

# Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

## Report of the Expert Group Meeting\*

Organized by  
The Division for the Advancement of Women  
in collaboration with UNICEF

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Division for the Advancement of Women  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
Two UN Plaza – DC2-12<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10017  
Fax: (212) 963-3463 Email: [daw@un.org](mailto:daw@un.org)

\*The views expressed in this document are those of the experts and do not necessarily represent the views of the United Nations

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## **I. Introduction**

1. In accordance with its multi-year programme of work for 2007-2009, the Commission on

6. This report and all documentation relating to the meeting are available online at the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw>.

### **C. Programme of work**

7. At its opening session on 25 September 2006, the meeting adopted the following programme of work (see Annex III):

- Opening of the meeting;
- Election of officers and adoption of the programme of work;
- Presentation and discussion of the background papers prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women and UNICEF;
- Presentation of papers prepared by experts;
- Working groups on issues and recommendations;
- Introduction of the draft report;
- Adoption of the draft final report;
- Closing session

### **D. Election of officers**

8. **The experts elected the following officers:**

Chairperson:	Ms. Christina Marion Nomdo (South Africa)
Co-chairperson:	Ms. Judith Bruce (USA)
Rapporteur:	Ms. Busakorn Suriyasarn (Thailand)

### **E. Opening statements**

9. Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, welcomed all participants to the historic building of UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre. She underscored the symbolic significance of holding the expert meeting on the girl child in a building that has played a major role in protecting children since its establishment, in 1445, as the first hospital in the city of Florence dedicated solely to the care of abandoned or orphaned children. Ms. Santos Pais noted the timeliness of the Expe

Beijing, and emphasized the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as instruments for the protection and prom



development. The twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly on Children in 2002 recognized that the achievement of development goals for children, particularly girls, was contingent upon, inter alia, women's empowerment.<sup>1</sup>

22. The Beijing Platform for Action recognized that discrimination and violence against girls begin at the earliest stages of life and continue unabated throughout their lives. Girls often have less access to, inter alia, nutrition, physical and mental health care and education and enjoy fewer rights, opportunities and benefits of childhood and adolescence than boys. They are often subjected to various forms of violence and exploitation.<sup>2</sup>

23. At its forty-second session in 1998, the Commission on the Status of Women considered the theme of the girl child and adopted agreed conclusions, which outlined actions and initiatives aimed at, inter alia, the promotion and protection of the human rights of the girl child; education and empowerment of the girl child; improving the health needs of girls, the situation of girls in armed conflict, and combating trafficking and eliminating child labour.<sup>3</sup>

24. The outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly identified child labour, violence, lack of access to education, and sexual abuse as some of the obstacles that the girl child continues to face.<sup>4</sup>

25. The report of the Secretary-General on the ten-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action concluded that progress has been made by many countries in the advancement of the girl child, in particular in the recognition of the human rights of the girl child through the adoption of appropriate legislation, and in increasing access to primary education. It noted, however, that further efforts were needed, inter alia, to ensure equal access to secondary education and to job opportunities, to eradicate sex work by children, to ensure reintegration of the girl child after armed conflicts, and to improve collection of data on the situation of the girl child.<sup>5</sup>

26. At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders reaffirmed their previous commitments to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls<sup>6</sup>. At its sixtieth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/141 on the girl child, in which it expressed deep concern, inter alia, about discrimination against the girl child and the violation of her rights and stressed the importance of a substantive assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action with a life-cycle perspective.

27. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) contain mutually reinforcing principles to ensure protection and fulfillment of the rights of girls and to end gender-based discrimination. CEDAW General Recommendation 24 on women and health emphasizes that girls constitute a vulnerable and disadvantaged group that makes them especially susceptible to sexual abuse and, inter alia, disadvantages them in access to information about sexual health.<sup>7</sup> General comments by CRC have drawn attention to

sexual abuse at home, in the community and educational settings is greater for girls than boys.<sup>10</sup> Refugee and displaced girls also experience sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>11</sup> The study noted that States should ensure that anti-violence policies and programmes are designed and implemented with a gender perspective, taking into account the different risks facing boys and girls with respect to violence.<sup>12</sup> States should also promote and protect the human rights of women and girls.<sup>13</sup> A national research agenda on violence against children should be developed with particular attention to vulnerable boys and girls.<sup>14</sup> Local government and civil society initiatives should be promoted and supported to prevent violence against children, particularly by



eliminating discrimination and violence against girls, and addressing their exclusion from entitlements, rights and equal opportunities.

32. This consensus is reflected in a body of international legal instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its two Optional Protocols on The Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and The Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol; the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; and the ILO Conventions 138 on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. The rights of the girl child are also protected in humanitarian law.

33. The consensus on the rights of the girl child is also reflected in policy outcomes of inter-governmental processes and their follow-up, such as the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the World Summit for Children (1990), the Millennium Declaration (2000) leading to the Millennium Development Goals, and the 2005 World Summit, as well as in Security Council resolutions 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and 1261, 1314, 1379, 1539 and 1612 on children and armed conflict.

34. The findings and recommendations of the Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children and the Secretary-General's In-depth study on all forms of violence against women provide an opportunity to strengthen the international momentum to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against girls and to empower them to realize their full potential.

35. Recent benchmark development reports, including reviews of the social dimensions of

## **B. Critical issues**

37. Despite the existence of an internationally agreed legal framework, girls overall still disproportionately bear the worst human rights abuses during childhood and adolescence.<sup>23</sup> In particular, the absence of, or inconsistencies in, the interpretation and implementation of legal frameworks at the national and sub-national levels have contributed to continuing discrimination and violence against girls.<sup>24</sup> In addition, harmful civil and customary laws, often derived from traditional beliefs, result in millions of girls around the world facing persistent discriminatory and violent practices, often at the hands of their own families and communities.<sup>25</sup>

38. A substantial proportion of girls is being actively disempowered by discriminatory, violent, unsupportive and disabling environments, beginning at home and extending to national and international levels. The very duty bearers charged with protecting and supporting the rights of girls - such as parents, siblings, guardians, teachers or law enforcement officers - have often been implicated in various forms of violence against girls, as well as in the neglect of their responsibility to protect them. Societies more generally continue to accept, and at times even foster, discriminatory attitudes that lay the groundwork for impunity for crimes against girls. In some cases, attacks on girls' physical and mental integrity are sanctified as elements of 'culture,' laying a powerful foundation for the denial of girls' rights.<sup>26</sup>

39. Pervasive patriarchal gender biases and stereotypes and narrowly defined gender roles place girls on the lowest rung of the social and family hierarchies, rendering them socially invisible and marginalized. As a result of discrimination, indifference, ignorance, and the hidden nature of the widespread abuses against them, girls continue to suffer serious rights violations, often outside the public consciousness, and are left behind in human development.

