness-raising campaigns must include listening to children, giving them opportunities to disclose. Interventions shall be tailored to the child's specific situation and needs. Lastly, it is important to utilize well-functioning social networks around the child and insure children that there are trusted adults, whom to report.

Key messages to end corporal punishment

Representatives from important European institutions such as the EU and Council of Europe, the UN and international organisations brought forward their suggestions to key messages and recommendations to guide the process of ending corporal punishment of children. The representatives were; **Maira Mora**, Director General of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat, **Marta Santos Pais**, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children, **Elda Moreno**, Council of Europe, **Valeria Setti**, European Commission, **Anna Henry**, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, **Lena Ingelstam**, Save the Children, **Bragi Guðbrandsson**, newly elected member to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and **Juris Jansons**, Ombudsman in Latvia;

- Violence against children can become part of a distant past, if we invest in strong child protection systems, including the enactment and enforcement of comprehensive legislation to prohibit all forms of violence against children, in all settings;
- With explicit legislation, States convey a clear message of condemnation of any form of neglect, abuse and exploitation while encouraging the upbringing of children through non-violent means;
- Children and young people have unique perspectives. Children can make significant contributions to decisions affecting their lives. They are the experts and the society need to include their recommendations;
- With strong legislation against corporal punishment, officials and professionals have clear guidance and child victims feel they matter;
- Legal and social norms must be addressed at the same time. This implies creating a culture of respect of the rights of the child and developing legal frameworks that explicitly ban corporal punishment;
- Governments must work with all relevant actors to enforce the implementation of the ban and information about the ban must reach all levels of society;
- Legal provisions must reflect evidence-based practices and should not only be based on criminal codes but include specific provisions in sectoral laws covering health, education and social services/child protection;
- Violence prevention must start in early childhood through social support to families. Investing in early childhood is a human right imperative, it makes economic sense and enables children to develop their full potential, free from fear and violence;
- Preventive measures must include promoting child rights, awareness-raising and education for children, parents and outreach measures. Further it includes universal and targeted social services, strategies to reduce child poverty, mechanisms for children to claim their rights and data collection;
- Positive discipline programs are essential to build a change in attitudes. They are to be promoted widely, building capacity for parents, caregivers, teachers, social workers and healthcare practitioners;
- There are safe, well-publicized, confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms in place for children, their representatives and others;
- States can support global progress by engaging with the Universal Periodic Review to encourage prohibition in law. They can target aid funding to ensure educational or institutional protection and engage with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendations informing future investments

Participants in the high-level conference took part in several workgroups commenting upon and giving recommendations on important thematic and strategic issues;

Advice from children and young people for promoting Non-Violent Childhoods

Speakers: Tove Kjellander, Vinkelrätt, Sweden; Turid Heiberg, Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat, Maria Thell, Maskrosbarn, Sweden, Jesper Jörtsö, Ambassador from Knas Hemma; Sweden, Agnese Sladzevska, Centrs Dardedze, Latvia, Anna Marie Schurmann Carstens, Danish National Council for Children and young person from Estonia.

The purpose of this thematic group was to provide a space for the participants to channel the views and recommendations of children on promoting non-violent childhoods. The speakers related the views of children who participated in structured consultations in Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Sweden on corporal punishment by parents and engaged in the discussion based on their own experiences.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that “State parties shall assure a child capable of forming his/hers views the right to express those freely in all matters affecting the child”. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) emphasises that “children’s rights to be heard and to have their views given due weight must be respected systematically in all decision-making processes, and their empowerment and participation should be central to child caregiving and protection strategies and programmes;”. The CRC further notes that child participation has particular relevance in situations of violence and can play an important preventive role against all forms of violence in the home and family, including corporal punishment. (CRC General Comment no 12 and 13).

The Council of Europe has developed a child participation assessment tool to facilitate and measure States progress over time in supporting child participation. The tool provides indicators that guide States in undertaking a baseline assessment and consequently identifying measures that promote further compliance and progress. Estonia and Latvia are piloting the assessment tool.

Jesper Jörtsö presented the views of children and young people in Sweden who participated in structured discussions about their experiences of corporal punishment. He channeled the impression of children that it is rare to see a parent hitting their children in the open in Sweden, but that it still happens in many homes. The children felt that there is need to adjust, change and develop new practices to meet the needs of children; practices which are reflected in the recommendations from this thematic group.

Jesper also talked about how some children are forced into a “power game” with their parents, often fueled by the fear of what was described as unpredictable changes in their parents’ mood and behavior, turning from being gentle to aggressive. A young woman from Estonia who contributed with a written testimony to the high-level conference, mentioned similar concerns, pointing to confusing manipulations by caregivers and lack of clarity and understanding of the real causes for the parents’ aggression and abuse.

They both also emphasised the importance of being listened to by trusted and caring adults. Being in a safe and caring environment helps release stress and gain a clearer perspective on corporal punishment, its negative effects and that there are other ways to raise children and build relationships. Children below the age of 10 in Latvia who are exposed to, or have experienced corporal punishment, echoed the perspective that when you live with corporal punishment, you get so used to it that it becomes a natural part of life.

The participants therefore recommended that children should receive more information about their right to live a life free from violence, otherwise it is difficult to relate to corporal punishment and to speak about it. Training of parents and reporting of incidents are also important measures to address corporal punishment. Mental abuse and neglect needs to be addressed as part of corporal punishment of children.

The participants also highlighted the situation that younger children who are exposed to harsh physical violence often also are less likely to be heard and believed. Special measures should therefore be taken to ensure that children of all ages are enabled to contribute their perspectives, by giving them opportunities to tell their stories, involving them in surveys and research and ensuring that their voices are reflected in recommendations on how to strengthen preventive and protective efforts. In general, child-friendly information must be shared with children from the earliest age about their rights to dignity, respect and a non-violent childhood.

Recommendations

- Create mandatory education for new parents. This can for example be done by family centers or institutions that are working with early prevention, children's rights, preventive health care providers and in pre-schools.
- Take children's concerns seriously – it is crucial to listen to children and young people. This can be done for example by involving children and young people in high level discussions and including them in the decision-making process.
- Public awareness about the prevalence and negative impact of corporal punishment on children's health, wellbeing, development and adult-child relationships as well as children's rights to freedom from violence must continuously be raised.
- Include and involve children and young people who might not have experienced violence themselves as they may have friends in that situation. By involving all children and young people it is possible to create a much better understanding of how violence affects children in general and to help the individual child.
- Encourage adults to be kind towards children and dare to ask if they notice something is not right. Professionals should always aim to build trust and follow-up and protect the child until safe solutions are found.
- States must create and use tools for social service staff to report suspicions when they detect signs of children being victims of abuse and violence.

