



## **International Conference on Children, Torture and Other Forms of Violence**

### **The Tampere Declaration**

The “International Conference on Children, Torture and Other forms of Violence: Facing the Facts, Forging the Future” brought together 183 participants from 73 countries in all regions, representing a wide range of international and national NGOs, other organizations and observers from governments and international governmental organizations,

We reaffirm our commitment to continue our struggle to eliminate all forms of violence and torture against children and to create a world that protects and fulfills all rights of children.

Violence against children (all persons under 18), both girls and boys, encompasses all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, and includes, inter alia, sexual abuse, harmful traditional practices, trafficking, exploitation, bullying in schools and corporal punishment.

Violence against children demands immediate and effective action because of their inherent vulnerability. Violence kills and maims millions of children globally, and inhibits and undermines every aspect of a child’s development.

Violence is perpetrated against children in both private and public settings – their families, communities, detention centers, schools and other institutions – by parents, carers, educators, employers, peers, armed groups, and state officials of all kinds. Whatever the setting, the state has ultimate responsibility for deterring violence and providing effective protection and remedies, including early assistance and support to children after trauma.

Preventing and eliminating violence against children has huge potential for creating a society free of violence and favourable to a culture of human rights.

We the participants present –

Concerned that in many countries and regions there is still widespread social and cultural acceptance of violence against children and that widespread impunity allows such violence to continue,

Concerned about structural causes of violence against children including the denial of social, economic and cultural rights, which is exacerbated by globalization and resulting in increased poverty and inequality,

Recognize that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international standards affirm children’s status as holders of human rights. These include the right

to respect for human dignity and physical and psychological integrity and to equal protection under the law, without any form of discrimination.

Recognize the special competence and abilities of children and affirm that all children have the right to be active participants in identifying, preventing and addressing all forms of violence suffered by them,

Note the necessity to strengthen existing mechanisms to address violence, establish new mechanisms, provide them with adequate and sustainable funding, and take greater efforts to mainstream children's rights across international, regional and national systems,

Welcome the strong advocacy by the Committee on the Rights of the Child for protection of children from all forms of violence, through its reporting process, general discussion days and other activities,

Welcome the request of the General Assembly that the Secretary-General conduct an in-depth international study on the issue of violence against children, as recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

We the participants present,

Agree on the following recommendations and urge that every effort is made to ensure they are widely known, respected and implemented.

We recommend:

To the United Nations and UN-related bodies:

1. That the UN Commission on Human Rights appoint a Special Rapporteur on Violence against Children in order to, inter alia, solicit, receive and exchange information and communications, including individual complaints and on systematic violations, from all relevant sources, including from children themselves, on any form of violence or ill-treatment they may be subjected to, as well as its causes and consequences; to undertake investigations; and to take appropriate, including urgent actions. The Special Rapporteur should, as part of his or her work, interact with all relevant UN mechanisms, with relevant regional bodies and with national and international NGOs, and seek the views of children.
2. That the UN Secretary-General appoint an internationally-respected independent expert to head a well-qualified team to conduct the in-depth international study on violence against children requested by the UN General Assembly, and that the study be conducted in line with the recommendations set out by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, consulting all relevant sources including children;
3. That the Committee on the Rights of the Child produce General Comments on the provisions relating to children and violence in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular articles 19 and 37, taking into account the

special vulnerability of children to torture and other forms of violence, and that violence may affect different children in diverse ways, depending on factors including age, sex, and disability, and underlining states parties' obligations to prevent and remedy such violations;

4. That UN agencies and related bodies support the preparation and implementation of the international study on violence against children by providing staff, logistical and other support;
5. That the UN Mechanisms should mainstream the rights of the child within the scope of their activities;
6. That the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights organize with urgency a special workshop for existing UN mechanisms to address ways to more effectively address violence against children within their work, as recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child during its 28th session, and to enhance coordination amongst themselves;
7. That the UN Commission on Human Rights consider issues of violence against children as part of all relevant resolutions, in addition to the resolution on the rights of the child;
8. That the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children make a firm commitment to end all violence against children, with attention to the particular situation of girls, and adopt a clear plan of action to eliminate such violence, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights instruments and implement the plan within the same decade;
9. That resources available to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and relevant special mechanisms be increased to enable them to more effectively carry out their work.

To States, that they:

10. Ratify and fully and systematically implement all international and regional human rights and humanitarian instruments relevant to violence against children in all areas under their jurisdiction, and incorporate the same within domestic legislation;
11. Review, enact and amend as necessary all laws to prevent and prohibit torture and all forms of violence against children;
12. Take immediate measures to reform and to ensure the practical implementation of domestic laws and mechanisms, so as to ensure that child victims obtain justice and redress;
13. Provide adequate reparation, rehabilitation and reintegration of child victims in accordance with international and regional instruments, taking into account the differing circumstances and needs of child victims;

14. Establish or enhance effective monitoring bodies for the implementation of domestic legislation;
15. Cooperate with all international monitoring and fact-finding missions;
16. Implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and other treaty bodies in their concluding observations to periodic reports;
17. Identify all forms of violence against children and develop a national plan of action to end all forms of violence against children, in collaboration with civil society, including children;
18. Establish and strengthen juvenile justice systems that eliminate violence and meet international standards;
19. Implement international human rights instruments concerning child slavery, child labour, trafficking in children, abduction, as well as humanitarian instruments protecting children in armed conflicts;
20. Conduct research and studies and implement training programmes for all government officials in collaboration with civil society bodies, including NGOs;
21. Take all necessary measures to create an environment conducive to prevent violence against children through, inter alia, institutions, media, and education;
22. Eradicate all customary and traditional practices that constitute violence against children, are detrimental to the child's development or perpetuate violence against children, with special attention to girls;
23. Address structural causes of violence against children, inter alia, by allocating sufficient resources to ensure adequate nutrition, shelter, education and health care;
24. Promote and support community-based and local mechanisms for combating violence against children;
25. Empower children for effective participation in prevention and protection against violence through provision of resources at all levels;
26. Cooperate with other states to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against children, including by providing resources and technical cooperation;
27. Allocate adequate resources to ensure the effective functioning of UN mechanisms dealing with children and the successful completion of the in-depth UN study on violence against children.

Adopted in Tampere, Finland, the 30<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2001.