40. In Section VI of the report, the Expert Group highlights groups of girls deemed "invisible" due to a combination of factors that put them at an especially high risk of discrimination and rights violations. The fact that many of their experiences of discrimination and violence happen out of public view (in private settings), or are seen as normal practices, renders them invisible. As a result, policies and programmes too often ignore or miss them.

## **C. Implementing the international framework**

41. The Expert Group found that substantial progress towards implementation of the international normative framework could be made if efforts were strengthened in a number of areas, as outlined below.

42. Current international instruments and policies are not specific enough to protect, promote and fulfill the rights of the girl child. As a result of this lack of specificity, two of the most important international instruments for girls' rights, CRC and CEDAW, are not being adequately implemented to positively protect and promote the rights of the girl child. In addition, there are insufficient linkages between the two Conventions and their monitoring bodies.

Admission to Employment and Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Countries that have ratified these Conventions, as well as the CRC and CEDAW Conventions, have not sufficiently and effectively applied these instruments in national laws or at the sub-national level. The lack of political will is also reflected in the limited allocation of resources for girl-specific programmes, impeding progress not only on the empowerment of girls, but on the achievement of national social, economic and development goals. Security Council resolution 1325, and the subsequent Presidential Statements on women, peace and security, have not yet resulted in committed interventions concerning violence against girls in armed conflicts.

44. The trend towards larger global data aggregations over-emphasizes national-level data, masking significant sub-national variations. Many trends regarding the lives of girls are monitored and interventions designed and allocations made at the national level. Yet it is at the sub-national level that many policies and programmes fail to address the persistent occurrence of discrimination and violence against girls. The tendency of inadvertently portraying and addressing girls as a homogeneous group—by governments and civil society institutions alike—often results in the empowerment of some groups of girls and the neglect of others. It is imperative to address the rights of the girl child with due consideration of the different contexts and experiences of girls.

45. Development policies and resources on child and youth health are often gender-blind and, as a result, the special needs and priorities of girls are neglected. Many interventions target young children (for early intervention) or older adolescents (for catch-up interventions) and, as a result, many at-risk girls between the ages of 6 and 14 are missed. Policies and programmes to address the situation of girls are often reactive (“rescue and recovery”) instead of proactive and focused on prevention and protection. Yet in the face of a number of abuses discussed in this report, there is no full recovery for many of these girls. More efforts must be proactively directed towards the protection and promotion of the human rights of girls.

46. Girls often lack access to girl-friendly, safe and supportive spaces, including at school. Yet studies find that girl-friendly spaces, which are discussed throughout this report, are often among the best platforms from which governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations can protect and promote the human rights of girls.<sup>27</sup> It is important that girls have a voice and are enabled to take part in the deliberations that address their life chances and potential as human beings. Ignoring the voice of the girl child effectively prevents her from influencing decisions regarding her life and development. Girls’ right to express themselves must be promoted and protected.

## **V. Addressing patriarchy, gender inequalities, and negative gender values, stereotypes and practices**

47. Underlying patriarchal attitudes and behaviour, as well as discriminatory gender norms and structures, are the root causes of violations of girls’ rights. In national forums and in legislation, in places of work, schools and vocational training institutions, on the street and in the home, negative patriarchal attitudes, practices and gender stereotypes favor boys and men and give them power. The result is that millions of girls and women are negatively affected in diverse and culturally-specific ways. While boys and men may also have their rights violated by rigid gender norms – and efforts should be undertaken to address this – women and girls are the most

negatively affected. There is an urgent need to challenge, and take collective action to address, patriarchy and power imbalances. This must include action by all relevant stakeholders – governments, communities, individual women, men, girls and boys.

48. Many of the worst forms of discrimination and violence against girls occur in their own homes and communities. The socialization of boys and men frequently focuses on controlling the sexuality and reproductive and productive labor of women and girls. The repression of female sexuality, including an over-emphasis on female virginity and fertility, is a driving force behind much of the discrimination and subjugation of girls. Widespread access to pornography in some settings, for both boys and girls, is a form of sex “mis”-education that reinforces negative and violent stereotypes.

49. Rigid forms of gender socialization are often generated and preserved by tradition and

## **VI. Girls at high risk of discrimination and violence: Invisible girls**

53. Girls encounter various forms of discrimination and violence at different stages in their lives. Their susceptibility to sexu

have serious repercussions on the gender balance in some populations, which may result in further violence against women and girls in the not-so-distant future. Emerging evidence can be seen, for example, in trafficking of young women and girls as brides-to-be from Viet Nam to rural China, where many young women live in virtual slavery.<sup>32</sup>

b) Girls and female genital mutilation/cutting

58. Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) continues to take its toll on girls, largely in Africa. According to studies by the World Health Organization (WHO), there are between 100 and 140 million girls in the world who have undergone FGM/C.<sup>33</sup> It is estimated that the practice affects 3 million girls every year.<sup>34</sup>

59. FGM/C comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs, whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. Performance of the procedures is often justified by tradition. The consequences, as documented by WHO and other organizations, are multiple; infection, tetanus, bleeding, tearing during child delivery, and keloid formation are some of the results. The risk of HIV infection exists, especially when the same tool is used to cut several girls at the same time. Adverse obstetric and prenatal outcomes are among the known harmful immediate and long-term effects of FGM/C.<sup>35</sup>

c) Girls at risk of child marriage

60. Social expectations and family poverty often put intense pressure on girls to marry and begin bearing children before they are emotionally, socially and physically ready. If present trends continue, over one hundred million girls will be married as children in the next decade.<sup>36</sup> In most countries, the practice of child marriage is concentrated in specific sub-national contexts or regions.<sup>37</sup>

61. In many parts of the world, young girls (sometimes as young as six years old) are forced into early marriage by their families and communities, often justified by tradition and/or religion. Economic pressure is also often used as an explanation for early marriages, with parents and communities treating girls as commodities through bride price and dowries paid by their prospective husbands.<sup>38</sup> In some situations of armed conflict, practices of child marriage are exacerbated as families marry off their girls in an attempt to try and avoid rape, abduction and forced marriage, or to raise money for the survival of remaining family members.<sup>39</sup> In extreme cases, families protect their honour by marrying their girls off as early as possible.<sup>40</sup>

