



Defensa de Niñas y Niños - Internacional DNI

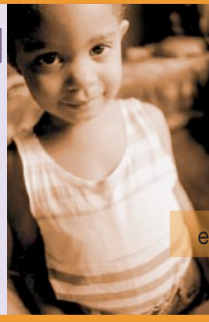
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<http://www.dci-is.org>

Meeting on 20 November 2006 : « UN Study on Violence Against Children :

What next? »,

Palais des Nations,
Geneva

Statement by
Benoît van Keirsbilck
(DCI-International)

Defence for Children International welcomes the publication of the UN Study Report on Violence Against Children. The report marks a fundamental step in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the international level, as well as on the national and regional level.

DCI especially welcomes the fact that the Study has analysed all forms of violence and not just, as regrettably so often is the case, individual occurrence of violence in domestic settings. The report states very clearly that violence against children also regularly stems from States themselves and from the institutions that they create. Both the Final Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning individual states and the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights contain ample evidence in this regard.

This situation is even more worrisome if one considers that the violence sometimes comes from juvenile education

institutions; the very institutions that have been entrusted with the care for children in need of protection from domestic violence.

Therefore, DCI calls for States to take up their responsibility in guaranteeing that the various public institutions will demonstrate more respect for children as well as in implementing complaint mechanisms that are easily accessible to children.

In addition, DCI calls on international and intergovernmental organisations to incorporate guarantees for the protection of children against all types of violence in all of their recommendations, resolutions and conventions.

DCI all too often observes that States or intergovernmental organisations such as the European Union adopt laws that generate violence against children.

States can only legitimately address the issue of the eradication of violence against children if they themselves have incorporated, on all levels, legal protection measures and institutional mechanisms that respect children and their rights.

Successful Launch of the official UN World Report on Violence against Children

27 November 2006
Elke Koning

On the twentieth of November, several members of DCI's International Secretariat attended the launch of the official report of the UN's Violence against Children study, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It was a well-attended event, with many representatives of the major UN agencies, as well as NGOs, present. The event was organized by WHO, UNICEF, OHCHR and the Independent Expert for the UN Study on Violence Against Children, Mr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro.

What's next?

The launch was presided over by Mrs Claire Brisset, former National Child Ombudsman in France, who also chaired a roundtable discussion on the question: UN Study on violence against children: what next? This roundtable focused on the tasks ahead for both UN agencies, member states, and civil society in ensuring proper follow-up to the Study's findings. Panel members included CRC's vice president Mrs Moushira Khattab, HRC's president Mr Luis Alfonso de Alba, NGO Subgroup on Violence against Children convenor Roberta Cecchetti, NGO Advisory Panel Chair Jo Becker and two youth representatives involved in the regional consultations. Mrs Khattab strongly recommended the creation of a Special Representative on Violence against children and stressed the importance for this office to closely collaborate with the Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict, this latter issue obviously being one of the main causes of violence committed against children. Mr de Alba reminded the audience, largely made up of NGO representatives, of the importance of current events in the Human Rights Council. The revision of all of its mandates, especially trying to avoid overlap and strengthening mechanisms, provides an excellent opportunity for the issue of violence against children to be brought under the attention of the HRC. In addition, he said that the HRC is currently working hard to ensure mainstreaming of Human Rights in the entire UN system, on which they are keen to work with the CRC and with NGOs.

Roberta Cecchetti and Jo Becker expertly set out the main challenges for ensuring adequate follow-up, especially concerning implementation of the Study's recommendations. Mrs Becker, summing up the criteria for follow-up, stressed the fact that the establishment of a UN Special

Representative's office would effectively meet all of these, including high visibility of the issue and maintaining the study's momentum, and importantly, coordinate existing UN efforts. Both Mrs Cecchetti and Mrs Becker restated NGO commitment to the Study and the need to ensure permanent NGO involvement in the follow-up.

UN commitments:

In the second session, representatives of UN agencies outlined their future activities concerning Violence against Children and the implementation of Mr Pinheiro's recommendations. Notably, Frans Roselaers of the ILO said that the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the ILO will take up the recommendations of the study. He said "Enforcement requires workplace regulations, inspectorates, legal sanctions against the employment of under-age workers, and elimination of illegal activities involving children. But it also requires comprehensive approaches, addressing the economic and cultural causes of child labour, the promotion of education and alternative livelihood, and social mobilization to change attitudes about child labour and violence against children in workplaces". For a summary of the statements of other UN agency representatives, check the official site of the study at: www.violencestudy.org.

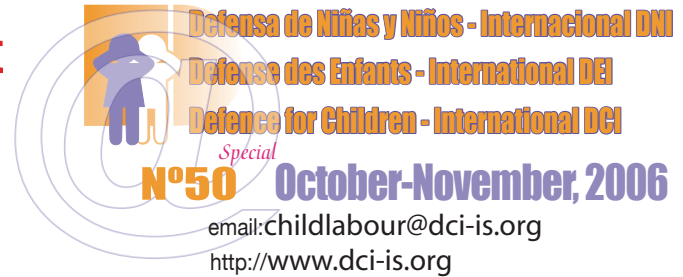
After the second session, discussions with the audience ensued. Reactions from the floor included statements by representatives of the EU and GRULAC pledging support for the study, and a statement by DCI's Executive Committee member Benoit van Keirsbilck, drawing attention to the fact that states are often perpetrators of violence against children and therefore have a double responsibility in ensuring the protection of children's rights. The launch ended with Mr. Pinheiro presenting the full study report to all members of the panel. All in all, it was a full programme. But as Mrs Brisset mentioned in her opening statement, "violence against children is a tale of silence". We all have a responsibility to break this silence, as youth representative Milos from Serbia reminded the audience. Last Monday's launch certainly was a step in the right direction.

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The UN Study on Violence against Children - an introduction



● *Elke Koning*
October 5th 2006

On October 11th, Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, the Secretary General's Independent Expert on Violence against Children, presented his final report to the United Nations General Assembly in New York. It's the last part of a process that started as early as 2001, when following a recommendation from the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the General Assembly adopted resolution 56/138, requesting the Secretary General to lead an in-depth global study into the phenomenon of violence against children, its nature, extent, and causes.

The current report is the result of that study, aimed at providing a comprehensive global picture of violence against children and proposing recommendations to prevent and respond to this issue. It focuses on the incidence of various types of violence against children within the family, schools, alternative care institutions and detention facilities, communities and, importantly, in places where children work.

The study was prepared through a participatory process which included national and regional consultations (which are discussed in more detail below), government reports, expert meetings and field visits. The consultation meetings were attended by children and young people, UN agencies and NGOs, governments, researchers, journalists and activists from around the world.

Notably, this study is the first UN study to include an Advisory Panel consisting solely of children and youth. Its task was to provide children's view on the topic of child abuse. Representatives of the panel were present at the launch of the study's report in New York, where they met with Secretary General Kofi Annan. The youth panel is part of the larger NGO Advisory Panel, that was regularly consulted by the Independent Expert. As a member of this NGO Panel, DCI's Child Labour Programme Coordinator, DCI Costa Rica President, DCI Americas Vice president, Mrs. Virginia Murillo Herrera, contributed to the study on behalf of DCI.

The study concludes that violence against children happens everywhere, in every country and society and across

all social groups. While some violence is unexpected and isolated, most violent acts against children are carried out by people they know and should be able to trust: parents, boyfriends or girlfriends, schoolmates, teachers and employers. Violence against children includes physical violence, psychological violence such as insults and humiliation, discrimination, neglect and maltreatment. Although the consequences may vary according to the nature and severity of the violence inflicted, the short- and long-term repercussions for children are very often grave and damaging.

In the introduction to his report, Mr Pinheiro stresses the fact that no violence against children is justifiable and that all violence against children is preventable. He expressed the hope that this study will mark a turning point in the attitude of adults toward violence against children, ending its justification in such elusive terms as tradition or discipline. He recommends the appointment of a permanent Special Representative on Violence against Children, to continue to promote as a high-level advocate, the prevention and elimination of all violence against children and to ensure follow-up will be given to the present study.

This study is an important achievement and will hopefully serve as a catalyst in the process of ending violence against children. At DCI, we believe it is important to underscore, as the report does, the fact that child labour and violence against children are closely interrelated. Therefore, in this special edition of the Child Labour Desk Newsletter devoted to the UN Study, we will focus on the report's findings and recommendations regarding violence against children in the workplace, as well as on some of the reactions to the report regarding this specific topic. We have also included articles from our sections around the world to inform you of the work that DCI is undertaking to end violence against children.

Sources:

- [Report of the independent expert for the UN Study on Violence against Children](#)
- www.violencestudy.org

ILO executive promotes zero tolerance approach to violence against working children

● *Elke Koning*
13th of October,

In an interview placed on the ILO website, the Director of the ILO's department of Partnerships and Development Cooperation, Mr Frans Roselaers, reacted to the presentation of Mr Pinheiro's report on Violence against Children. He fully supports the report's conclusion that the key departure point has to be a policy of zero tolerance of violence against children who are working.

"There has been a failure to sufficiently acknowledge working children's varied experience of violence – physical, psychological and sexual- and take it fully into account when developing plans and programmes" he said.