Promoting positive parenting

Speakers: Olivia Lind Haldorsson, Author of the Guidance report on positive parenting (Child Circle), Laura Milciene, Save the Children, Lithuania, Bengt Söderström, Stiftelsen Allmänna Barnhuset,

Sweden, **Anssi Pirttijärvi**, Office of the Ombudsman for Children, Finland, **Salvör Nordal**, Ombudsman for Children, Iceland, **Maria Keller-Hamela**, Empowering Childrens Foundation, Poland and **Eva Bellander**, child rights advocate, Sweden.

Non-violent positive parenting is a key foundation for the successful implementation of national laws to prohibit corporal punishment of children. State authorities carry the key responsibility for parenting support, including rolling out positive parenting programmes. Working together with a broad range of actors to ensure reach and impact is crucial.

Today, there are several positive parenting initiatives which help parents cope with the challenges of being a parent, which support and guide parents in adopting non-violent parenting strategies and build positive relations with their children. It is not always easy to determine which programme will have most impact and be cost effective. It is therefore important to carry out a solid context analysis and to develop clear goals for the parenting support.

All action should be guided by a clear and targeted national strategy and action plan. Special efforts must be made to ensure an inclusive approach, which caters for the needs of different individuals and groups, in particular those hard to reach, at heightened risk of using violence and children and parents with special needs. It often a mix of different programmes that will have the most impact.

Continuous evaluation, including by gathering feedback from children, parents and programme staff is crucial to measure impact of the training and to make potential adjustments.

Staff support, and education is important to ensure that trainers remain passionate, professional and competent and to prevent fatigue and burnout.

Recommendations

- Establish a national body responsible for developing, resourcing and monitoring a context driven national strategy to prevent and address violence against children, including an action plan for parenting support taking a multidisciplinary and preventive approach.
- Adopt a principled approach guided by children's rights, research, evidence, sustainability inclusivity, staff-competence and wellbeing and establish a broad partnership.
- Adopt special measures to ensure a child centred approach, including through involvement of children in the design, implementation and evaluation of the national strategy and the initiatives it generates.

Prosecution or educational support

Speakers: **Anna Henry**, Director, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, **Pernilla Leviner**, Associate Professor in Public Law, Stockholm University, Sweden, **Anna Kaldal**, Professor, Stockholm University, Sweden, **Heiða Björg Pálmadóttir**, Director, National Child Protection Authority, Iceland and **Jillian van Turnhout**, Children's Rights Advocate, Ireland

Implementing the legal ban on prohibiting corporal punishment in all settings including in the home is challenging for all societies. Most societies have defined a preventive role for the education, health and social sectors, however, in certain cases it is also necessary to prosecute caregivers when children are victims of corporal punishment.

Social, health and education sectors are essential in preventing, guiding and responding to violence against children with caregivers. These sectors also must respond urgently to reports from children and others about incidents of violence. Yet, professionals are often hesitant to cross the threshold of the family home and when they do, they seldom approach the issue of violence against children. They are also less likely to ask the child about violence and abuse.

A good practice is the Barnahus model, based upon multi-disciplinary and interagency cooperation to support child victims and witnesses of violence getting child-friendly services in a safe environment. The situation of the child is investigated, the child is heard in a child friendly and safe environment and follow up procedures are determined. The case may be referred to the court, but it is just as likely that the case is referred to child protection and social services.

Recommendations

- The principles of the “Best Interests of the Child” and the rights of the child are essential when discussing relevant preventive or protective interventions when children are at risk or harmed by corporal punishment. In all work the core guiding question must be: “What is best for this child?”
- The law is to send a clear message that corporal punishment is wrong, and that it harms children in the same way as adults are harmed by violence.
- Prevention and early intervention is according to the UNCRC General Comment no 8 the main purpose of law reform. A systematic approach is needed where for instance trusted professionals such as midwives, public health nurses and early years educators engage with parents and includes information and discussions about violence against children.
- Children must be given opportunities to be informed and heard. Adults and professionals must ensure that children are informed and equipped to use their voice.

Tracking progress towards Non-violent Childhoods – measuring changes in attitudes and behavior to achieve an end to corporal punishment.

Speakers: **Staffan Janson**, Professor and Author of the Guidance on Tracking Progress, Sweden, **Triona Lenihan**, the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, Dr **Ewald Filler**, Austrian Federal Chancellery, **Andres Aru**, Head of Department, Office of the Chancellor of Justice, Estonia, **Ewa Jarosz**, Professor, University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland and **Anna Sarkadi**, Professor, Social Medicine, Uppsala University, Sweden.

Different definitions and data collection methodologies prevent monitoring and comparison of the situation in different countries and settings and there is therefore little comparable data across regions and over time on the impact of a ban on the prevalence of corporal punishment. Comparable research carried out before and after a ban on corporal punishment is available only in a handful of countries, most of them in the Baltic Sea Region. In other regions, studies have focussed on potential decrease of the use of corporal punishment in a specific setting, usually schools, or evaluating the impact of a programme.

Quantitative methodologies are used to measure and compare prevalence of corporal punishment. However, it can also be useful and sometimes necessary to complement quantitative studies with a qualitative methodology such as semi-structured interviews, focus groups and visual methods, since different types of data and research provide a more complete and complex picture. It is also useful to use multiple tools to measure the prevalence and consequences of violence against children in a

society. Population-based surveys and self-reported data from surveys can be complemented with data from different registers, for example mortality registers, health registers and social service and police registers.

It may also be important to not only measure the scope of the problem but also explore the context and contributing factors associated with corporal punishment and other forms of violence against children. Contributing factors may be social, economic and environmental factors such as social mobility, political changes, economical changes, family factors, individual features of parents / caregivers and a child.

The role of children and young people in research can for example involve developing a survey questionnaire, but children can also be included as actors in planning and conceptualising the strategy and procedure for the research, collecting data and in analysing the results.