62. Child marriage jeopardizes girls' health and limits their opportunities, usually disrupting their education and often violating their rights in a number of ways. Data on spousal age differences show that the younger the girl, the greater the age differential with her spouse.<sup>41</sup> Child marriage with significantly older husbands tends to preclude the establishment of an equal, consensual relationship—child brides have limited or no capacity to negotiate sexual relations, contraception, and other reproductive decisions, including the terms of childbearing, as well as other aspects of their life.<sup>42</sup>

63. Child marriage typically transits girls from sexual abstinence to high levels of unprotected sexual relations, often with older partners. In the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, this significantly increases the risk of HIV/AIDS, and indeed prevalence rates among married girls are often strikingly higher even compared to sexually active age mates. Married girls who have been abandoned, divorced or widowed may be at a particular risk of HIV/AIDS as a result of their vulnerability post-marriage.<sup>43</sup>

## **2. Child mothers and girl heads of household**

### **a) Child mothers**

64. Young brides often become mothers before they are physically and emotionally ready. Other young girls also become mothers as a result of rape, commercial sexual exploitation and forced marriage. Millions of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 – both married and unmarried – give birth each year. For this age group, complications of pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death, with unsafe abortion being a major factor. There is a strong correlation between





72. Girls as well as boys are engaged in child labour, many in its worst forms. ILO reports

76. Another concern is girls who perform domestic chores within their own households. Child labour statistics do not take into account household chores within the household as child labour, as it is not considered an economic activity, regardless of the number of hours dedicated to this activity. Nonetheless, a recent ILO-World Bank-UNICEF study found that girls work significantly longer hours than boys performing domestic chores within their own households.<sup>71</sup> Girls' involvement in domestic chores within their own household contributes to their limited enrollment in schools and lower levels of achievement, thus increasing their likelihood of living in poverty.<sup>72</sup>

77. Many governments are reluctant to recognize child domestic work as a form of child labour, including as a worst form of child labour, because of the prevailing tolerance for use of children as domestic servants. The absence of clear legal measures and effective law enforcement against rights violations of child domestic workers remains a serious impediment to expanding efforts to address the problem.<sup>73</sup>

b) Girls affected by slavery-like practices

78. Many children fall victim to trafficking through abduction, use of force or deception. Due to poverty, many poor families decide to send their children to seek work opportunities away from home. Girls are among the nearly six million children in forced or bonded labour, including



## 5. Girls infected with and affected by HIV and AIDS

85. The face of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is increasingly young, poor and female. In some settings, the latest incidence of HIV/AIDS is reaching a female to male ratio of 8:1 among those aged 15-24.<sup>91</sup> The HIV/AIDS epidemic is threatening the poorest, youngest, and least powerful segments of society composed of individuals with limited social and economic assets, unable to avoid, mitigate the effects of, or leave unsafe sexual relationships. Hundreds of millions of poor and socially excluded girls are at significant risk of sexual exploitation, economically driven sexual relations and child marriage, all factors that put them at increased risk of contracting HIV. Another high risk group includes the millions of girls who are not living at home with their parents or attending school.<sup>92</sup>

86. Girls infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS face enormous challenges in realizing their rights. UNICEF-ILO studies find that girls infected by HIV are twice as likely to be engaged in child labour and its worst forms. In these circumstances, girls are often required to assume additional household responsibilities, such as caring for ill family members and younger siblings at the expense of opportunities to attend school and build their social networks. In an effort to provide for the basic needs of their families, whose livelihood inputs have been weakened by HIV and AIDS, young girls may be pushed into exploitative environments where they are at risk of child labour, physical abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking. Moreover, the youngest girls affected by the epidemic are less likely to have access to basic health services or receive proper nutrition when their primary caretakers are ill or are children themselves.<sup>93</sup>

87. Female heads-of-households, some of them infected by their now deceased husbands or sexual partners, struggle to provide food and shelter for their children. In some cases, girls are pulled out of school due to lack of resources or the need for them to engage in activities to help support their families. When parents or caregivers die, girls may have to take on the role as head-of-household. Girl heads-of-households often experience higher levels of sexual abuse and exploitation as they try to provide for their siblings, thus increasing their risk of exposure to HIV and AIDS.<sup>94</sup>

88. HIV and AIDS destroys families due to the death of parents or caregivers. Significantly, 13 of the 17 countries with over 100,000 children orphaned by AIDS are either experiencing armed conflict or are on the brink of an emergency situation.<sup>95</sup> Girls in situations of armed conflict are also at heightened risk of contracting HIV and AIDS. Armed conflict breaks down social structures, community protection networks and legal protection mechanisms and fosters an environment where sexual violations and exploitation increase. Sexual relations can become increasingly violent, the number of partners can increase and girls become sexually active at younger ages. Occurrences of rape, sexual slavery, trafficking and forced marriages also increase, with more and younger girls subject to these violations.<sup>96</sup> All these factors facilitate the spread of HIV/AIDS, with girls in particular at high risk. In addition, military personnel often have higher HIV/AIDS rates than civilian populations, which means that girls within war affected communities are at greater risk of exposure to the disease than previously.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, in most war affected areas, testing and treatment of HIV/AIDS affected children is non-existent.<sup>98</sup>

## **6. Refugee, asylum-seeking and internally displaced girls**

89. There are over 23.7 million refugees and internally displaced persons, the majority of whom are women and children.<sup>99</sup> Refugee and asylum-seeking girls are protected not only by

number of locations, pastoral and nomadic communities are subject to frequent deadly attacks by armed raiders and, at times, armed government forces.<sup>104</sup> In research and data on pastoral and nomadic communities, attention to girls is almost entirely absent.