The ILO director's comments on some of the findings of the report were insightful.

The report notes that although child labour legislation exists, it is rarely successfully enforced. In response, Mr. Roselaers observes that this is caused by the continued existence of many impediments to law enforcement, such as the lack of an effective and universal birth registration system, and ineffectiveness of labour inspectorates in the developing world. However, the key ILO conventions concerning child labour have been ratified by the majority of countries which according to Mr Roselaers, is proof of the broad international political consensus on the need to eradicate child labour. There are also examples where enforcement of these laws has indeed been effective, such as the release of 3000 young boys working as camel jockeys in the United Arab Emirates, and a social outreach programme in Tanzania that provides education and psycho-social counselling to former child domestic workers.

One of the key components to ending child labour is universal access to education. But according to Mr Roselaers, schooling is also incremental in eradicating violence against children, as, she states, it "provides an opportunity for the promotion of self-protection, non violence and peaceful conflict resolution".

More has to be done to make workplace violence against children more visible, agrees Mr Roselaers with the report's findings. He claims the ILO's large-scale Time-bound Programmes to eliminate child labour are a means to that end, since they constitute a comprehensive approach, including prevention, withdrawal, rehabilitation and future protection of children. Over twenty countries have already adopted this approach and more are designing similar programmes.

Regarding prevention, Mr. Roselaers stressed the need for greater attention to be given to those forms and situations of work that are intrinsically hazardous and violent, especially those in remote, illicit or hidden locations. He also identifies the need to work with trade unions and organizations of employers, in order to improve protection for the youngest members of the regular workforce, and to prevent under-age children from entering the workplace.

A wide range of measures are needed to address workplace violence against children.

This article is based on an interview with Mr Roselaers on the ILO website. For the complete interview, check: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/features/06/child_violence.htm

NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child
NGO Advisory Panel on the UN Study on Violence against Children

Proposal for the 2006 UNGA resolution on the rights of the Child - text on violence against children –

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General principles

The resolution should be used to ensure that States **endorse the SG's Report and its recommendations (both the overarching and the setting-specific ones) and commit to its full implementation.**

The UNGA resolution needs to highlight and reinforce States' obligations to prohibit and condemn all forms of violence against children, including all corporal punishment, traditional practices and sexual violence.

The resolution should **establish the mandate of a Special Representative on Violence against Children** for 4 years, to ensure systematic follow-up to the Study and to work with relevant UN agencies, special mechanisms, NGOs and civil society, children and others to prevent and eliminate violence against children. The resolution should call for voluntary contributions from governments to support the core costs of a small but functional secretariat. Voluntary contributions should ideally come from a wide range of countries, especially from those which have been involved throughout the Study process and hosted national and regional consultations and follow-up. North-South and East-West ownership needs to continue in order to ensure that VAC is recognized as a global problem and therefore addressed and tackled everywhere. Voluntary contributions can range in size.

The resolution should therefore aim at endorsing **all the overarching recommendations included in the SG's report**, in a shorter version without selecting some over others.

The **text on VAC should be part of the omnibus resolution**. GRULAC (who has the initiative) and EU should include all interested governments in the discussion and negotiation as from the outset and not after having found consensus between the two groups. This is important to ensure wide support, especially on the most sensitive issues such as legal ban of all forms of VAC and the establishment of the Special Representative.

In an ideal world, the omnibus resolution would be **adopted by consensus**. But on the basis of the experience of previous years, this seems most unlikely and we emphasise that we do not believe that a desire for consensus should weaken or undermine uncompromising support for the SG's report recommendations. We believe it is inevitable that some states will seek amendments which will have to be voted on.

Proposal for a text

Introductory paragraphs

1. Reaffirms the inalienable rights of children to full respect for their human dignity and physical integrity and the obligations of states to protect them from all forms of violence.
2. Reaffirms further that children are entitled to their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights without discrimination of any kind. (this could go in the overall introductory paragraph)
3. Welcomes the report of the Independent Expert of the Secretary-General on violence against children, and **endorses** the recommendations included therein which address the need to prevent and to respond to all forms of violence against children.
4. **Congratulates** the expert for the participatory process through which the report was prepared in close collaboration with Member States and United Nations bodies and organizations, other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and in particular, on the unprecedented level and quality of participation by children ;
5. Acknowledges that violence against children is a multidimensional problem and calls for a multifaceted response, combining human rights, public health and child protection perspectives.
6. Recognises the intolerable scale of violence against children in all countries and all settings, including state-authorized and legalised violence against girls and boys, in their homes, schools, forms of alternative care, penal systems and on the streets.
7. Shocked by the findings that children's human right to dignity and physical integrity is given less priority and a lower status than the dignity and integrity of adults' in every society.
8. Concerned by the fact that violence is in most cases perpetrated by the adults closest to children and responsible for protecting their well-being and upholding their rights.
9. Convinced that urgent action is needed to put an immediate end to violence against children.

Operative paragraphs:

10. Urges all States to:
 - a. Develop and implement a **national strategy on violence against children**, based on a child rights framework, which is integrated into national planning processes with time-bound targets, coordinated by a national agency with the capacity to involve multiple sectors of government, civil society and children themselves in its development and implementation. The implementation of the national strategy should be systematically monitored, evaluated and provided with adequate human and financial resources.
 - b. **Prohibit all forms of violence against children**, in all settings, including all corporal punishment, harmful traditional practices, such as early and forced marriages, female genital mutilation and so called honour crimes, sexual violence and torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The death penalty and life sentences for offenses committed before age eighteen should be abolished as a matter of highest priority.

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Proposal for the 2006 UNGA resolution on the rights of the Child
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- ... →
- c. Prioritize **prevention**: Allocate adequate resources to address risk factors identified by the Study and prevent violence before it occurs. In line with the Millennium Development Goals, attention should be focused on economic and social policies that address poverty, gender and other forms of inequality, income gaps, unemployment, urban overcrowding and other factors which undermine society.
 - d. Promote **non-violent values**: Strive to transform attitudes that condone or normalize violence against children, including stereotypical gender roles and discrimination, acceptance of corporal punishment and harmful traditional practices. Ensure that children's rights are disseminated and understood, including by children. Encourage the media to promote non-violent values and implement guidelines to ensure full respect for the rights of the child in all media coverage.
 - e. Enhance the **capacity** of all who work with and for children: Invest in systematic education and training programmes – both initial and in-service - for professionals and non-professionals, to impart knowledge and respect for children's rights and skills to prevent, detect and respond to violence against children.
 - f. Provide **recovery and social reintegration services** for child victims of violence: ensure accessible, child-sensitive and universal health and social services, including pre-hospital and emergency care, legal assistance to children and, where appropriate, their families, when violence is detected or disclosed.
 - g. **Engage actively with children** and respect their right to participate: ensure respect for children's right to have their views heard and given due weight in all aspects of prevention, response and monitoring of violence against them. Establish and sustain mechanisms to engage with children directly in designing and building multi-sectoral and child-friendly child protection systems which are effective, work in the best interests of children and do not add further harm to the child victims of violence. Support child-led organizations and children's actions to end violence against children.
 - h. Create accessible and **child-friendly reporting systems**: Safe, well-publicised, confidential and accessible mechanisms must be available for reporting violence against children. All children including those in care and justice institutions should be aware of complaints mechanisms. The development of confidential free telephone hotlines for children should be considered, together with the creation of other ways of reporting violence through new technologies.
 - i. Ensure accountability and end **impunity**: All perpetrators of violence against children should be brought to justice and be held accountable through appropriate criminal, civil, administrative and professional proceedings and sanctions. Persons convicted of violent offences and sexual abuse of children should be prevented from working with children.
 - j. Address the **gender dimension**: All anti-violence policies and programmes must be designed and implemented from a gender perspective, taking into account the different risks faced by boys and girls.
 - k. Develop and implement systematic **national data collection and research on violence** against children, providing indicators based on internationally agreed standards, commission confidential interview research with children, parents and other carers, with appropriate ethical safeguards, to reveal the true extent of all forms of violence against girls and boys, in the home/family and in all other settings, and to enable progress towards its elimination to be measured and to inform policy and programming at all levels.
 - l. **Ratify and implement all relevant instruments**: Ratify all relevant international and regional human rights instruments relevant to the protection of children from all forms of violence, review and withdraw reservations and implement their treaty obligations and strengthen their cooperation with treaty bodies.

