



RESOLUTION

of the Vienna Conference

"Towards Childhoods free from Corporal Punishment"

**adopted at the
High Level Global Conference
in Vienna, 1 – 2 June 2016**

Preamble

Emphasising the obligation of all States, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, to promote and encourage respect for human rights of all, deriving from the inherent dignity and worth of the human person,

Recognising that the right to a life free from violence is vested in all human beings without distinction as to age, race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status,

Acknowledging that violence against children, including violent punishment, in all settings of their lives, including in the community, in schools and other institutions and forms of care and in the home, breaches their human rights to life, safety, equality under the law and to respect for their dignity and physical and emotional integrity and poses a serious threat to their physical and mental health,

Welcoming the almost universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and noting that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment characterised by an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding, as recognised in the Preamble of the Convention, and that violence against the child is incompatible with such an environment,



Reaffirming states' obligations under Articles 19, 28(2) and 37 of the Convention to protect the child from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,

Taking account of the Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 8, "The right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment (arts. 19; 28, para. 2; and 37, inter alia)", adopted by the Committee in 2006, and commending the Committee's statement (para. 3) that: "Addressing the widespread acceptance or tolerance of corporal punishment of children and eliminating it, in the family, schools and other settings, is not only an obligation of States parties under the Convention. It is also a key strategy for reducing and preventing all forms of violence in societies", and concurring with the Committee's opinion as stated in its General Comment No. 13, "The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence", that "physical violence" includes "all corporal punishment and all other forms of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" (para. 22),

Taking cognisance of the recognition among high-level regional bodies – including the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the European Committee of Social Rights and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child – that all corporal punishment of children should be prohibited by law in all settings and of their efforts to ensure prohibition in all states in their respective regions,

Mindful of the report of the United Nations Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children, presented to the UN General Assembly in 2006, which called for prohibition of all forms of violence against children, including all corporal punishment, as a matter of priority,

Recalling the establishment of the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children, designed to secure progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Study on Violence against Children, and welcoming the progress made in legal protection of children from violence,

Welcoming the commitments made in 2015 by all UN member states to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to end all forms of violence against children and to transform our world to one which is free of fear and violence, which invests in its children and in which every child grows up free from violence,

Recognising that the prohibition and elimination of violent punishment of children is fundamental to states' fulfilment of Target 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda ("End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children") and welcoming the identification of indicators to monitor progress, including indicator 16.2.1: "Percentage of children aged 1–17 who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month",



The participants at the Vienna High Level Global Conference –

1. Condemn all violence against children, including all violent punishment, as incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person,
2. Welcome the accelerating global movement towards legal prohibition of all corporal punishment of children in all settings of their lives, and appreciate the adoption by a growing number of states of constitutional and other legal frameworks which clearly confirm every child's right to an upbringing free from corporal punishment,
3. Note that more than half of UN member states have by June 2016 either prohibited all corporal punishment (49 states) or clearly committed to do so (another 54 states),
4. Declare that legal prohibition of corporal punishment of children is a critical foundation for changing social norms which accept or condone such violence and for promoting positive, non-violent relationships with children,
5. Emphasise the value of baseline data and successive surveys to measure changes in the prevalence of violent punishment and in social attitudes towards the upbringing of children, as demonstrated by successive studies in Austria, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Costa Rica and other countries,
6. Welcome the growing research evidence of the positive impact of banning corporal punishment in reducing violence and emphasise the lack of evidence of any detrimental effect on child development and the enjoyment of children's rights and on family life in states which have prohibited all corporal punishment in the home,
7. Assert that there is no positive educational value in corporal punishment of children and that this is confirmed through many empirical studies,
8. Refute in the strongest possible terms any trivialisation of violent acts against children, whether physical, emotional or sexual in nature, and any defence of corporal punishment such as "tapping", "smacking", "spanking" or "slapping", which violate the rights of the child, undermine the child's self-esteem and impair children's relationships with parents and other adults.



The participants therefore make the following commitments:

- to work collaboratively and individually, at international, regional and national levels, to speed progress towards universal and effective legal prohibition of all violent punishment of children in all settings of their lives,
- to ensure that, guided by the best interests of the child, the law providing children with equal protection from assault in their homes is effectively implemented and enforced, recognising the special value of family relationships,
- to pursue and promote necessary and sustained other measures to achieve the elimination of violent punishment of children, including: comprehensive dissemination of the law banning violent punishment and of children's right to protection from all forms of violence; promotion of positive, non-violent forms of discipline and relationships with children; public and parent education, including on the negative impact of violent punishment of children, and the establishment of safe and child sensitive counselling, reporting and complaint mechanisms to address incidents of violence against children and support child victims,
- to establish a reliable data collection system and to encourage, and where appropriate commission, research to measure progress towards the elimination of violent punishment of children and towards full respect for their status as individual people and rights holders.