95. Girls within pastoral and nomadic communities suffer discrimination and rights violations due to gender stereotypes, negative practices related to property ownership and inheritance, early

necessary services. Disabled girls are more likely to be excluded from education, especially in the developing world. The additional impact of gender inequality is significant for girls with disabilities who are excluded from education as they will not add to the workforce. Even when included, girls often lack the access to specialized equipment or skilled staff that would allow their full participation.<sup>113</sup>

100. These children also face higher levels of parental abandonment and are susceptible to physical and sexual abuse. Girls with disabilities are at risk of HIV/AIDS infection as a result of such abuse. Because children with disabilities face obstacles in identifying perpetrators or communicating to others about abuse, their abusers are less likely to be identified and girls are more likely to remain in abusive environments. Armed conflict exacerbates all these factors, as the number of children with disabilities resulting from the fighting grows.<sup>114</sup>

d) Girls in detention

101. An estimated one million children and adolescents are believed to be in detention worldwide,<sup>115</sup> the majority of whom have committed small property-related crimes such as petty theft. Detention is psychologically and physically damaging to children. Youth criminality is a politically sensitive issue, and governments often choose to criminalize so-called “delinquent” children and adolescents (especially those who are poor), than to embark on the more complicated path of addressing the root causes of their marginalization from society. This trend is evidenced by the push in many countries to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility.<sup>116</sup>

102. Issues faced by girls in detention include pre-trial and post-trial violence, including physical and sexual violence and harassment by adult detainees, staff/guards and peers (staff often allow or encourage youth to abuse other youth); violence as a result of detention conditions; disciplinary measures (including as part of sentencing); and arbitrary/prolonged detention.<sup>117</sup> Detention conditions are often poor, with overcrowding, co-mingling with adults, and poor sanitary facilities.<sup>118</sup>

103. Because there are many more boys than girls in criminal justice systems around the world, girls are often inserted into the system with little recognition that their needs are different. Because of the relatively low numbers of young female offenders, specialized custodial facilities, whether pre-trial or post-sentence, rarely exist, with the result that girls are often held in places far from their family. For similar reasons, they are more likely than boys to be held with adults. The practice of mixing girls with adult female detainees is justified by the authorities in some countries as being positive for girls, although no decisive evidence of this appears to exist. Overall, girls are more likely than boys to be deprived of educational opportunities when detained. The special hygiene needs of girls are usually overlooked.<sup>119</sup>

104. When mothers are deprived of liberty, all efforts should be made to provide the best possible conditions for children, including girls, cared for by mothers in pri0 Tc( m)n detentn, e0.00hr

## **VII. Empowering girls to realize their human rights**

105. The human rights of girls enshrined in international instruments cannot be attained without the empowerment of girls themselves. An informed and empowered girl is better able to exercise agency over her own life, to be an actor rather than a recipient of rights and services, and to become a visible and active member of society.

106. Empowerment is an active and inclusive proc



stark contrast to boys—have few opportunities to meet their same-sex peers outside of their home, or even in the context of school, in a reliably accessible and safe place. Perhaps those with the least access to a safe and supportive space are newly married girls—transited from natal homes to marital homes far away, disconnected from family social networks which may have nurtured them.<sup>122</sup>

## **2. Building girls' social assets**

114. Social isolation is a reality of life for the vast majority of disadvantaged and marginalized girls. Migrant girls, girl child domestic workers, girls living in situations of armed conflict, girls living on the streets and other groups of high risk girls are often living separately, or even totally isolated, from their immediate families, and therefore away from the basic protective unit of society. Research has demonstrated that a substantial portion of adolescent girls aged 10-14 are effectively de-linked from key protective structures—they are neither living with their parents or families nor attending school.<sup>129</sup>

115. Building girls' social assets includes informing them about their rights and helping them build the skills to exercise these rights. It entails helping to build connections with same-sex friends, developing safe spaces to meet friends, having adults in their lives to whom they can turn in times of need, and mentors who help them aspire to their future goals. Building social assets means giving girls opportunities to experience being part of a team and developing leadership skills. Girls' social assets can only be built if they find their own voice and recognize their ability to identify their own needs and act on them as full members of society. During later childhood/early adolescence, in order to enter into decent work, girls must learn to identify

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### **3. Provision of education, information and skills-building for girls**

117. Education represents one of



visible and girls at greatest risk—articulate their needs, which are often different from those of more privileged girls.

126. Many national and international organizations, including United Nations entities, have in recent years begun to include girls' voices in designing and evaluating their policies and programmes. However, it is important that participation of girls—particularly girls from poorer households and in more marginal circumstances—be meaningful and not a token gesture. Participation mechanisms must explicitly acknowledge the great diversity of girls and seek to ensure the participation of the least privileged and highest risk girls.

### **Box 3**

#### **Reaching out to girl domestic workers in the Philippines**

The Visayan Forum Foundation began reaching out to girl and boy domestic workers in public parks,

129. A small but growing base of impact evaluation has confirmed that such programmes can have an impact, and have demonstrated changes in attitudes and behaviors of men and boys who have participated in, or been reached by, such activities. Most of these initiatives have engaged boys and men aged 15 and up.<sup>149</sup> There is a need to consider interventions and policies that engage even younger boys, including engaging men to a greater extent in the care of young children as a way to change discriminatory gender socialization from the earliest ages.

130. At the policy level, ministries of women's affairs and gender equality should examine and review their policies to identify concrete ways to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality. This may include policies related to paternal leave, policies to encourage men's participation in antenatal and maternal care, and campaigns and policies to eradicate the trafficking of women and girls and sexual exploitation, in HIV/AIDS prevention and sexual and reproductive health, among others.

#### **Box 4**

##### **Helping boys challenge traditional male socialization**

There are concrete, evaluated interventions starting at the community level that have been proven to impact on how boys and girls, as well as families and communities, view gender roles. It is during childhood and adolescence that boys and girls internalize and rehearse the gender roles they will assume as men and women. Traditional gender norms are linked to increased risk of HIV/AIDS, violence, and (for girls) early unwanted intercourse and pregnancy. In hopes of fostering more equal relationships between men and women, and to reduce the risk that young men themselves currently face, some programmes are now focusing on helping boys question traditional male socialization. Within the framework of these programmes, small groups of boys are organized to meet on a weekly basis over at least three to six months. The curricula often emphasize social themes over health information, addressing such issues as violence and sexual coercion, what it means to be a man, homophobia, and women's rights as human rights. Other programmes carry out community campaigns or engage community leaders in questioning discriminatory, traditional norms. A cross-cutting concern is to identify boys' own rationale for change and to teach them critical thinking skills to help them question inequitable views about gender equality. Innovative programmes in Nigeria, Brazil, Mexico, and South Africa are among those documenting

133. Experts agreed that it is paramount that data be systematically disaggregated not only by sex, but also by age:

- § Female/male infants to 5 years of age
- § Girls/boys 6 to 9 years of age
- § Girls/boys 10 to 14 years of age
- § Girls/boys 15 to 19 years of age
- § Young women/men 20-24 years of age.