Recommendations

- Baseline data in connection with the introduction of a corporal punishment ban is of great importance, followed by repeat studies using the same methodology to track progress over time.
- Population based studies should be performed with well validated questionnaires.
- Wherever possible, it is preferable to use internationally accepted methodologies and definitions of terms.
- Qualitative interviews with children, parents and teachers should be performed before embarking on surveys, to get information about less well-known local circumstances.
- Many maltreated children are poly-victimized. The surveys should cover different forms of maltreatment like corporal punishment, interpersonal violence, sexual abuse, emotional harassments, humiliations and neglect.
- It is important to use multiple tools like qualitative studies, surveys and different register studies to get the full picture of the situation and status in a country.
- One should be open to new methods that may give a good understanding of young (3-5 years) children's and other vulnerable group's views. A promising method in this respect is the "In My Shoes" computer-based interview which has shown good validity and accuracy in several different countries and settings with preschoolers and children/youth with developmental disabilities (<http://www.inmyshoes.org.uk>).

Essential drivers for implementation of the ban

What needs to happen to promote implementation of a ban against corporal punishment? What immediate and long-term action must be taken? Who are key actors that need to be involved in the change-making process? These and other questions were addressed in a series of roundtables involving representatives from Ministries, Ombudsoffices for children, academia and children's organisations, looking at key action to take once a ban against corporal punishment has been achieved.

Immediate actions: A key lesson learned from countries that have adopted a ban is that it must be accompanied by a comprehensive public campaign about the ban and its purpose of preventing

harm to children. Measures to educate and support parents in finding alternative child rearing strategies are equally crucial. Passing the ban is a long-term commitment by a State, which must be followed by an integrated response system that has a preventive focus and a functioning support system. Children must be heard and listened to concerning all questions of violence against children including in development or policy and interventions and when building the support system. Primarily, children need to have somewhere to turn to when subjected to violence. All children must be considered and included in the support system including children with disabilities, children from less strong economic and social environments and refugee and immigrant children. Barnahus was repeatedly mentioned as a good practice to reveal trauma and abuse as well as the need for the country to have long term strategies for their inclusion in the society.

Awareness-raising: Awareness-raising and communication are key measures to support the adoption and implementation of national laws to prohibit corporal punishment of children. Such campaigns aim to generate awareness of the ban and promote the shift from corporal punishment to positive and non-violent parenting approaches. These measures may involve ministries and institutions at national, regional and local level, service providers in the health and education systems, and NGO, community and faith groups as implementing partners of the State or by taking independent initiatives. A central aim of the awareness-raising activities and communication is to inform children that they have the right to freedom from all forms of violence, including corporal punishment.

Education: It is crucial to offer a broad set of educational activities targeting parents to be, parents, preschool teachers and teachers on a broad set of topics and in particular the impact of violence on children's health and development and use of non-violent parenting and teaching strategies. Emphasis should also be placed on education for children who may be the first receivers of information from friends who are exposed to violence. They may be the only ones who know the full story and need to know what to say, how to act, who to tell etc.

Political Leadership & Champions: Political leadership is crucial to ensure that corporal punishment is given visibility in public debates and political agendas. Key bearers of public messages play an important role in conveying convincing, credible and informed messages about the impact of violence against children, alternative childrearing strategies and the ban. "Champions" from different sectors and with different roles, including for example Child Ombudsoffices, doctors, celebrities and faith groups can make constructive contributions to public debates and appeal to different audiences and constituencies.

Data & Research: Increased efforts to collect data and support research to ensure evidence-based policy, education and public debates is essential to promote implementation of the ban.

Baseline data about attitudes and behaviour in societies provide a basis for regular surveys and research to evaluate change and the impact of policies and interventions.

Research and evidence-based advocacy play an important role in that it can legitimise and provide credible arguments for changes in law, policy, service provision and other interventions to support parents and children. Special emphasis should be placed on gathering information and views from children with different backgrounds and characteristics, including children who are exposed to violence, children who witness violence or have heard friends that speak about violence, and those not exposed to violence.

Academia and researchers can play an important role in providing data and research, engaging in evidence-based advocacy and education and to evaluate the impact of law, policy and interventions.

National Strategies and Action Plans: Strategies and action plans can become essential drivers for implementation of the ban. States may need to decide whether to address corporal punishment as an integral part of a broader national strategy against violence or developing a specific and separate strategy that focusses only on preventing and addressing corporal punishment. Regardless, all national strategies and action plan must include the following elements in order to have an impact and generate real change:

- a. a needs-based preventive and protective measures drawing on an assessment of the human and financial capacities of different municipalities to ensure the same delivery of quality services across the country;
- b. a SMART goals with both quantitative and qualitative indicators;
- c. a long-term and multidisciplinary approach that ensures coordination;
- d. a strong element of competence building and support systems for those who are responsible to implement the strategy, for example on the implications of the ban on service provision and educational measures including transforming attitudes and practice;

The strategy and action plan furthermore must:

- e. be fully resourced with an activity and goal-oriented budget;
- f. clarify roles and responsibilities, including a clear statement on the primary role of Government and authorities to implement the strategy;
- g. introduce a strategy to involve all relevant stakeholders and actors including children at national, regional and local levels in the implementation of the strategy;
- h. include special measures to prevent and address complex and emerging issues, including concrete measures to prevent suicide and self-harm.

The role of the ombudsperson for children is to be a convening actor, offering a centre for collaboration. They can also play an important role in providing independent and evidence-based input to national debates as well as policy and law making. The ombudspersons play a crucial role in providing a neutral and evidence-based voice in difficult political environments and be a voice for children, drawing on research and consultation.

Main outcomes of the Global Conference in May 2018 on the Universal Prohibition of Corporal Punishment in Malta

HE Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta, underlined the importance of the work of the global community to ensure that children's rights are also understood as human rights. The President pointed to the importance of countries working together and sending a strong message to the international community that all forms of violence against children are unacceptable. By putting an end to corporal punishment, the intrinsic human dignity and holistic wellbeing of children are safeguarded. HE Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca saw this kind of collaboration as an invitation for others to embrace a culture of zero-tolerance, in the best interests of children.

The President presented the main recommendations from the global conference on the universal prohibition of corporal punishment in Malta, May 2018. A Declaration was also signed by the national delegations to prohibit corporal punishment in all forms. Children from Malta, empowered through the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, expressed their hopes for their societies by the essential role of loving and respectful parents breaking the vicious cycle of violence. They shared their concerns for other children, who are in a position of increased danger, such as children with disabilities, learning difficulties, and children in migration.

