

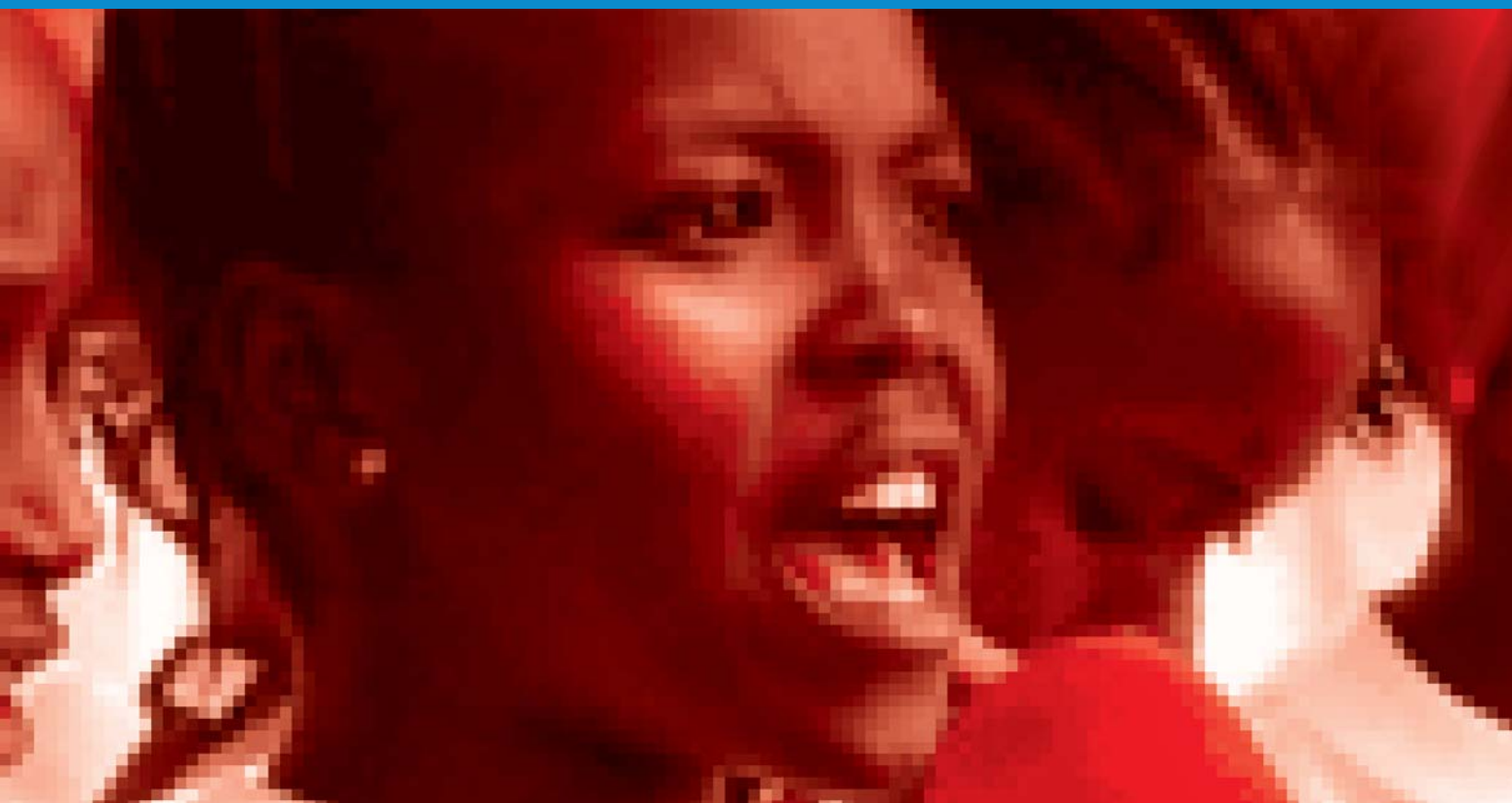


The African Child Policy Forum

The Second International Policy Conference on the African Child

Violence Against Girls in Africa

May 11-13, 2006 – United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Record of the Conference Proceedings



Save the Children



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on the African Child

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Second International Policy Conference on the African Child involved considerable preparation and coordination in order to make it a success. The African Child Policy Forum is therefore grateful to all those organisations and individuals who partnered with it in planning and organising the conference.

We are specially grateful to Plan, our major partner over the years and the organisation that was the main donor to the conference. The Forum is also very grateful for the financial and technical support that it received from the AU, UNICEF, UNFPA, the Save the Children Alliance, EU and UNECA. Their partnership and support were essential in ensuring that the objectives of the conference were achieved. We thank Save the Children Sweden for organising and facilitating the children's pre-conference meeting. Credit also goes to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for facilitating protocol and immigration matters during the conference.

Special thanks to our eminent political and religious leaders who honoured us by their presence: H.E. President Girma Wolde Giorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; H.E. Joaquim Chissano, Former Head of State of the Republic of Mozambique; H.E. Madame Chantal Compaoré, First Lady of Burkina Faso and His Grace Archbishop John Onaiyekan, Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Nigeria.

Profound gratitude to the excellent team of chairpersons, speakers and discussants for taking their precious time to attend, facilitate and speak at the conference.

Special thanks to Prof. Paulo Pinheiro and the Secretariat of the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children for sharing with us the insights into the report.

Many thanks to, ILO, UNAIDS, ICRC, Inter-Africa Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children and Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN) for contributing to the conference documentation by writing thematic monographs on various aspects of violence against girls in Africa.

We would like to acknowledge and deeply thank the children who participated and shared with us their experiences and views.

To all the participants we are grateful for their participation and for contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the conference and also joining the Forum in the noble cause of fighting all form of violence against children.

CONAFE and ANPPCAN deserve special mention for collaborating with the Forum in organising the All-African Consultative meeting of Child Rights, Youth and Human Rights Organisations.

Lastly, our sincere thanks to our International Board of Trustees, under the leadership of H.E. Dr. Salim A. Salim for their devotion, time and energy to ensure that the conference was a success.

We remain indebted to you all.

Assefa Bequele, Ph.D

Executive Director

The African Child Policy Forum

INTRODUCTION

The international community now acknowledges that violence against children is a serious problem and cause for concern. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), as many as 40 million children under the age of 15 are victims of violence every year. In its resolution 56/138, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth study on the issue of violence against children, upon the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. In February 2003, the Secretary-General appointed an independent expert, Prof. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, to direct the study. The report was to be based on available evidence, information and a series of regional consultations, and be carried out in collaboration with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WHO.

The conference – Violence against Girls in Africa – organised by The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), was designed to complement and enrich the study process. This conference adds the voices of African women, women activists and leaders, as well as policy-makers, human rights activists, African youth and prominent African figures, to the debate on preventing violence against girls in Africa. The proceedings are informed by a conference report, testimonials, dialogue among the various stakeholders and a special forum for children and youth. A poll-based report on young African women's experiences of violence against them was produced before the conference. The outcome of the conference was a declaration to be and policy makers used as a vehicle for campaigning with the African Union, African governments to develop effective policies and programmes to prevent violence against girls.

The Context

Violence—physical, psychological and sexual—is an especially pernicious problem in Africa. As elsewhere, girls are particularly vulnerable, partly due to the influence of traditional values and tolerance towards domestic violence.

Girls in many parts of Africa are victims of early marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). Early marriage puts African girls at risk of contracting HIV, since most husbands are older and sexually experienced. According to the Botswana Human Development Report 2000, girls under the age of 14 are twice as likely as boys to contract HIV, rising to three times as likely between the ages of 15-29. African girls also contract HIV as a consequence of rape, exploitation and trafficking. HIV and AIDS are causes as well as consequences of violence against girls in Africa. In many instances, the stigmatisation of HIV and AIDS causes others to carry out physical and psychological violence against girls living with HIV or AIDS.

African girls are further subjected to violence in times of conflict, since sexual violence against women and girls is increasingly being used as a weapon of war. In Sudan's Darfur region, for example, many women and girls are being raped, abducted and forced into sexual slavery by Janjaweed militias. Girls in the conflict-ridden Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) also suffer from sexual violence on a large scale, according to a 2005 report by Amnesty International.

The violence experienced by African girls in conflict situations reflects the discrimination and inequality they experience during peace times—at home, at school and in the community. A Human Rights Watch report of March 2001 disclosed the widespread practice of rape, assault and sexual harassment of girls by male students and teachers in South Africa. Various other reports indicate that girls in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Zambia commonly drop out of school to avoid harassment by male students and teachers.

The conference focused on violence against girls in Africa in the three settings that are the principal areas of concern in the Pinheiro report:

- the family
- schools
- the community

The conference gave special attention to child-to-child violence, which is prevalent in these settings. In addition, the conference complemented the scope of the Pinheiro report by focusing on other forms of violence common in Africa, including:

- in the workplace
- in conflict and crisis situations
- exploitation and trafficking
- in the context of HIV and AIDS

Since women and girls in Africa are the most vulnerable, they should be in the vanguard of the fight against all forms of violence. This conference involved women activists, women leaders and adolescent girls in the ongoing consideration of violence against them. Their voices were added to the process and final outcome of the event, and will contribute to the follow-up debate on violence against children that will take place in New York in 2006, during the 61st ordinary session of the UN General Assembly.

Objectives

The overall objective of the conference was to contribute to the ongoing international effort to effect attitudinal and policy change relating to violence against girls in Africa. The immediate specific objectives were to:

- provide a platform for like-minded organisations to work together and initiate a pan-African movement opposed to all forms of violence against girls in Africa
- ensure that African views and positions, especially regarding girls, are reflected in actions and resolutions taken by the African Union (AU) and the UN in respect to violence against children
- initiate dialogue and formulate actions to be taken by various stakeholders, particularly governments, to address the issue of violence against girls in Africa.

Conference Format

The framework for the conference was provided by the *International Policy Conference on the African Child*, a biennial event organised by the ACPF. The conference rationale is to provide a forum for dialogue among child rights activists, policy-makers and experts. The first conference was held in May 2004 in Addis Ababa, on the theme *The African Child and the Family*. The focus of the second conference, violence against girls in Africa, was chosen as particularly appropriate since violence against children is the subject of the special report by the UN Secretary-General and a serious problem in Africa.

Prior to the conference, the ACPF collected information on African girls' experiences of violence from three sources:

- Existing literature on gender-based violence and violence against children.
- Five thematic studies on violence against girls in specific settings that The African Child Policy Forum carried out in collaboration with the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children; the International Committee of the Red Cross; the International Labour Organization; the Uganda Child Rights NGO Network; and UNAIDS.
- Retrospective surveys of the of girls' experiences of violence in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

This information was shared with conference participants.

Outcomes

The conference culminated in the adoption of a declaration to stop violence against girls in Africa. This declaration is directed at the AU, African governments and Civil Society Organizations. It focuses on the way forward, complementing and looking beyond the Pinheiro report.

The conference programme included plenary sessions and panel discussions, and there were meetings of participants and representatives of children's rights, women's and human rights organisations both before and after the conference.

Child Participation

Children and youth groups had the opportunity to participate in the conference and in the process leading up to the event. They presented and shared their experiences and voiced their opinions throughout the conference, following the children's consultation, *Violence against Children*, held before the main meeting.

Partners

The ACPF organised the conference in partnership with Plan International, one of the world's leading child rights and development organisations.

Both organisations wanted to involve as many potential allies as possible in this very important event. The major partners in organising the conference were the Secretariat of the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, African Union, European Union, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Save the Children Alliance, the Coalition of NGOs working for Children in Africa (CONAFE), African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNAIDS, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN), the Inter-Africa Committee on Traditional Practices, among others.

Venue and Date

The conference took place on May 11 and 12, 2006 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Following the conference, the *All Africa Consultative Meeting of Child Rights, Youth and Human Rights Organisations* took place on May 13; (please see subsequent section for details). A pre-conference children's consultation – Violence against Children – was held on May 9 and 10; (please see following section).

PROCEEDINGS OF CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Opening session

Conference Statement

Dr. Assefa Bequele, Executive Director, The African Child Policy Forum; Member of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

Welcome Address

H.E. Dr. Salim A. Salim, AU Special Envoy and Chief Mediator for the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on Darfur; Secretary-General Organisation for African Unity (OAU) (1989-2001); Chairman, International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

Partnership for Children

Mr. Jim Emerson, Chief Operations Officer, Plan International

My Wishes and my Pledge for Africa's Children

Dr. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF

Children's Report

A report from the pre-conference consultation, Violence against Children, May 9-10, 2006

Special Guest Speaker

Mme. Chantal Compaoré, First Lady of Burkina Faso

Opening Address

H.E. President Girma Wolde Giorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Keynote Address

H.E. President Joaquim Chissano, former Head of State of Mozambique; Chairperson of the Africa Forum for African Former Heads of State

Conference Statement by Dr. Assefa Bequele, Executive Director, The African Child Policy Forum; Member of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

Dr. Assefa Bequele welcomed all and thanked the many, many people who made this conference possible. He explained that the conference is intended to contribute to the ongoing process involving the preparation of the UN report on violence against children, making the voice of African children heard and seen in the report and in the public arena.

In looking at the problem of violence, four things are particularly striking. The first is the extreme and widespread violence to which children are subjected. The second is that much violence is perpetrated by those closest to the children who are expected to provide protection and care. Thirdly, ill-informed values and traditions result in much violence, and finally, the cost of preventing violence is negligible, since violence is the product of a state of mind and the change needed comes from within.

We must all examine our attitudes toward violence and the way we view, treat or deal with children. We must all assume our responsibilities; as parents, as siblings, as members of the human race. We need to shed the complacency that shamefully marks the African landscape and insist on zero tolerance to any form of violence

The ACPF would like to anchor the deliberations during this conference to concrete action: a conference declaration and a personal pledge of commitment. We should commit ourselves to an Africa that respects

the rights of every man, woman and child and to an Africa that upholds a culture of peace and non-violence.

Welcome Address by H.E. Dr. Salim A. Salim, AU Special Envoy and Chief Mediator for the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on Darfur; Secretary-General Organisation for African Unity (OAU) (1989-2001); Chairman, International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

H.E. Salim A. Salim, Chairman of the Board of ACPF, welcomed all participants to the conference. He highlighted the diligent work of the Forum in promoting the rights and welfare of the child through research, advocacy, policy development and policy dialogue.

Violence against children, especially girls, in Africa is a pervasive problem, yet there is very little reported or understood. This has partly to do with the perception that certain forms of violence are acceptable and even desirable. However, only limited research has been carried out on the subject, which is why the work of the ACPF is so critical.

Among other things, the research carried out by the Forum shows that girls are neglected and discriminated against from birth, which in extreme cases leading to death. Of girls surveyed by ACPF, 90 per cent reported being physically abused by the very people they trusted most, including family members and teachers. Girls are often exposed to heavy or difficult labour at an early age, and domestic violence is socially accepted, leading to millions of children living in permanent fear. Trafficking of girls, which sometimes leads to death, is all too common in many parts of Africa, and millions of girls are victims of harmful traditional practices, with about 6,000 girls subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM) every day.

All discrimination, subtle repression and deprivation, disenfranchisement, disempowerment or harassment is accentuated in times of war. Girls and women become targets of war and weapons of war. In the transformation of women and girls from human beings to objects and victims of war, we are all dehumanised.

Violence against women and girls in Africa is a highly complex and emotive area, and should be addressed with sensitivity as well as realism. This conference should move the issue forward and trigger action across the continent, as we commit ourselves as individuals and as a group to act in the best interests of children.

Partnership for Children by Mr. Jim Emerson, Chief Operations Officer, Plan International

The speech was read by **Mr. David Muthungu**, Regional Director, Southern and Eastern Africa, Plan International. **Mr. Jim Emerson** recalled Plan's decision in 2002 to support Assefa Bequele in establishing The African Child Policy Forum, an ambitious initiative that has now become a vibrant organisation and one of Plan's key partners in Africa. The Forum is an important centre of advocacy and a hub for influential thinkers, activists and policy-makers.