134. The Expert Group recommends that governments, international organizations including the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders, work together to collect, analyze, compile and disseminate data in order to monitor progress in eliminating discrimination and violence against the girl child in the following areas:

Health Stat

- § Percentage of girls/boys (age 10-14) living apart from both parents.
- § Percentage of girls/boys (age 10-14) living apart from both parents, and out of school.
- § Ratio of school attendance of female/male orphans (age 10-14).
- § Ratio of school attendance of female/male non-orphans (age 10-14).

### Child marriage

138. The indicators on child marriage identified by the Experts include:
- § Percentage of girls/women currently 10-24 married under age 15, and under age 18.
  - § Average spousal age differences for girls married (under 15, under 18), compared to those married over 20.

### Child labour

139. Indicators on child labour include:<sup>151</sup>

- a) prevalence of child labour



- Are paid in cash and in kind for work.
  - Are unpaid for work.
- Š Percentage of girls/boys in child labour who are in female-headed household.
  - Š Percentage of girls/boys in child labour who are in male-headed household.
  - Š Percentage of girls/boys in child labour who are the head of own household.
- c) prevalence of hazardous child labour and violence at work
- Number and percentage of girls/boys (5-11, 12-14, 15-17) who:
- Work under hazardous conditions (including in domestic work).
  - Work in one of the worst forms of child labour as defined by the ILO Convention 182.
  - Work in one of the worst forms of child labour as specified in the national laws (in reference to Article 4 in ILO Convention 182).
- Š Percentage of girls/boys who suffer/are exposed to injuries or health hazards at work.
  - Š Percentage of girls/boys who suffer/are at risk of serious injuries and illnesses (resulting in hospitalization, disabilities) or death at work.
  - Š Percentage of girls/boys who suffer/are at risk of violence at work (including verbal, physical and psychological abuse, sexual harassment, and rape).

Participation and access to decision-making in society

140.

Community support, safety and protection

141. The indicators on protection and s

## **IX. Conclusions and recommendations**

142. The Expert Group proposes overarching conclusions and recommendations that apply to actors at all levels to address discrimination and violence against girls. It proposes three sets of recommendations specifically addressed to particular groups of actors: firstly, on the application of international human rights instruments and legislative and policy reforms, addressed mainly to States and international bodies; secondly, specific recommendations relating to programming, implementation and follow-up, addressed to States, United Nations agencies, donor agencies, and organizations working directly with children; and finally, recommendations addressed to non-governmental and civil society organizations.

### **1. Overarching conclusions and recommendations**

*a) Adopt an integrated and rights-based approach for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, including ratification of international instruments.*

143. The protection and promotion of girls' human rights should be the explicit focus of all actions to eliminate discrimination and violence against the girl child. International human rights instruments provide the framework and accountability mechanisms for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. These instruments include, but are not limited to, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its two Optional Protocols, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol, ILO Conventions No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime.

*b) Strengthen the implementation of human rights instruments at the national, sub-national and local levels.*

144.

gender-responsive in design, methodology and data collection, and analyses should be disaggregated by age, sex, stage in life-cycle, education, marital status, family characteristics, geographical location, ethnicity, and income. Member States and organizations working on girls' issues should also ensure systematic collection of qualitative as well as quantitative data, mapping of the situation of specific groups of girls and broad dissemination of research findings. Lessons learned and good practices should be widely shared a

education for girls, nutrition for early growth and development, sexual and reproductive health services, the support of mentorship programmes for girls' empowerment, available and accessible legal structures and advocates for girls, efforts to prevent and address exploitative labour, and other programming to promote girls' rights. Programming should build upon local capacities and ownership, and the interventions should take into account the particular needs within the specific cultural/political contexts and life/work experiences in each group of targeted girls.

*g) Ensure participation and empowerment of girls by providing safe spaces.*

149. Member States should fully implement Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which guarantees children the right to express their opinions and participate in decision-making related to their own lives. States should create or support the creation of enabling environments that are safe and supportive of the full development and protection of the rights of girls. They should be held accountable for the creation and positive impact of these environments. This includes family, school, community, workplace and other spaces. To ensure that girls have meaningful participation in the elaboration, implementation and follow up of all public policy that affects their lives, it is vital to provide adequate and sustained resources to support girl-friendly participatory mechanisms.

150. Safe and enabling spaces for girls are ones whereby girls can feel safe but also empowered. The spaces can be girl-only or mixed-sex spaces where mutual respect between boys and girls and gender equality can be fostered. A range of youth-serving initiatives, such as youth centres, peer education programmes, family and life skills programmes, and other youth services, can increase girls' participation by creating safe spaces for girls and addressing girls' needs and priorities. Special safe spaces should be created for girls with particular needs, such as married girls, young mothers, child workers, girls affected by HIV/AIDS, girls with disabilities

*i) Involve men and boys in efforts to fight against discrimination and violence against women and girls.*

152. Efforts to change attitudes that condone, and practices that sanction, discrimination and violence against girls and women will not achieve ultimate success without the active

157. The CEDAW Committee should consider drafting a General Recommendation on women and girls in armed conflict to assist States to take actions to prevent and respond to violations of their rights during conflict and to facilitate measurement of progress in States meeting their obligations.

158. The reporting guidelines for the CRC and CEDAW Committees should require reporting on progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action critical area of concern on the girl-child, including increased attention to problems at sub-national level which may be hidden under national level statistics, data and information.

159. The two Committees should also increase collaboration and consultation with civil society, in particular women's groups and organizations, in order to monitor how national governments implement, in practice, concluding observations and recommendations of these Committees.

b) Other human rights mechanisms and instruments

160. The methods of work and procedures of the newly established Human Rights Council should devote explicit attention to the human rights of girls, including through a specific sub-item on the Human Rights Council's agenda.

161. Bearing in mind the grave violations of girls rights in situations of armed conflict, the Security Council should ensure that the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict includes a specific focus on girl children, and country reports should provide progress reviews relating to the girl child. This Working Group would take into account currently available standards, tools

c) Member States

165. All States which are parties to CRC and CEDAW should take action to:

- i) Harmonize their national laws with international standards relating to girls, noting the inter-linkages between the two Conventions and their protocols. Sensitivity to sub-national variations of data on human rights abuses of girls should be incorporated in the domestic legal framework.
- ii) Organize consultations with the NGO sector in the process of writing Government reports to the CRC Committee, the CEDAW Committee and other international human rights treaty bodies, and initiate a wide-ranging public debate on the draft version of such reports before they are submitted to the respective bodies.
- iii) Mainstream issues of the girl child into the periodic reporting to the international human rights treaty bodies, in particular CRC and CEDAW.