Capacity-building and training

- Guidance and training opportunities for professionals who work with, and for, children victims of abuse and punishment is essential.
- Trained social workers need to be available in all countries to provide necessary support.
- Professionals need training to support in supervision for psycho-social professionals and teachers.
- Countries with good practices should share and support other countries who are building their capacity.
- Invest in train-the-trainer programmes to enable communities to provide necessary services.

Providing Immediate Care

- Provision of immediate care to a child who has been the victim of abuse and punishment should always take place in a child-friendly setting, which respects the voice and the experiences of the individual child.
- Families should receive adequate care from specialised agencies, working together to meet the complex and intersectional demands of each child and their family.

Empowerment and Education

- Complementary to the training of professionals, child empowerment, through education, is a must to ensure that children know that corporal punishment is never acceptable.
- Children cannot wait, and while parents need to be helped and empowered to make the right choices, children need to know that they have the right and the ability to report corporal punishment and to discuss their feelings and experiences.
- One Conference participant said that, "discipline means to teach, but this has come to mean something negative. We need to teach children to solve problems, and to know that violence does not solve any problems."
- The need for awareness-raising initiatives, access to information, and effective social mobilisation, were other important points raised by the conference.

Positive Parenting

- Parents need alternatives to corporal punishment, and underlying mentalities and cultural norms need to be challenged and transformed.

The need for Strategy, Legislation and Policies

- The necessary change in mentality and culture should take place by embracing a bottom-up approach to develop the necessary strategy that includes awareness, education and training, as well as a top-down approach, to put in place effective legislation and policies.
- We need to work in synergy, on a national level, on a regional level and on an international level.
- There are benefits of cross ministerial action plans at national level.

A Culture Change

- The right language used against corporal punishment should reflect the local cultural context.
- While effective legislation is a necessary foundation, it is simply not enough. It is part of a longer process that involves policy changes and cultural transformations.

Data and Research

- A cause for concern is the insufficient data on the prevalence and harm of corporal punishment. Collecting data and research is of utmost urgency and importance.
- There is the need for continuous assessment, improved teamwork, longitudinal research, the promotion of cost-effectiveness, and the provision of global tools to achieve the goals.

Child Participation

- It is the duty of adults and authorities to empower children to tell their stories in their own way as children are the experts on childhood, and their voices must be heard by politicians, legislators, policy-makers and activists.
- Only then can a top down approach be successful in developing the right strategy, legislation and policy.

Prevention

- Prevention against corporal punishment must be prioritised.
- Authorities must budget for prevention and learn to see it as an essential investment in the holistic wellbeing of children and the societies as a whole.

Best interest of the child

- Finally, all participants of the Malta meeting posed this important question: As community leaders and decision takers, are we putting our children first, in all of the processes that we are implementing?

Messages and recommendations from ministers and ministries

Cooperation and continued monitoring of violence against children are necessary

Lena Hallengren, the Swedish Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality, emphasized that the world community must work together to end violence against children. All countries who have prohibited corporal punishment need to inspire, encourage and offer other countries support. The provision from 1979 in the Children and Parents Code is instructive for the ambitions of the Swedish government: “Children are entitled to care, security and a good upbringing. Children are to be treated with respect for their person and individuality and may not be subject to corporal punishment or other humiliating treatment.”

Even if the existence of violence against children is less in Sweden, it still happens too often. A survey conducted by the Swedish Children’s Welfare Foundation with funding from the Government shows that children with disabilities or chronic illnesses are more likely to be subjected to child abuse than other children. Every fourth child with a disability or chronic illness has been exposed to violence. Children with neuropsychiatric disabilities or an eating disorder stands out as being particularly vulnerable. Other vulnerable groups are children who do not identify as male or female, children in families where there has been disagreement about living arrangements and child visitation, children who do not have the same opportunity to make decisions regarding their own lives and children living in families with unstable finances. Continuous monitoring of the existence of violence, behaviors and attitudes among children as well as by parents is required in order to adapt preventive measures.

Iceland putting children in the forefront at all levels

Ásmundur Einar Daðason, the Icelandic Minister of Social Affairs and Equality, presented his plan to by political decision to make Iceland the best country in the world for a child. The Icelandic welfare state and system will be reformed on a new ideology that puts children in the forefront at all levels. To demonstrate the seriousness of the intention, the Ministry will change name from Ministry of Social Affairs and Equality to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Children, and a strategy is developed to lead the reform process. The new Ministry will develop an action plan for strengthening children’s rights and new legislation for services including reforming older legislation on child protection. The purpose is to secure early identification and early intervention with relevant funding.

Key to success is to get everyone on board. Co-operation has been initiated between ministerial sectors through a “Statement of Will”, which will be followed up by a steering group. The steering group will be led by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Children and includes Ministries of health, justice, education and the ministry of local authorities as well as the Icelandic Association of Local Authorities. The aim of the co-operation is to break down the walls between service providers in order to secure comprehensive and coordinated services for children. All the political parties are on board and a parliamentary committee has been established with members from all parties. The Parliamentary committee is to ensure an intra-political approach as the welfare of children should not be a political issue. It is an issue that should unite political parties as the welfare of children is the most important investment that a society can make creating successful individuals for the future society and providing positive long-term economic results.

Death of a child provoked legislation in Lithuania

Linās Kukuraišis, the Lithuanian Minister of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, informed that the ban of corporal punishment in all settings was adopted by the Parliament in 2017. It was triggered and encouraged by the tragic death of a small boy, who was brutally murdered by his stepfather and mother. Since July 2018, a new child protection system has been created to provide Lithuania with a uniform framework for protecting the rights of children and all families with appropriate assistance. The new child protection system is needed as old habits still prevail and most people still impose minor corporal punishments towards children.

The police and municipalities remain the most important partners of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service. This is because police officers usually are the first ones to receive information on potential crimes and offences and the municipalities are the ones providing necessary assistance to families who have used violence against children, acted negligently, or have failed to ensure the protection of their children's rightful interests.