Follow-up

- 11. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the report of the expert is **disseminated** as widely as possible among Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as within the United Nations system;
- 12. Recommends that the Secretary-General appoints for a period of four years a **Special Representative** on violence against children, ensuring that the necessary support is made available for the effective performance of his/her mandate. Encourages the Special Representative to work with the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Funds and the World Health Organization and all other relevant UN agencies, and calls upon States and institutions concerned to provide voluntary contributions to support the appointment and the SR's office.
- 13. Recommends that the Special Representative:
 - a. Act as a catalyst and convenor to promote international and regional cooperation and enhance the participation of civil society to eliminate violence against children, informed by the recommendations of the UNSG's Study on Violence against Children;
 - b. Act as a high profile advocate to promote prevention and elimination of all violence against children, including by ensuring systematic monitoring of the implementation of key recommendations arising from the UNSG's Study;
 - c. Ensure that children's participation in the elimination and prevention of violence against them is supported and their views heard and respected;
 - d. Assess progress achieved and difficulties encountered in protecting children from all forms of violence, including through country visits and raise awareness and promote systematic collection and dissemination of information about violence against children and about its effective elimination;
 - e. Ensure multisectoral coordination in addressing violence against children within the United Nations system and work closely with the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Funds and the World Health Organization, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, relevant United Nations and regional bodies, the specialized agencies and other competent bodies, as well as non-governmental organizations;
 - f. Establish effective and mutually supportive collaboration with NGOs/civil society.
- 14. Requests the Special Representative to submit to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council an annual report containing relevant information on the situation of violence against children, bearing in mind existing mandates and reports of relevant bodies;
- 15. Calls upon Member States and relevant United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations, child-led and youth organisations to cooperate with the Special Representative and provide information on the implementation of the recommendations of the SG Report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

Geneva/New York, 2 October 2006

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Article on UN study's findings and recommendations regarding Child Labour:

In his report on violence against children, UN Special Representative Paulo Sergio Pinheiro focuses on five settings in which violence against children regularly occurs. One of these is the workplace, or "work settings" as is the term used in the report. In the following, the findings and recommendations of the report concerning violence against working children will be highlighted.

Elke Koning
October 5th 2006

Findings

The report recalls data from ILO that estimates a total of 218 million children were involved in child labour in 2004 the world over, of which 126 million were doing hazardous work. It notes that there is only little data available on violence against working children, especially regarding those in the informal sector. But violence has been found to affect working children everywhere, be it physical, sexual or psychological. It may be used to coerce children to work, or to punish or control them in the workplace. The evidence available suggests that violence in the workplace generally comes from employers, but it can also come from co-workers, clients and police officers, among others.

There is a special concern with regard to violence and working children, which sets the workplace apart from the other settings where violence against children occurs, which is that some categories of work have been identified as being "worst forms of child labour" under ILO Convention 182. This is especially true of some categories of illegal work. It means that these forms of labour, because of their hazardous and detrimental character, constitute an act of violence against children in and of themselves.

Mr Pinheiro's report explicitly condemns sexual exploitation and bonded labour as constituting violence. It estimates that the exploitation of children under 18 in prostitution, child pornography and similar activities takes on 1 million children worldwide every year, often through kidnapping, child trafficking, coercion, and selling. Sexual violence is intrinsic in these sectors, and is often accompanied by physical and psychological violence as well. To make matters worse, children suffering from this kind of maltreatment are often unable to find help. When they do, they run the risk of being treated as criminals and being detained, without means of appeal.

Bonded and forced labour is also still a reality in many parts of the world. All forms of violence are endemic in this type of labour. This holds especially true for traditional forms of slavery that still exist in some countries and affect tens of thousands of children who are unable to protect themselves from their 'employers'.

Domestic work, the largest sector of employment for girls under 16, has also been designated a "worst form of child labour": It is a sector of labour that is highly invisible and thus easily overlooked, but Mr Pinheiro's report has given it specific attention, particularly denouncing the fact that it often takes on the form of exploitation, servitude and sometimes even slavery. Reported maltreatment includes physical punishment, and constant humiliation, mostly from women employers, with male members of the household subjecting girls to sexual harassment and violence.



Progress

Mr Pinheiro acknowledges some progress has been made in the area of preventing violence against working children. ILO convention 182, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children are examples of how legislation has provided new tools for concrete action on eliminating the worst forms of child labour and addressing child trafficking. But much remains to be done, and one of the main obstacles, according to the report, is the failure to translate international commitments to protect children from violence into action at the national level.

Recommendations

He has devised a set of overarching recommendations addressed primarily to states, but applying also to NGO's and other grass roots organisations, as well as to employers, children and their parents. The most important among them are calls for: the prohibition of all violence against children; prioritising prevention; providing recovery and social reintegration schemes; strengthening international, national and local commitment and action; ensuring accountability and ending impunity; and ensuring the participation of children.

With regard to working children, it is mentioned that in principle, under-age children should not be in the work place at all and that working children should be protected from all sorts of violence. The report identifies a set of setting-specific recommendations addressed to working children:

1. The elimination of child labour should be mainstreamed into national development policies and priority should be given to eliminating the worst forms. Particular attention should be given to the economic exploitation of children in the informal sector.
2. Where children work in accordance with international conventions, regulatory and inspection regimes must be created that include violence prevention programmes.
3. For children working illegally, recovery and integration schemes must be created that focus on under-age children and children in worst forms, ensuring their access to education.
4. Partnerships must be formed with the support of the private sector, trade unions and civil society, to stimulate corporate social responsibility.

For the implementation and follow-up, Mr Pinheiro's main suggestions are the introduction of focal point for legislation at the national level; establishing a national ombudsman for children's rights; and the appointment of a United Nations Special Representative on violence against children, supported by the offices of OHCHR, UNICEF and WHO.

Sources:

-Report of the independent expert for the UN study on violence against children
 -www.violencestudy.org

An overview of the regional consultations for the UN study on Violence against Children in work setting places:



The Special Representative's report offers a comprehensive view of violence against children. It explains where this violence occurs, in what forms, and what should be done to stop it. The report's general recommendations are the result of a thorough consultation process, carried out in the different regions of the world. To provide you with a more detailed picture of all matters discussed regarding violence and child labour, we have summarised the regional findings on this topic in the following article. For each region, an analysis of the current situation is presented, followed by an overview of progress achieved. Each section concludes with the regional recommendations on how to end violence in work settings.

CARIBBEAN

The Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children for the Caribbean region took place from **10 to 11 March 2005** in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Analysis :

A general lack of awareness on the issue in many countries in this region, combined with the hidden and illegal nature of the majority of children's economic activities, makes it difficult to obtain exact data on the number of children involved in Child Labour in this region.

Extremely poor countries like Haiti or Jamaica show especially high numbers of child labour, and an increase of children working and living on the streets, making them particularly vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and violence.

Progress :

Many countries in the Caribbean region have recently begun to assess the extent of Child Labour problem in order to be able to implement appropriate policies that put an end to the violence against children in the workplace. Some countries have already set up projects. In addition, some countries propose an alternative to the traditional education system, providing skills training for out-of-school children. Belize is an example of a country taking the lead in this.

Recommendations :

Concerning legal frameworks, policies and procedures, the Caribbean countries need to revise their domestic laws relating to Child Labour in order to be in accordance with the ILO Convention 182. In addition, the region must document and monitor the number of working children in each country and their conditions of work; these national studies would facilitate a regional overview of the issue.

As for public education, countries in the region should implement strategies to deal with Child Labour, especially increasing public awareness on the issue. The Caribbean countries should continue their efforts to create education alternatives for working and street children.

SOUTH ASIA

The Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children for South Asia took place from **19 to 21 May 2005** in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Analysis :

Millions of children work in South Asia. The exact level of violence against children in work settings is not known but it is common knowledge –reaffirmed in 1995 by a Human Rights Watch study- that children in this region work long hours under bad conditions and are therefore more vulnerable to exploitation and physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Indeed, corporal punishment, forced labour, psychological abuse and sexual harassment are quite common in the South Asian region, so much so that injuries and even death occur frequently. However, just like in the Caribbean region, the problem of violence against children in work situations is often not recognised because of the hidden nature of children's economic activities and traditional values. NGOs try to gather information on the issue, especially in such countries as Nepal, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

India has the largest number of working children of all countries in the world, a fact worsened by its rising levels of unemployment. In India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh, children are mainly exploited in the garment and carpet industries, where the "nimble fingers" argument –claiming the use of children's small hands is necessary to maintain the high quality of the product- still holds sway. In Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, countries in conflict, children are often used as soldiers. In the region as a whole, the number of children entering the informal sector is on the rise.

Sexual abuse in the workplace is a major concern in the South Asian region. This form of abuse especially affects young girls working in domestic services. Moreover, a lot of children are being trafficked for sexual exploitation. Of the 900 000 estimated sex workers in India, 30% are young girls.

Progress:

South Asian countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and many of them have also signed the ILO Convention 182. It seems, however, that governments do not fully respect their commitments regarding the issue of Child Labour. National bodies dedicated to the protection of children have been created, but in general they lack a special focus on violence against children in the work settings, specifically.

Collaboration between governments and NGOs on the issue of violence against children in the workplace is extremely important and necessary. In some countries, like for instance Nepal, the government provides information and sometimes

funding to local NGOs in order for them to provide assistance with rehabilitation, health care and other services to working children affected by violence.

The cultural system prevalent in South Asia has indirectly promoted Child Labour, and raising awareness on the violence often associated with child labour is needed.

Recommendations:

Concerning legal frameworks and policies, South Asian countries should incorporate children's rights as a policy issue in their Poverty Reduction Plans. Moreover, governments must formulate and implement appropriate Child labour policies in order to eradicate the violence against children in the workplace. ILO Convention 182 needs to be respected. Child labour laws need to be reviewed. The level of awareness of the key actors in the legislative system on the issue of violence against children in the workplace needs to be increased in order to be more effective. A supervisory system to ensure effective implementation of laws and sensitization of the judiciary, police and administrative units in charge of enforcement is required throughout South Asia.

