



**Side-event on**

**A World Free from Violence and Exploitation against Children:  
Targets and Indicators for the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

Supported by the Governments of Benin, Canada, Indonesia,  
Ireland, Japan, Paraguay and Sweden

New York, NY – September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Preventing and responding to all forms of violence and exploitation, in all contexts, is essential to ensure children's rights to survival, development and well-being. Countries with high rates of child labour tend to have low rates of school attendance. Children who study in a violent environment achieve lower academic results than those who do not. A child victim of abuse and exploitation can be affected emotionally, mentally and physically, and his or her ability to learn and socialize can be seriously hampered, as well as their capacity to contribute to the economy and society in the long term. This affects the long-term viability of economic growth and peace.

Yet, violence against children takes place in every country, every region, and at every socio-economic level –in homes, schools and communities, in institutions, online in virtual communities, and through the use of mobile technologies.

As world leaders gather in New York for the general debate of the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Governments of Benin, Canada, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Paraguay and Sweden hosted a side-event on A World Free from Violence and Exploitation against Children, as an opportunity to highlight the importance of including the prevention and response to violence against children in the post-2015 development agenda, and ensure focus, investment, commitment and results for children the world over.

The event took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2014, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and was co-organized with six child-focused agencies that have come together to advocate for children's issues in the post-2015 development agenda: eradicating all forms of extreme poverty; tackling inequalities; stopping all forms of violence against children; and ensuring locally-led and transparent mechanisms for monitoring progress and ensuring accountability. These organizations are: ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages International, UNICEF and World Vision International. The event was also endorsed by the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Violence against Children, CPC Learning

Network, Elevate Children Funders Group, Global Child Forum, International Disability Alliance, International Disability and Development Consortium, Latin American and Caribbean Movement for Children, Maestral, Terre des Hommes International Federation, WithoutViolence, and World Day of Prayer and Action for Children.



The event was presided by Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden, who opened the meeting and was accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Madeleine. In her address, H.M. Queen Silvia emphasized the importance of including the prevention of violence against children in the post-2015 development agenda. “We learned from the Millennium Development Goals that by setting clear goals, having dedicated funding for programmes, and creating innovative partnerships

with the private sector we were able to significantly reduce child mortality in the developing world. We now have the opportunity to do the same for the prevention and elimination of violence against children. Let us use the next set of global goals, the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure that all children not only survive but also thrive,” said Her Majesty.

H.E. Mr Martín Llano-Heyn, Director General for Multilateral Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paraguay, gave the opening remarks for a panel of Government representatives, UN entities, and civil society organizations. In his remarks, Ambassador Llano-Heyn highlighted the leadership role that Governments must take to address the issue of violence against children, and highlighted the role that the Government of Paraguay has played in advocating for the post-2015 development agenda to address violence



and exploitation against children, including through a recent declaration during the last 44<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Organization of American States (OAS) General Assembly, that was held in Asuncion, Paraguay. “Governments must take all the necessary measures to ensure the protection of children, especially the most vulnerable ones. In this regard, two things are essential: commitment and investment” said Ambassador Llano-Heyn. And he concluded: “We thus encourage fellow Member States to ensure that the prevention and response to violence against children continues to be a priority for the post-2015 development agenda throughout the inter-Governmental negotiations and in the final outcome of this process.”

A host of supportive Governments then issued clear and strong statements of support, calling attention to the central role that the prevention of violence against children should have within the next generation of development goals. Ms Stine Bosse, member of the UN Secretary-General’s MDG Advocacy Group, moderated the panel.

Mr Malcom Brown, Deputy Minister for International Development of Canada, reaffirmed the commitment of the Government of Canada to protect children from violence, exploitation and abuse throughout the world, and recalled the actions being taken to ensure that children survive and thrive –including the introduction of a resolution at the UN General Assembly to end child, early and forced marriage. “Canada is working to ensure that children are central to the post-2015 global development agenda. Ensuring that children are safe, educated, and healthy is fundamental for global stability, security, and prosperity. Making the world safe and secure for boys and girls is something that together we can all achieve,” stated Mr Brown.