All situations where there are reports on potential violence against children are difficult and require comprehensive investigation. Children should not be left with their families by mistake, because, in some cases, such mistakes can cost the respective child's health, or even life. Yet taking children out of their families by mistake is equally harmful, as it can lead to great mental anguish on the part of the child and the entire family. Currently, a case with two children having been taken from the parents are under investigation with some doubt as to the background of the decision. However, the story has encouraged the society to question the legal ban on corporal punishment and some family organizations have already asked the parliament to withdraw new amendments, they blame state institutions of violence against families. The overall situation is fragile, but the aim is to create a family-friendly system which includes a legal ban on corporal punishments and all forms of violence against children. Resources must be invested in the education of parents and to services for families which face problems with alcohol, inability to express emotions in a constructive way or lack a parent.

National plan and continuous work with attitudes in Finland

Annika Saarikko, the Minister of the Ministry of Family and Social Services, reminded that Finland in 198 was the second country in the world to ban corporal punishment after Sweden. Attitudes and behavior have been regularly monitored and before the ban approximately 50 per cent of Finns thought that physical discipline practices were acceptable, while in 2017 this figure had dropped to 13 per cent. Most parents is not approving of corporal punishment even in exceptional circumstances, but it is still happening. According to the School Health Survey (2017), a significant proportion of children and young people reported that they are experiencing violence against them by their parents in the form of for instance threats of hitting, yelling, name calling or throwing and kicking items.

A National Action Plan for Safety Promotion among Children and Youth under 25 years (2018–2025) has been developed to meet this challenge. The aim is to improve national coordination of preventive work and reduce health losses due to unintentional injuries, self-harming and violence against children through multidisciplinary cooperation of various actors. The National Action Plan also considers different social phenomena such as safety risk factors due to different cultural, ethnic and

socio-economic backgrounds or disabilities. Furthermore, it is an ambition of the Ministry to encourage more child participation, find better methodologies and to boost the service system in a multi-professional way. For example, surveys show that women are more likely to resort to all forms of corporal punishment than men. There is still a strong need to influence attitudes and raise the awareness of the right of children to have a childhood free of violence. The goal must be to ensure that no child is a victim of corporal punishment. It is valuable to continue sharing the experiences between countries to strengthen the efforts towards non-violent childhoods.

Prevention and early detection in Croatia

Marija Pletikosa, State Secretary of the Croatia Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy highlighted that protection from violence is a human right and that violence is a social problem requiring full attention and responsibility. The Republic of Croatia prohibits all forms of violence against children and the principle of the best interests of the child must be considered a priority in all actions involving children performed by public or private institutions and bodies.

Violence prevention is a priority and changing views and opinions about violence is a permanent challenge. Preventing violence against children in the family is both about stopping harmful parenting but also about creating a broad support system for parents and for other educators included in the upbringing and education. This system must be focused on child welfare and stimulation of their cognitive, social and emotional development. There is a need for an integrated approach that includes the assessment of the individual needs of the family and environmental factors. Different aspects of parental care and the developmental needs of the child should be emphasized in order to identify the potential of parents, to explain possible reasons for inadequate procedures, the change potential and to provide direction for intervention.

The State Secretary pointed out the importance of early detection of family risks as well as early intervention measures. For the purpose of rapid, early and effective responses, it is important to co-ordinate the treatment of all relevant stakeholders, in particular the education system, health care system, social welfare system, etc. Despite the relatively good legislative and the strategic framework for action in this area, it is necessary to further enhance the co-operation among sectors and to encourage the local community to implement the defined frameworks.

“Children First” in Spain

Sandra León informed on behalf of the Spanish Minister of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare that the Government is acting on a decision from 2017, when all the political parties formally asked the government to pass a law that would eradicate violence against children. The current Government has announced that children is a top priority illustrated by various commitments and actions such as enacting the law to eradicate violence against children, creating the High Commission to fight Child Poverty as well as the High Commission for the 2030 Agenda.

The drafting of the new law is led by the Ministry in close collaboration with regional governments, civil society associations, academics, experts and professionals. The new law will explicitly prohibit all forms of violence against children and intends to be more encompassing and based upon several pillars such as awareness-raising, prevention, early detection (including professional training), sanction and rehabilitation. Preventive measures in different areas such as in the family, schools, health care, sports, leisure and the cyberspace are essential. Furthermore, the law is to be part of a national

commitment, a national alliance to protect the fundamental rights of the Child. It will be grounded on the Spanish government's commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (articles 3 and 19). A National Strategic Plan on Violence against Children will also be developed to decrease the gap between social norms on childrearing and legal norms.

Sandra Leon, who is the General Director of the High Commission against Child Poverty, underlined that she is confident that the government will be able to approve a new integral law to eradicate violence against children early in 2019 and thus be partners in the overall aim of many countries to put Children First.

Invitation to take part in the fourth high-level conference in 2020 in Tunisia: “For a Childhood without Corporal Punishment”.

HE Neziha Labidi, Minister for Women, Families and Children extended an invitation to take part in the fourth high-level conference in 2020 in Tunisia on the theme “For a Childhood without Corporal Punishment”.

In 2010, Tunisia prohibited corporal punishment as the first African country and the country has since its independence in 1956 committed itself to be a State of law where human rights to every citizen and to every child shall prevail. The Minister mentioned that very many parents in the world recognize corporal punishment as necessary and educative. Thus, we face a huge cultural challenge. The Minister herself, as a mother, was also a product of “tough love”, but fortunately, the child inside her made her aware that educational violence is nothing but a sort of social oppression.

Several reforms have been undertaken since 2011 in Tunisia in the fields of public health, social policies and education to coordinate a common mobilization of all the actors as well as their commitment to the prevention of violence against children. In the second constitution of the Republic of Tunisia, from 2014, underlines that “the State guarantees children rights” and that the best interest of the child shall prevail over any decision of his or her concern. In 2017, Tunisia declared the “National Year of Childhood”, marking its commitment towards childhoods and setting new challenges that target the social dimension and eradication of disparities and exclusion. Furthermore, the “Integrated Public Policy for the Protection of Childhood” was adopted to protect children and youth at risk and their access to a balanced education. This public policy recognizes the importance of strengthening the capacities of the families by providing them with knowledge that can positively change their attitudes and behaviors. The Comprehensive Law to Combat Violence against Women and Girls, adopted in July 2017, represents a significant step forward in the legal protection of girls against violence. Furthermore, Tunisia has ratified the Lanzarote Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Abuses and the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on complaints procedures.