Education systems must be relevant, accessible and affordable. Non-formal education is a very important alternative but must encourage transition to formal or vocational training for potential and current child workers.

Countries of the region need to set up mechanisms for the social protection of children, especially girls working in invisible sectors. It is essential to raise public awareness on the violation of children's rights.

More research is needed on the various dimensions of violence against children in the workplace as it would help to develop eradication strategies.

Employers' organizations and trade unions could formulate and enforce codes of conduct and issue national directives to eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labour. NGOs too could play a role and, in collaboration with such movements, they could help mobilize resources for a "Child Labour Elimination Fund". Donors must ensure effectiveness of programmes through regular consultations in thematic group meetings and by monitoring the implementation.



WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

The Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children for West and Central Africa took place from **23 to 25 May 2005** in Bamako, Mali.

Analysis:

Africa suffers from poverty and insecurity due to numerous civil wars, lack of financial and natural resources, weakness of the educational and healthcare system, etc. With this catastrophic economic situation, most African children are obliged to work in order to contribute to their family's subsistence. According to data from the ILO, around 48 million children aged 5 to 14 are economically active in Africa, which represents 29 % of the population.

The link between child labour, child trafficking and sexual exploitation is undeniable. In Africa, trafficking children in order to exploit them is widespread¹ but it turns out to be difficult to estimate the exact number of displaced children because of the hidden and illegal nature of trafficking children. This practice automatically leads to acts of violence as, first of all, children are taken away from their family environment; then, during the transfer process, they are often treated as animals and they suffer from sexual abuse throughout the journey. Finally, children are exploited at their place of work, forced to carry out dangerous work – ill-suited to their age and abilities² – and suffering from malnutrition, lack of healthcare, maltreatment, etc. They work in conditions of slavery and are, moreover, in conflict with the law in the host country as they have clandestinely crossed borders. Nigeria especially has many well-organized trafficking networks and the government is lax about this specific issue.

Violence against children is also widespread in domestic work. Regrettably, since it takes place in private homes, it is not considered child labour and is socially accepted. However, many children, especially girls, are exposed to physical, psychological and sexual abuse. They work long hours under very bad conditions and suffer from punishment if their tasks aren't carried out perfectly.

Progress:

NGOs and International Organizations are working in partnership with West and Central African governments in order to increase awareness about the consequences of child trafficking. At a community level, surveillance committees have been set up to prevent child trafficking.

Most countries in the region have adopted laws and subscribed to international treaties that prohibit work for young children. However, domestic work remains a problem, as it falls outside national legislation.

Recommendations:

During the consultation, the West and Central African countries were urged to ratify and enforce Convention 138 on the minimum working age and Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour of the ILO. The region needs to create and implement national action plans for fighting violence against children in the workplace. The legal void relating to child trafficking needs to be filled in order to eradicate the phenomenon. For example, the countries of the region need effective mechanisms of border surveillance. In this sense, it is important to develop common regional strategies, such as the Libreville platform organized by the ILO and UNICEF in 2000.

The awareness of African families must be increased with regard to the violence that is often linked with child labour. Media-based information campaigns are a necessity.

Governments should ensure that children are working in safe environments and encourage employers to assume their responsibilities to supply working children with their basic needs.

Education is a key point in a strategy targeting children. It must be accessible for all. Non-formal education is an interesting alternative to consider.

Protection and rehabilitation programmes for children affected by violence with appropriate psychological support must be implemented, especially for girls in prostitution and children who have worked in slave conditions.

1 Among the countries concerned, we can quote Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo.

2 For example: stone breaking and mining activity in rural areas and waste collection, begging or prostitution in urban areas.

LATIN AMERICA

The Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children for the Latin American region took place from **30 May to 1st June 2005** in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Analysis:

In Latin America, around 19.7 million children under 17 are involved in child labour, which represents 14.7 % of the population; 12.6 millions of them are in the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Most of the countries in the region have ratified ILO Conventions 138 and 182. During the regional consultation, countries mentioned the problem was not a lack of legislation but a lack of means to apply it.

The economic exploitation of children often leads to violence and abuse. It is difficult to assess the extent of child labour violence in the region but some ILO studies give an overview of the numerous risks incurred by working children. For instance, children working at marketplaces and dump sites suffer from numerous health problems due to waste manipulation which often causes gastrointestinal infections, dermatological illnesses because of allergy-producing substances. Children working in agriculture suffer from long exposure to solar radiation in prolonged static postures; they come into contact with agrochemicals and often use heavy and dangerous tools. Children in domestic servitude are exposed to corporal, psychological and sexual abuses. Furthermore, all these forms of work impede school attendance and harm prospects for a decent future.

In Colombia, approximately 8000 children are child soldiers, and in Brazil the problem of child labour especially affects indigenous children, who are considered to be "cheaper and more docile".

Progress:

Many countries have implemented plans to put an end to violence against children in the workplace. Such projects deal with policies, programmes and actions concerning health, education, and institutional reforms.

Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua have already implemented projects to prohibit dangerous activities for children. Ecuador and Panama are in process and Brazil, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic have created specialized organisms to deal with the issue.

Recommendations:

Concerning legal frameworks, it is essential that states design and systematically implement both quantitative and qualitative studies into the economic exploitation of children, and the violence that it generates. This will allow them to fully understand the various dimensions of the phenomenon and be able to adjust their policies to comply with the CRC and ILO conventions, to which they are a signatory.

Coherence needs to be achieved between the differing national norms on the minimal age for marriage, the minimal age for leaving school, the minimum working age, and the age of criminal responsibility.

In general, to defend the right to protection from maltreatment and exploitation, all practices that violate this right have to be eradicated through processes of awareness raising.

Parents, teachers and other people interacting with children, such as employers, must refrain from using physical or psychological punishment as a disciplinary method or for any other purpose. This type of punishment must be banned by law and an end to these practices must be promoted.



NORTH AMERICA

The Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children for North America took place on **3rd June 2005** in Toronto, Canada.

Analysis:

In the United States and in Canada, most adolescents combine their studies with part-time jobs. Employment in restaurants, grocery, and convenience stores is very common in the region. Young people are exposed to the risk of being victims of robberies and related homicides, especially when they start early in the morning or when they finish very late at night. Statistics on employment-related injuries or loss of life are few but according to US data, 70 % of deaths among working adolescent girls are homicides, with the retail trade in particular being a very dangerous sector in this regard.

Progress:

There has been some criticism concerning the Alberta Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act, in Canada. This act deals with street children involved in the sex trade and allows detaining them for up to 5 days to enable assessment and health care. That being positive, after several physical examinations, there are no long-term rehabilitation mechanisms and children are released onto the streets.

Recommendations:

Policy changes that protect working children are necessary and rehabilitation programmes must be implemented. Parental education is considered a key element in reducing children's exposure to violence.

EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children for East Asia and the Pacific took place from **14 to 16 June 2005** in Bangkok, Thailand.

Analysis:

In the East Asia and Pacific region, a lot of children are working. The difficult economic circumstances cause numerous children to enter the labour market (especially the informal sectors) very early in order to supplement the household income. These children are exposed to a high risk of being exploited and abused.

In 1997 it was estimated that over 200 000 working children in the Philippines were between 5 and 9 years of age and a survey in Cambodia in 2001 indicated that 26 % of children aged 5 to 9 were working. The sectors where working children can be found vary from family farms, factories, agricultural industries, and

fisheries to domestic work, retail trade and the sex industry. The most widespread form of child labour in the East Asia and Pacific region seems to be domestic work, which mostly concerns young girls. Often, working children are isolated from their families. In the Philippines, this concerns 14 % of all working children.

Some countries, like Vietnam and Thailand, report declining numbers of children in the labour market.

During the regional consultation, Mr Damanik, a representative of the working group on violence against children in work situations, presented the especially urgent case of exploitation of young boys in the fishing industry in North Sumatra, Indonesia. Thousands of children are working in this sector and the conditions are extremely hard. Indeed, children are often kidnapped, and forced to work long hours, they are injured or killed because of work accidents or even due to physical abuse by their employers. Mr Damanik urgently recommended the Indonesian Government ratify the ILO Conventions 138 and 182 and promote the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. He also urged national movements to prevent exploitation and violence against children and stressed the need for implementation of more effective mechanisms.

During the regional consultation, violence against children in the workplace was divided into three categories: physical abuses or exposure to physical hazards (like torture or working for long hours), sexual abuse and psycho-social abuse (such as insults, isolation or prohibition of school attendance). Among the causes of violence against children in work situations, the working group underlined the general lack of awareness towards children's rights, the frequent isolation from the family, the lack of recognition of the work causing children to be overlooked by protective laws, and the weakness of policies and procedures.

Recommendations:

To conclude the regional consultation, general recommendations were formulated, including the need to promote the rights of the child in the workplace, the need for participation of children, recommendations concerning law and policies enforcement -for instance to draft regulations on working conditions and minimum age requirements especially for informal work settings-, recommendations relating to social advocacy to increase public awareness on the issue, and many more.



MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

The Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children for the Middle East and North Africa took place from **27 to 29 June 2005** in Cairo, Egypt.