This conference is timely in addressing the problem of violence against girls, which is too often sanctioned and disguised in many African countries. Plan recognises the problem and is increasingly taking action to help alleviate abuse against children through establishing partnerships with community-based organisations and governments. Together with other non-governmental organisations (NGOs), these efforts are making an enormous difference in the lives of millions of children around the world.

The issue of violence is not simply an African problem; it is a global problem that concerns us all. This conference is very much about commitment. We are expected to conclude the event with a declaration at the end of our deliberations, as well as to make a pledge or personal commitment to taking the cause

further. As an organisation, Plan has committed itself to ending all forms of violence against children, especially girls. This commitment encompasses working to achieve the immediate prohibition of extreme forms of violence; addressing the root causes of violence; contributing to developing the capacity of African civil society; working towards a society that is humane, free of violence and respectful of rights and dialogue; and campaigning for a world where violence against children anywhere is regarded as violence against children everywhere.

My Wishes and my Pledge for Africa's Children by Dr. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF

Dr. Rima Salah recalled the thousands of girls around the world and on the African continent are facing violence in their communities, schools, and homes, as well as dire poverty, conflict, displacement, and the real threat of HIV and AIDS.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the world's most ratified human rights treaty, reinforced by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). We also have the protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the Cairo Declaration on an Africa Fit for Children, which call for action to end violence against children. We have the tools, but we need to make them matter for girls in Africa.

This year, the Secretary General will release the global study on Violence against Children. This study can make a real difference to the lives of girls by bringing difficult and often hidden issues into the open, and providing concrete recommendations for action to governments, so that they can meet their commitments to children.

We must each commit ourselves to creating a protective environment for children. Laws must be passed to criminalise the sexual exploitation and abuse of girls, and these laws must be enforced, so that perpetrators are punished and victims protected. Collectively, we must advocate for an end to harmful traditional practices and corporal punishment of children. We have to put girls at the centre of all our policies and programmes.

It is important to recognise the links between gender inequality and gender-based violence. Promoting women's social, economic and political rights is not only important for women, but also important for children. The empowerment of women and girls in Africa is not just good for girls or for Africa, but good for the world.

Children's Report: A report from the pre-conference consultation, Violence against Children, May 9-10, 2006

Forty four children¹ from Somalia, the Sudan, Senegal, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia and their interpreters convened at the Addis Ababa Hilton in a regional conference organised by Save the Children Sweden for two days (May 9-10). They discussed various issues on violence against children including its causes and forms as well as solutions.

Children's Report: We are girls and boys from Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda who participated in the children's consultation, *Violence against Children*, held on May 9 and 10, 2006. We discussed many forms of violence, mainly physical, psychological and sexual. The forms of violence which are most common in our countries are corporal and other forms of humiliating punishment, sexual abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), bullying, etc.

Some of the causes of these forms of violence are:

- harmful traditional attitudes, in particular against girls;
- lack of awareness on the affect of violence on children;

¹ The children were all aged under 18 years old.

- ignorance of people about child rights;
- lack of good governance;
- lack of child participation;
- irresponsibility of adults;
- gender discrimination;
- overall violence in society, including war and conflict.

Based on the CRC and ACRWC, we propose the following:

1. Governments should adopt and implement laws against all forms of violence (including corporal and other forms of humiliating punishment, child sexual abuse, FGM, etc);
2. Governments should create awareness raising programmes on violence against children;
3. Governments and other agencies should encourage children to participate in all activities fighting violence and discrimination;
4. Governments and other agencies should create awareness of the population on the consequences of violence by using child friendly tools (for example in the media) to reach children and adults;
5. Governments and other agencies should enable children to have access to information about international and regional mechanisms, such as CRC and ACRWC.

Our peers, parents, governments, the international community and the African Union: we call on all of you to help us children to achieve our rights, including protection from all forms of violence.

Special Guest Speaker: Mme. Chantal Compaoré, First Lady of Burkina Faso

Mme. Compaoré expressed pleasure about being back in Addis Ababa, a symbol of African freedom and dignity, and the seat of great international organisations.

Women and especially girls are victims of violence around the world. Africa is experiencing the dramatic consequences of this violence, aggravated by armed conflict, socio-political crises, poverty and the survival of harmful practices. The problem of violence against girls is so complex that only engagement based on personal conviction stands a chance of eradicating it.

Three critical actions are required. Firstly, to create a united front against all forms of violence committed against children. Secondly, to reinforce legislation and policies directed at promoting and protecting the rights of children. Finally, to insist on the ratification and implementation of the CRC and the ACRWC.

On a personal level, Mme Compaoré pledged to continue supporting the Inter-African Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices, the organisation of African First Ladies and the Suka Foundation.

Credit is due to the ACPF for organising this conference, and to all NGOs working for the benefit of African children. The Day of the African Child is an opportunity for African countries to advance the rights of the child and to ensure their well-being. It is imperative that we form a chain of solidarity and synergise our actions, regionally and internationally. Policy-makers are urged to release sufficient resources for activities promoting the well-being of children.

Opening Address: H.E. President Girma Wolde Giorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

H.E. Girma Wolde Giorgis welcomed all and especially the children, ‘the flowers of today and the fruits of tomorrow’. He indicated that we owe it to them and to ourselves that they be given the respect and care they deserve, and that they be put first in all our private considerations and in the public domain.

The meeting programme shows an extraordinary cast of exceptionally distinguished world authorities on human and children's rights, which makes this conference quite unique.

In Africa, there are many cultural practices that are particularly harmful to girls. Both in the past and at present, girls are exposed to socially accepted forms of violence. As long as women have no power to influence their lives, men will continue to subjugate them to violence. We need to do something about this. This conference should deliberate on the socio-economic root causes that underpin the problem of violence in our societies, so we can come up with medium to long term approaches to deal with this pernicious problem.

In the meantime, we have the moral imperative to address the conditions of those who need immediate help and assistance. Battered women and children cannot wait; they need to be rescued, assisted and cared for on a priority basis. Therefore, the conference will also need to discuss the lessons we have learned about providing immediate social, legal and rehabilitative measures.

All those who are engaged in helping the victims of violence deserve thanks – not just from me, or from the government – but from us all. It is up to everyone in this room to stop all forms of violence against children. With this resolution, the President declared the conference officially open.

Keynote Address: H.E. President Joaquim Chissano, former Head of State of Mozambique; Chairperson of the Africa Forum for African Former Heads of State

H.E. Joaquim Chissano called violence against girls a despicable and abominable act that unfortunately remains widespread in Africa.

Violence against girls is multiple faced. Women and girls are the main victims of domestic violence. They are targets of domestic and international trafficking, recruitment as child soldiers, sexual abuse, and numerous forms of other abuses. We conveniently seem to find reasons for not taking decisive action about the chain of ancient customary and cultural practices and taboos. We need to break this silence, tacit denial and neglect.

Much has been done already; in terms of developing relevant instruments such as the 1989 CRC and 1990 ACRWC. The latter provides an African perspective on how best to pursue efforts aimed at ensuring the welfare and protection of the rights of the African child. The wide ratification of these two extremely important legal instruments bears testimony to the leadership and foresight by African leaders, demonstrating their commitment to the protection of the rights of all children, in particular girls. It was also through this kind of leadership that the UN adopted the Millennium Development Goals in the year 2000. They constitute a new global deal for development with a clear set of goals, in which child rights issues feature prominently.

Realising these rights has become a matter of priority for African countries. However, despite all these efforts, violence against children, especially girls, persists in Africa and has reached an alarming scale. Legislation is indeed necessary, but not sufficient in combating child abuse. We all know that effective enforcement of legislation remains very low in Africa. Most African countries do not have the requisite capacity to implement all the objectives of the law. This is why some violators continue to defy existing laws and exploit loopholes in the legal systems to continue to inflict untold violence on children.

At the national political level, we must strike the right balance between enforcement and prevention, and between punishment and persuasion. At the same time, we need to do all we can to strengthen enforcement. This means that governments should not only enforce laws, but also ensure that ordinary people know what those laws mean, why they were enacted and for what purpose they exist.

Through public awareness raising campaigns, we need to establish a culture of debate in our people. We need to encourage a free and open discussion of issues, including the danger of damaging children, the

future of our continent, through perpetrating violence.

As guardians of our tradition and cultural heritage, we must not be afraid of questioning prevailing traditions or taboos if they serve to justify humiliation or violence inflicted on another human being. Keeping tradition and cultural heritage rich and vibrant means adjusting it to the current dynamic of the world, and discarding what has ceased to be useful or relevant. A child should have a unique and privileged position in African society. The full and harmonious development of our children should be the responsibility of all Africans, no matter what their personal position.

SESSION I: VIOLENCE, WOMEN AND GIRLS - THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

Chair

Prof. Jaap Doek, Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and Member of the International Board of Trustees of The African Child Policy Forum

Violence against Women: The International Dimension

Dr. Yakin Erturk, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women

Dealing with Violence: Lessons from International Experience

Ms. Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda, Regional Programme Director for East and Horn of Africa. UNIFEM

Moving on from Violent Punishment of Children

Mr. Peter Newell, Coordinator of the Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment of Children

Violence against Women: The International Dimension by Dr. Yakin Erturk, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women

Dr. Yakin Erturk pointed out that violence against girls in Africa is part of a universal problem transcending cultural, class and geographic boundaries. Historically, unequal power relationships are rooted in a patriarchal legacy premised on a hierarchical structure of male control over children and women, which is maintained through the use or threat of violence. Non-discrimination on the basis of sex is one of the fundamental principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but its implications for women only became apparent through the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

International declarations have provided the legal tools to hold governments accountable for violence committed against women by state actors. The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women extends this responsibility to acts committed by non-state actors in either the private or public sphere. A life free of violence is now recognised as an entitlement of women and girls. Ensuring this is a State obligation.

However, cultural relativism still serves as a major justification for violence against women and girls. The growth of fundamentalist movements around the world as well as conservative political trends pose serious barriers to implementing international human rights standards.

International law is still essentially bounded by sovereign state boundaries, but new, non-state actors are emerging whose responsibilities vis-à-vis human rights standards have not been subject to sufficient scrutiny. The failure to develop effective solutions to the increase in the trafficking of women and girls for the purposes of labour and sexual exploitation is a case in point.

Progress made so far proves that if we take it upon ourselves, it is possible to resist and react to violence against women and girls, wherever and whenever it occurs.

Dealing with Violence: Lessons from International Experience by Ms. Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda, Regional Programme Director for East and Horn of Africa. UNIFEM

Ms. Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda highlighted the main forms of violence committed against girls and women. She stressed that since this violence is committed at home, in schools and in their communities, and further compounded by poverty and situations of war and conflict, no place is a safe space for women and girls any longer. Places assumed to be safe have become hidden zones of violence.

International responses to these issues of violence have included the setting of normative human rights and legal frameworks and the strengthening of existing legal protection mechanisms. Reconciliation committees in post-conflict situations include elements of gender justice whilst making support services available to survivors of violence. Through research, awareness raising and advocacy, governments and civil society attempt to address the root causes of violence. However, the large body of existing national and international laws and conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which has been ratified by 173 countries, has so far failed to protect women and girls from violence.

We need to practice a zero tolerance policy towards all forms of gender-based violence. Instruments to implement national legislation and policies need to be adequately resourced, and more attention is required to promote prevention initiatives.

We should also recognise that women's and girls' ability to address violence against them is directly related to their social and economic empowerment. We therefore need to support community-based prevention and protection mechanisms that include women and girls as active participants. Above all, we need to bring all perpetrators of violence against girls and women to justice, thus protecting the survivors of violence from further abuse.

Moving on from Violent Punishment of Children by Mr. Peter Newell, Coordinator of the Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment of Children

Mr. Peter Newell argued that violent punishment scars the childhood of the majority of the world's children. There is a global assumption that adults can hit and humiliate children with impunity. Fewer than 20 countries have completely prohibited all corporal punishment, with about 10 more committed to do so.

We need to recognise that we will not make significant progress in challenging the worst forms of violence against children if we continue to endorse routine, daily, casual violence at home, in schools and in childcare institutions. The UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children needs to end adult hypocrisy and double standards that have defended humiliation and violence against children for so long. It is encouraging that all nine of the Regional Consultations held for this study advocated for the prohibition of corporal punishment.

From the perspective of international human rights law, corporal punishment is illegal, and clear and explicit law reform is required to send a clear message to society. Changing the law is not in itself expensive, and linking law reform to comprehensive awareness raising does not have to be expensive either.

Corporal punishment has a legal status in every African state. We are not asking favours of governments; we are insisting that they take their human rights obligations seriously. The all-Africa report, *Ending Legalised Violence against Children*, that was launched at this conference details these obligations and includes messages from many African opinion leaders, including religious leaders. This is important, because they challenge the idea that religious texts justify violence against children.

No more adult excuses. Why should children wait?

The plenary discussion began with a question about the proposed 16 Days of Activism against Violence to be held from the November 16 (The World Day of Prevention of Child Abuse) and the December 10 (Human Rights Day), which also encompasses World AIDS Day on the December 1. Participants were encouraged to take forward issues raised at the conference during the 16 Days, but also not to save their activism until the end of the year!

The impact of HIV and AIDS on orphaned or vulnerable African children was considered in light of standards of care for children who have no option but to live in institutions. The CRC does contain provisions for minimum childcare standards, and a recent report of a UN Taskforce on the Girl Child affected by HIV and AIDS in southern Africa contained substantive recommendations on addressing the issue of standards. Displaced and fractured families are also especially vulnerable to violence. Protection and prevention work must be undertaken simultaneously.

Participants talked about the need to set up mechanisms to implement international conventions, so that policies reach down to grassroots level. Even where countries have signed optional protocols, they can be negligent: CEDAW and CRC are among the most ratified but least implemented conventions. We need to prioritise children's rights at domestic and international levels through integrating violence against children into national planning processes, such as Poverty Reduction Strategies, to increase resources and accountability. Civil society and pan-African courts could also be ways of holding governments accountable for violations of children's rights. The African Union's investigation into sexual misconduct in Darfur was used as an example of useful experience in engaging with gender-based violence that should be disseminated and taken forward.

SESSION II: VIOLENCE, WOMEN AND GIRLS - THE AFRICAN DIMENSION

Chair

Adv. Bience Gawanas, Commissioner for Social Affairs, African Union, and Member of the International Board of Trustees of the African Child Policy Forum

Violence against Girls in Africa: An overview

Mr. David Mugawe, Conference Director, The African Child Policy Forum

Violence against Girls: Experience and Protection in West Africa

Mr. Guy Massart, West Africa Regional Research and Evaluation Advisor, Plan International

Sexual Violence against Girls, HIV and AIDS

Ms. Konjit Kifetew, Project Officer UNAIDS Ethiopia

Violence against Children at Work

Mr. Yaw Ofosu, Senior Child Labour Specialist, International Labour Organization

Violence against Girls in Crisis and Conflict Situations

Ms. Florence Tercier Holst-Roness, Advisor in Women and War, International Committee of the Red Cross

Violence against Girls in Schools

Ms. Maryce Ramsey, Director, Safe Schools Programme

Violence against Girls in Africa: An overview by Mr. David Mugawe, Conference Director, The African Child Policy Forum

Mr. David Mugawe argued that if we are to tackle violence against children, we must understand what we mean by violence and where and why it happens. Violence is generally considered as a violation of the rights to life, security, dignity, and physical and psychological well-being. Violence carried out against women and girls is essentially control and coercion directed specifically against a woman because of her gender.

Girls in Africa are particularly vulnerable to various forms of violence – both because of their gender and because of socio-economic and cultural conditions. But it would be a mistake to assume that girls face abuse only in such exceptional circumstances, i.e., in crisis and conflict. With girls violence does not end when a ceasefire is declared or a peace deal signed, as girls continue to face the stigma surrounding sexual exploitation, whereas former boy combatants are usually accepted by the community. Violence is widespread in schools, in homes and in the communities of African girls.

