

**Second Inter-Agency Meeting,
Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children
August 2, 2006
To be presented at the beginning of the video-conference 2.30pm**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am delighted to welcome you to this Second Inter-Agency Meeting. It has been an exciting period since we last met in March and I will give you a short update on recent events. But first, I would like to stress the importance of this inter-agency group as a forum of discussion, communication and planning to ensure great progress at the country level. I believe that it will be the work of this UN inter-agency group in conjunction with the regional mechanisms which were created or strengthened by the regional consultations that will ensure success and sustainable change at the country level and will end violence against children.

Professor Pinheiro has now completed his report, currently under review by the SG's office, and we have had the opportunity to discuss an advance draft this morning. We are now poised for the launch of the study report on October 9. We clearly see a gathering of momentum and activities around the Study all over the world and I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of the highlights of the last months.

In the Middle East and North Africa region, Ambassador Khattab hosted a well represented meeting of governments in Egypt in March to prepare for the dissemination and follow up on the Study, and to establish the follow-up mechanism for that region.

We have had the support of the African Union, and witnessed an impressive gathering of advocates at the conference on violence against the girl child in Africa, in Addis Ababa in May where a Pan-African declaration was presented on stopping violence against children. We also saw the African Day of the Child this year focus on the theme of protection of children from violence. In Kenya, an innovative national campaign was launched on 27th July by the Vice-President.

The South Asia Forum for Ending Violence Against Children – another great example of a regional follow-up mechanism already in place - held its first meeting from 24 to 26 July. This Forum concentrated on finding practical solutions to two of the manifestations of violence which were identified by the region as the most urgent of their concerns: early marriage and trafficking. It was preceded by a young people's meeting that was facilitated by Save the Children and the Forum itself was attended by Ministers and senior government officials and NGOs from countries in the Region.

I was happy to learn also of an important initiative that took place in the Caribbean in July on the issue of corporal punishment. Government officials, NGOs, representatives of religious bodies and others participated in this meeting where the international partnership around this Study was also well represented.

I consider these initiatives crucial to our efforts to translate the important recommendations of the Study into changes that will make a sustained difference in the lives of children.

Another important aspect has been the participation of children. In May, a children's meeting was convened in New York, where the children gathered to work on the child

friendly version of the report and the recommendations and to prepare for the launch of the study. Most of these children had already been involved with the regional consultations and were selected through carefully planned regional processes. Planning for the participation of children at the launch itself is now underway and we work again very closely with Save the Children.

As we can see from the above, thousands of people have been involved in the Study: children and young people, civil society organizations, governments, public authorities, researchers and academics, regional bodies, journalists and others. This is very much due to the leadership of Prof. Pinheiro as well as the strong Inter-Agency partnership among us all.

The meeting today has two major objectives. First, we will share our plans for the launch of the Study and discuss how we can combine our efforts to effectively communicate the key messages around the Study. We are lucky to have the right people in the room to help us in this effort.

The second broad objective is for us to explore how each of our Agencies can contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of the Study in the crucial months and years that follow the launch of the Study Report. I will speak more about UNICEF's follow-up plan and strategies later on and look forward to hearing also from the partner agencies.

The participants here in Geneva have already had the benefit of in-depth discussions with Professor Pinheiro on the draft of the SG's report. Also, the communication focal points have had discussions on specific advocacy plans this morning.

We hope that by the end of this meeting we will emerge with a clear idea of how we could work together to achieve the best visibility for the Study that would mobilize governments and the world to act on its recommendations.

We look forward to a discussion that will meet these objectives with the same spirit of commitment and optimism that we shared across the Atlantic in March at our first Inter-Agency meeting in New York.