Analysis:

Child labour is very common in many countries of the Middle East and North Africa. The exact extent of the issue is not precisely known since most of the children work in the informal sector. According to UNICEF, children in the region work under extremely difficult conditions and during more than 10 hours a day. Therefore, working children suffer from physical and psychological violence.

In all the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, laws for the protection of children exist. They define the minimum working age (between 14 and 15 years old) and specify the nature of decent work conditions. However, it seems that these laws are not widely respected. Moreover, such laws do not apply to domestic work or work within the family, which is not considered as a form of child labour, even though children working in such contexts are at large risk of being abused physically, mentally and sexually.

In Yemen, it is common practice for male children to be forced to enter the labour market at a very young age, in order to increase the family income. The early presence of children in the streets exposes them to delinquency and gangs. The Yemeni Government, in collaboration with civil society, has established institutional centres for the rehabilitation of those children.

The Gulf Council Cooperation reported many children are used as jockeys in camel races in the United Arab Emirates. They are generally kidnapped from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh and are between 2 and 7 years old. Before the race, they are deprived of food in order to be light. These children are maltreated, injured and sometimes die as a result of this. Recently, the chairperson of the Emirate Union for Camel Races issued a decree that prohibits the participation in camel races of children under 15 years old and those who weigh less than 45kg. If this decree is not respected, a fine can be administered and the perpetrator can be excluded from participation in the race.

Recommendations:

The key recommendations were: recognition of all forms of violence as a violation of children's rights; enforcing relevant legislation, by punishing those who commit violence in any form against children; to ensure the rehabilitation of such children; to encourage the role of the civil society; and to raise general awareness on the problem.

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

The Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children for the Europe and Central Asia region took place from **5 to 7 July 2005** in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Analysis:

In Europe and Central Asia, child labour exists. Some children enter the labour market to increase their family income but this does not automatically imply their being subject to exploitation and violence. Among the numerous factors causing child labour, we can quote poverty, family decomposition, AIDS, discrimination towards minority groups but also lack of enforcement of child labour laws and policies.

Some countries of the region respect the international standards advocated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the ILO Conventions 138 and 182 and have implemented laws on the issue. Nevertheless, in certain countries, some children continue to suffer from economic exploitation.

According to ILO studies there seems to be a growing number of children living and working on the streets in Europe and Central Asia. This is especially true in Russia, which has gone through an important economic crisis. In St Petersburg alone, the number of working street children is estimated between 10 000 and 12 000, 60 % of which are under 13. Among them, an estimated 20 % are involved in illicit activities like drug trafficking, selling stolen goods, and prostitution. In Romania, many children can be found on the streets, begging. In Turkey, children between 7 and 17, young boys in particular, are obliged to work on the streets to ensure their families' subsistence. In this country, two categories of street children are identified: those who work during the day and come back home at night and those who live and work on the streets day and night because they do not have a house or a family. The majority of children working on the streets in Turkey belongs to the first group and is involved in activities such as shoe polishing, and hawking. The second group is more exposed to violence because they mainly work in drug trafficking.

According to the International Crisis Group's 2005 report "The Curse of Cotton: Central Asia's Destructive Monoculture", many children work in agriculture in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Forced labour and poor working conditions seem to be common practice in the cotton fields of Central Asia.

In other countries of the region, working children are often Roma children. Studies led by UNICEF and Save the Children UK in Bosnia and Herzegovina indicate that 80 % of school-age Roma children do not attend school. The problem is one of discrimination rather than lack of infrastructure.

Recently, a lot of children from Central Asia are being trafficked into the European Union. This practice is a major concern in the region. Given the fact that this is an illegal activity, it turns out to be very difficult to obtain statistical information on the issue.

Progress:

In Europe and Central Asia, legislation on child labour has been adopted to regulate the employment of young people. It specifies the minimum working age, the number of hours worked, the conditions of work; and provides sanctions for employers who violate the rights of children in the workplace. Labour inspection, however, remains flawed or non-existent in many countries.

Recommendations:

Regarding trafficking, with the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Palermo Protocol, States are undertaking several law reforms on anti-trafficking, concerning both sexual and economic exploitation. The report of an Experts Group on Trafficking in Human Beings convened by the European

Union in 2003 declared that "States should criminalize any exploitation of human beings under forced labour, slavery or slavery-like conditions." In order for these anti-trafficking laws to be effective, protection mechanisms need to be implemented to encourage victims to cooperate.

ÁFRICA DEL ESTE Y SUR

The Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children for East and South Africa took place from **18 to 20 July 2005** in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Analysis:

Most of the countries of the region have adopted the ILO Conventions on child labour. Still, domestic servitude is a widespread form of child labour in the East and South African region, especially in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho and Madagascar. It mainly concerns young girls, although it is difficult to obtain exact data due to its invisible nature. It is, however, common knowledge that domestic workers suffer from physical, psychological and sexual abuse.

HIV/AIDS is a significant factor in the region, increasing the number of working children because orphans have no choice but to work in order to survive. Another major concern in the region is the increase in commercial sexual exploitation of children and "sex tourism". Southern Africa represents a platform for traffickers of every kind.

It will take very long to eradicate child labour in the East and South African region because of the general situation of the African continent. Governments and the civil society should therefore not strive for the total eradication of child labour but their first priority should rather be ensuring that working children are treated as human beings and do not suffer unduly.

In Africa, reconciling laws that prohibit child labour with the realities of extreme poverty remains a delicate question.

Recommendations:

Children employed legally must be protected, so governments should develop codes of conduct for employers, which for instance prohibit corporal punishment in the workplace.

Among other recommendations, the laws on child labour should be reinforced by States and child prostitution must be eradicated. The will to set minimum working age for children at 16 years old was expressed.

For further information, please see the full documents:
<http://www.violencestudy.org/r57>

Analysis of Violence against Children and Power Relations in Latin America



The existence of violence in today's society is caused by a variety of complex factors, and it is children and teenagers who suffer the most from its ever-growing presence. The deterioration of the situation in Latin America is closely linked to a series of structural factors and the inherently discriminative power relations in society.

Despite having ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Latin American countries still hold a tutelary view whereby children and teenagers are seen as objects of supervision, control and punishment. Therefore, children and teenagers are generally unable to fully exercise their human rights, to access development opportunities, and to take part in the process of social integration and participation in democracy. On the contrary, there seems to be a trend towards a permanent violation of their rights.

In the complex context of social violence in Latin America, there are different practices of violence reflecting power relations in society: aggression at school; violence suffered by child and teenage workers; contempt for street children; discrimination in state institutions; etc. Paradoxically, the very state institutions that frequently use violence against children and teenagers such as schools, care centers, hospitals, the police and the judicial system, are also the ones which should protect their rights. In addition, these acts of violence are usually backed, in a complex system, by social beliefs and cultural patterns endorsed by a large part of society.

Thus, it is necessary to examine and identify the social, cultural and ethical aspects of violence against children. Many violent practices are seen as part of the accepted social order, or are sustained by structures of privileges, authority and socially legitimate control. Hence the frequency and dimension of acts of violence, which are generally associated with a high level of impunity. The practice of violence supported by social structures has a strong impact on families, where, traditionally, violence against children occurs in the first place. Domestic violence is one of the main causes of violation of the rights of children and teenagers, and of impunity thereof, in Latin America. In addition, the cultural values supporting violence, and the general notions of discipline and punishment make violence one of the most serious public health and mentality problems.

On the other hand, every analysis of the current situation of violence must take into account a new discourse emerging in the region, that condones the existence and application of violence by the State and in society. This discourse concerns so-called "public security," and the policies and actions of repression developed in this context. Evidently, every demand for greater security should go hand in hand with a demand for greater justice and greater respect for all human rights. Nowadays, however, this term is generally used only to refer to personal safety vis-à-vis petty crime and the violence associated with it.

In this context, one of the main focal points of the demand for public security seems to be the criminalization of children and adolescents, especially those suffering from poverty and marginalization. Statements by state institutions and other sectors of society often include demands for the "eradication of crime" with strong Manichaean undertones, and the development of firm

measures against (stereotypical representations of) adolescents, who are considered a risk factor.

This narrow and manipulated concept of security, supported by authoritarian arguments, has resulted in various permanent acts of indiscriminate violence against children and adolescents in all countries: from the fight against "maras" or gangs in Central America, which has apparently increased the levels of social violence, to the trends of "gatillo fácil", unjustified killings by armed forces. In this context, the lynching and execution of suspected perpetrators of crimes, which occurs frequently in countries such as Guatemala or Bolivia, is very worrisome indeed. Coincidentally, victims are mainly adolescents, who have been tortured, killed or maimed for life only because of their age and poverty, in the name of protection of society.

Such a context of discrimination and violence, in which the human rights of children and adolescents are violated in so many different ways, first needs to be recognized in all its dimensions. In addition, it is necessary to include the social values and beliefs which support this kind of violence in the analysis, and to stress the responsibility that States and societies must take. Only on this basis can the matter be dealt with effectively and can prevention be strengthened, following Professor Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro's lead: "The best way to deal with violence against children is to prevent it from taking place."

