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Welcome to the Defence for Children International (DCI) Newsletter

Forewords from the Executive Director of the IS, Ileana Bello

Dear friends,

At the close of my third month at DCI-IS, I must say that I am now starting to feel more and more a part of the movement and learning much about how things work at the IS. These past two months have been very intense, and at the same time also very productive. I have had the chance to meet with many of the people who make up the sections and this has given me the chance to associate faces to names and to strengthen our relationships. I had the chance to meet with some representatives of Israel, Holland, Switzerland and, surprisingly, with a large delegation of Japan's section, which had been suspended but now seems to be once again committed to the movement.

From the point of view of our lobby and advocacy activities, March 2010 has been very busy at the IS. The UN Human Rights Council held its 13th session, a time of great activity for NGOs. DCI worked actively to make the annual full day meeting on the rights of the child, celebrated on 11 March, as significant

as possible. We submitted a joint oral statement together with the OMCT on violence against children in places of detention, and we co-signed another oral statement read during the Panel's discussion on violence in schools and within families. Moreover, the HRC issued a significant resolution that is the first step toward drafting an additional Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, concerning the communications procedure. (www.defenceforchildren.org)

DCI-IS made its presence known during the main meetings of the session and participated in several side events organised by various organisations and institutions.

I am now looking forward to meeting other sections and learning as much as possible about their activities, their hopes and their regrets, and I am ready to support DCI's wish to influence more policy changing.

Respectfully,
Ileana

DCI-France: Annual General Meeting

On 6 March, DCI-France held its annual General Assembly, bringing together its members, partners and other interested parties. Among other issues, the members had to determine the orientation and priorities of the association for

the coming five years. They as well conducted regular statutory votes, including the renewal of one-third of the Administration Council members.



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News from DCI-Japan

If you remember well, DCI-Japan was suspended at the last IGA in Brussels because the section had interrupted all communications with the International Secretariat. It was assumed that the section had ceased to carry out any activities. In reality, DCI-Japan has continued to exist and in fact coordinated the drafting of the NGO report on the implementation of the CRC in their country, which was submitted recently to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. DCI-Japan was therefore invited by the NGO Group on the CRC to come to Geneva to represent the Japanese NGO coalition at the last CRC “pre-session” that took place in February.

It was on this occasion that contacts were re-established between the IS and DCI-Japan. A constructive meeting took place to discuss the section’s future affiliation with the movement as well as more substantive issues regarding child rights in Japan.

The section affirmed its wish to remain a member of the DCI movement and to re-establish a regular exchange of information. The IEC will discuss the situation in the upcoming months to determine the requirements for official reintegration.



Universal Periodic Report – Italy and Bolivia

The Universal Periodic Review for Italy was held on 9 February 2010. The State delegation was headed by Mr. Vincenzo Scotti, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs. Of major concern throughout the review was the situation of certain ethnic minorities, particularly the Roma and Sinti communities. Mention was made as well of the need to improve conditions in detention centres throughout the country. Germany pointed toward a report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention which noted problems in the juvenile justice system.

The final recommendations were as follows:

- Establish an ombudsperson and national plan of action for children, and ensure special training for teachers of children with disabilities

- Make efforts to prevent and eliminate child abuse and discrimination
- Support diversion in the juvenile justice system, making deprivation of liberty a measure of last resort.
- Implement Law 91/1922 to ensure rights for all children born in Italy

Bolivia’s UPR was held on 10 February 2010, with Ms. Nardy Suxo, Minister of Institutional Transparency and the Fight against Corruption, heading the State delegation. Bolivia was praised for its work to combat illiteracy, and encouraged to continue this effort as well as to improve education access for girls and indigenous children. Many states raised concerns about the need to combat violence against chil-



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Universal Periodic Report *(continued from page 2)*

dren, forced labour and trafficking, and the need to improve conditions in juvenile detention facilities.

The final recommendations of the session were the following:

- Enforce the new law on the sale of children, sexual exploitation and trafficking; take specific measures to fight trafficking of and domestic violence against women and children, and against child labour and corporal punishment
- Establish an ombudsman for children and a national strategy for human rights education in schools
- Reinforce the implementation of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children
- Work toward eliminating discrimination against indigenous women and children

- Continue efforts to ensure equal opportunities for girls and women in education, access to employment, housing and working conditions

- Improve detention conditions, especially for women and children, and enhance prison education and training, health and nutrition services

- Ensure separation of children and adults in detention facilities, and take steps to reduce the use of pre-trial detention

- Consider seeking technical assistance in the area of juvenile justice and reintegration programs for exploited children, and follow up on the UN Study on Violence Against Children

Child Rights Day at the Human Rights Council's 13th Session

On 10 March 2010, the Human Rights Council held its third annual full day meeting dedicated to the right of the child, focussing especially on the fight against sexual violence against children. The morning panel discussion centred on the topic of the various manifestations of sexual violence against boys and girls in the five settings in which they spend their childhoods: home, school, care centres and justice systems, the workplace and the community. Additional time was spent addressing in particular the experiences of children in emergency and conflict situations.