Mr. Mugawe gave the following examples:

- South African health officials say adolescent girls are twice as likely to contract HIV as boys.
- In an ACPF survey in Ethiopia one quarter of rape cases were perpetrated by a male relative. Unfortunately, many rapes go unreported to authorities – in South Africa, for example, less than three per cent of rape cases are reported.
- In some regions of Nigeria, girls marry on average just after their 11th birthday.
- Prevailing poverty leaves girls with little choice but to join the workforce, often under exploitative and sometimes violent conditions. A desire to escape poverty and access wider opportunities leaves girls vulnerable to traffickers: around the world two million girls between the ages of five and fifteen are introduced into the commercial sex market each year.
- Around 130 million women and girls have undergone female genital cutting, most of whom live in Africa. Another two million are at risk of this degrading and dangerous practice every year. Although the practice is not unique to the continent, 28 of the countries where girls undergo FGC are African.
- In schools girls face violence in their classrooms and on their way to school; according to The African Child Policy Forum's retrospective survey, female teachers (16 per cent) were the main perpetrators of physical maltreatment on girls in Kenya. A national survey in South Africa found that 32 per cent of reported child rapes were carried out by teachers.
- A survey in Ethiopia by The African Child Policy Forum found that 72 per cent of children had been slapped when at school.
- In Botswana 67 per cent of schoolgirls surveyed had been sexually harassed by their teachers.
- A 2005 survey in Cameroon found that 16 per cent of secondary students had been sexually abused.

Although the impact of this violence against girls varies according to the type of violence and the context in which it is carried out, it has a number of overarching consequences. First and foremost violence against girls is a denial of their fundamental human rights as adopted in many international laws and conventions. Secondly, there is growing recognition that a country will not reach its full potential as long as women and girls are denied the opportunity to participate fully in society. Thirdly, violence has far-reaching physical and psychological consequences, and can result in internalising violence as a form of conflict resolution. Fourthly, there are also costs of violence that go beyond the individual. These are referred to as socio-economic costs, and can be put into four categories:

- **Direct costs:** expenses incurred in treating, addressing and preventing violence: institutions such as the police, judiciary, medical or social services.
- **Non-monetary costs:** the pain and suffering of people who experience or witness violence, in some cases leading to depressive disorders, alcohol or drug abuse, or even death.
- **Economic multiplier effects:** reduced productivity, absenteeism, decreased labour market

participation, lower earnings and decreased investment, with a negative impact on the economy.

- **Social-multiplier effects:** the impact on interpersonal relationships and quality of life; inter-generational transmission of violence and the erosion of social capital.

The African Child Policy Forum believes that ending violence against girls in Africa is one of the most pressing challenges facing Africa today and can no longer remain hidden. The ACPF calls upon governments and civil society to act decisively and promptly in implementing the legal instruments in place to protect children from violence. Every one of us must also commit time and resources to ending the gross injustices that will continue to take place in every country across Africa until we raise our voices to end them. Lessons must be drawn from the successes of practical programmes that provide assistance to girls who have experienced violence. These can provide valuable insights for implementing similar support mechanisms across Africa.

Violence against Girls: Experience and Protection in West Africa by Mr. Guy Massart, West Africa Regional Research and Evaluation Advisor, Plan International

Mr. Guy Massart discussed the transition from traditional and cohesive egalitarian societies to modern societies fostering individual rights. A study conducted in rural Benin, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Niger and Senegal confirmed that the weakest social groups suffer the most in (temporarily) dysfunctional societies. In male-dominated societies, girls lack social capital as they are considered crucial for the reproduction of society, and their bodies are considered as prizes to be won by men. These attitudes expose them disproportionately to beatings, food deprivation, threats of witchcraft and sexually-oriented aggression.

Although local norms unanimously condemn these practices, communities often feel that the movement of girls needs to be physically constrained to specific spaces under adult control in order to maintain social order. The use of violence is considered a legitimate way to obtain obedience and conformity to social norms.

Although it may be the girl herself who decides to use her body, which often is her only resource, to escape marriage to an older man, or as a means of gaining some economic independence, it is not uncommon for families to encourage girls to engage in occasional transactional sex to supplement the family income. Whilst teenage pregnancies and abortions are common, girls are still stigmatised as promiscuous.

Without addressing power relations in rural communities, it is unlikely that girls will ever be able to acquire enough social capital to escape violence. Therefore, any effort to support girls in their efforts to become more independent should originate from existing norms and survival strategies.

Sexual Violence against Girls, HIV and AIDS by Ms. Konjit Kifetew, Project Officer UNAIDS Ethiopia

Ms. Konjit Kifetew discussed the contribution of gender-based violence to the continued spread of HIV, which has already claimed more than 20 million lives in Africa. The absence of specific instruments to protect girls from sexual abuse and coercion in national AIDS programmes perpetuates a situation in which millions of women continue to experience horrifying situations of sexual violence, and is partly to blame for gender-based violence remaining an important factor in Africa's HIV and AIDS pandemic.

In Africa, 58 per cent of those infected with HIV are women, with infection rates among girls in sub-Saharan Africa four to seven times higher than among boys. A study in Rwanda showed that the incidence of HIV amongst female rape victims was more than 50% higher than for women who had not been raped.

Violence against girls is an under-reported crime for complex social and cultural reasons. Women often lack the negotiating power to refuse sex. The shame and stigma associated with rape, and the real and perceived difficulties in the reporting system and within the judicial processes lead many girls and young women to decide against reporting crimes of sexual violence.

There is a wide range of international human rights laws and conventions that have the potential to provide women and girls in Africa with better protection if they are incorporated into national law. By failing to enact and enforce laws, African governments fail to take responsibility for protecting girls and women from sexual violence and the attendant increased risk of HIV.

UNAIDS recommends that governments embark on legislative and programmatic reform, promote public education and enhance family contributions to address the spread of HIV and AIDS through gender-based violence.

Violence against Children at Work by Mr. Yaw Ofori, Senior Child Labour Specialist, International Labour Organization

Mr. Yaw Ofori drew the participants' attention to the violence committed against children in the workplace. Africa has over 50 million child workers and is the only continent where the number of child workers is actually growing. Many of these children are involved in what the international community labels the 'worst forms of child labour', with over 50,000 children in prostitution and pornography, 120,000 actively involved in war, and many more abducted and trafficked for bonded labour.

Although globally more boys than girls are involved in child labour and hazardous work, girls are more often exposed to serious violence. Data is limited and difficult to collect, but it is known that girls face verbal abuse, emotional torture, denial of food and water, forced overwork, physical aggression, kidnapping, sexual violations and even murder.

Girls in domestic labour are especially at risk. Most of these girls are from extremely poor backgrounds and are hidden away, so they lack negotiating power to confront their employers about being confined to the home, working extremely long hours, facing physical, psychological and sexual abuse. These girls are at increased risk of exposure to HIV, and many suffer from psychological disorders due to their confinement in prison-like conditions. Extreme forms of violence occur when children are trafficked, with girls bearing the brunt of threatened or actual verbal, physical or sexual violence to force submission.

The most obvious solution to ending violence against children in the workplace is to end child labour altogether. As this objective is very far from realised, we need to mobilise society to establish codes of conduct, information and monitoring systems, and improve access to education for all working children.

Violence against Girls in Crisis and Conflict Situations by Ms. Florence Tercier Holst-Roness, Advisor in Women and War, International Committee of the Red Cross

Ms. Florence Tercier Holst-Roness discussed violence against girls in Africa resulting from armed conflicts and from being separated from caregivers due to being displaced. Obvious threats result from acts of war, with many children dying or becoming physically injured through direct fighting or because of landmines. However, under such conditions, girls are at increased risk of sexual violence and thus of contracting HIV and becoming pregnant, sometimes at a very early age. Early pregnancies can lead to many well-documented health-related problems such as fistula. Further, it is important not to lose sight of the emotional damage resulting from trauma and stigmatisation.

Girls associated with fighting forces are almost without exception sexually abused, and often have actively participated in violent acts themselves. Girls suffering from emotional trauma after such horrendous experiences often have to deal with the double stigma of being a former child soldier and feeling morally defiled when they attempt to reintegrate into society. Psychological support is necessary if these girls are ever to return to a normal life.

There is a strong need for a gendered approach in programmes dealing with the reintegration of children who have been associated with fighting forces and children who have been separated from their families

in times of conflict and displacement. International agencies dealing with reintegration need to assimilate their activities and produce gender- and age-disaggregated data in order to address the specific issues girls are confronted with.

Violence against Girls in Schools by Ms. Maryce Ramsey, Director, Safe Schools Programme

Ms. Maryce Ramsey presented The Safe Schools Programme, which addresses school-related gender-based violence in Malawi and Ghana to create safe environments for all girls and boys, resulting in improved educational outcomes and reduced negative health outcomes. Safe Schools aims to identify the most effective interventions in reducing gender-based violence in schools over a five-year pilot.

Physical, sexual, or psychological gender-based violence can take place in the school, on the school grounds, going to and from school, or in school dormitories. It is based on gendered norms for roles and relationships and is perpetrated by teachers, pupils, or community members, with girls and boys being victims as well as perpetrators. Violence negatively affects educational and reproductive health outcomes, but is also a human rights issue. Change is required at individual, community, institutional and national levels.

The programme takes a social mobilisation approach, involving planned actions and processes to reach, influence and involve all segments of society in order to effect behavioural change. Safe Schools works with ministries to ensure children's rights are institutionalised and protected, and strengthens their ability to implement effective teacher codes of conduct. It works with schools to train them on appropriate classroom management and preventing gender-based violence. It emphasises the role teachers can play as child protectors. With parents and community leaders, Safe Schools works to recognise and uphold children's rights and develop Community Action Plans to stop gender-based violence. Through trained and trusted counsellors, Safe Schools works with children themselves to empower them to know and claim their rights.

The programme helps develop life skills to prevent gender-based violence and engage in healthy relationships based on rights, respect and responsibility.

The plenary discussion posed a number of questions to the panel, including the issue of why people focus on violence suffered by girls, when boys are also subjected to violence, including sexual violence. It is our duty to protect all children, regardless of gender, although girls are generally more vulnerable to the worst forms of violence.

Participants enquired whether the Safe Schools Programme followed up allegations of rape that came out during their study. Maryce Ramsey responded that the survey found out whether children had reported any violence they had experienced and what happened in consequence. In some cases, referrals were made; for example, in Ghana, the Ministry of Education followed up an allegation of rape that was made against a teacher.

Preceding the need to mobilise resources, African governments and communities were implored to decide the actions and strategies with which they are going to address violence and the required resources can be identified following this plan of action.

It was observed that parents are themselves victims of social norms and are often ridiculed for trying to raise children in a non-violent way. We should support parents and other caregivers who do implement good practice in raising children and begin to question socially accepted practices such as bride prices. We also need to listen to children and ensure that they have a voice, by helping children to develop in a way that enables them to advocate on their own behalf. The private sector is another potential partner in the fight to counter violence against children, as one option in providing better access to services that can help children protect themselves.

SESSION III: VIOLENCE BY CHILDREN AGAINST CHILDREN: CHILDREN AS PART OF THE SOLUTION

Chair

Ms. Lena Karlsson, Global Advisor, Save the Children Sweden

Violence by Children against Children: A Growing Concern

Ms. Carol Bower, Executive Director, Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RAPCAN)

The Southern Africa Experience

Dr. Anthony Simpson, Social Anthropology Department, Manchester University, UK

The Asian Experience

Ms. Lena Karlsson, Global Advisor, Save the Children Sweden

Comments by Children

Mr. Mohammed Seyid (Kenya) & **Mr. Basim Elias** (Sudan)

Violence by Children against Children: A Growing Concern by Ms. Carol Bower, Executive Director, Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RAPCAN)

Ms. Carol Bower shed some light on the occurrence and impact of violence by children against children. This phenomenon is not new, but there are signs that it is increasing. It has been recognised only recently that child-on-child violence is not an innocent aspect of childhood and that adult violence has its roots in childhood.

Peer-on-peer violence includes almost all the same forms of violence as those committed by adults on children. Children have been found to inflict emotional, physical and sexual abuse on other children. The statistics are shocking: around 38 per cent of children interviewed in South Africa reported some form of child-inflicted violence in the previous seven weeks, and 40 per cent of all reported rapes in South Africa involve an under-18 year old perpetrator. Some sex-offenders are as young as seven years old.

The roots of this child-on-child violence are complex, but in essence can be traced back to children witnessing adults hurting each other and children. Many African cultures place a high value on dominance and power. Children who perpetrate violence are likely to become violent adults, whilst child victims can develop physical and psychological problems as adults.

We need to listen to victimised children to help them deal with their experiences. Children require greater supervision to prevent further violence. Violence needs to be reported to show that there are consequences following violent behaviour.

The victimising child needs to be made aware that violence will not be tolerated and to accept the negative consequences of their behaviour. They need to be taught appropriate conflict resolution skills and empathy for their victims.

The Southern Africa Experience by Dr. Anthony Simpson, Social Anthropology Department, Manchester University, UK

Dr. Anthony Simpson recalled his studies in Zambia on constructions of masculinity and their impact on gender-based violence. In order to confront violence against girls, we must recognise the violence committed against boys in the lessons they are given about how to be 'real' men. Young men often described their fathers as silent and emotionally distant figures, or as violent, brutal, rough, harsh and fierce. An absence of emotional warmth and physical affection between first sons and their fathers is considered normal in African families.

A significant method of a father's discipline was physical punishment and the almost constant threat of it. Many boys recall witnessing their fathers beating their mothers, and being unable to intervene. A man's actions towards his wife and children express his power and ownership over them, and boys learn that 'real' men claim superiority over women. This claim is often sustained with reference to men's greater physical strength, African tradition and Christianity.

Boys also have to struggle among peers to achieve manhood. Older boys often force their juniors to fight age-mates, and multiple-partner sexual intercourse is made into an important measure of manliness. Demonstrations of sexual potency need to involve penetrative vaginal intercourse - the only activity judged to be proper sex. Although girls' sexual desire needs to be recognised so they are not always cast as victims, the violent conquest of women is a central element in male competition.

Process drama is a very useful tool to facilitate the interrogation of stereotypical constructions of masculinity and femininity leading to gender-based violence. The experience outlined here from Zambia shows the willingness of youth to find solutions for these problems. They must not be denied this opportunity.

The Asian Experience by Ms. Lena Karlsson, Global Advisor, Save the Children Sweden

Ms. Lena Karlsson informed the meeting about the experience of child participation in efforts to end violence against children in South Asia. Children, especially boys, in South Asia learn that conflicts are resolved through violence (bullying, sexual abuse, etc.), but when asked indicate they would much prefer non-hegemonic forms of masculinity that promote tolerance, non-violence, respect and gender equality.

Most programmes and initiatives to end violence are designed by adults and ignore the active participation of children. However, children want to be part of the solution and ask adults to encourage children's involvement, share information, model participatory behaviour and help them to develop the skills needed to play their part, whilst creating a safe environment for participation. Child participation is not only important because it is a right, but also because it increases the effectiveness of interventions and empowers children as current members of civil society. Meaningful participation is characterised by an ethical, safe, non-discriminatory and child-friendly approach.

Examples from Bangladesh, Nepal and India show that children are able to bring the degree of violence in their communities to the surface using street theatre, discussion groups and children's clubs, and can even contribute to mobilising state legislative powers to incorporate legal instruments banning the use of violence against children. Twenty-five South Asian children participated in the Regional Consultation for the UN Study on Violence against Children in Pakistan, and a delegation of children is part of the South Asia Forum on Violence against Children.

Comments by Children

Mr. Mohamed Seyid from Kenya and **Mr. Basim Elias**, assisted by **Ms. Aliya Musa**, from Sudan brought a youth perspective to the issue of violence against children, following the Children's Consultation preceding the conference.

Mohamed Seyid talked about his experiences of child-to-child violence. He explained that bullying at school can take the form of name calling or beating, and is often based on ethnic or religious divisions. Many children experience violence at home from siblings; in particular, sisters are abused by their brothers if they refuse to do housework. Street children - especially recent arrivals to the street - are vulnerable to attack or robbery by other street children. Children with rich or influential parents can sometimes take advantage of their position to attack less well off children.