Therefore, DCI sections in Latin America are working with various action strategies: lobbying; social mobilization; monitoring of implementation and exercise of the rights of the child; proposing regulations and policies; and promoting education and organization of children and teenagers in order to strengthen their associations and generational identity. In addition, eight DCI sections in Latin America are working on a regional project on Juvenile Justice. Taking a rights-based approach, this project aims to decrease the level of violence within the Juvenile Justice system so that the provisions set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international standards of human rights related to adolescents in conflict with the law, may actually be enforced. The project has four different focal points: the review and reform of legislation to guarantee enforcement according to the Convention; the promotion of penal alternatives to imprisonment; the empowerment of justice administrators; and awareness-raising in the community.

It is important that all civil society organizations continue working to decrease the level of violence against children and adolescents, and that the existing efforts and networks are strengthened in order to address the root causes of discrimination in society. It is paramount to support the creation of new social relations based on the promotion, recognition and protection of children and adolescents as subject of rights.

Prevention and Assistance in cases of Violence against Children and Adolescents: Good Practices

Defence for Children – International, DCI Latin America

Defensa de Niñas y Niños - Internacional DNI

Defense des Enfants - International DEI

Defence for Children - International DCI

Special
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email: childlabour@dci-is.org

<http://www.dci-is.org>

Defence for Children– International, DCI Latin America

6th November 2006

Bolivia

In order to achieve the social recognition of children and adolescents as social citizens and individuals, as well as the validity and full exercise of their specific human rights, DCI-Bolivia tries to influence both society, the State and even themselves, by promoting changes in structural and social conditions impeding the realization of these rights, as well as changes in attitudes and practices that violate them directly.

To this end, DCI-Bolivia has decided to focus their efforts to tackle structural violence on three dimensions:

- **Economic:** to draw attention to the necessity of public investment in children and adolescents in general, and in health and education in particular.
- **Political:** to include a focus on children and adolescents in the institutional framework of the State, and to strengthen its capacities to comply with its responsibilities. Thus, DCI-Bolivia works on the strengthening of Child and Adolescent Advocacy Committees, the National Council and Commissions for Children and Adolescents in municipalities and departments; on the follow-up of proposals regarding specific policies; and on the progress of including a focus on children in the new State's Political Constitution.

- **Social:** to have an impact both on civil society and society as a whole through campaigns to raise public awareness, and through support for the organization and participation of children and adolescents.

DCI-Bolivia develops its activities on a national scale, and specifically in the cities of La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba, Oruro y Santa Cruz, through its head office and subsidiary offices.

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Colombia

DCI-Colombia, Centre for Social and Legal Advocacy "Sol y Luna": Since 2004, DCI-Colombia has been working in the municipality of Barrancabermeja (Department of Santander) with young people from disadvantaged areas, assisting children and adolescents affected by social and political violence. For their benefit, the Centre for Social and Legal Advocacy "Sol y Luna" transformed its offices into a youth centre. The centre now offers adolescents and young people a space to meet, to dream, and to work on cultural and political projects.

The aim of this centre is to prevent adolescents and young people from getting involved in armed conflict, crime and the use of chemical substances. The centre has the following motto: "One poet more, one fighter less." The centre has reached more than 300 adolescents and young people, and it has been such a success that municipal authorities have pointed it out as an example for the region, and have declared it the first official youth centre in the municipality.

There are plans to create at least three more centres in municipalities particularly affected by this kind of violence.

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Chile

In the framework of DCI's regional Juvenile Justice Programme, DCI-Chile is carrying out two activities aimed at preventing violence against minors:

1. Radio workshops for youth offenders consisting of 10 sessions and including the broadcasting of eight programmes. The goal is to increase the participation of adolescents as well as raise the awareness of the community, minimizing stigmatisation and promoting reintegration into society.

2. Social skills workshops for youth offenders comprising 10 sessions. The objective is to develop their social skills and ability to peacefully settle conflicts.

Furthermore, adults have also been trained. Since 2002, educators from the National Service for Minors have been trained in areas such as crisis intervention, children's rights, conflict resolution, and early detection of violence amongst peers in Transit and Diagnostic Centres. In 2006, kindergarten teachers and technical staff have been trained to work with multi-problem families in order to prevent child maltreatment.

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Costa Rica

DCI-Costa Rica develops the project "Let's Educate for Coexistence. Methodology of Seedbeds of Coexistence. Strategy for conflict resolution in educational institutions": Since 2005, DCI-Costa Rica and "Dos Generaciones" from Nicaragua have been developing a training process whose main goal is to set the conceptual, methodological and organizational basis for the launch of the campaign "Let's Educate for Coexistence." This campaign is focused on the promotion of respectful, fair coexistence relations amongst peers in schools. In 2004, DCI-Costa Rica had already put this initiative into practice in Costa Rica, in four high schools in the "Gran Área Metropolitana" (Larger Metropolitan Area).

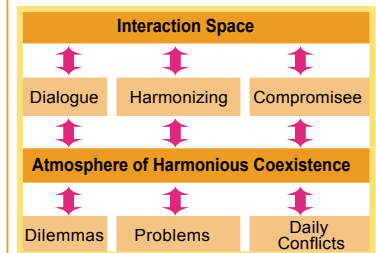
For this purpose, DCI-Costa Rica used the methodology "Iruq, be your own hero", which was created and promoted by DCI-Ecuador, and adapted it for primary and secondary schools, to facilitate its application in Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

The process aims at strengthening the political, conceptual and methodological

capacities of different actors participating in the campaign "Let's Educate for Coexistence" in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras through the exchange of experiences in preventing violence in schools. This activity was carried out in 20 schools per country in 2006.

Its methodology:

Conflict Mediation in educational settings



The project tries to create meeting places in schools, where coexistence, peace, tolerance and solidarity agreements may be reached. Its aim is to create skills, abilities and capacities for conflict resolution. The project tries to apply a mass strategy to bring about changes and improve coexistence within the education system. These goals are to be achieved through: dialogue, as a means of communication which allows listening to and recognising other people; harmonisation, as a means to accept that, starting from differences, common ground can always be found to strengthen coexistence in schools; and compromises, in order to comply with the agreements reached through mutual concessions.

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Defence for Children – International, DCI Latin America

Juvenile Violence Prevention:

Since 2003, DCI-Costa Rica has been working on programmes that prevent juvenile violence, and one of its goals has been working with poor communities in order to tackle child and adolescent social vulnerability. The target populations are children and adolescents of school age, i.e. between the ages of 6 and 11, and adolescents between the ages of 12 and 15. This programme includes the following elements:

- Identification of very poor families with scarce resources.
- Support for the enrolment or continued attendance in schools of children and adolescents of these families, through the provision of resources, and out-of-school assistance.
- Development of spaces for recreation and personal development parallel to out-of-school activities.
- The development of all these activities requires the active participation of recognised leaders of the community.

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Ecuador:

DCI-Ecuador develops a programme on violence prevention in primary schools: "Iruq and Sisa." During 2004 and the first two months of 2005, DCI-Ecuador carried out the project "Violence Prevention in primary schools in Ecuador: Iruq and Sisa" in the parish church of Molleturo (department of Cuenca). Its aim was to improve coexistence within the educational community through emphasis on respect for human rights and especially children's rights. The project was carried out in 12 schools, working with both one teacher-system and multi-teacher-systems.

The project was based on the creation of collectively agreed norms that would facilitate coexistence. Furthermore, it established the basis for the resolution of group conflicts through children's participation. The initiated process of self-evaluation helped change the authoritarian relations that do not respect rights, so typical for schools. The participatory process of reaching agreements enabled teachers to look at the educational practice and

their relations with children, other teachers and parents in another way.

On the other hand, creating these collective agreements formed the basis for developing harmonious interaction, guided by ethical principles. The creation of ethical principles also helped both children and teachers to view coexistence as an expression of individual freedom as well as other people's freedom (see other people and take them into account) and, subsequently, an issue for which every member of the education system is responsible.

The project also contributed to the boost of the self-esteem of the children and adolescents who participated. This project, like reinsertion into school, brought about processes that go beyond conflict settlement. Through the methodology of seedbeds of coexistence, children have developed new social skills and more assertive attitudes towards aggression and acts of violence.

Following the implementation of the project, the different institutional actors, mainly the teachers, started questioning the way they relate to children. Teachers have started to question the use of corporal punishment as a mechanism to maintain discipline and "encourage" learning.

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Mexico:

Since 2003, Fundación Reintegra, DCI associate member in Mexico, has been developing a campaign against maltreatment of children and adolescents in communities. In collaboration with other civil and human rights organizations, they organised the campaign "No painful blows, no hurtful words"¹. The objective is to create a culture of respect for the dignity of children and adolescents, and prevention of maltreatment.

The campaign is addressed to parents, teachers and educators, and has been widely publicised. One of the highlights is the production of a few simple plays, written and performed by the children themselves. Children present situations of maltreatment in the family and in school, and show their suffering.

The plays are performed in secular or religious celebrations deeply rooted in the community.

¹ Campaign launched in Central America in 2001. DCI-Costa Rica, together with other national and international organizations, has taken part in its development and promotion.

