

## **Eastern and Southern Africa region**

### **Children's Concluding Statement**

**20 July 2005**

#### **VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS**

The school, a place of learning has turned out to be a nightmare because there is violence and it is unbearable.

To be punished mentally, emotionally and physically. Being severally beaten up, made to dig pits as deep as your height as well as being forced to go to bed with teachers leaving us in a position with no one to talk to. It is hard to tell anybody for fear of losing our education. When we came to this consultation we had many expectations and we are proud to say that at least a big step has been taken to address our problems, because it is true that education is the key to our future.

#### **VIOLENCE IN INSTITUTIONS**

Most African countries suffer the problem of poverty; as a result children are most affected. Most parents in such situations are not able to provide adequately for their children hence these children opt to go and earn a living for themselves.

This causes children to go and look for employment in institutions such as factories, mines and so on. Other children are just abandoned or just transferred to other countries to work as slaves. In the past few days we the children have been deliberating and coming up with recommendations to these already mentioned problems.

We have discussed these problems of child abuse and child labour. Most countries have signed the convention on the eradication of the worst forms of child labour, the law is there but it is not enforced. Children gave their various experiences such as working in mines and factories and others being child soldiers.

As the children we are appealing to the private sector and the UN to make awareness in communities to eradicate child labour. We are also appealing to the government to reinforce the laws on child labour in institutions. Government should abolish all forms of child prostitution and make brothels illegal.

Violence against children is not only in workplace but also in institutions such as orphanages, youth centre and rehabilitation centre. As the children we are urging the the govt and private sector to empower the social workers to monitor orphanages NGO's should see to it that children in institutions such as orphanages are not sexually exploited in any way. Govt should sensitize parents and the rights of the child. Parents in Somalia overload girls with a lot of house chores. We the children demand that this should be stopped.

Lastly govt. and the private sector should provide food, clothing and other necessities to institutions where children are kept. It is the plight of every African child that our recommendations are taken into consideration because we are the future.

### **VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

In Africa, where each day more and more children are beginning to take a poem, great responsibilities to sustain their lives, the workplace cannot be avoided. However, measures must be taken to avoid the exploitation of children in these areas:

We want a minimum age for children to work to be enforced at 16 years old. No child should have to fight a war or carry heavy loads and neither should a child have to work long hours without pay or be abused or treated unfairly. Children deserve to be treated as equals in the work place and those who abuse us should be severely punished. Equality and quality in the work place is what the children want.

### **VIOLENCE IN THE HOME, FAMILY AND THE COMMUNITY**

The home, the family, the community these are the places we find joy and love in.

Being here has not only been a privilege but has left us as the children expectant As to what is yet to come. Some of our objectives are that when we go back home we will be able to tell our parents about what we have learnt and hope that from here we will build an open relationship with them including the community at large.

Hopefully from here our right will be recognized and that those kids that are undergoing any form of abuse will be attended to as soon as possible, And lastly we ask that you look at us not as a stumbling stone but as, as a building block for the future.

For it is true that we as the children do not just belong to the family but to you the community at large.

### **CHILDREN'S OPINION**

I am a refugee from DRC and I live in South Africa now.

All the children who have attended the conference are greatly thankful to the government, to all the ministers and to the members of UNICEF for giving us the opportunity to express ourselves and give our opinion about the violence that we face in schools, the community, the institution and the workplace and also in the family and how this violence affects us.

We discussed everything in our groups and some of the recommendations that we came to were really amazing. We would like you to think about our recommendations intensively. We would like you to consider refugees in any programs that you make about

violence against children. We do not want violence we just want education to make our continent a better place for life.

On another note we would like to thank Joyce and Pat from NCRC and all the chaperones and facilitators. We would also like to thank Advocate Thoko Majokwene from the National Prosecuting Authority for her generosity as well as the Government of South Africa for their help. We thank too the staff of Kopanong hotel as they have treated us in the utmost respect and humanity. The food was okay, although we could have done with a bit more sporting facilities, however we survived. To everyone involved we say keep up the good work and remember peace brings happiness. Thank You.