Recommendations arising from the Children's Consultation focus on the need for teachers, parents and

other adults not only to listen to children but to take action. Children and adults should learn about the CRC and gender discrimination through awareness raising activities in public spaces, universities and other places. Adults need to stop using violence against children or violent behaviour will continue in the next generation. One of the reasons for violence against children was identified as stress about money, so the government needs to create more employment opportunities. Rehabilitation is a more effective strategy for violent children than prison, and children should never be imprisoned alongside adult criminals. Finally, both girls and boys should respect each other, and carry out their responsibilities as well as asking for their rights.

Basim Elias described some of the actions taken to combat violence against children by a network of child rights organisations in Sudan. Members of the network have visited marginalised communities, such as orphanages and camps for displaced people, to conduct orientation sessions, peer-to-peer training and training for trainers on violence against children, communication skills, FGM, HIV and AIDS, and the CRC. Another strategy is awareness raising in public places, schools and universities. Children and youth have participated in discussions with the government and local NGOs to try and address the gaps between CRC obligations and current laws. In 2005, a two-day workshop for 20 youth NGOs was held to inform them about harmonisation of the CRC, and 50 children from different Arab countries were trained on children's rights.

We encourage children to take matters forward and act on the recommendations to stop violence against children.

The plenary discussion began with a comment about the recommendations calling for the passing of new laws. To put in place effective laws that will have an impact, strong social consensus about the legislation is needed. Listening to and involving children is an important way of making sure that laws are backed up by commitment within Africa.

Participants considered the impact of violence in the media on our children. It was agreed that this is a complicated issue and that it is not possible to determine the impact of the media without considering the larger context, but that the media could be a positive force for change. One of the youth participants felt that violent television and films did affect children, who sometimes want to re-enact what they have seen, but added, "our fathers are the ones who buy the televisions."

Another young participant stressed the importance of rehabilitation for children convicted of crimes, especially when minor, rather than putting children in prison with adults. Children and adults need to work together to examine the factors in society that create violent behaviour. Unlike in the past, children absolutely have to be part of the solution.

SESSION IV: TOWARDS A COMMON POSITION

DAY 2

Chair

Ms. Christine Cornwell, Member of the International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

The UN Report on Violence against Children

Prof. Paulo S. Pinheiro, Independent Expert for the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children

*What does it mean for Africa?***Discussants:**

Hon. Sofia Simba, Minister for Community Development, Gender and Children, United Republic of Tanzania

Ambassador Moushira Khattab, Secretary General, National Council for Childhood & Motherhood, Egypt, and Vice Chair of UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Prof. Jaap Doek, Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and Member of the International Board of Trustees of the African Child Policy Forum

Mr. Don McPhee, Regional Programme Support Manager, West Africa Regional Office, Plan International

The UN Report on Violence against Children by Prof. Paulo S. Pinheiro, Independent Expert for the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children

Prof. Paulo Pinheiro highlighted the main recommendations of his report on Violence against Children, which he will present to the UN General Assembly in October this year, together with a more substantial book. The central message of the Study will be that no violence against children is justifiable, and arguments about tradition, excuses of necessity or disguise as discipline will not be tolerated. Children are vulnerable and that should be an unassailable case for more – not less – protection from violence. A world that allows violence against children has no hope of combating violence in the adult world.

The report will not propose new international instruments, but instead will argue for effective action based on current state obligations. All sectors in society share responsibility for condemning, preventing and responding to violence against children. The report suggests that a high-profile and influential international mechanism is required to ensure coordinated follow-up action and monitoring of progress. In order to ensure that the issues raised by the report remain high on the agenda, a Special Representative to the UN Secretary General should be appointed. This person should ensure the continued participation of children and young people in the process, bringing them to the heart of the UN.

Prof. Pinheiro expressed his hope that the African Union will consider how best to work globally and link to the Special Representative, thus ensuring that the report becomes a living instrument; a catalyst for real and lasting change in the lives of African children and a decisive turning point towards the elimination of violence against children.

Hon. Sofia Simba, Minister for Community Development, Gender and Children, United Republic of Tanzania

Hon. Sofia Simba said that the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children covers all the salient features of violence against girls. However, its success remains dependent on effective implementation.

African societies consider children as a gift and as a means to secure their future, but continue to inflict violence against them. This violence is preventable and the family is in a unique and important position to change the current situation. Questions need to be asked about what has happened to the traditional African family system, and whether modern lifestyles are causing family systems to disintegrate.

African countries have formulated laws and conventions, but they are not enough. Many cases go unreported, as they are not regarded as violence. Violence against girls is entrenched in many people's mindsets, so laws must be complemented by creating awareness, campaigning and advocacy to ensure proper child care.

The recommendations of the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children must take into account the paucity of resources in Africa. It should also emphasise the fundamental causes of violence against children in Africa.

Ambassador Moushira Khattab, Secretary General, National Council for Childhood & Motherhood, Egypt, and Vice Chair of UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Ambassador Moushira Khattab began by noting that the Regional Consultations are a major departure from similar studies carried out before. The process has been as important as the study itself.

Africa is aware of the problem of violence against children and is taking some positive steps; for example, Egypt's First Lady is taking steps to address trafficking and child exploitation. Particular attention must be paid to the needs of vulnerable children. All children must enjoy human rights on an equal footing. No religion in the world encourages or sanctions violence, but negative traditions and customs continue to permit violence to continue.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by almost every country, but implementation is lacking. The report must lead to strategies and steps to be taken at national and international levels to provide protection, interventions and rehabilitation. Nothing within the study is surprising, and it does not draw new conclusions. If we listen to the study's recommendations and implement them we will end violence against children. A steering committee should monitor the implementation of the report's recommendations and data collection should be disaggregated by country, with coordinating bodies at national level.

Accountability and good governance within the family, schools and institutions will help ensure a commitment to ensuring human rights for children.

Prof. Jaap Doek, Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and Member of the International Board of Trustees of the African Child Policy Forum

Prof. Jaap Doek began by outlining what the study means to children. He felt that it should be regarded as an adult promise to stop violence against children as well as a tool that children can use to initiate action wherever they are.

It is also an instrument for governments, providing recommendations for eliminating violence against children. Governments should produce National Plans of Action within six months (before July 1, 2007) of the report being submitted to the General Assembly. Governments must ensure that they budget for these recommendations and include children's participation in strategies to eliminate violence against children. The report will assist NGOs by strengthening their efforts and rationalising their work as partners with governments.

African Union member states are urged to report on their progress towards implementing the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child before 2009 to the African Committee of Experts on the

Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Mr. Don McPhee, Regional Programme Support Manager, West Africa Regional Office, Plan International

Mr. Don McPhee identified children's participation as central to the implementation of the report. Therefore resources must be allocated to children and children's organisations for the implementation of the report's recommendations.

He called on the study to focus on the power relationships involved in violence against girls and the need to change perceptions. There is a need for equal partnership between NGOs from the north and south, instead of the paternalistic type of partnership that currently exists, as well as integration and coordinated action between the African Union, the UN system and civil society organisations. Civil society organisations must be supported and their capacity built to assist their efforts to eliminate violence against girls. This must be a feature of the report and the action plans, as well as the implementation process. Overall, the report needs to emphasise partnership, and changes in perceptions and attitudes.

In the plenary discussion, the point was made that we need to look at the alternatives to corporal punishment. It was agreed that any form of violence is unacceptable. The youth delegates suggested that establishing counselling and guidance clubs would be a more effective alternative to corporal punishment in schools, and this could be achieved by training peer educators as counsellors.

Another suggestion was that partnership with telecommunications companies could enable telephone help-lines to be set up for children experiencing violence, which would be especially helpful for those in rural areas. Improved communications would generally enable both adults and children to report violence, as long as there is sufficient awareness. Even where there are mechanisms in place, they will not be properly used or operate effectively if people lack awareness of the problem. Many countries do have effective reporting systems and these can be regarded as examples of best practice; for example, in Egypt, where cases of violence can be reported to a separate body rather than the police. The media can also play a role in the way violence is represented and perceived in society.

Girls, especially in the ten to fourteen age group, are often under-served by interventions addressing violence against children, but this issue will be addressed in the report.

The need to prioritise was emphasised in tackling this serious problem. Children cannot wait for poverty to be overcome before their problems are addressed; violence against children needs to be tackled with urgency.

SESSION V: TOWARDS A MOVEMENT TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Chair

Mr. Kailash Satyarthi, Chair, Global March against Child Labour, and Member of the International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

Grassroots Experience in Social Mobilisation: A Report from Ethiopia

Dr. Bogalech Gebre, Executive Director, Kembatta Women's Self Help Centre, Ethiopia

Mobilising Girls against Violence

Ms. Mercy Musomi, National Coordinator, Girl Child Network, Kenya

Mobilising against Harmful Traditional Practices: Lessons from Africa

Ms. Berhane Ras-Work, Executive Director, Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children

Social Mobilisation: Lessons from International Experience

Mr. Sergio Kristensen, Country Representative, Save the Children Denmark

Moving the Cause Forward

Dr. Amaya Gillespie, Director, Secretariat United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children

Chair

Mr. Kailash Satyarthi, Chair, Global March against Child Labour, and Member of the International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

Mr. Kailash Satyarthi began the session by commenting on the magnitude of the problem of violence against children in Africa, its causes and consequences. The session was designed to address the urgent need to find the most effective solutions and to build a mass movement to counter violence against children. Mobilisation and advocacy can make a real difference to the lives of children affected by violence; for example, the worldwide 80,000km march against child labour, championed by Dr. Assefa Bequele of The African Child Policy Forum, resulted in the ratification of a convention against the most exploitative forms of child labour by 148 countries, as well as the organisation and unionisation of many child labourers.

Children do not need to listen to any more words. They need action, as the following session illustrates. This session is about concrete interventions and examples of tackling violence against children. It aims to build a mass movement led by young people themselves.

Grassroots Experience in Social Mobilisation: A Report from Ethiopia by Dr. Bogalech Gebre, Executive Director, Kembatta Women's Self Help Centre, Ethiopia

Dr. Bogalech Gebre shared the experience of the Kembatta Women's Self-Help Centre (KMG) in southern Ethiopia. She explained that every October, girls from that area present themselves as marriageable young women. Traditionally, they have to 'remove the dirt' by having their fingernails pulled out and their genitalia cut. Many girls would nearly bleed to death, but they would still hold their heads high, wear a special hair style and be proud of becoming a woman. In October 2004, for the first time thousands of Ethiopian girls enjoyed that pride without pain, bleeding or death as more than 100,000 people celebrated a dramatic decline in FGM, abduction for marriage, widow inheritances and other harmful traditional practices.

Women are most unsafe in the home. Global studies indicate that domestic violence claims more female lives than AIDS, TB or malaria in the 15 to 44 age group. The home is where sons learn about violence and learn that women are passive resources to be exploited. The home is where girls learn their fate as subjects of male dominance, and are conditioned to be submissive. KMG believes that in order to help women escape violence, they must transform from being passive objects to active citizens. KGM runs a programme called Community Capacity Enhancement. Part of the programme involves community conversation, which is an interactive process of observing, reflecting, questioning and consensus-based decisions for change. The programme builds on the age-old African tradition of communities gathering under the village tree to resolve personal and tribal disputes. Using this approach, for the first time people saw moving pictures of what it really means to be mutilated and to bleed. There were some who fainted during the video.

Change can start with one woman, as a personal, internal revolution of women changing within themselves. However because of women's lack of access to information and knowledge, and because women perceive themselves as objects, change is slow and difficult. Communities have the capacity to change, but this requires time and investment. It took the courage of one girl to change the whole attitude towards abduction in one area. Her abductor was imprisoned, demonstrating the lack of impunity to the

whole community.

Mobilising Girls against Violence by Ms. Mercy Musomi, National Coordinator, Girl Child Network, Kenya

Ms. Mercy Musomi provided the participants with the experience of the Girl Child Network (GCN), an umbrella organisation responsible for the coordination and dissemination of information about the activities of more than 300 associated NGOs working for the rights of girls in Kenya.

Over 90 per cent of the women who seek help from GCN have suffered from various forms of gender-based violence for long periods in their lives, primarily in the privacy of their homes. Although society publicly condemns violence against girls and women, young boys learn from an early age to consider violence as a normal way of life. Girls and women are discouraged from publicly talking about the violence they experience by their friends and relatives.

Most girls and women have no knowledge of their basic rights. Even if they are aware, the social and economic costs of going to court are often beyond the means of these girls, who are usually economically dependent on the very people that commit acts of violence against them. If they do report acts of violence to the chief or village elder, public medical institutions or the police, often they encounter reluctance to take their cases seriously. In extreme cases, these women are further abused by these duty bearers. Half-way houses where women can stay during the trial are almost non-existent. As a result, domestic violence remains largely unreported.

A multi-faceted approach is required to create a culture in which gender-based violence is considered unacceptable, targeting the media, religious institutions and the justice system. It is crucial to inform children at a young age about their rights to prevent existing patterns of violent behaviour becoming part of the culture of the next generation.

The following means have been used to reach children:

- Child rights clubs in over 200 schools
- Video programmes, made collaboratively with children and adults, used to address adults on how to ensure protection of girls
- Child exchange programmes, where children learn by discussing issues with each other. The challenge is ensuring that adults accept their views
- Games for peer education amongst girls and boys.

Mobilising against Harmful Traditional Practices: Lessons from Africa by Ms. Berhane Ras-Work, Executive Director, Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children

Ms. Berhane Ras-Work reminded the participants that many forms of violence against girls in Africa abound within the family. As most of this gender-based violence is part of African culture and tradition, it is not seen negatively, but rather as part of a good upbringing for girls.

For instance, FGM is revered by its practitioners for bringing positive values to the initiated girl. Early marriage boosts the father's ego, as his young daughter is being married as a virgin. Abduction of a young teenager for marriage is not generally seen as wrong and disagreements are often settled amicably between the two families. Other forms of violence against girls in the family include preference for sons over daughters, excessive workload for girls, and discrimination in nutrition and formal education against girls. As well as such culturally condoned forms of violence, many girls are subjected to such perversions as incest, commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Legislation against all forms of violence against girls is desirable but must be accompanied by creating

awareness at community level and training of peer educators for any sustainable change of attitude and behaviour to take place. Governments should take education for girls more seriously, as a way of introducing girls to their rights and increasing their opportunities.

The Inter-African Committee adopts a multi-pronged and holistic approach in its campaigns to end gender-based violence at the national, regional and international levels. This includes raising awareness of different target groups, training trainers, and lobbying governments to develop policies and programmes that address gender issues.

February 6 has been declared the International Day of Zero Tolerance on FGM and other Harmful Traditional Practices, which demonstrates an emerging paradigm shift that we must build on.

Social Mobilisation: Lessons from International Experience by Mr. Sergio Kristensen, Country Representative, Save the Children Denmark

Mr. Sergio Daniel Kristensen started by sharing some children's words and their perceptions of violence, urging that interventions focus on prevention and protection wherever possible.

Save the Children is the world's largest independent movement for children, working in 110 countries worldwide, including on the issue of violence against children. Violence is any aggressive behaviour that is physically, sexually or emotionally abusive. Violence is a global phenomenon, occurring irrespective of material wealth or state ideology, and is often inflicted on children by those who are in charge of their care or education, including in the home, schools, medical and care institutions, in detention, in work places and on the streets.

