



STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO END ALL CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

“Children too are holders of human rights. It is widely acknowledged now that corporal punishment is a fundamental breach of children’s rights to respect for their human dignity and physical and mental integrity. The Convention on the Rights of the Child requires States, in its article 19, to protect children from “all forms of physical and mental violence” while in the care of parents and others. The fact that corporal punishment of children is legal in many countries, unlike other forms of inter-personal violence, challenges the universal right to equal protection under the law.

“Hitting children is also a dangerous practice, which can cause physical and psychological injury and even death. Corporal punishment is identified by research as a significant factor in the development of violent attitudes and actions, both in childhood and later life. It inhibits or prevents positive child development and positive forms of discipline. Promoting positive, non-violent forms of discipline empowers parents and reduces family stress. Yet corporal punishment in the family home is still a legal and common practice in most states of the world. In many, corporal punishment remains an accepted form of discipline in schools and other institutions, and in some it is authorised as a sentence for juvenile offenders and as a punishment in penal institutions.

“We the undersigned believe this is the right time to make quick progress towards ending social and legal acceptance of corporal punishment globally. Some countries have already prohibited all corporal punishment, including in the family. The purpose of legal reform in this area is to change attitudes and to promote positive family relationships – not to increase prosecution of parents. Many States have banished corporal punishment from their schools and other institutions, with positive results. Constitutional and supreme courts have provided landmark judgments condemning it.

“We therefore call on governments to declare their opposition to corporal punishment of children and to set a timetable for eliminating corporal punishment. This requires both explicit legal reform and also public education involving all sectors of the community including children.”

SIGNED..... POSITION.....

ORGANISATION.....

CONTACT NAME.....

EMAIL.....

ADDRESS.....

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PHONE..... FAX.....

PLEASE RETURN TO
GLOBAL INITIATIVE 94 White Lion Street LONDON N1 9PF UK
OR FAX TO **+44 (0)20 7713 0466**