The Minister is an advocate of good governance of child protection in a multi-sectorial and multi-disciplinary approach and work for the interdependence, interconnection, coherence, complementarity and articulation between the various policies and programs related to women, the family, children and the elderly to better identify issues and present appropriate, coherent, concrete and concerted solutions. Lastly, Minister Labidi reminded about children living in conflict zones under extremely disturbing conditions, children who die under the bombs, who wander here and there without memories, without roots, without identity. Labidi calls for the universal conscience to find a new world of peace, love, acceptance and respect of the other. “There cannot be a childhood without punishment if there is no peace and security in the minds of men and women”, she said.

Key note address: Laws and policies make children feel they matter – 3 important dimensions

Marta Santos Pais, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children emphasised in her key note address the inspiration, commitment and energy brought forward by all working to guarantee that all children, everywhere can experience a childhood that is free from fear and from violence. The Special Representative reflected on three important dimensions of the multifaceted approach that we must pursue if we are to succeed.

Firstly, we must prioritize investment in violence prevention. And prevention must start in early childhood. Violence remains widespread and pervasive - every five minutes, a child dies as a result of violence; every year over one billion children experience some form of violence – that is half of the world's children! But, violence often starts early in life. As documented by UNICEF's report '*A Familiar Face*' shouting, yelling or screaming are common forms of discipline for one-year-olds. Close to 300 million children between 2 and 4 experience psychological aggression and/or physical punishment by their caregivers at home. And 176 million children under five years of age witness domestic violence. These children risk falling short of their potential because of the adversities they face in this critical period of their life. Indeed, unlike a fairy tale, the story of violence in early childhood does not have a happy ending.

Scientific research shows that early childhood stress - including exposure to violence – compromise children's health and education, with long-term negative mental and physiological consequences. Violence can alter the structure and function of the brain, with a negative impact on children's language and cognitive skills. This in turn, can lead to social and emotional competency deficits and an increased tendency to maladaptive behaviour.

Safeguarding the safety and protection of children from early childhood is first and foremost a question of human rights. But investment in violence prevention also makes economic sense. Violence against children generates huge economic costs – according to some studies, over US\$7 trillion a year. But more importantly, violence prevention can generate crucial social gains. A recent study in South Africa illustrates this well: the study found that self-harm could be reduced by 23% in the population if children did not experience physical violence; anxiety could be reduced by 10% if children were not emotionally abused; alcohol abuse could be reduced by 14% in women if they did not experience neglect as children; and interpersonal violence could be reduced by 16% if children did not witness family violence.

Secondly, the enactment and enforcement of an explicit legal ban on all forms of violence against children, including corporal punishment within the home, is crucial.

We have seen visible strides in legal reform over the years. But the pace of progress needs to be enhanced if we are to protect all children from violence by the year 2030. With sound legislation, States express their accountability for the realization of children's rights and they convey a clear message of what is acceptable and what is non-negotiable. The law is essential to condemn violence in all its forms, as well as to promote and support positive discipline and the upbringing of children through non-violent means. Legislation is also key to provide clear guidance to state officials, professionals working with children, families and common citizens about their responsibility for child protection. But more importantly, ***child victims feel they matter!*** They are entitled to enjoy freedom from neglect, abuse and exploitation, and services and institutions must be ready to provide child sensitive support, redress, and genuine recovery and reintegration.

And let us not forget: legislation is also highly valuable when used in support of public information campaigns, social mobilization initiatives and the promotion of behaviour change. When social conventions or harmful practices persist behind deeply entrenched traditions, legal reform can open avenues for engaging key actors, including parliamentarians, religious leaders, local authorities, families, professional associations and the private sector to support efforts aiming at the abandonment of those practices.

Thirdly, societies must ensure that when incidents of violence occur, children benefit from the protection, assistance and support they require.

Violence is pervasive, hidden and concealed. Reporting is low, and it is also deeply painful, especially when incidents occur within children's circle of trust, and are committed by people children know and love. Moreover, investigations are lengthy, and child victims are at high risk of re-victimization by services set up to address these concerns. This explains why children so often fail to speak up. And why so many of them end up receiving no genuine help.

In many countries, counselling, reporting and complaint mechanisms are largely unavailable or difficult to access, particularly by vulnerable children. And where they exist, they often lack the needed resources and skills to address children's concerns and promote the healing and reintegration of victims. As a result, children lack trust in available services, fearing their stories will be dismissed and they will be judged, rather than listened to. They also frequently fear public exposure, stigmatization and reprisals if they make incidents of violence known. But more fundamentally, children lack information about where to go and whom to call to get advice and assistance.

This pattern must and can be changed. And the experience of Children's Houses (Barnahus) provides an essential reference to do things right. Guided by the best interest of the child, the Children's Houses bring together under the same roof highly trained professionals from all relevant agencies, who provide a child-friendly environment within which children are interviewed, evidence is gathered, and care and treatment foreseen. As a result, multiple interviews are avoided, child victims' therapy and support provided, and impunity effectively fought. First, Children's Houses must be established by law and constitute a core building block of a well-resourced national child protection system. Second, they must be informed by children's experience and perspectives. Third, they must be well-publicized and made accessible to all children, without discrimination of any kind. And fourthly, they must safeguard children's safety, ensure confidentiality and provide prompt and speedy response and follow up.

2019 – celebrating the Convention on the Rights of the Child and taking part in the review of Sustainable Development Goal 16.2

The Special Representative highlighted the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified treaty in the history of the United Nations. This is a momentous celebration, but it must also become a turning point in our efforts to translate the Convention into a reality for every child. Also, in 2019, the UN General Assembly will host its first overall review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including target 16.2 on ending all forms of violence against children. The promotion of non-violent childhoods must be at the heart of this process. Ending violence in children's lives is first and foremost a question of children's rights. And with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda we have a strategic roadmap

to bring violence to an end. We must transform this historic opportunity into an unstoppable movement. And we must move ahead with a deep sense of urgency!

Children feel impatient and they have high expectations of us all. And as we all know; children's determination knows no borders. This was echoed once again by more than 170,000 young people whom we surveyed in an online opinion poll on migrant and refugee children, conducted in cooperation with UNICEF. As one child said poignantly, "I have dreamt a lot, but nothing has been realized so I'm tired of dreaming. The problem is that it feels like you're hanging on a rope... And you don't know whether it will hold, or if it will break, and then all is lost".