Save the Children stresses that all violence against children is an abuse of their rights and is never acceptable, and that all children have the right to be protected from violence. The following are key actions in addressing violence against children:

- Inter-agency and international cooperation to ensure long lasting reforms
- The establishment of standards against violence; for example, Save the Children has a Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct for all its staff
- Consistent planning to ensure that all projects include awareness raising, competence building and training
- Prevention and protection should be prioritised wherever possible; identifying new forms of violence and being on special alert in situations of conflict, when violence tends to increase
- Advocacy to guarantee the existence and enforcement of effective legislative protecting children, and to ensure that states explicitly prohibit all kinds of violence against children

Moving the Cause Forward by Dr. Amaya Gillespie, Director, Secretariat United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children

Dr. Amaya Gillespie recalled that the UN Study on Violence against Children is largely the result of concerns over what the system has not delivered, over what communities are suffering and over patterns of unnerving levels of violence against children. She encouraged delegates to remember that the study is a mobilisation effort, not only a piece of research. The hope is that the study will be used as a platform to encourage people already working to combat violence against children to step up their efforts. The UN Secretary General will launch the study internationally for governments, but regional and national launches are very welcome.

There is plenty of research on behaviour change, and the experience of all participants gathered at this conference shows that change is not only possible, but does not have to take a very long time given the right conditions. If we are clear about what it is we want to achieve, and are focused on very specific behaviours, we will be able to provide the right level of knowledge to the right people.

Mobilising people is about changing or influencing attitudes; a quotation from a child sums up the hopes of activists against violence, "It should be modern not to be violent." Being afraid of irritating people should not be an excuse for not making stopping violence against children everyone's business. No one should be a bystander. We need action because good ideas alone are not enough. We should use the platform of the study now, since it is unlikely that the current energy and support around the world can be rallied again anytime soon.

During the plenary discussion, some questions were raised about the way statistics on FGM are collected, due to the sensitivity of the subject. Calls were made to re-examine FGM statistics to avoid underreporting, and to look at non-traditional methods of collecting data as well as mobilising against the practice.

Interest and appreciation of Dr. Bogalech's successful work was expressed by many participants. Disseminating lessons as widely as possible is vital in order to learn lessons on tackling FGM and other forms of violence against children. Dr. Bogalech talked about her experience developing methodologies based on pilot schemes and training local people to work within their own communities and develop consensus among all actors. She added that current legislation against FGM is weak and not a sufficient deterrent.

Some participants felt that the global movement against FGM has made a lot of progress combating ideas about medical or religious obligations. However, it was pointed out that northern countries have made great progress putting in place legislation despite the limited scale of the practice, whereas African governments are lagging behind although FGM affects millions across the continent.

Men can feel like the target of campaigns about violence against women and children, including practices such as FGM, and may go on the offensive. There needs to be investment in reaching men and boys, so that they can become champions of the cause and grow up respecting women from childhood. Information about FGM should be integrated into school curricula; for example, in biology lessons.

Save the Children informed all delegates that their Code of Conduct and other policies can be downloaded from their website (www.savethechildren.org). This can provide a starting point for other organisations and avoid duplication of work.

Governments need to be made more accountable in terms of their work on violence against children, and civil servants need clear guidelines on what to do when faced with cases of violence. Calls were made to make sure those children with disabilities, and orphans and vulnerable children are not excluded from policies and programmes.

SESSION VI: WHAT CAN GOVERNMENTS DO?

Chair

Ms. Etta Tadesse, Country Representative, UNFPA Ethiopia

Holding Governments to Account

Ambassador Moushira Khattab, Secretary General, National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, and Vice Chair of UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Establishing Child Protection Systems

Ms. Margie de Monchy, Child Protection Advisor, UNICEF, Nairobi

Addressing Violence: The South African Experience

Adv. Thoko Majokweni, Director, National Prosecuting Authority of South Africa

Establishing an Effective Legal System to Deal with Violence

Ms. Souad Abdennebi-Abderrahim, Regional Advisor for the Promotion of Women's Human and Legal Rights, UNECA

Holding Governments to Account by Ambassador Moushira Khattab, Secretary General, National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, and Vice Chair of UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Ambassador Moushira Khattab discussed what governments can do to prevent violence against girls. Governments must honour their international commitments and withdraw any reservations they might have about the CRC. Governments must enact laws that protect children and prohibit and criminalise all forms of violence against them, as well as periodically reviewing their legislation to ensure its conformity with international instruments and its continued relevance. Implementing laws requires obligatory reporting of violence, and adequate financial resources allocated to national plans of action to combat violence against children. To make progress, society needs to be aware, civil society strengthened and children actively involved. Particular attention needs to be paid to educating society about the harmful consequences of many traditional practices, reversing the claim of tradition or culture as excuses.

Every child who is a victim of abuse or exploitation is entitled to the most effective form of protection, requiring immediate action as soon as such incidents occur or are suspected. State parties should develop effective systems of reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up, as well as establishing data systems on violence against children.

In three regional consultations in Africa, African governments have been very active in supplying the UN Study on Violence against Children with information about the current state of affairs, a road map towards further improvements and carefully worded constraints and aspirations. We hope that African governments are committed to continue the journey with the same enthusiasm and are confident that their priorities will be reflected in Prof. Pinheiro's recommendations to the UN General Assembly later this year.

Establishing Child Protection Systems by Ms. Margie de Monchy, Child Protection Advisor, UNICEF, Nairobi

Ms. Margie de Monchy argued that an effective child protection system needs to involve a well integrated collaboration among various government sectors and civil society at all levels. It needs to respond to children at risk of abuse with early interventions and provide timely services to all children who are victims of abuse with appropriate health care, legal assistance and support for recovery and reintegration.

Governments must ensure that adequate standards are in place for the care and protection of children, that the roles and responsibilities of the state and civil society are clearly defined, that all parties are accountable, and that funds are available for state services as well as civil society programmes. Specifically, five key components for adequate child protection need to be in place:

- Support community-based monitoring mechanisms to identify children at risk, recognise signs of abuse, respond as appropriate and refer as needed. Families and communities are the first line of defence for children, so creating mechanisms for them to report cases of abuse is vital.
- The second line of defence is the network of basic service providers with whom children come into contact on a regular basis. Therefore, we need to build capacity of teachers, health and social workers to prevent and respond to cases of abuse.
- Strengthen social welfare systems to provide standards of care, monitoring and services. Social workers are essential to the follow-up support needed during the reintegration process.
- Strengthen specialised child protection services in police and justice systems with procedures that are child-sensitive and age-appropriate.
- Ensure legislation and enforcement policies are in line with international standards, with sufficient

resources to ensure implementation.

Addressing Violence: The South African Experience by Adv. Thoko Majokweni, Director, National Prosecuting Authority of South Africa

Adv. Thoko Majokweni informed the audience about the South African approach in dealing with the high incidence of rape in the country. South Africa has declared the prevention of sexual violence against women a priority and in 1999 established the specialised Sexual Offences and Community Affairs Unit. The unit is mandated to assess best practices in reduction, management and victim support mechanisms, with the objective of improving conviction rates, eliminating secondary victimisation by questioning their credibility or condemning them to living with their rapist and ultimately reducing the incidence of sexual offences.

The unit developed a model called Thuthuzela, or Comfort, which is a radical approach to rape care management. It aims to provide women and girls with more humane treatment by reducing secondary victimisation, reducing the time it takes to bring a case to court and improving the conviction rate. Beginning at the police station, rape survivors are removed from the public to a victim-friendly room, while they wait for an ambulance to transport them to the Thuthuzela centre. Doctors, police and other assistants are trained to be sensitive and to explain the procedures to survivors so that they are informed at all times.

A huge success factor of Thuthuzela is that it is driven by passionate, committed individuals who regularly go beyond the call of duty. The streamlining of procedures with the objective of improving conviction rates has helped to significantly increase the number of sexual violence and abuse cases brought to court, and a sharp increase in convictions since 1999. An integrated inter-departmental communication strategy is now trying to raise awareness on the issue and reduce the incidence of sexual assaults in the country.

Establishing an Effective Legal System to Deal with Violence by Ms. Souad Abdennebi-Abderrahim, Regional Advisor for the Promotion of Women's Human and Legal Rights, UNECA

Ms. Souad Abdennebi-Abderrahim stated that women and girls often do not have access to their rights because of discrimination based on gender and the status of children. Many countries have paid particular attention to girls in their national action plans. However, despite awareness of their status, legal protection for women and girls remains weak and inefficient. Lack of knowledge about children's rights further compounds this situation and cases of violence against girls are not followed up because of persistent negative attitudes towards women and girls.

According to Human Rights Watch, many South African schools keep rape claims quiet. Although the government acknowledges that there are problems, there is little - if any - coordination between schools and government departments.

International humanitarian law applies to all human beings and the CRC is binding on all parties. We must now lobby African countries to ratify and implement their obligations. We must also address the challenges to international laws that are apparent at domestic level. The implementation of international law is often hindered by customary law. There is also an issue of the jurisdictional pluralism surrounding violence against girls. Children face additional barriers to seeking legal redress. For example, in Liberia and Cameroon children cannot talk during court proceedings. There are no child-friendly courts in many countries. Judicial staff are predominantly male. Many of the people responsible for responding to cases of violence against girls are not aware of international humanitarian law on human rights.

More effective reporting mechanisms, combined with efficient legal systems with specific provision for children, are needed if we are to address violence against girls.

Plenary Discussion raised the need for governments to be involved in any actions to protect children from violence. Governments also should be obliged to establish a department responsible to act on the CRC to ensure that they do not simply ratify the convention and fail to act on their commitments. A mechanism to capture the voices of civil society organisations also is needed. It was stressed that working with religious and tribal leaders can have a positive impact on ending violence against women and girls.

The problem of collecting evidence in rape cases was also raised. It was pointed out that many witnesses are prevented from coming forward by beliefs and societal conditions. Panellists suggested that the capacity of governments and civil society must be increased to improve this situation. Ms. Margie de Monchy also pointed out that many countries are experimenting with community-based child protection structures that are then taken up at governmental level. She pointed out that Tanzania and South Africa have integrated child protection into their National Plans of Action.

Ambassador Khattab acknowledged the need for strong monitoring systems, but suggested that they should not be regulated by one body and should be multi-disciplinary.

It was agreed that the research reports that were presented at the conference should be made available.

SESSION VII: THE DECLARATION

Chair

Prof. Jaap Doek, Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and Member of the International Board of Trustees of The African Child Policy Forum

Prof. Jaap Doek began by thanking members of the committee for all the hard work involved in drafting the declaration. Two committee members, Misrak Elias and Rose September, expressed their hope that the final declaration reflects the views, concerns and priorities arising from the conference. The committee endeavoured to capture the wealth of experience and the rich exchange of ideas of the participants, and to articulate the urgent commitments required to stop violence against children.

The declaration was formally endorsed by the assembly, with participants affirming that the contents embody the spirit of the conference and provide a strong platform for mobilisation. Rather than specifying every specific convention or protocol, it was agreed that the phrase, 'all relevant international human rights legal instruments' would cover all potentially useful precedents. Stakeholders are encouraged to use the declaration to its maximum potential, so that all involved can move from intentions to action on this pressing issue affecting millions of African children. Professor Paulo Pinheiro agreed to use the declaration as constructively as possible in his report to the UN on violence against children.

Text of Declaration

The Second International Policy Conference on the African Child: Violence against Girls in Africa, May 11 and 12, 2006, United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa

The Africa Declaration on Violence against Girls

We, the participants of the Second International Policy Conference on the African Child: *Violence against Girls in Africa*, held in Addis Ababa 11-12 May, 2006 drawn from 25 countries, including over 600 participants from national, regional and international organisations and 22 children from six African countries, call for action by all African governments and other stakeholders² to take immediate steps to end all forms of violence against children.

² All African Governments, civil society organisations, families, children, parents and custodians, the African Union, the African Inter-Parliamentary Union, United Nations agencies and other international development and human rights organisations.

All children, without discrimination, have fundamental human rights. Violence against children whether it is physical, psychological or sexual is a gross violation of these fundamental human rights. We believe that the pervasive violence directed against children globally and in Africa, in their homes, schools, communities, places of care and other settings is preventable, intolerable and must stop.

Violence against children has incalculable costs to present and future generations and it undermines human development. We recognise that virtually all forms of violence are linked to entrenched gender roles and inequalities, and that the violation of the rights of children is closely linked to the status of women.

The situation of African girls is especially critical as a result of discriminatory and patriarchal practices, inequality, exclusion, inadequate legal protection, lack of educational opportunities, the disproportionate impact HIV and AIDS has on them, as well as the persistence of poverty. Failure to address these situations constitutes not only a grave violation of human rights, but threatens the very fabric of society.

We are inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the ILO Convention no. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, international humanitarian laws and human rights instruments as well as the African Union Common Position on Children: Africa Fit for Children (Cairo). We are profoundly concerned that the rights enshrined in these Conventions and agreements are not adequately integrated into domestic laws, policies and practices and therefore have not yet had a meaningful impact on the everyday lives of African girls and boys.

We believe that governments and civil societies are all individually and collectively responsible and mutually accountable to ensure that every child lives in a world free from violence. We also believe that governments have the primary responsibility and obligation to take concrete and immediate action to end all forms of violence against children, particularly girls.

We therefore strongly urge the Member States of the African Union:

- (a) to take all necessary measures for the effective prohibition of all forms of violence against children, including developing and implementing comprehensive National Plans of Action to protect children, which are supported with adequate human and financial resources by 2010.
- (b) to immediately enforce the actions recommended under (a) above, especially with regard to the following conditions that constitute a grave violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of girls:
 - Rape/ defilement and other forms of sexual violence in the home, in schools, in places of care, in communities and other settings
 - Gender inequality which leads to violence against girls, discrimination, and the disproportionate spread of HIV and AIDS among girls and young women
 - Harmful traditional and cultural practices including but not limited to female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM) and honour crimes
 - Trafficking, abduction and commercial sexual exploitation including prostitution and pornography
 - Conscription of girls into armed conflict and their sexual exploitation in conflict and post-conflict situations
 - Child marriage, forced marriage and marital rape
 - Corporal punishment and other humiliating forms of punishment
 - Worst forms of child labour including harmful domestic work
 - Migration for unsafe illegal work which affects safety and security of children
- (c) to establish effective and easily accessible complaints mechanisms for children, which respect their

privacy, with appropriate guarantees of confidentiality; and effective monitoring of the rights of the child to be protected against all forms of violence via country, regional and international monitoring mechanisms.

- (d) to provide all children, especially girls, who experience violence with multi-disciplinary services including counselling and other resources that they need for full recovery and reintegration in their communities, and with legal support (including provision for compensation), and to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice and rehabilitation.

We urge all governments and other stakeholders:

To take all necessary measures conducive to creating a safe, violence-free, non-discriminatory environment for the full and harmonious survival, development and participation of girls; and to institutionalise the following specific actions:

- Build a culture of peace and prevent violence through promoting positive, non-violent, non-discriminatory forms of child rearing, teaching and conflict resolution.
- Promote gender equality and take immediate measures to reform the laws, policies, attitudes and practices which discriminate against girls and women and fail to protect them.
- Support the capacity of families to adequately protect their children.
- Create safe spaces for girls and provide anti-bullying programmes in schools and communities.
- Promote the full participation of children, developing their skills and potential, and promote the right of girls to express their views and have them taken seriously.
- Support the participation of boys and men, as well as children's organisations, as part of the solution to end violence against girls.
- Promote a culture of peace, respect for human dignity, non-discrimination and non-violence through mobilising local governments, communities, the media, faith-based organisations and traditional leaders.
- Conduct research to deepen understanding of the causes and impact of violence against children, especially girls, and build strong relationships with research institutions/organisations in the quest to impact policy and practice.
- Ensure the integration of actions called for in this declaration into existing national, regional and international campaigns and events such as February 6, the International Day on Zero Tolerance Against FGM and other Harmful Traditional Practices; June 16, the Day of the African Child; November 25 to December 10, Sixteen Days of Activism on Violence against Women and Children; as well as the agenda of the African Union Common Position on Children: Africa Fit for Children (Cairo Declaration 2001).

We further urge the Member States of the African Union to:

- Place the issue of violence against children, especially girls, on the African Union Summit's agenda as soon as possible and to link it to the follow-up of the Cairo Plus 5 agenda on the African Union Common Position on Children: Africa Fit for Children.
- Ratify all the relevant international human rights and international humanitarian instruments, including ILO Convention no. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and those pertaining to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
- Recognise and give priority follow-up attention to the recommendations of the regional consultations in the context of the United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children.