166. All States should conduct legislative and policy reforms to eliminate discrimination and violence against the girl child. Legislative and policy reform should be combined with necessary national and local social policies, resource allocations and programmes to make implementation and enforcement of the law effective. A budget line for protection and empowerment of girls should be established in all relevant ministries and public access provided to this information. Actions required by States include:

- i) Urgently develop, adopt and implement legislation and policies that promote and safeguard the rights of the girl child and women.
- ii) Identify and fill gaps in legislation regarding the priority groups of girls discussed in this report;
- iii) Repeal all laws that discriminate against women and the girl child, for example, laws on inheritance, property ownership, divorce, and minimum age for marriage.

167. States should ratify the ILO Conventions 138 and 182, and ensure that national plans, policies and programmes on combating child labour and its worst forms (including commercial sexual exploitation, slave-like practices, forced and bonded labour, trafficking, and hazardous forms of child labour) effectively eliminate child labour of girls. A special focus should be given to especially vulnerable situations of working girls, including girls in domestic child labour, by identifying child domestic labour as a potentially worst form of child labour to be eliminated in national laws.

168. All forms of girl child labour below the minimum age for employment should be eliminated as a matter of priority, combining law reform with effective social policies, including access to education and health services. In cases of girl workers above the legal minimum working age but under the age of eighteen working within the legal limits for employment, decent



work conditions, including strict regulation and monitoring of work conditions, and the prevention and eradication of violence at work, should be ensured.



- ii) Conduct comprehensive analysis of the quality of education at the national level, based on surveys of educational outcomes (that is, organize testing of children aimed at examining whether children have acquired appropriate life sk



iii) Encourage and support the organization of different forms of extra-curricular activities for children, taking into account specific interests of girls.

iv)

179. To ensure systematic coordination of efforts, the following actions are required:

- i) Increase support to and/or initiate programmes of collaboration with NGOs working at sub-national and national level.
- ii) Improve inter-agency coordination on the girl child and collaborative development of standards, ~~and, stipend~~ ~~and, stipend~~

- i) Create girl-to-girl mentoring and support structures which draw upon the talents of girls who have graduated from secondary school. Tapping the skills of these girls, and building their social capital to serve as mentors to younger girls, will both reward their schooling achievements and develop them as a cadre to connect to and deliver programmes to younger girls. A cadre of adolescent and young women is vital for successful role modeling, programming and for the provision of safety nets for younger girls.
- j) Support public education programmes and spaces for girls to, for example, carry out national level consultations, essay contests, national media events that include the voices of girls and boys in questioning gender inequalities.
- k) Establish teams within media management responsible for designing and implementing gender-sensitive editorial policy and integrating girl child issues into media programmes. Create media space for girl issues, for example dedicated minutes of broadcasting time or a dedicated column.

## ANNEX I

### List of Participants

#### EXPERTS

Shamima ALI  
Coordinator, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre  
P.O.Box 12882  
Suva, Fiji

Gary BARKER  
Executive Director of Instituto Promundo  
Rue Mexico 31/1502  
Rio de Janeiro, RJ  
CEP 20031-144  
Brazil

Judith BRUCE  
Senior Associate/Programme Director  
Gender, Family and Development  
Population Council  
The Population Council  
1 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

Nicole BIDEgain PONTE  
Youth Activist  
Acosta Y Lara 2442  
CP. 11600  
Uruguay

Biljana BRANKOVIC  
Independent Consultant  
Zarka Zrenjanina 6, apartment 5  
Belgrade, Serbia

Fatuma CHEGE  
Chairperson  
Dept. of Educational Foundations  
Kenyatta University  
P.O.Box 1314, Ruaraka-00618  
Kenya

Shahira FAWZY  
Chairperson, Socio-economic planning  
center for appropriate development  
(SEPCAD)/CAPACITY NGO  
22 Mohamed El Mahdi, Golf area,  
Heliopolis, Cairo  
Egypt

Cecilia FLORES-OEBANDA  
President  
Visayan Forum Foundation  
4<sup>th</sup> floor, RFM Center  
Pioneer Corner Sheridan Streets  
Mandaluyong City  
1550  
Philippines

Ambassador Moushira KHATTAB  
Vice-Chair  
Committee on the Rights of the Child  
Geneva  
Switzerland

Dyan MAZURANA  
Research Director  
Feinstein International Center  
Tufts University, USA

Christina NOMDO  
ON PAR Development  
PO Box 1625  
Cape Town, 8000  
South Africa

Berhane RAS-WORK  
Executive Director,  
Inter-African Committee on Harmful  
Traditional Practices Affecting Women and  
Girls  
145 Rue de Lausanne  
1202 Geneva, Switzerland



Teresita SILVA  
President and Executive Director  
Childhope Asia  
1210 Penafrancia St.  
Paco, Manila, 1007  
Philippines

Busakorn SURIYASARN  
Independent Consultant  
398/2, 7 Monterey Place,  
Soi Paisingtoh Rama 4,  
Klongtoey, Bangkok 10110  
Thailand

Daniela ZAPATA  
Independent Consultant  
Santiago, Chile  
Mardoqueo Fernandez 171 #1006,  
Providencia,  
Santiago, Chile

## **CONSULTANTS**

Savitri GOONESEKERE  
Emeritus Professor of Law  
University of Colombo  
304/5 Park Road  
Colombo 5, Sri Lanka

Christoph SCHUEPP  
Independent Consultant  
Bochum, Germany

## **OBSERVERS**

### **United Nations System**

#### **International Labour Organization**

Anita AMORIM  
Programme Officer for Latin America  
Gender and AIDS Focal Point  
International Programme on the Elimination  
of Child Labour  
International Labour Organisation  
4 route des Morillons 1211  
Geneva, Switzerland

### **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Dutima BHAGWANDIN  
Gender Coordinator  
Office of the High Commissioner for Human  
Rights  
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

### **United Nations Development Population Fund**

Riet GROENEN  
Advisor on Gender and Human Rights  
UNFPA  
11 Chemin des Anémones  
1219 Chatelaine  
Geneva, Switzerland