H.E. Mr Jean-Francis Regis Zinsou, Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations, brought attention to some of the actions that the Government of Benin is taking to address the issue of violence against children and ensure children’s rights. “Benin is working with other countries to assure that children’s protection will be one of the main aspects to be taken into account in the post-2015 development agenda,” Ambassador Zinsou remarked.

H.E. Mr David Donoghue, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, reaffirmed the Government of Ireland’s commitment to freedom from fear and to the protection of children, and highlighted some actions that have been taken to address the issue of violence against children –including the signing of the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. “Ending violence against children we see both as a moral imperative and a human rights imperative, but when one considers the evidence it is also clearly an imperative for achieving sustainable development,” said Ambassador Donoghue. He further called for the prevention of violence against children to be adequately addressed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ms Diah Saminarsih, from the Office of the President of Indonesia’s Special Envoy on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reaffirmed Indonesia’s commitment to keep the elimination of all forms of violence against children in the post-2015 development agenda, as per the outcome document of the Open Working Group, and highlighted the need to translate these goals into action at the national level. “Each of us must continue to encourage and advocate our national Governments to make ending violence their national priority as well. Inspiration from the global goals must be translated into national targets to be echoed and implemented at national and subnational levels,” Ms Saminarsih concluded.

Mr Kevin Jenkins, President and CEO of World Vision International, recalled his experiences travelling the world and gathering the voices of children. “The only way to achieve meaningful progress in reigning in this evil will be to put the protection of children at the centre of society’s future plans. And one way to do that, probably the best way, is to weave it through the post-2015 development agenda. If we can’t keep children safe it is impossible to do much else,” said Mr Jenkins.

Ms Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, through a video message remarked, on the overwhelming scale of the problem and highlighted how children themselves have constantly expressed that violence is a serious obstacle to child development and must be brought to an end. “The elimination of violence is a pre-condition for sustainable development and the negotiation of the future global development agenda offers a unique opportunity to break the cycle of violence,” stressed SRSR Santos Pais. “In order to mobilize stronger action and leverage progress in the years to come, children’s protection from violence must remain both a distinct priority and a cross-cutting concern, especially under the goals regarding education, gender equality, economic growth and decent work, and the safety of cities and human settlements,” she added.

Ms Yoka Brandt, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, underscored the magnitude of the problem and the need to address it through a global commitment. “What development gains can we sustain when one in 10 girls under the age of 20 suffers some form of sexual violence, or when six in 10 children between the ages of two and 14, or almost a billion children, are regularly subjected to physical punishment, or when 95,000 children and adolescents below the age of 20 die as the result of homicide, as they did in 2012?” said Ms Brandt. She finally highlighted some actions that UNICEF and partners have undertaken to tackle violence against children – such as the #ENDviolence campaign and a newly released pair of [data](#) and [programme](#) reports on violence against children. She underscored that the reports make clear the importance of having a comprehensive approach and set out six concrete strategies for action to end violence against children.

Finally, Mr Andrew Johnson, acting Secretary General of ChildFund Alliance, brought attention to [new research from the Overseas Development Institute \(ODI\)](#), which shows that the global costs of physical, psychological, and sexual violence against children can be as high as US\$7 trillion, which is equivalent to the combined GDPs of Australia, Canada, India, and Mexico. “The personal costs of violence for children are immense and unacceptable, but as the recent ODI study found there are also enormous costs for the economy,” he said. Mr Johnson also presented a [video](#) with the [results from consultations](#) undertaken with over 2,300 children in 40 countries. Children are calling for world leaders to finish the job they started 15 years ago with the MDGs, and to prioritize the prevention of violence against children in the new agenda.

The panellists then answered questions from the audience.

The video recording of the event can be found [here](#).

Photos of the event can be found [here](#).