We strongly recommend that the African Union:

- Strengthen the capacity of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and facilitate the participation of children and young people.

- Obtain agreement from Member States to report to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child on their implementation of the recommendations of the Regional Consultations and the final report of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children, before the end of 2010.
- Support the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to draft and adopt guidelines for the content and review of these reports.
- Establish a Special Envoy on Violence against Children to serve as a mechanism for preventing, reporting and monitoring violence against children, in collaboration with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
- Promote and support the development of a structural cooperation between the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in order to establish a practice of monitoring that most efficiently contributes to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

We request that the United Nations Secretary General's studies on violence against children and women give special attention to eliminating violence against girls in Africa, and note their specific vulnerabilities.

Building on the Security Council Resolution 1325, **we call on the United Nations Security Council** to adopt a Resolution on Violence against Girls and Women in Armed Conflict, which addresses impunity and enhances State accountability.

Our Collective Commitment

We, the participants of this conference both adults and children, have a vision of an Africa that is humane and free from violence, that promotes a culture of rights, and nurtures its children to achieve their full potential. We have a vision of an Africa in which girls enjoy equal rights and freedoms, respect and dignity without fear of gender-based violence.

We pledge to commit ourselves individually and collectively, including both girls and boys, to eliminate violence against children in general and girls in particular.

We hereby undertake to ensure rigorous follow-up actions pertaining to the resolutions of this Conference including disseminating the proceedings within each of our organisations and to conduct ongoing national campaigns such as the Day of the African Child and the Sixteen Days of Activism on Violence against Women and Children.

We urge the organiser of this Conference, The African Child Policy Forum, to forward this Declaration and the Children's Declaration to all concerned bodies as soon as possible and to put in place an operational mechanism to follow-up the outcomes of this conference.

Adopted in Addis Ababa on May 12, 2006

Children's Statement

As children from all over Africa, we would like to thank all the NGOs who organised the children's meeting, especially Save the Children's Regional Office for East and Central Africa.

We would also like to thank the ACPF for having organised this conference. We would like to encourage you to continue to organise these kinds of forums and continue to invite children and young people from all over Africa.

We would also like to thank Professor Paulo Pinheiro for making the effort to come and share his time with us children.

We, girls and boys from six countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda) commit ourselves to:

- Sensitise other children and our communities on children's rights
- Form child clubs to teach children and communities about child rights and violence against children
- Do our best not to violate other children's rights
- Use dialogue and discussion with our peers, parents or guardians and teachers to solve conflicts.

We would like our governments and other responsible organisations to:

- Adopt and implement laws against all forms of violence, including corporal and other forms of humiliating punishment, child sexual abuse, FGM, etc.
- Create awareness raising programmes on violence against girls and boys
- Give a chance to girls and boys to participate in all activities to fight violence and discrimination
- Create awareness among the population on the consequences of violence by using child-friendly tools; for example, the media, to reach children and adults
- Create child-friendly reporting centres where children can report abuse cases
- Create guidance and counselling clubs in schools
- Enable children to have access to information about international, regional and national mechanisms such as CRC and ACRWC
- Encourage a follow up on the UN Study on Violence against Children recommendations, three years after the study has been finalised. Children should be involved in this follow up to see how much the governments have done to implement recommendations and how much they have done to involve children in the process.

We would now like to conclude with a poem.

Violence, violence, violence
 Why do you need to focus your eyes so much on the African children?
 Why do you want to ruin the fruits of tomorrow?
 We the African children are tired of sexual violence, corporal punishment
 and gender inequality

Violence, violence, violence
 Where do you come from?
 Who are your parents?
 Why are you the enemy of peace and love?
 Oh, God, we wish one day, violence and peace could have a peaceful talk

Violence, violence, violence
 You made us the children of Africa
 Lose all the hopes of educational life
 You made our future useless
 We are the future leaders and doctors
 Teacher, parents, doctors, leaders and all the people
 Why do you violate us?

We the African children want peace, love, care and unity
 Give us peace today if you want good fruits tomorrow!

CLOSING SESSION: A CALL AND PROMISE FOR ACTION

Chair

H.E. Dr. Salim A. Salim, AU Special Envoy and Chief Mediator for the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on Darfur; Secretary-General OAU (1989-2001); Chairman, International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

Statements by:

H.E. Tim Clarke, Head of Mission, European Union, Ethiopia

Mr. Per Engebak, Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, UNICEF

Mr. David Muthungu, Regional Director, Southern and Eastern Africa, Plan International

Hon. Sofia Simba, Minister for Community Development, Gender and Children, United Republic of Tanzania

Hon. Carina Hagg, Member of the European Parliament

Mr. Jean Baptiste Zoungwana, Chairperson, African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

Prof. Paulo Pinheiro, Independent Expert for the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children

Special Guest Speaker

His Grace Archbishop John Onaiyekan, Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, and former President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria

H.E. Tim Clarke, Head of Mission, European Union, Ethiopia

H.E. Tim Clarke reminded the audience of some of the statistics presented during the conference: 40 million children under 15 are victims of violence every year, 140 million girls have undergone FGM and another three million will be condemned to this practice every year. These figures are insane, numb the mind, revolt and are repugnant. They shake all of us, cosseted in our comfortable offices.

Walking out of this sumptuous conference hall, within minutes you will come across girls begging in the streets. Girls without access to education, to health care or parental affection, probably sexually abused, beaten by their parents or neighbours and denied love, affection and a caring environment. After a while, habit breeds indifference and the girls become a nuisance, an embarrassment. They become non-people. You avert your gaze and move on; they are someone else's problem, out of sight, out of mind.

He told the participants that, although he has dedicated 25 years of his life to gender issues in development, not enough has changed in that time and perhaps there is a need for different methods. It must be bottom-up, people-centred, non-bureaucratic, personalised, empowering and sustainable. There are in this hall some extraordinary people, who challenge the status quo. They find tangible solutions, initiated in communities, small-scale but capable of massive replication elsewhere if the right approach is used.

The Commission of the European Union has to change. We must become a campaigning organisation fighting for women's and children's rights. We must become a driving force for giving girls a chance. Let's together make a pledge to make a difference.

Mr. Per Engebak, Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, UNICEF

Mr. Per Engebak congratulated the ACPF for bringing together such an impressive group of experts on violence against children. We now have a study (The UN Study on Violence against Children) that is providing an in-depth global picture of the magnitude, causes, and consequences of various types of violence against children. It also identifies protective possibilities and documents good practices. Within Africa, the study has provoked dialogue at national, sub-national and regional levels about difficult or sensitive issues and practices that are deeply rooted in society yet may be harmful to children.

How can we make a visible difference towards eliminating violence against girls? First, we need to support mechanisms that help to hold governments and civil society accountable for the commitments made to children. Next, we need to ensure that children are protected by comprehensive national legislation, whilst promoting and supporting inclusive social protection systems. We also need to build the capacities of communities and social workers, and replicate and scale-up good models of specialised child protection services. We need to establish better data collection and make better use of the ongoing research agenda. We need to effectively address deeply rooted social, cultural and religious beliefs and customs that are used to justify violence against children, especially girls.

Finally, we need to continue the momentum initiated by the study to keep the issue high on the national and regional agendas, to ensure that the voices of girls are heard. The obstacles to fighting violence against girls need to be removed if we want to make progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and create an Africa fit for children.

Mr. David Muthungu, Regional Director, Southern and Eastern Africa, Plan International

Mr. David Muthungu thanked the ACPF, on his own behalf and on behalf of Plan International, for bringing this issue to the fore at a time when the global community awaits the final report of the UN Study on Violence against Children. He applauded the ACPF and all participants for their contributions, in particular the children. These two days have provided an opportunity to reflect on various factors and issues that contribute to violence against children, especially girls.

This violence is unacceptable, particularly when there are resources available as well as a critical mass of willing people and organisations working to stop this, as evidenced by the vibrant participation in this room. For this reason, he focused specifically on the way forward and made the following pledges on behalf of Plan International.

Plan International pledges to:

- Promote children and youth participation in order to advance and contribute to good governance in Africa
- Promote and enhance work with partners to help strengthen civil society in addressing violence against children and other forms of abuse of children's rights.
- Intensify efforts to eliminate the practice of FGM in Africa.
- Continue to be guided by the themes and strategies contained in Plan's Strategic Framework: Children in Africa.

He invited all to join Plan in fulfilling these pledges and stressed that Plan is looking forward to working with others in this worthwhile endeavour.

Hon. Sofia Simba, Minister for Community Development, Gender and Children, United Republic of Tanzania

Hon. Sofia Simba acknowledged that every conference participant will return to their respective country with a lot to do. She stated that in her role as Minister for Community Development, Gender and Children in Tanzania, she would call a meeting of those responsible for children within the government and draw up a plan of action including strategies for implementation.

She ended by stating that combating violence against children is her highest priority and expressing the hope that the other conference participants regard the problem in the same light.

Hon. Carina Hagg, Member of the European Parliament

Hon. Carina Hagg, representing a group of parliamentarians from eight different European countries, informed the conference audience about the lessons learned from their visit to Ethiopia. She recognised that the persistence of harmful practices such as early marriages, marriage by abduction and female genital mutilation all constitute violations of bodily integrity of and pose severe health risks to girls and women in Africa.

She stated that: 'If we are to meet the Millennium Development Goals and reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality, these practices will have to end. We parliamentarians recognise our important role in enhancing the sexual and reproductive health and rights [of women and girls]. We have a moral imperative in creating a [relevant] legislative and policy framework...and are committed to work for the allocation of resources.'

Mr. Jean Baptiste Zoungwana, Chairperson, African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

Mr. Jean-Baptiste Zoungwana thanked the ACPF for having organised this conference, and all of the speakers and participants for their valuable insights into the causes and effects of violence against girls in Africa.

Violence is experienced by children irrespective of their gender, age, social status or the economic position of their parents, and regardless of the level of economic development of their country. Although a lack of statistical data and holistic academic research limits our capacity to understand the full extent of adult-to-child and child-to-child violence in Africa, this conference has brought us to an understanding of the severe physical, psychological, economic and cultural consequences of violence on the individual, community and society at large.

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child is committed to ending all forms of violence against children in Africa. As chairman of this Committee, Mr Zoungwana invited state governments, technical and financial partners, civil society and children themselves to mobilise society on this issue, and to reflect on actions to be taken. In particular, the following forms of violence need to be ended immediately:

- FGM, arranged marriages and sexual exploitation of girls
- The use of child-soldiers and girls as sex-slaves of fighters
- Violence against children in the family, in schools, in the workplace and on the streets
- Child-to-child violence
- The discrimination and stigmatisation of orphans and other vulnerable children.

He drew the attention of participants to the theme of this years' Day of the African Child, which is The Right to Protection: Stop Violence against Children.

Prof. Paulo Pinheiro, Independent Expert for the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children

Prof. Paulo Pinheiro pointed out that the foremost conclusion of this meeting is that we need to keep girls in mind when we do anything that might concern them.

Prof. Pinheiro pledged - personally and on behalf of the Coordinating Committee of the UN Study on Violence against Children - that every recommendation within the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children will aim to have a positive impact on the lives of African children.

Special Guest Speaker

His Grace Archbishop John Onaiyekan, Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, and President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria

His Grace John Onaiyekan recalled the in-depth discussions based on the presentations of eminent experts on violence against girls in Africa. He asked how it could be that in a culture that loves children so much, there is so much pain, suffering and distress among our children.

The answer lies in part in increasing urbanisation, exposing African children to a sometimes hostile environment and making it difficult to expose child molesters. Economic pressures leave parents little time to look after their children, often forcing children to work and exposing them to further abuse. In extreme cases, parents practically sell their children in order to make ends meet, surrendering them to trafficking or child slavery. There is also the abomination of child soldiers, who are robbed of their childhood and wounded for life. Social stratification is destroying the African culture of basic communal egalitarianism, and has nurtured a generation of children who grow up thinking they are nobodies. It is a social time bomb that we neglect at our great risk.

If the African child is exposed to so much danger, it is largely because African society is equally exposed to such dangers. We cannot rescue the child without looking at what is happening in contemporary African society. The challenge of good governance in Africa remains pressing. We know that our continent is not poor, but that we need to manage ourselves better. It is only then that our children will have a reasonable chance of a better today and a brighter future.

Promoting the rights of the child should, however, never be presented to the exclusion of the rights of parents to exert control and guidance over their wards. That some parents may fail tragically does not justify transferring the responsibility for children to government officials or NGO activists. Although the majority of child abuse is perpetrated by parents, close relations, teachers and others who ought to protect children, I would still like to believe that the majority of parents and caregivers are still loving and caring. We cannot write them off. We need to put more effort into supporting families and caregivers. More efforts should be made to acknowledge and sustain the positive roles that traditional and religious institutions play in caring for children.

It is not right that the children in one part of the world should be dying of starvation and disease, while in other parts of the world they are wallowing in affluence. Those who are well off should feel for those who are in distress.

As a Catholic Archbishop, permit me to refer to some Christian principles. Jesus was a child of poor parents, born in a manger and carried away as a refugee. Jesus has a special love for children and even went as far as to stress that "unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven." The church to which I belong mobilises children to reach out to fellow children. It might be useful to study ways of involving religion-based children's organisations.

Our shared convictions and concerns about children in Africa have brought us all together. These

convictions and concerns have been carefully formulated in the final declaration, which will help us to sustain our enthusiasm and help share with others what we have received here. We hope that the declaration will be acted upon by governments in Africa and beyond. I am sure that God will bless our efforts to protect our children.

ANNEX I

PROCEEDINGS OF ALL-AFRICA CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF CHILD RIGHTS, YOUTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS

Theme:

Fostering and Strengthening an Africa-wide Movement for Children - Perspectives, Rationale and Mechanisms.

NGO Session One

Chair

Ms. Berhane Ras-Work, Executive Director, Inter-Africa Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting Women's and Children's Health

Introductory Remarks

Mr. David Mugawe, The African Child Policy Forum

Fostering and Strengthening an Africa-wide Movement for Children: Perspectives, Rationale and mechanisms

Ms. Wambui Njuguna, Regional Programme Director, African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN)

Dr. Moussa Sissoko, President, Coalition of NGOs working for Children in Africa (CONAFE)

Ms. Stella Ayo-Odongo, National Coordinator, Uganda Child Rights NGO Network

Mr. Fabrizio Terenzio, Environmental Development Action (ENDA) Third World, Equipe Jeunesse Action, Senegal

Ms. Awa Niang, Africa Movement of Working Children and Youth, West Africa Region

Mr. David Mugawe welcomed members of the Civil Society Organisations to the All-Africa Consultative Meeting. He mentioned that while planning for the International Policy Conference it was realised that there will be a good representation of Civil Society Organisations from across Africa, in addition to a number of Network Organisation that would be represented at the Conference. All these organisations share the goal of addressing the issue of child rights and welfare.

The last two decades have witnessed the emergence of numerous organisations, networks and associations working for the promotion and realisation of child rights and welfare in Africa. The approach pursued by the various organisations and groups to achieve this goal has been varied, ranging from the direct provision of services and support at the grassroots level to campaigning and advocacy work for policy and attitudinal changes at the national level. Much has been accomplished by these organisations in improving the lives and conditions of children. However, much more remains to be done through concerted effort and greater collaboration among all concerned for African children's rights and welfare.

It was therefore in light of this, that an All-Africa consultative meeting on an Africa-wide movement for children was proposed. David mentioned that this meeting was to hold discussions on the theme of Fostering and Strengthening an Africa-wide movement for children: Perspectives, Rationale and

Mechanisms. The meeting intended to foster and strengthen a continent-wide movement for and on behalf of children and youth in Africa, and to develop:

- Strategies to increase effective networking and coordination among all concerned
- Ways to promote the (implementation of the) African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Participants were asked to discuss their own experiences as well as the experience of major networks and consortiums of child-focused organisations, and deliberate on a way forward and on joint action at the pan-African level.