### **International Fund for Agricultural Development**

Maria HARTL  
Technical Adviser - Gender and Social  
Equity  
Technical Advisory Division  
International Fund for Agricultural  
Development (IFAD)  
Via del Serafico 107  
00142 Rome, Italy

### **World Food Programme**

Isatou JALLOW  
Chief of Gender, Mother and Child Health  
Service Policy, Strategy and Programme  
Support Division  
World Food Programme  
Via C.G.Viola 68  
Parco dei Medici  
00148 Rome, Italy

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

Frances NICHOLSON  
Research Officer  
Division of International Protection  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
94 Rue de Montbrillant  
CH-1202  
Geneva, Switzerland

**Observers from Government**

Angela BÄHR  
Team Leader GTZ  
Protection of Minors against Sexual Exploitation  
Dag Hammarskjold – Weg 1-S  
D-65760 Eschborn  
Germany

Bianca POMERANZI  
Senior Gender Adviser – General Directorate  
for Italian development cooperation  
Via Contarini 25-00104  
Rome, Italy

Eva Maria WELSKOP-DEFFAA  
Director-General for Gender Equality  
Federal Ministry for Family Affairs  
Senior Citizens Women and Youth  
Alexanderstrasse 3, D-10178  
Berlin, Germany

**International Organizations**

Karen JABRE  
Programme Manager,  
Programme for the Promotion of Partnership  
between Men and Women  
International Parliamentary Union  
5, chemin du Pommier  
Case postale 330  
CH-1218 Le Grand-Saconnex /  
Geneva, Switzerland

Elsie-Bernadette ONUBOGU  
Gender Adviser, Democracy, Peace and Conflict  
Commonwealth Secretariat  
Marlborough House, Pall Mall,  
London SW1Y 5HX, UK

**Civil Society**

Hourig BABIKIAN  
Christian Children's Fund  
211 East 43<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10017

Sarah BOUCHIE  
Director for the Basic and Girls' Education Unit  
CARE  
151 Ellis Street  
Atlanta, GA 30331

Tara CHETTY  
Information and Research Officer  
Fiji Women's Rights Movement  
P.O. Box 14194  
Suva, Fiji

Alessandro DE MARCHENT ET  
D'ANSEMBOURG  
Santa Maddalena Foundation  
c.da delle Corte 1  
I-25040 Nigoline, Italy

Kristine HERMAN  
Gender/Human Rights Liaison  
American Bar Association  
ABA-CEELI  
Neftchilar av., 97, Apt. 23  
Baku, Azerbaijan

Catherine E. MOORE  
IFUW Coordinator/Representative at the  
Hourig BABIKIAN

Regine ROSNER  
IN VIA Katholische Madchensozialarbeit  
Deutscher Verband  
Referentin  
Karlstrasse 40, D-79104  
Freiburg, Germany

Setareh TAHERKHANI  
Iranian Association of Women's Studies  
University of Tehran,  
16 Azar Street, Enghelab Ave.  
Tehran, Iran

## **ORGANIZERS**

**United Nations Division for the  
Advancement of Women (DAWF(DAWF(DAWFTf0 -1.14 TD0 Tc()TjTT4 1€)TjTT0.0002 Tc0.0002 52OS**

**ANNEX II**

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.11**      *Social and economic development and reproductive health of vulnerable adolescent girls*  
Ms. Judith Bruce (United States)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.12**      *The girl child and armed conflict: Recognizing and addressing grave violations of girls' human rights*  
Ms. Dyan Mazurana (United States)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.13**      *Teacher identities and empowerment of girls against sexual violence*  
Ms. Fatuma Chege (Kenya)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.14**      *Violence against the girl child from a practitioner's perspective*  
Ms. Shamima Ali (Fiji)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.15**      *Full protection of the girl child through effective legislation and enforcement*  
Ms. Moushira Khattab (Egypt)

## **B. PAPERS BY OBSERVERS**

- EGM/DVGC/2006/OP.1**      *The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, Situation paper for the Pacific Islands Region*  
UNICEF
- EGM/DVGC/2006/OP.2**      *Need for action to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against girls*  
Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Berlin, Germany
- EGM/DVGC/2006/OP.3**      *Reducing Vulnerability of the Girl Child in Poor Rural Areas: Activities of the International Fund for Agricultural Development*  
IFAD, Rome

## **C. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- EGM/DVGC/2006/BP.1**      *Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child*  
Prof. Savitri Goonesekere, Consultant

- EGM/DVGC/2006/BP.2** *Report of the online discussion on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child*  
Mr. Christoph Schuepp, Consultant
- EGM/DVGC/2006/BP.3** *Gender statistics and existing evidence*  
Gareth Jones, UNICEF
- EGM/DVGC/2006/BP.4** *Violence and discrimination, voices of young people:  
Girls about girls.*  
UNICEF

**D. INFORMATION NOTES**

- EGM/DVGC/2006/INF.1** Aide-Memoire
- EGM/DVGC/2006/INF.2** Information Note to Participants
- EGM/DVGC/2006/INF.3**

## ANNEX III

### PROGRAMME OF WORK

#### Monday, 25 September 2006

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.	Registration of participants
9:30 – 9:35 a.m.	Welcoming remarks by Ms. Marta Santos-Pais, Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre
9:35 – 9:50 a.m.	Opening statement by Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations
9:50 – 10:10 a.m.	Introduction to the meeting, election of officers, adoption of the programme of work
10:10 – 10:40 a.m.	Break
10:40 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	<u>Session I: Introduction to the theme</u>  Presentation of the background paper Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, Prof. Savitri Goonesekere, consultant  Presentation of the report of the online discussion on Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, Mr. Christoph Schuepp, consultant  Ms. Noreen Khan and Ms. Mima Perisic (UNICEF) <i>Voices of youth – Girls about girls</i>  Discussion
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.	Lunch break
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.	<u>Session II: Protection of the girl child from discrimination and violence</u>  Ms. Moushira Khattab (Egypt), Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child <i>Full protection of the girl child through effective legislation and enforcement</i>  Ms. Shamima Ali (Fiji) <i>Violence against the girl child from in the Pacific Islands region</i>

Ms. Berhane Ras-Work (Ethiopia)  
*The impact of harmful traditional practices on the girl child*

Discussion

4:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Break

4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Session III: Girls in especially vulnerable situations

Ms. Judith Bruce (United States)  
*Social and Economic Development and Reproductive Health of Vulnerable Adolescent Girls*

Ms. Dyan Mazurana (United States)  
*The girl child and armed conflict*

Ms. Cecilia Flores-Oebanda (Philippines)  
*Addressing vulnerability and exploitation of child domestic workers: An open challenge to end a hidden shame*

Discussion

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Welcome reception  
hosted by UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

**Tuesday, 26 September 2006**

9:00 – 9:15 a.m.