In essence, children's ambition is simple and within reach. They want to grow up happy, confident, respected and protected, in a world that cares, for them and for everyone else, a world where their voice is valued and considered. This was the promise made by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, almost 30 years ago. It is high time to make it work! Joining hands together, violence against children can become a part of a very distant past. **And zero, zero violence against children, can become mankind's favourite number.**

Inspiration from the European Parliament, the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children and the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children

Joining forces

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, the chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on children's rights, emphasised that children are rights-holders and need to be treated as fully-fledged citizens. No culture can justify violence against children and there should be no space for corporal punishment in the modern societies. Legislation alone is not enough, we need to change mentality and attitudes with a multi-stakeholder approach, working together with families, teachers, civil society and businesses to eradicate all forms of violence against children. Let's join forces to make sure that every child enjoys their right to live free from all forms of violence and reach their full potential.

Corporal punishment is unacceptable and preventable

Howard Taylor, the Executive Director of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, asked why ending corporal punishment is of fundamental importance? Because corporal punishment is the most common form of violence against children experienced by children wherever they may live was the answer. One billion children experience violence, abuse and neglect every year. That is completely unacceptable – but it is preventable. 3 years ago, when the Sustainable Development Goals were approved every head of state committed to end violence abuse and neglect against children by 2030. 2 years ago, the UN Secretary General launched the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.

The Global Partnership work to grow demand for change, mobilise resources for everyone working to end violence against children and equip professionals with the solutions, the expertise and resources they need to make a difference. The combination of leadership, solutions, expertise and resources can be very powerful for sustained progress to end violence against children. 23 governments have joined the partnership as pathfinding countries, putting a plan in place every 3 or 5 years and monitoring the outcomes of what works to end violence against children. Currently the Global Partnership is working with experts to prepare for an investment case to end violence against children. We need smart costings in return for investments to better equip policy makers and professionals to make the case that ending violence against children is also a smart thing to do.

Laws to be followed up by strong child protection systems

Anna Henry, Director of the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, highlighted the value of the comprehensive set of guidance reports and learning from the Baltic Sea Region over the course of the Non-violent Childhoods programme that will serve as a valuable resource to colleagues and partners around the world working to improve the lives of children and build more peaceful and rights-respecting societies. The Global Initiative aims to end violence against children through universal prohibition and elimination of all corporal punishment as the most pervasive and accepted form of violence against children, and works to achieve this by providing technical assistance to governments and civil society, maintaining a comprehensive evidence base on the legal status, prevalence and impact of corporal punishment worldwide and supporting national, regional

and international action and a global movement of 1500 partners and supporters, covering all continents. The Global Initiative is now also working in partnership with the Maltese Presidency to report on the 2018 Global Conference and support the Tunisian Government as they prepare to host the next biennial conference in 2020.

Without doubt, passing strong laws is an essential first step to eliminating corporal punishment. It sends a message and provides clear guidance to both society and service providers that children are entitled to the same protection from assault as adults. However, laws alone cannot change society. Strong child protection systems are needed which focus on prevention through family support and early intervention. The new guidance reports launched here today set out a range of actions and steps that can be taken and are a significant asset for policymakers seeking to achieve this essential change for children.

The Guidance Reports and Cartoon

The Non-violent childhoods programme developed 6 Guidance Reports and a Cartoon.

Step-by-step guidance on implementing a legal ban from a perspective focused on the human rights of the child



The step-by step guide provides an overview of key implementation measures rooted in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Political support, clear legislation and national action plans are important tools. National action plans and strategies work better when roles and responsibilities are clear, and activities are financed at the national and local levels. The guide points out that the primary purpose of the ban is to educate and provide support for parents and others, not to criminalise them. Furthermore, effective implementation of the law requires visible, cross-sectoral coordination to ensure educational and preventive measures are prioritised, delivered and communicated widely. In addition, monitoring and evaluation by state actors, independent actors and civil society are essential to ensure effective implementation.

Guidance on implementing the legal ban in the domestic setting in accordance with the principle of the best interests of the child



The family, in whatever form it takes, plays a fundamental role for a child's development, education and protection. As such the family is well placed to empower a child and support them in reaching their potential. Ensuring equal protection from assault in the home, for children as for adults, requires an explicit statement in legislation, which makes it clear that any form or degree of physical punishment, or any other form of humiliating or degrading punishment of children, is unlawful. Procedures need to be in place to encourage reporting of incidents of violence against children. When corporal punishment is identified in the home, the child's best interests will most often be served by responses that support the parents to change their behaviour and restore or enhance the family's capacity to care for the child. In cases where it is not possible for a child to remain with the family without suffering severe harm, the child's best interests must be assessed and considered as a primary consideration.

Guidance for service provision promoting the implementation of the legal ban in child protection and social services, education, health care and law enforcement



This guide points to the fundamental role of services for children and parents to prevent and protect child victims of corporal punishment. Service provision involves ministries and institutions who plan and budget for services, local service providers who are in direct contact with children and families, as well as authorities who provide supervision and monitoring. In most countries, state agencies collaborate with non-state actors for service provision, including organisations and private service companies. Communities, faith organisations and volunteers are also often involved in providing services for parents and children. Service providers work directly with victims and perpetrators of corporal punishment and engage the whole family to reduce

risks and strengthen protective capacities. Successful service models offer easy access to multi-disciplinary services within communities and are integrated into local child protection and social welfare systems. Increasingly, service providers are taking on the role of facilitators and mentors, handing over more responsibility to family members and ensuring the child's active engagement as a service user. Consulting children in the development, planning and review of services benefits children, families and professionals alike and helps to make the available services more meaningful and attractive for children and parents.

Guidance for awareness raising campaigns and communication to promote non-violent childhoods



Awareness-raising, communication and campaigns are key measures used to support the adoption and subsequent implementation of a legal ban on corporal punishment. Approaches to awareness-raising can be universal, targeting the whole population, or directed towards a specific group, such as different types or professions, faith groups as well as children or young people. Campaigns and communication measures typically alternate topics such as information about the law, the impact of violence on children and alternative parenting strategies. Some campaigns are planned and implemented as part of a broader national strategy or a set of activities that aim to transform attitudes, behaviours and social norms. Developing social interven-

tions that convey easy messages, are timely and appealing to the target audience and can maximise outcomes and cost effectiveness. Involving children in developing, implementing and evaluating activities is essential to achieve this.