In conclusion he acknowledged the contribution of CONAFE, ANPPCAN and The Uganda Child Rights NGO Network in collaborating with ACPF in organising the meeting.

Ms. Wambui Njuguna argued that an Africa-wide movement for children is long overdue. There is strength in numbers, and the movement must be huge to make its presence felt on the continent. Africa provides the world with problems that the world cannot relate to, blaming them for our own omissions but expecting them to come to our aid. We have to reduce the burden that we give others to solve. Traditionally, children in Africa belong to the entire clan. Creating an African movement for children should not be difficult with the African spirit of harambee, or togetherness.

In Africa, governments ratify conventions simply to please donors, but in reality they rarely implement their commitments. In some cases, governments even expect civil society organisations to implement programmes on their behalf, and often don't take action unless pushed by civil society. When governments have their priorities skewed, strong movements are needed as whistle blowers to alert the world to help stop abuse and child rights violations. Our collective involvement in a movement would help us to discover each other's work, and improve our use of existing instruments and networks to further our individual causes.

Prerequisites for a successful movement are:

- Minimal gaps in vision, purpose, background, etc. between members
- A burning issue that brings members together
- Recognition of individual capacities and contributions
- Transparency and accountability
- Availability of financial and human resources
- Sense of belonging
- Opportunity to regularly review purpose and methodology
- Binding rules and regulations

The movement should be African-driven and could be hosted by member organisations on a rotational basis, making use of existing infrastructures for implementation and communication.

Dr. Moussa Sissoko stressed the existing strengths of African institutions in community health, education, advocacy, etc. which could be built on in the establishment of an African Movement for Children. He recalled the establishment of the Coalition of African Organisations working with Children (CANGOC, or CONAFE in the French acronym) in June 2003 in Bamako, Mali, with representatives from organisations from 34 African countries. The coalition was established with the following objectives:

- Design and carry out lobbying and advocacy activities
- Share best practices
- Reinforce follow-up mechanisms on child rights issues
- Reinforce national child rights and development coalitions

Recognising the importance of existing networks operating at national level, a pan-African network or movement should develop organically along programmatic lines rather than set up another infrastructure. An African movement for children should:

- Reinforce itself through spontaneous exchange of information
- Share information on individual programmes in order to optimise the impact of interventions and avoid duplication
- Develop strategic partnerships with actors such as the African Union
- Promote best practices
- Jointly develop mechanisms for resource mobilisation for the activities of the movement and its member organisations, with a focus on generating African support to decrease external dependence
- Promote 'real' child participation, to avoid children who 'parrot' what they think adults want to hear

Africa is rich in experience, and it should develop its internal potential to mobilise different actors and develop complementary actions, exchange of experiences and funding mechanisms.

Ms. Stella Ayo-Odongo stated that the contribution of civil society organisations in child rights discourse cannot be overemphasised. Across the continent, numerous organisations are making a difference in the lives of many children. Civil society organisations have contributed to advocacy, awareness raising, and service delivery and proved their effectiveness in tracking children's progress and monitoring violations of their rights. There is increasing recognition of the role of civil society by governments, the African Union, European Union, United Nations and other regional bodies. The next step is for civil society to start demanding governments deliver on their promises made internationally and regionally.

The need for an Africa-wide movement, building and establishing coalitions as a strategy for advocacy and influencing change, is part of a global trend for collective action. The Global Movement for Children (GMC) is proof that it can work. The GMC was initiated in 2002 and has contributed to bringing children to the centre of global debate, decision making and action. This success needs to be consolidated and used to bolster regional action.

This All-Africa Consultation should serve as a launch pad for a movement, which could be known as the Africa Movement for Children (AMC). This AMC should liaise with existing regional bodies, such as the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), Eastern Africa Community (EAC), Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), etc., to promote the further ratification and implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), and to provide opportunities for children to participate within the framework of collective action.

Participants in the proposed AMC need to agree on clear goals, agree to communicate and meet periodically, and commit resources, in order to make the movement a key partner in generating a regional agenda for children in Africa.

Mr. Fabrizio Terenzio highlighted the importance of a participatory approach to a movement for children, due to his experience with Environmental Development Action in the Third World (ENDA) and the Global Movement for Children (GMC). The most recent United Nations Special Session on Children was the most participatory session ever held by the UN, but some of the lessons from that experience are not being applied.

The Global Movement for Children in West and Central Africa has provided a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to share their experiences as equals, rather than as funders and funding recipients. During the past three years, the GMC has made good progress in terms of organisational development and

building collaboration between child rights groups. African civil society must be able to sit at the table as an equal and respected partner. Child participation has been integrated into planning and review processes, including a peer review of ECOWAS and a Special Session of African Congress, when a Kenyan child was able to ask heads of state about budget allocation for children's issues. The governments of Senegal and Mali accepted proposals put forward by youth and child organisations on the issue of child trafficking between the two countries. The child's perspective was included in the Millennium Development Goals Review Session in New York, with just one child participant from our network among the 200 seats. We have to convince people that the dynamic of such children's rights groups can really reinforce social development.

Ms. Awa Niang explained that she represents the Movement for Working Children, which was established in 1994 in Senegal. The members found that mobilising as group was a way of improving their conditions of life and work. The movement now encompasses the whole of West Africa and works to implement 12 means of improving conditions for working children through advocacy and grassroots work. Sensitisation campaigns on violence, trafficking and exploitation of children have yielded a number of results in changing attitudes and behaviour. The network uses the media, especially the radio, to reach the general public with messages about children's rights.

Awa informed the participants that she used to work as a street hawker selling shells. Thanks to the basic education and French lessons she received from the network, she is now capable of addressing international meetings and expressing herself in French, despite leaving school after primary level. Training and education by the network has raised the income of many working children, as well as enabling them to train their peers.

The plenary discussion began by emphasising the need to define the role and identify the niche of any proposed movement or coalition. A movement must have a common vision and agenda, and be based on a clear ideology around a well-thought out issue. The CRC and the ACRWC could constitute ready developed ideologies to unite behind, as well as the declaration signed by participants at this meeting.

Collaboration with all levels of government and other strategic partners was recognised as a vital part of the initiative to guarantee impact and coverage. However, taking up issues of child rights and violence against children may involve confronting governments if necessary. Minimum standards are also imperative for working in partnership with others, so that members can be held accountable. For example, some unethical NGOs take advantage of children by using them to fundraise without using the money for the benefit of children. Relationships within a network should be on an equal basis, rather than dictated by donor-led priorities, or competition between NGOs for funds. Developing children's participation and voice must be integral to the network.

The proposed functions of a movement to counter violence against children were specified as; a platform for dialogue; a critical analysis of government reports supplied to the African Committee of Experts on the Welfare of the Child; sharing best practice; and designing solutions. African governments often lack high quality data about the situation of children, so a pan-African network would be in an excellent position to bridge the information gap about children's status.

Some participants felt that it was important to look carefully at current pan-African networks and their role in society, in order to examine the need to create another institution. It is important that networks are backed up by social consciousness about the issue. Nationally and regionally some networks have failed and others succeeded, so lessons need to be learned from previous experience before planning an ambitious pan-continental movement. Linking to the Global Movement for Children was suggested as a

possibility, although concern was expressed about the high membership fees.

In any alliance, leadership, sustainability and joint vision are the most important issues to ensure viability, as well as examining regional priorities. Making progress and planning concrete action on the issue of violence must be the priority for children, and we need to utilise children's capacity to act together as part of our efforts.

NGO Session Two:

Chair

Prof. Jaap Doek, Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and Member of the International Board of Trustees of The African Child Policy Forum

Views of partner organisations

Mr. Per Engebak, Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, UNICEF

Mr. Kimaru Wakaruru, Regional Child Rights Programming Advisor RESA, Plan International

Ms. Lena Karlsson, Global Advisor, Save the Children Sweden

Mr. Getenet Assefa, Programme Manager, European Union

Mr. Per Engebak, Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, UNICEF, highlighted that all the participants are important actors in our respective domains, but there is a need for greater connectivity. Over the last 10 years in Africa, there has been no lack of commitment to children in terms of conventions, initiatives and declarations. However, insufficient effort has been made to hold policy-makers accountable for these initiatives. In any good democracy, there must be clear separation of roles between the government and civil society, or accountability will suffer. The role of the movement being proposed here is to make governments accountable for upholding their commitments and promoting children's rights.

Sometime in 2006 there will be an African mid-term review of progress on commitments made in 1999 at the Cairo-Plus-Five.³ This is an internal African Union accountability mechanism, but it could be a unique opportunity for African civil society to hold AU member states accountable for commitments they made to children in 2001. This is an African mechanism that could benefit from the wisdom and deliberations of the participants represented here. In May 2007, there will be a follow-up to the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children. African child rights activists also have the potential to make an impact there, if we organise ourselves.

Mr. Kimaru Wakaruru, Regional Child Rights Programming Advisor RESA, Plan International stressed the importance of participants having a clear understanding of what they have committed to do once they leave the meeting. We are not looking to create a new structure, but have committed to take action. We need to think about the best way of communicating our agenda to potential collaborators and partners. It is an important process and should begin by determining the pace and direction of our next actions. It is imperative that we retain our links with communities at grassroots level, so that the impact of holding stakeholders accountable to their commitments to children will be felt where it is most needed. The biggest challenge for any network is inclusiveness, so we need clear strategies on how to stay accountable as a movement and how to keep all concerned involved, especially children, our most important allies.

³ This was a review process of the 20-year Programme of Action agreed at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994. It was stated during the process that economic development and stabilisation of population growth rates are not possible without focusing on the role and status of women

Ms. Lena Karlsson, Global Advisor, Save the Children Sweden recommended that the Declaration and Children's Statement from this meeting should be platforms for further action. She also observed the need for collaboration between civil society and government, recognising their strengths as well as remembering the proposed movement's role as whistle-blower and watchdog. The African Union and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child will also be important partners. Children should be involved from the very beginning of drafting the structure and content of the movement, so that it is child-friendly in all respects.

Mr. Getenet Assefa, Programme Manager, European Union elaborated on the civil society fund of the European Union that was launched in June 2006 in Ethiopia. Ten million Euros has been set aside to strengthen the capacity of civil society to enable them to engage in dialogue, influence policy and strengthen service delivery.

He stated that the European Union wants to be responsive to the needs of civil society and are not seeking to set their own agenda. He urged Ethiopian organisations present to approach the EU and seek support under their children and youth programme category.

The plenary discussion began by re-iterating that any proposed movement should not duplicate ongoing work at local level. The conference Declaration was recommended as a framework for a way forward that is tied into local processes at country level, and should be disseminated as widely as possible.

Participants then recommended the development of a concept paper to take the process of a movement building forward. This would be developed by an interim task-force comprised of ANPPCAN, CONAFE, ACPF, SOS Children's Villages, ENDA, Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RAPCAN), Uganda Child Rights NGO Network and the Africa Movement of Working Children and Youth, with ANPPCAN as the convenor. Its mandate would be to present a concept paper on organising a pan-African movement for implementing children's rights, as well as how to take forward the work of the conference and ensure the involvement of children. The task force will then circulate a draft, with terms of reference, to the larger group through email, to be finalised by October or November. Important issues to consider include organisational structure, membership, knowledge management and communication. Priority themes for the movement could include conflict resolution, orphans and street children, and sexual abuse of boys. Also, it was suggested that the movement could possibly take up one important issue at a time. January 1, 2007 was proposed as the official launch date of the movement.

The term 'movement' may have to be amended, as it is associated with political opposition in some African countries.

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child commended the desire for an Africa-wide movement and welcomed partnership and collaboration with NGOs and civil society to ensure implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Participants were reminded of the upcoming African Day of the Child and the possibility for working collaboratively.

There was a plea for participants to actively play a role in positively shaping the destiny of Africa, rather than its destiny being, at best, government driven and predominantly externally driven. The civil society sector needs to make serious efforts to organise itself in order to have a real impact on policy. There will be no real impact if the focus stays at micro-level. Regional movements and networks may be able to accomplish what national level NGOs do not have the capacity to achieve, and networks can also support the work of individual level NGOs. The envisaged network needs to collaborate with governments, but also should be firm with authorities who are not living up to their commitments.

The session concluded with calls for condemnation of the Ugandan government's clamp down on civil society for speaking out on violations against children. This action threatens all of African civil society, and recommendations were made to address this as follows:

- The CRC Committee will raise the issue next week during their meeting, on behalf of Ugandan civil society
- ANPPCAN Uganda will work on a document to be circulated, further improved and then presented in October or November by the task force as a resolution or an expression of solidarity. The document needs to contextualise the Ugandan issue with similar clamp downs on civil society in Eritrea, Zimbabwe, etc. and link it to a proposed peer review system adopted by AU.

ANNEX II

Full Text of Declaration

The Second International Policy Conference on the African Child: Violence against Girls in Africa, May 11 and 12, 2006, United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa

The Africa Declaration on Violence against Girls

We, the participants of the Second International Policy Conference on the African Child: *Violence against Girls in Africa*, held in Addis Ababa 11-12 May, 2006 drawn from 25 countries, including over 400 participants from national, regional and international organisations and 22 children from six African countries, call for action by all African governments and other stakeholders⁴ to take immediate steps to end all forms of violence against children.

All children, without discrimination, have fundamental human rights. Violence against children whether it is physical, psychological or sexual is a gross violation of these fundamental human rights. We believe that the pervasive violence directed against children globally and in Africa, in their homes, schools, communities, places of care and other settings is preventable, intolerable and must stop.

Violence against children has incalculable costs to present and future generations and it undermines human development. We recognise that virtually all forms of violence are linked to entrenched gender roles and inequalities, and that the violation of the rights of children is closely linked to the status of women.

The situation of African girls is especially critical as a result of discriminatory and patriarchal practices, inequality, exclusion, inadequate legal protection, lack of educational opportunities, the disproportionate impact HIV and AIDS has on them, as well as the persistence of poverty. Failure to address these situations constitutes not only a grave violation of human rights, but threatens the very fabric of society.

We are inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the ILO Convention no. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, international humanitarian laws and human rights instruments as well as the African Union Common Position on Children: Africa Fit for Children (Cairo). We are profoundly concerned that the rights enshrined in these Conventions and agreements are not adequately integrated into domestic laws, policies and practices and therefore have not yet had a meaningful impact on the everyday lives of African girls and boys.

We believe that governments and civil societies are all individually and collectively responsible and mutually accountable to ensure that every child lives in a world free from violence. We also believe that governments have the primary responsibility and obligation to take concrete and immediate action to end all forms of violence against children, particularly girls.

We therefore strongly urge the Member States of the African Union:

- (a) to take all necessary measures for the effective prohibition of all forms of violence against children, including developing and implementing comprehensive National Plans of Action to protect children, which are supported with adequate human and financial resources by 2010.
- (b) to immediately enforce the actions recommended under (a) above, especially with regard to the following conditions that constitute a grave violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of girls:
 - Rape/ defilement and other forms of sexual violence in the home, in schools, in places of care, in communities and other settings

⁴ All African Governments, civil society organisations, families, children, parents and custodians, the African Union, the African Inter-Parliamentary Union, United Nations agencies and other international development and human rights organisations.

- Gender inequality which leads to violence against girls, discrimination, and the disproportionate spread of HIV and AIDS among girls and young women
 - Harmful traditional and cultural practices including but not limited to female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM) and honour crimes
 - Trafficking, abduction and commercial sexual exploitation including prostitution and pornography
 - Conscription of girls into armed conflict and their sexual exploitation in conflict and post-conflict situations
 - Child marriage, forced marriage and marital rape
 - Corporal punishment and other humiliating forms of punishment
 - Worst forms of child labour including harmful domestic work
 - Migration for unsafe illegal work which affects safety and security of children
- (c) to establish effective and easily accessible complaints mechanisms for children, which respect their privacy, with appropriate guarantees of confidentiality; and effective monitoring of the rights of the child to be protected against all forms of violence via country, regional and international monitoring mechanisms.
- (d) to provide all children, especially girls, who experience violence with multi-disciplinary services including counselling and other resources that they need for full recovery and reintegration in their communities, and with legal support (including provision for compensation), and to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice and rehabilitation.