Defensa de Niñas y Niños - Internacional DNI

Defense des Enfants - International DEI

Defence for Children - International DCI

N°50^{Special} October-november, 2006

email: childlabour@dci-is.org

<http://www.dci-is.org>

This way, we use a strategy called thematic celebrations, that is, on Independence Day in Mexico, we celebrate the right to live without violence; on friendship day, we celebrate the right to express love in the family; at Christmas, we celebrate the non-violent ways of educating our children; etc. This strategy is very good for raising awareness in communities. Each year, as part of this campaign, we organize a contest of videos produced by children, which are lately widely screened. Reintegra, DCI associate member, was recognised for its work with its children's theatre company on the right not to be maltreated.

Adolescents deprived of their liberty:

Institutions for youth offenders are environments where the level of violence amongst peers is very high. The objective of this programme is to decrease the occurrence of physical violence. Firstly, the negative cycle of violence is discussed, as well as how violence is associated with the image of masculinity. At this stage, we try to change their view on gender issues, showing it is possible to be a man without having to resort to violence. Afterwards, we teach them alternatives for conflict resolution such as dialogue, mediation, respect for differences, and even staying out of fights, as a protection measure. This experience has had very positive results. The authorities themselves have said that boys who come to this workshop improve their behaviour, avoid fights, show more respect for their peers, custodians and authorities, and do not participate in riots.

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Paraguay:

Ninety percent of adolescents involved in the cases dealt with by DCI-Paraguay in collaboration with the Programme of Youth Offenders reported having been physically and psychologically maltreated by police officers in police stations.

To confront this, DCI-Paraguay promotes opportunities for adolescents under guidance, to have their say and denounce maltreatments. It also offers a platform to denounce situations where police officers use violence against adolescents.

We provide the following cases, that were reported, as examples:

"Mario, 14 years old, reported having been brutally tortured by policemen in the police station of 111 Arroyo Seco. He said that he was arrested on the street without a warrant or prior warning to his parents (which is considered kidnapping), to be interrogated as the suspect of an offence committed in the neighbourhood. He was handcuffed, taken to the police station, and instantly put into a cell. There, he was hung from his handcuffs and beaten with sand-filled bags. The policemen went on to fill his mouth with paper whilst they interrogated him about the offence, using all kinds of corporal punishment and verbal humiliation. While he was enduring torture, he saw how another group of policemen applied electric shocks to one of his neighbours' testicles, a boy his age who was arrested for the same offence."

"Jorge, 18 years old, reported having been tortured by policemen from the police station Quinta Metropolitana. He added that, whilst he was being physically attacked, they threatened to kill him, claiming he and people from his community were not worth anything, and did not deserve to live." Likewise, other adolescents reported having been tortured in the police station Tercera Metropolitana.

DCI-Paraguay has denounced these humiliations to the Department of Human Rights in the Supreme Court, police authorities and the media. DCI-Paraguay has also insisted in interviews, mainly on the radio, that which we see is only the symptom of a larger history of violence to which children and adolescents are subjected.

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Violence against Children in Benin : the specific case of Labour and Traffic of Children, by DCI Benin

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The global problem of violence is intricately linked with many child rights issues.

In the Republic of Benin, children are traditionally considered as mere subjects, who are not entitled to a genuine right to participation, as envisaged in, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and the Welfare. In addition to being subjects, they were also regarded as having needs and requiring specific attention for protection within the family, the community and society as a whole.

The child is the "Vignon 1", the "Vignilé 2", the "Vi-Utu 3"! The child is considered a treasure in need of protection, moving step by step towards adulthood through rites of passage according to its age and level of maturity.

It used to be out of the question for parents to let their children suffer from useless violence, since they might be punished by the community. For instance, the community did not accept that a mother drop her child even if she did so inadvertently. Depending on her position in society, she risked being submitted to corporal punishments. Education was considered a shared responsibility of the entire community.

The situation today:

The times have changed and tradition has evolved. The disintegration of values and families, the monetarisation of society, the market economy, the growing urbanisation and industrialisation have together brought about a mentality change. Although children are entitled to some rights, cases of horrible violence against children, of all kinds, are reported by the press in Benin daily and everyone –including children- seems to have grown accustomed to this. Children suffer from violence exercised by their own parents and by their (formal or informal), guardians. Children living with foster families and children who are victims of trafficking are most likely to suffer from this violence.

A few examples of violence against orphans and victims of trafficking:

- A girl living with a foster family was "ironed" with an electric flatiron because her guardian suspected the child of having sexual relations with her husband.

[1] Word in Fon language meaning "the child is good". This is a way of saying that there are benefits to having a child

[2] Word in Fon language meaning "the child is a gift from/for life"

[3] word in Fon language meaning "everything for the child"

- A girl weighing 58 kilos was loaded with over 60 kilos of luggage, a load well above her physical capacities.
- To punish his child for petty theft and being late, a father burnt his hands by putting them in sand that he had previously heated. The child has lost the use of both hands.

The child, previously an object of rights, has now become a rights concern and is an active and passive witness, vulnerable to abuse, and physical and psychological violence. Along the same lines, children's protection and rights guaranteed in several international and regional conventions are violated (especially for matters related to the ILO Conventions 138 and 182 on the minimum age of employment for children), turning the child into a victim of all forms of violence. These forms of violence include direct and indirect maltreatment of children, physical abuse, exploitation at work, sexual and economic exploitation, violence and sexual aggression. All of these contribute to the unscrupulous exploitation of children's labour.

DCI BENIN'S ACTION TOWARD VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR AND CHILD TRAFFIC

It needs to be emphasised that in some national traditions, children are brought up with the Thalio policy: "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". Even among working children, a child which has been taught to answer violence with violence, to take violent revenge upon suffering, will tend to behave violently toward his peers.

In 1998, DCI Benin was the first to organise a sub-regional consultation on "strategies to combat child labour" and identify common actions for children's protection in that field.

As Benin is considered a country of origin, transit and destination for trafficking in children, DCI-BENIN was selected by the ILO/IPEC-LUTRENA Programme for a pilot study project on trafficking in children in Benin on May 18th 2000. This research has brought to light the characteristics of the labour and the activities undertaken by victims of child trafficking, and their impact on children. The latter carry out all kinds of activities. They mainly end up in the agricultural, domestic, handicrafts, and commercial sectors and on construction sites. Girls, but sometimes also boys, are generally put to work as domestic servants, family assistants or in

commerce. This is the case for children trafficked to Nigeria, Ivory Coast, and Gabon. Sometimes they are involved in sexual exploitation where their incomes are withheld by their traffickers or intermediary networks. Boys are generally put to work in cocoa fields or in factories, but they also work in mining, stone quarries and in the exploitation of sea sand in Nigeria or in construction in Ivory Coast.

Children who are involved in commercial activities, work as itinerant workers or street hawkers. They mainly work in catering. Most of these jobs are monotone and painful because they are not in appropriate for young children. Sometimes they suffer from maltreatment. Children are exposed to all kinds of risks and health hazards (malformation of the spinal column, illnesses, accidents etcetera).

The main goal of the trafficking of children is making as much money as possible and it is this imperative that governs work relations. The child can not appeal to anyone and is at his employer's mercy. Victims of child trafficking generally complain of fatigue, maltreatment and physical violence. Health care is generally insufficient or non-existent. Specific risks occur depending on the type of work. It can be sexual violence for children who work as domestic servants or street hawkers. Children who work in the construction field have to carry heavy loads and this can hamper their physical development. All children involved in the agricultural sector (employed in cocoa fields for example) suffer the same health problems. These include physical injuries, snake bites, fractures and malformation of the spinal column.

In the construction and public work field we registered the following problems: lower back pains, aches, falling on construction sites, transport of heavy equipments, deadly accidents, injuries caused by work tools, etcetera. It is necessary to also take into account the mortal risks run by all the children involved in trafficking in the host country or during the journey. Some of them are run over on their way back home because they were cycling. In general, the trafficking of children supplies child labour, aiming to provide child labour to people who need it, regardless of activity or their needs. Work conditions are hard. The average duration of a shift is 10 hours or more. Children generally live with their employers. Some of them have no or few possibilities to leave the place of work but others can go out on weekends. Some children are also entitled to one month off per year. Their meals are few and of lesser quality than those provided to the rest of the household.





After this study, some proposals have been made. They deal with (among other things):

- raising parents' awareness
- compulsory free education
- creation of a learning centre for children under duress

Other proposals regarded the purchase of eating bowls for children and the fight against malnutrition and poverty.

Parents think that we will eradicate the traffic of children through the fight against poverty, the creation of training and welcome centres for children in difficult situations, by raising parents' awareness, thanks to compulsory free education, birth control and repression through the drawing-up of new laws. Emphasis was put on development projects for cities and villages of Benin especially in risk areas, the strengthening of the population's ability to cater for

themselves, the fight against illiteracy and juridical illiteracy, and the strengthening of women's resources through the multiplication of local funds and agricultural funds to grant them credits. Finally, the proposals were sent to non governmental organisations to support their efforts in fighting against trafficking of children and promoting the rights of the child.

DCI-BENIN permanently advocates for the eradication of violence through seminars, programs, and training programmes, be they initiated by DCI-BENIN or not.

Notwithstanding its limited means, the section is present in many villages, providing its technical support, especially its legal knowledge, to public debates. Educational tools were developed for that purpose. DCI-BENIN takes part in many education programmes and programmes which promote peace and the eradication of violence against children.

Three strategies were developed by the section: they deal with law, ethics and education, and social issues respectively.