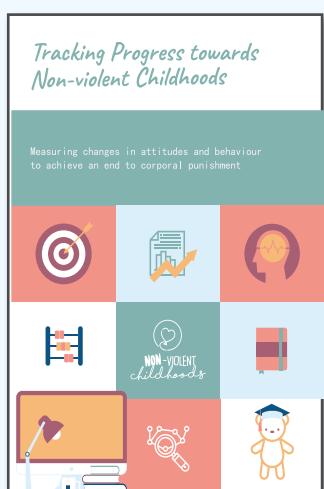
Guidance on programmes for positive parenting



Non-violent, positive parenting is key to the successful implementation of national laws to prohibit corporal punishment of children. Positive parenting programmes aim to help parents cope with the challenges of being a parent. They seek to support the parent in developing skills and strategies to abandon the use of corporal punishment and replace it with attitudes and behaviours that strengthen a positive parent-child relationship. Positive parenting recognises that structure and boundaries are important to parenting, and that there are more effective and less harmful ways than using corporal punishment to raise children. Behaviourist and rights-based approaches have inspired different positive parenting programmes, including 'universal' preventive

campaigns, 'selective' support through service provision and 'indicative' individual and group programmes. There are five key principles for effective and child-centred action to promote positive parenting such as a focus on the rights of the child, actions that are inclusive and based on working together and informed by research and evidence.

Guidance on research measuring progress with the implementation of the ban



The guide on tracking progress focuses on the importance of learning from research, monitoring and evaluation to determine how future strategies, activities, partners and channels should be designed to maximise the impact of measures for the implementation of a legal ban on corporal punishment. Planning and budgeting for epidemiological research in follow-up to the enactment of laws prohibiting corporal punishment is essential for measuring progress with their implementation. A key precondition for this to succeed is the establishment of baseline data concerning the main indicators that are to be monitored over time. In countries or contexts where little is known about the prevalence of corporal punishment and relevant attitudes, qualitative inter-

view studies with parents, teachers, other professionals and children are of great value before embarking on nationwide surveys. Qualitative studies may help identify different methods of punishment not covered by regular questionnaires on violence against children and neglect. Epidemiological tracking should preferably be performed by an independent research group with thorough knowledge of child maltreatment surveys. Consulting with children is advisable as children can give information about circumstances that are unknown to adults or overlooked by them. Governments have to be ready to accept the outcomes of the surveys, even if the results indicate a negative trend, and to take further action on that basis.

A non-violent childhood comic book and campaign



“A non-violent childhood” is a comic book about the harmful impact of corporal punishment for a child, and the importance for children to have trusted adults to turn to. The parents of a young boy fear he will not do well in life - that he is lazy and not taking his schoolwork seriously. They don’t know how else to motivate him, so they use corporal punishment. After all, that is how they were raised. Meanwhile, the son thinks he cannot talk with other adults, because then everyone would know his shame. But change is happening. The school staff are learning, and the boy is getting the support he needs to feel empowered. In this story, the children are given the chance to be heard, and end up proving they are smarter than adults tend to think!

The Non-violent childhoods programme and campaign is accompanied by a heart. When we champion this symbol of non-violence – either by pin, profile photo, poster, or any other format – you declare your support that all children should be treated the way you would want the children close to you to be treated: with **respect, dignity and kindness.**

Interviews and video’s available at YouTube:

The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children conducted a number of interviews at the high-level conference in November in Stockholm, asking participants what works and what different actors can do to end corporal punishment of children. You can watch the interviews as they are released on the Global Initiative’s [YouTube channel](#).

Background from the Council of the Baltic Sea States

Maira Mora, the Director- General of the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat, introduced the background to the high-level conference;

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 stated for the first time in history that human rights are inherent to all human beings - with no exceptions. In 1978, Poland followed up by proposing a Convention on the Rights of the Child, realizing the need to specifically promote the rights and protection of children. It took 10 years before the Convention was adopted by the UN in 1989.

In the meantime, Sweden did not wait, and as the first country in the world, in 1979 prohibited corporal punishment in all settings, and thereby introduced a totally new standard. Children under 18 years of age were no longer to be subjected to any form of corporal punishment, they were rather entitled to care, security and a good upbringing.

In the years to follow, many countries and regions followed the example of Sweden. In addition, the UN, regional bodies such as the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly, the European Union, the European Court of Human Rights and international organisations like the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, and Save the Children have been forerunners in promoting change to strengthen the rights of children. And let us not forget the many national and local civil society initiatives often the first to prompt action. The important role of ombudsoffices for children, academia and faith-based groups must also be mentioned. Additionally, the UN Sustainable Development Goals are emphasising the need to end all violent punishment and have a specific indicator to measure progress.

Today, 54 countries have a legal ban, and are implementing it - and many more countries are in the process of enacting a legal prohibition. These countries are part of transforming a global culture that for centuries has been condoning and promoting corporal punishment to a new situation where corporal punishment is seen as a violation of children's human dignity and right to physical integrity. It is a criminal offence like any other form of family violence.

However, children still report being physically and emotionally punished and in fact corporal punishment is the most common form of violence against children. They feel sad, hurt and ashamed when their parents or caregivers use corporal punishment. Research underlines the relationship between corporal punishment and aggression, depression, negative health outcomes, impaired parent-child relations and even changes in the structure and functioning of the brain.

We are in a positive flow at the moment and the Baltic Sea Region is a model region at global level with 10 out of 11 countries having prohibited corporal punishment in all settings including in the home. All the countries in the Baltic Sea Region have furthermore taken part in the Non-violent Childhoods programme aiming at strengthening the awareness and efforts.

In this conference, the Non-violent Childhoods programme is formally launching 6 guidance reports, a cartoon and an awareness-raising campaign, providing a valuable background for policy makers and professionals and their work. The reports emphasise that positive, non-violent direction and guidance are needed from parents. Tools are presented to showcase how we can build societies of trust and where children can develop their potential and grow up to become healthy adults making a difference in our societies.

In 2014, Sweden organised a global conference on corporal punishment. In June 2018, Malta took the torch organising the second global conference and in 2020, Tunisia will take the work forward at global level encouraging all countries to give children a non-violent childhood.

This high-level conference is to raise the attention to the fact that it is possible to change attitudes and behaviour and for a regional entity to support national implementation promoting children's rights to grow up without violence. We know that by 2020, there will be even more countries supporting the movement. We welcome this development heartily.