We urge all governments and other stakeholders:

To take all necessary measures conducive to creating a safe, violence-free, non-discriminatory environment for the full and harmonious survival, development and participation of girls; and to institutionalise the following specific actions:

- Build a culture of peace and prevent violence through promoting positive, non-violent, non-discriminatory forms of child rearing, teaching and conflict resolution.
- Promote gender equality and take immediate measures to reform the laws, policies, attitudes and practices which discriminate against girls and women and fail to protect them.
- Support the capacity of families to adequately protect their children.
- Create safe spaces for girls and provide anti-bullying programmes in schools and communities.
- Promote the full participation of children, developing their skills and potential, and promote the right of girls to express their views and have them taken seriously.
- Support the participation of boys and men, as well as children's organisations, as part of the solution to end violence against girls.
- Promote a culture of peace, respect for human dignity, non-discrimination and non-violence through mobilising local governments, communities, the media, faith-based organisations and traditional leaders.
- Conduct research to deepen understanding of the causes and impact of violence against children, especially girls, and build strong relationships with research institutions/organisations in the quest to impact policy and practice.
- Ensure the integration of actions called for in this declaration into existing national, regional and international campaigns and events such as February 6, the International Day on Zero Tolerance Against FGM and other Harmful Traditional Practices; June 16, the Day of the African Child; November 25 to December 10, Sixteen Days of Activism on Violence against Women and Children; as well as the agenda of the African Union Common Position on Children: Africa Fit for Children (Cairo Declaration 2001).

We further urge the Member States of the African Union to:

- Place the issue of violence against children, especially girls, on the African Union Summit's agenda as soon as possible and to link it to the follow-up of the Cairo Plus 5 agenda on the African Union

Common Position on Children: Africa Fit for Children.

- Ratify all the relevant international human rights and international humanitarian instruments, including ILO Convention no. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and those pertaining to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
- Recognise and give priority follow-up attention to the recommendations of the regional consultations in the context of the United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children.

We strongly recommend that the African Union:

- Strengthen the capacity of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and facilitate the participation of children and young people.
- Obtain agreement from Member States to report to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child on their implementation of the recommendations of the Regional Consultations and the final report of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children, before the end of 2010.
- Support the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to draft and adopt guidelines for the content and review of these reports.
- Establish a Special Envoy on Violence against Children to serve as a mechanism for preventing, reporting and monitoring violence against children, in collaboration with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
- Promote and support the development of a structural cooperation between the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in order to establish a practice of monitoring that most efficiently contributes to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

We request that the United Nations Secretary General's studies on violence against children and women give special attention to eliminating violence against girls in Africa, and note their specific vulnerabilities.

Building on the Security Council Resolution 1325, **we call on the United Nations Security Council** to adopt a Resolution on Violence against Girls and Women in Armed Conflict, which addresses impunity and enhances State accountability.

Our Collective Commitment

We, the participants of this conference both adults and children, have a vision of an Africa that is humane and free from violence, that promotes a culture of rights, and nurtures its children to achieve their full potential. We have a vision of an Africa in which girls enjoy equal rights and freedoms, respect and dignity without fear of gender-based violence.

We pledge to commit ourselves individually and collectively, including both girls and boys, to eliminate violence against children in general and girls in particular.

We hereby undertake to ensure rigorous follow-up actions pertaining to the resolutions of this Conference including disseminating the proceedings within each of our organisations and to conduct ongoing national campaigns such as the Day of the African Child and the Sixteen Days of Activism on Violence against Women and Children.

We urge the organiser of this Conference, The African Child Policy Forum, to forward this Declaration and the Children's Declaration to all concerned bodies as soon as possible and to put in place an operational mechanism to follow-up the outcomes of this conference.

ANNEX III

FULL TEXT OF INDIVIDUAL PLEDGE

PLEDGE TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Concerned by the persistence of widespread violence against children and by the silence and inaction that perpetuates it.

I, _____, pledge:

To make a personal, lifetime commitment to help end all forms of violence against all children.

To immediately begin by changing my attitudes and behaviour:

- by examining how I, as an individual, contribute to violence against children through my actions, by keeping silent or by turning a blind eye;
- and by better informing myself about how and why children are subject to violence.

To speak out against violence against children wherever and whenever it occurs be it in my family, at my work or in my community.

To work for a society that is humane and free of violence, and where children are raised in an environment of peace and security, by nurturing a culture of rights and dialogue.

To be personally accountable for the action that I take, however big or small, to make these commitments a reality and to review these commitments in one year.

To dedicate this pledge to life, love and security for all the world's children.

This pledge was made at The African Child Policy Forum's Second International Policy Conference on the African Child: Violence Against Girls in Africa, May 11-12, 2006.

ANNEX IV

CHILDREN'S CONSULTATION: VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Forty four children from Somalia, the Sudan, Senegal, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia and their interpreters convened at the Addis Ababa Hilton in a regional conference organised by Save the Children Sweden for two days (May 9-10). They discussed various issues on violence including its causes and forms as well as solutions. A presentation was made by Ms. Lena Karlsson, Global Advisor, Save the Children, Sweden on the process of the UN Study against Children. The session dealt with overall recommendations made by children in the process, recommendations the study is expected to make and the follow-up to the UN study.

Following a presentation by Mr. Shimelis Tsegaye from the ACPF about the Forum and the general objectives and programme of the May 11-12 conference, the participants took up the issue of where, how and when in the conference children shall make their collective as well as individual contributions.

A brief introduction on the draft declaration was given in a child friendly way by the ACPF representative, following which group discussions took place within three groups, which were set up with a good intercultural mix:

- One of the groups discussed the draft declaration. This group's discussions were informed by the deliberations of the previous sessions in which the forms of violence and their solutions were discussed.
- The second group dealt with the issue of violence against children by children and how children can be part of the solution.
- The third group drafted the children's statement.

Many forms of violence and the corresponding actions which were not mentioned in the ACPF declaration came out of the discussion. These were taken on board the children's statement.

Finally, the meeting ended with the sharing of responsibilities and selection of group representatives in relation to children's participation in the May 11-12 conference.

The children attended and participated in the Second International Policy Conference on the African Child: *Violence Against Girls in Africa* and were guided through the process by representatives of Save the Children Sweden. They were given an opportunity during the conference to present a report on their two-day meeting.

Full Text of the Children's Statement:

As children from all over Africa, we would like to thank all the NGOs who organised the children's meeting, especially Save the Children's Regional Office for East and Central Africa.

We would also like to thank the ACPF for having organised this conference. We would like to encourage you to continue to organise these kinds of forums and continue to invite children and young people from all over Africa.

We would also like to thank Professor Paulo Pinheiro for making the effort to come and share his time with us children.

We, girls and boys from six countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda) commit ourselves to:

- Sensitise other children and our communities on children's rights

- Form child clubs to teach children and communities about child rights and violence against children
- Do our best not to violate other children's rights
- Use dialogue and discussion with our peers, parents or guardians and teachers to solve conflicts.

We would like our governments and other responsible organisations to:

- Adopt and implement laws against all forms of violence, including corporal and other forms of humiliating punishment, child sexual abuse, FGM, etc.
- Create awareness raising programmes on violence against girls and boys
- Give a chance to girls and boys to participate in all activities to fight violence and discrimination
- Create awareness among the population on the consequences of violence by using child-friendly tools; for example, the media, to reach children and adults
- Create child-friendly reporting centres where children can report abuse cases
- Create guidance and counselling clubs in schools
- Enable children to have access to information about international, regional and national mechanisms such as CRC and ACRWC
- Encourage a follow up on the UN Study on Violence against Children recommendations, three years after the study has been finalised. Children should be involved in this follow up to see how much the governments have done to implement recommendations and how much they have done to involve children in the process.

We would now like to conclude with a poem.

Violence, violence, violence
 Why do you need to focus your eyes so much on the African children?
 Why do you want to ruin the fruits of tomorrow?
 We the African children are tired of sexual violence, corporal punishment and
 gender inequality

Violence, violence, violence
 Where do you come from?
 Who are your parents?
 Why are you the enemy of peace and love?
 Oh, God, we wish one day, violence and peace could have a peaceful talk

Violence, violence, violence
 You made us the children of Africa
 Lose all the hopes of educational life
 You made our future useless
 We are the future leaders and doctors
 Teacher, parents, doctors, leaders and all the people
 Why do you violate us?

We the African children want peace, love, care and unity
 Give us peace today if you want good fruits tomorrow!

ANNEX V - Conference Programme

Thursday, 11 May 2006

8.00 – 9.00 **Registration**

9.00 – 10.00 **Opening Session**

- **About the Conference** – Dr. Assefa Bequele, Executive Director, The African Child Policy Forum, and Member of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- **Welcome** - H.E. Dr. Salim A. Salim, AU Special Envoy and Chief Mediator for the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on Darfur; Secretary-General OAU (1989-2001); Chairman, International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum
- **Partnership for Children** - Mr. Jim Emerson, Chief Operations Officer, Plan International
- **My Wishes and My Pledge for Africa's Children** – Dr. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF
- **Children's Declaration on Violence** – A Statement by African Children
- **Special Guest** - Madame Chantal Compaoré, Epouse du President du Faso (First Lady of Burkina Faso)
- **Opening Address** - H. E. Girma Wolde Giorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

10.05 - 10.45 **Special Sitting: Keynote Address**

H.E. President Joaquim Chissano, former President of Mozambique and current Chairperson of the Africa Forum for African former Heads of State

10.45 – 11.15 **Coffee Break**

11.15 – 12.45 **Plenary Session I : Violence, Women and Girls – The International Dimension**

Chair:

Professor Jaap Doek, Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and Member of the International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

- **Violence against Women: The International Dimension** – Dr. Yakin Erturk, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women
- **Dealing with Violence: Lessons from International Experience** - Ms. Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda, UNIFEM Regional Programme Director for East and Horn of Africa
- **Moving on from Violent Punishment of Children** - Mr. Peter Newell, Coordinator of the Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment of Children
- **Plenary Discussion**

12.45 – 14.00 **Lunch**

14.00 – 16.00 **Plenary Session II : Violence, Women and Girls – The African Dimension**

Chair: Adv. Bience Gawanas, Commissioner for Social Affairs, African Union, and Member of the International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

Special Presentation

Violence against Girls in Africa: An Overview - Mr. David Mugawe, The African Child Policy Forum

Panel Discussion

- **Violence against Girls: Experience and Protection in Western Africa** - Mr. Guy Massart, Plan International, West Africa Regional Office
- **Sexual Violence against Girls and HIV/AIDS** - Mr. Bunmi Makinwa, UNAIDS Country Representative, Ethiopia
- **Violence against Children at Work** - Mr. Yaw Ofosu, International Labour Organization
- **Violence against Girls in Crisis and Conflict Situations** - Ms. Florence Tercier Holst-Roness, International Committee of the Red Cross
- **Violence against Children in Schools** - Ms. Maryce Ramsey, Director, Safe Schools Programme, USAID.
- **Plenary Discussion**

16.00 – 16.30 **Coffee Break**16.30 – 18.00 **Plenary Session III : Violence by Children against Children: Children as Part of the Solution**

Chair: Ms. Lena Karlsson, Global Advisor, Save the Children Sweden

- **Violence by Children against Children: A Growing Concern** - Ms. Carol Bower, Executive Director, Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
- **The Southern Africa Experience** - Dr. Anthony Simpson, Social Anthropology Department, Manchester University, UK
- **The South America Experience** - Mr. Gary Barker, Executive Director of Instituto Promundo, Brazil
- **The Asian Experience** - Mr. Ravi Karkara, Regional Programme Manager (Nepal), Save the Children Sweden
- **Comments by Children**
- **Plenary Discussion**

18.00 -18.30 **Children's Choir** under the direction of the renowned pianist Girma Yifrashewa

18.30 **Reception**

Friday, 12 May 2006

9.00 – 10.30 **Plenary Session IV: Towards a Common Position**

Chair:

Ms. Christine Cornwell, Member of the International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

The UN Report on Violence against Children - Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, Independent Expert for the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children

Discussants: What does it mean for Africa?

- Hon. Sofia Simba, Minister for Community Development, Gender and Children, United Republic of Tanzania
- Ambassador Salamata Sawadogo, Chairperson, AU Commission for Human and People's Rights
- Professor Jaap Doek, Chairperson, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Mr. Don McPhee, Regional Programme Support Manager, West Africa Regional Office, Plan International

■ **Plenary Discussion**

10.30 – 11.00 **Coffee break**

11.00 – 12.30 **Plenary Session V : Towards a Movement to Stop Violence against Children**

Chair:

Mr. Kailash Satyarthi, Chair, Global March against Child Labour, and Member of the International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

Panel Discussion

- **Grassroots Experience in Social Mobilisation: A Report from Ethiopia** Dr. Bogalech Gebre, Executive Director, Kembatta Women's Self Help Centre, Ethiopia
- **Mobilising Girls against Violence** - Ms. Mercy Musomi, National Coordinator, Girl Child Network, Kenya
- **Mobilising against Harmful Traditional Practices: Lessons from Africa** Ms. Berhane Ras-Work, Executive Director, Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children
- **Social Mobilisation: Lessons from International Experience** - Mr. Sergio Kristensen, Country Representative, Save the Children Denmark
- **Moving the Cause Forward** - Dr. Amaya Gillespie, Director, Secretariat United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children

■ **Plenary Discussion**

12.30 – 13.30 **Lunch Break**

13.30 – 15.00 **Plenary Session VI : What Governments Can Do**

Chair: Prof. Dharam Ghai, Member International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

- **Getting Governments to Account** – Ambassador Moushira Khattab, Secretary General, National Council for Childhood & Motherhood and Vice Chair of UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- **Establishing Child Protection Systems** - Ms. Margie de Monchy, Child Protection Advisor, UNICEF, Nairobi
- **Addressing Violence: The South Africa Experience** - Adv. Thoko Majokweni, Director, The National Prosecuting Authority of South Africa
- **Establishing an Effective Legal System to deal with Violence** Ms. Souad Abdennebi-Abderrahim, Regional Advisor for the Promotion of Women's Human and Legal Rights, UNECA
- **Plenary Discussion**

15.00- 15.30 **Coffee Break**

15.30 – 16.30 **Plenary Session VII : The Declaration**

Chair: Mr. Ben Kioko, Director and Legal Counsel, African Union

- **Presentation and Adoption of the Declaration**

16.30 – 18.00 **Closing Session: A Call and Promise for Action**

Chair: H.E. Dr. Salim A. Salim, AU Special Envoy and Chief Mediator for the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on Darfur; Secretary-General OAU (1989-2001); Chairman, International Board of Trustees, The African Child Policy Forum

[This closing session will be unconventional in the sense that speakers will be expected to focus on the way forward and pledge to specific actions to end violence against children.]

- **By Children**
- H.E. Ambassador Tim Clarke, Head of Mission, European Union, Ethiopia
- Mr. Per Engebak, Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, UNICEF
- Mr. David Muthungu, Regional Director, Southern and Eastern Africa, Plan International
- Mr. Jean Baptiste Zoungrana, Chairperson, African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child,
- Prof. Paulo Pinheiro, Independent Expert for the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children

Special Guest Speaker:

His Grace Archbishop John Onaiyekan, Catholic Archbishop of Abuja and President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria

■ The Pledge

Saturday, 13 May 2006

9.00-13.00: **The All-Africa Consultative Meeting of Child Rights, Youth and Human Rights Organisations**

This is a special meeting of Civil Society Organisations to discuss how they could support each other and work together so as to create a strong Africa-wide movement for the promotion and protection of the rights and welfare of children.

It is being organised in collaboration with partner organisations such as the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) and the Coalition of NGOs working for Children in Africa (CONAFE).

The meeting's programme will be circulated separately.

ANNEX VI - List of participants

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