



Human Rights Council 27th Session

Panel on Ending violence against children: a global call to make the invisible visible

23 September 2014

NGO Joint Statement

This statement is co-sponsored by Save the Children International, Arigatou International, Casa Alianza Switzerland*, Child Rights Connect, Child Rights International Network*, Defence for Children International, Edmund Rice International, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children*, International Catholic Child Bureau, Plan International, Red Latinoamericana y Caribeña para la Defensa de los Derechos de los Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes*, SOS Children's Villages International, Terre des Hommes Federation Internationale, War Child Holland*, Women World Summit Foundation, World Organisation Against Torture

*Not enjoying UN consultative status

Thank you Mr. President.

25 years after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a majority of States are still failing to fulfill their immediate human rights obligation to prohibit and eliminate all violence against children. It is an indictment of the UN human rights system that progress remains scattered and slow.

Meanwhile, there is a growing body of scientific evidence that demonstrates that exposure to violence and stress, especially at a very young age, provokes irreversible brain damage on children.

Violence is also both cause and consequence of social exclusion and discrimination; it is a marker of children's inequality and powerlessness.

Lastly, violence against children has huge costs on societies and nations. A recent study by National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)¹ calculated that sexual abuse of children in the UK costs annually between 1.6 and 3.2 billion British Pounds (costs to health, child protection and the criminal justice system as well as reduced economic productivity).

We all know what needs to be done to end violence against children; in particular:

1. Enact and ensure enforcement of laws that ban all forms of violence including all corporal punishment of children;
2. Invest in prevention in all contexts in which children live, play and learn and support parents, care givers and teachers in their child rearing and education roles;
3. Establish and resource a well trained workforce of social workers;
4. Raise awareness, break the silence regarding violence against children and challenge social norms that justify it;
5. Effectively listen to children, provide anonymous and confidential reporting and work with them to identify and apply solutions to eradicate violence;
6. Bring perpetrators to justice and end impunity.

Governments must act now. Today's debate is an opportunity to seal a global commitment for children. The next important occasion is the global agenda that will replace the current MDGs as of 2015.

We appeal to the Human Rights Council, its members and observers, to call on the Secretary-General of the UN to include in his forthcoming synthesis report an unequivocal stand for the elimination of all forms of violence against children, as a target that is possible, achievable and a cornerstone of any sustainable development for the generations to come.

Thank you

¹ Aliya Saied-Tessier, *Estimating the costs of child sexual abuse in the UK*, NSPCC, July 2014.