Welcome statement by Ms. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF

9:15 – 9:30 a.m.

Summary of Day 1 by Rapporteur

9:30 – 10:50 a.m.

Session III (continued)

Ms. Busakorn Suriyasarn (Thailand)  
*From the kitchen to the classroom: Call for political commitment and empowerment to get girls out of child domestic labour and into school*

Ms. Teresita Silva (Philippines)  
*Girl children in vulnerable situations*

Discussion

10:50 - 11:20 a.m.

Break



11:20 a.m. – 1:20 p.m.

Session IV: Empowerment of the girl child

Ms. Fatuma Chege (Kenya)

*Education as a tool for the empowerment of the girl child* [title to be confirmed]

Nicole Bidegain (Uruguay)

*Girl child empowerment: A challenge for all*

Mr. Gary Barker (United States)

*Engaging boys and men to empower girls: Reflections from practice and evidence of impact*

Discussion

1:20 – 2:50 p.m.

Lunch break

2:50 – 4:10 p.m.

Session IV (continued)

Ms. Biljana Brankovic (Serbia)

*“Boys’ mind, girls’ heart”: Barriers to the realization of potential in gifted girls – responding to challenges*

Ms. Shahira Fawzy (Egypt)

*Socioeconomic empowerment: A route towards equality of the girl child*

Discussion

4:10 – 4:40 p.m.

Break

4:40 – 6:40 p.m.

Session V: Institutional arrangements for the promotion of elimination of discrimination against the girl child

Mr. Gareth Jones (UNICEF)

*Gender statistics and existing evidence*

Ms. Daniela Zapata (Bolivia)

*Counting invisible workers: Girls in domestic activities within their homes*

Ms. Christina Nomdo (South Africa)

*Improving the quality of life for the girl child by using child rights and gender-sensitive budgeting: Perspectives from South Africa*

Discussion

**Wednesday, 27 September 2006**

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.	Summary of discussion by the Rapporteur
9:30 – 10:00 a.m.	Establishment of working groups
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Working groups
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon	Break
12:00 noon - 1.00 p.m.	Working groups continued
1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	Lunch break
2:30 – 4:00 p.m.	Working groups continued
4:00 – 4:30 p.m.	Break
4:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Adoption of structure of expert report proposed by the Rapporteur / Establishment of drafting committee
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.	Working groups continued / Group drafting of report

**Thursday, 28 September 2006**

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Working groups – finalize inputs / Group drafting of report
11:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Break Consolidation of working group inputs into one overall report by the Rapporteur
11:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.	Distribution of overall report to participants Participants provide written comments to drafting committee Officers provide comments to each working group Each working group integrates participants' and officers' comments and finalizes group inputs (including lunch break)
3:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Rapporteur consolidates revised working group inputs into draft report
4:00 – 4:30 p.m.	Break
4:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Presentation and adoption of draft report in plenary
5:30 – 5:45 p.m.	Closing remarks by Ms. Marta Santos-Pais, Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre and Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/S-27/2, paragraph 23

<sup>2</sup> United Nations (1995). Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), Chapter I, resolution 1, annex II, paragraph 259

<sup>3</sup> E/CN.6/1998/12, page 31

<sup>4</sup> A/RES/S-23/3, paragraph 33

<sup>5</sup> E/CN.6/2005/2, paragraphs 494-495

<sup>6</sup> A/RES/60/1, paragraph 58 (f)

<sup>7</sup> CEDAW General Recommendation No. 24 (paragraph 6, 12 (b) and 8)

<sup>8</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) General Comments No.1 (paragraph 10); No.7 (paragraph 28) and No.4 (paragraph 31)

<sup>9</sup> A/61/299, paragraphs 24, 28, 30, 43, 45

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, paragraphs 44, 52, 69

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, paragraph 74

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, paragraph 106

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, paragraph 106

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, paragraph 107

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, paragraph 114 (e)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, paragraph 99

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, paragraph 111

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, paragraph 133

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, paragraph 134

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, paragraph 83

<sup>21</sup> A/61/122/Add.1, paragraph 83

<sup>22</sup> Lloyd, Cynthia B. (ed.) (2005). *Growing Up Global: The Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries*. Panel on Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries. Committee on Population and Board on





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<sup>80</sup> Many child protection advocates contend that given their limited options, it is incorrect to say that children 'willingly' join armed groups.

<sup>81</sup> Verhey, Beth (2004). *Reaching the Girls: Study on Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo*. UK: Save the Children and the NGO Group: CARE, IFESH and IRC.

<sup>82</sup> Mazurana, Dyan and Khristopher Carlson (2006) Op.cit.

<sup>83</sup> McKay, Susan and Dyan Mazurana (2004). Op.cit.; Carlson, Khristopher, Dyan Mazurana, Elizabeth Stites and Godfrey Orach Otobi (forthcoming) "Young Mothers, Forced Marriage and Children Born in Captivity within the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda," in: *Disasters: The Journal of Disasters Studies, Policy and Management*; McKay, Susan , Mary Burman, Maria Gonsalves and M. Worthen (2006) "Girls Formerly Associated

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<sup>112</sup> UNICEF (2001). Op.cit.; United Nations (2006a) Op.cit.

<sup>113</sup> United Nations (2006b). Op.cit.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> UNICEF (2005). *The State of the World's Children: Excluded and Invisible*. New York: UNICEF, page 41

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.; NGO Advisory Panel for the United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children (2005). *Violence against Children in Conflict with the Law: Summary Report*, Thematic consultation for the United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children. Geneva, 4-5 April. Available at: [http://www.violencestudy.org/IMG/doc/VACICL\\_Summary\\_Report\\_final.doc](http://www.violencestudy.org/IMG/doc/VACICL_Summary_Report_final.doc)

<sup>117</sup> United Nations (2006a). Op. cit.; United Nations (2006b). Op. cit.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Siegirst, Saudamini (2006). Personal communication with Dyan Mazurana, 30 September.

<sup>120</sup> UNICEF (1998), "Juvenile Justice", *Innocenti Digest (January)*. Florence, Italy: UNICEF; United Nations (2006a). Op.cit.

<sup>121</sup>