Regarding law, strategies are focused on incorporating international and regional child rights instruments (whether signed and ratified or not), translating and explaining them in a more simple language for actors in the field of child protection and for all levels of the population. This programme was implemented a few years ago, with the support from "Stichting Kinderpostzegels", and is currently being carried out independently by the section.

Regarding education, an ethical strategy has been proposed. It is a rights-based strategy, with its main emphasis being on the right to life, on

the rights of the child as a special kind of human rights and on women's rights, since they are instrumental to the protection of the child.

In addition to the ethical strategy, other education strategies have been developed. They are based on responsible parenting as an instrument to fight against the trafficking of children and more generally, against child exploitation through work. They also promote a view of the child as a guarantee for the progress of the nation and the survival of the community.

From a social point of view, the main challenge is to take action on an national and international scale. The development projects aimed at families and communities, concrete actions to reduce the offer and the demand of child labour, and the strengthening of economical resources of families and communities, are all social strategies that could generate concrete results for the global protection of children and against the exploitation and trafficking of children in particular.

On a regional and international scale, efforts will have to be made to mobilise existing resources, ensure genuine cooperation and sincere international action. Indeed, children need to feel sincere interest from all decision-making bodies to ensure their physical, psychological and moral protection. They need great solidarity with regard to their problems. People should be touched by their exploitation, maltreatment, and hard living conditions.

It is undeniable that children's rights should be guaranteed and that the community is an essential instrument to monitor the rights of the child. In order to truly contribute to the improvement of children's lives and as a consequence, the life of humanity as a whole, we need: national solidarity; a more equal distribution of national and international resources; an efficient fight against poverty and for education for all; and the ability to exercise the right to adequate standard living conditions. Most of all, we need to create an environment where children and women -who are considered to be especially vulnerable by the United Nations- would be recognised as real actors for development. It would also provide children with a safe environment where they would be protected from economic exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, and child trafficking.

Because nothing is more worthy of the support of man, this human being of reason and understanding and respect for others, whose mentality and behaviour change according to customs, traditions and cultures, than the respect for the dignity of the child, this little human being in a process of development whose physical, mental and moral integrity are in need of protection. Mankind, taking decisions on a national and international scale, has to overcome all obstacles to efficiently guarantee the rights of children and protect them from exploitation and the worst forms of labour.

CONCLUSION

Considering all the difficulties that children have to face today, we wonder if we are witnessing a recession in the traditional value-based perception of the child. Everyone has to get involved in the struggle to protect the rights of the child and guarantee protection against all the forms of exploitation and trafficking of children that contribute to child labour. Collaboration between all states and national and international organisations is essential in order to guarantee children a better access to healthcare, fight illiteracy and to achieve the goals that Benin has set regarding education.

May all these Conventions frequently adopted on a national and international scale -that is to say the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the different ILO Conventions on Child Labour (for instance Convention 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment and Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour)- guarantee children a better protection, a better assistance and the respect of their rights. Let's make sure that the child of today, will be the well-balanced adult of tomorrow.

DCI-BENIN is always at the ready to promote the rights of the child to be free from violence. We are still trying to obtain funds for our projects on social mobilisation on the issue of violence against children, on the creation of their centre of social and judicial defence and on the continuous awareness-raising regarding the rights of the child.

The guarantee of a better world and a better future for children is to monitor the rights of the child through solidarity and cooperation on a international and national scale. DCI-BENIN reasserts its commitment for the protection of children against every form of abuse or violence.



Australia – Adelaide Now

2nd of October

Unions demand child labour reforms

South Australian unions have called for sweeping changes to child labour laws to protect the young from what they say is exploitation and abuse. "Until now, there has been nothing to stop young children working unsupervised, overnight shifts in dangerous environments with no penalty payments, and we have taken many calls from concerned parents," the SA Union's State Secretary said. Among the changes, unions want 14 years of age established as the minimum age for employment and limits on the type of work children can perform as well as on the hours they can work. They also propose to prohibit the employment of children in indecent, obscene or pornographic ways. With these changes the Unions aim to offer comprehensive protection to all children, regardless of the industry they work in.

Mexico – Colpisa/AFP

3rd of October

16.000 children sexually exploited in Mexico, claims Unicef

According to data from Unicef, at least 16.000 children are sexually exploited in Mexico, said the Director of the national Family Development Programme, Mrs Ana Rosa Payán in a statement made this week. She went on to denounce commercial sexual exploitation as one of the worst forms of child abuse. To eliminate this problem, Mexico has devised an action plan involving legal reforms to make the sexual exploitation of children a grave offence, including heavy sanctions for those responsible, announced Mrs Payán. In Mexico, 95.000 minors are involved in child labour, many of them in what are considered the worst forms.

India – Reuters

6th of October/ 10th of October

Child domestic labour ban law welcomed, but lacking enforcement – children still working

The Indian government has taken a step

forward in the fight to eradicate child labour by enacting a law to ban domestic work and some other forms of labour by children under 14. The law has gone into effect the 10th of October, but for it to be effective, the Indian government will need to improve upon their weak enforcement of existing child labour protections, Human Rights Watch said. Indian law already prohibits work deemed dangerous for children under 14, to which domestic, hotel and restaurant work has now been added. Nevertheless, when investigating child labour law enforcement in 2003, the human rights organisation found most illegal employers almost never faced sanctions, and money for rehabilitation, which is critical for preventing children from returning to dangerous work, remained unspent. HRW urged the Indian government to do more to address the factors that push children into the worst forms of child labour, including lack of access to education.

On the day the new law came into effect, children were found to be working everywhere in New Delhi. A ten-year-old boy working in a food stall not far from the Ministry of Labour said he'd rather be in school, "but what to do? This is necessary."

Nepal – Himalayan Times

6th of October

Nepali child labourers to attend UN meeting

Two child labourers from Nepal are participating in the launch of the UN study on Violence against children, at UN Headquarters in New York.

One of them, Shakti Sharan Nagarkoti, a child labourer from Kirtipur, had earlier been selected to attend the South Asian Regional-level meeting on Violence against children in South Asia, held in Islamabad, Pakistan, in July. At a press conference, he said "Children's opinions and views need to be given space to eliminate child labour, to find solutions to minimise the exploitations, discourage children in the labour sector and bring out their issues."

La República Democrática del Congo – BBC News

11th of October

Child soldier reintegration schemes Congo failing: girls especially left on their own

More than two years after the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo launched a country-wide scheme to reintegrate child soldiers into society, at least eleven thousand children are still involved with armed groups, claims Amnesty International in a report released the 11th of October. The majority of girls taken by armed forces, are still unaccounted for.

In the DRC, it is estimated that children constitute up to forty percent of some armed forces, with girls making up forty percent of those children. But only about five percent of the children released through the government disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programmes (DDR) are girls. According to Amnesty, commanders and adult fighters of armed forces often do not feel obliged to release girls, who they consider as sexual possessions. Government DDR officials also tend to regard these girls as 'dependants' of adult fighters, and therefore not entitled to enter into the DDR programme.

The children that did return to their families and communities as a result of the DDR programme received little or no support to return to civilian life, even though some of them had been taken as young as six years old. Amnesty claims that the government has been extremely slow in approving and implementing community reintegration projects. Not only has the government failed to release thousands of children still with armed forces today, but also has failed to meet the needs of released children, which facilitates the re-recruitment of children recently demobilised and reunited with their families, a spokesperson for Amnesty said. The organisation called on the incoming DRC government and the international community to prioritise investment in the state education system, providing free elementary education as soon as possible.

Paris – UNESCO – Comunicado de prensa

26th of October

Early childhood development and education remains under-developed in most countries

Early childhood development and education, the first of the six goals of Education for All, is the forgotten link in the education chain,

claims UNESCO in a report launched on the 26th of October. The annual Education for All Global Monitoring Report states that half the world's countries have no early childhood care and education policy for children under age three.

"Early childhood programmes make for strong foundations and pay high dividends," says Nicholas Burnett, director of the Report. "Each year in the developing world, over 10 million children die before age five of mostly preventable diseases. Programmes that combine nutrition, immunization, health, hygiene, care and education can change this. They are also a determining contributor to better achievement in school. Despite this, the children who stand most to benefit from such programmes are those least likely to have access to them."

But despite the well-documented benefits for child development and well-being, financing for early childhood programmes is a low priority in most countries: less than 10% of total public education expenditure was allocated to pre-primary education in 65 of the 79 countries with 2004 data available.

Iraq / Syria – Guardian Online

24th of October

Young Iraqi women and girls fleeing war and poverty fall prey to sex traffickers

Thousands of young Iraqi girls are being taken advantage of by unscrupulous sex worker traffickers seeking to exploit their desperate socio-economic situation for profit, United Nations agencies have reported.

A report published recently by the UNHCR and UNICEF found that prostitution among young Iraqi women in Syria, some just 12 years old, "may become a more widespread problem since the economic situation of Iraqi families is increasingly deteriorating".

"Organised networks dealing with the sex trade were reported," it said, finding evidence that "girls and women were trafficked by organised networks or family members". This growing sex trade occurs among an Iraqi refugee community in Syria that local NGOs now estimate at 800,000 people, and to whose plight aid agencies continue to turn a blind eye, the international community said.