The speakers on the morning's panel were Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children; Tim Ekesa, Director of the Kenya Alliance for the Advancement of Children; Manfred Nowak, Special Rapporteur on Torture; Lena Karlsson, Director of the Child Protection Initiative to Save the Children; and Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.

Ms. Santos Pais called on states to develop strategic plans to combat all forms of violence against children, particularly sexual violence. She and the other panelists named several methods by which this might be accomplished. Mr. Ekesa pointed in particular toward the importance of empowering boys and girls through child participation in the movement against sexual violence. Mr. Nowak underscored the need for clear state policies that prevent sexual violence from occurring in the first place, such as a strict separation between children and adults in detentions centres; indeed, Ms. Santos Pais pointed out later on in the discussion that it was essential to place greater focus on the root causes and prevention of sexual violence, rather than focussing all efforts on addressing violence once it has already occurred.

During the interactive dialogue, several states shared their best practices and reported that they had developed special services, such as telephone help hotlines for children and/or ombudsmen, to combat sexual violence against children.



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Ms. Cécile Trochu Grasso delivered a joint statement on behalf of DCI, the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), ECPAT International, International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE), Terre des Hommes International Federation, Plan International, SOS Kinderdorf (having ECOSOC status) and Child Rights Information Network (CRIN), the African Child Policy Forum and the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (not having ECOSOC status). Ms. Trochu Grasso expressed grave concern that incidents of sexual violence in detention centres are “likely more widespread than what is reported to a wider audience”. As was elaborated in DCI’s report “Kids Behind Bars” (2003), children housed in adult detention facilities are five times more likely to face sexual violence compared with children in juvenile centres.



On behalf of the NGOs represented by the joint statement, Ms. Trochu Grasso presented the following recommendations to Member States of the HRC:

1. Collect and share disaggregated data and information concerning instances of all forms of sexual violence in all places where children are deprived of their liberty.
2. Implement the recommendations of the UN Study on Violence against Children relating to violence in “justice institutions”, and in particular take special measures on :

- alternatives to detention;
- quality and trained staffing;
- access to effective complaints and investigation mechanisms;
- prosecuting perpetrators; and
- effective and independent access and monitoring of places where children are detained.

Invite relevant UN agencies to carry out a study on the scope, causes and consequences of sexual abuse of detained children and develop recommendations.

An afternoon side event during this day-long reflection centred around the publication and entry into force of the “Council of Europe Policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence”, which is based on the recommendations of the CRC and the UN Study on Violence against Children.

Following the side event, there was a second panel discussion on the prevention of and response to sexual violence committed against boys and girls. The panelists were Susana Villarán de la Puente, Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child; Mr. Victor Karunan, Chief of Adolescent Development and Participation at UNICEF; Ms. Najat M’jid Maalla, Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; Ms. Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Europe; and Ms. Eliana Restrepo, Deputy Director of PLAN, Colombia. The discussion centred in large part around the need for protective legal measures, such as a consistent minimum age for marriage, as well as the development of cross-sectoral strategies to address sexual violence. Mr. Karunan noted not only the need, but also the benefit, of child participation in affecting positive change: “Children themselves are the best advocates against violence.”



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Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children presents her first report to the Human Rights Council and meets with NGOs in Geneva

Marta Santos Pais started her mandate as Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) on Violence against Children last September. On March 15-19 she came to Geneva to present her first report to the Human Rights Council (HRC). On this occasion, she also delivered a presentation during the HRC's annual full day on the rights of the child, participated to a number of panel discussion side events on violence against children and took part to meetings with groups of NGOs.

Throughout the week, Ms Santos Pais showed passion and commitment for the cause of ending all violence against children and called member states, NGOs and UN agencies for increased collaboration and support to her mandate.



First Annual Report

In her first report, Ms Santos Pais recalls the history leading up to the establishment of her position as well as the scope of her mandate. She also outlines her vision and priority areas for her work and the strategies she intends to use to achieve progress in implementing her mandate, which builds on the recommendations of the UN Study on Violence Against Children.

In the next two years, priority will go to accelerate progress in three key strategic areas, namely 1) the development in each State of a comprehensive strategy on violence against children; 2) the introduction of an explicit national legal ban on all forms of violence; and 3) the consolidation of national data collection, analysis and dissemination, and research in this field.

Meeting with NGOs (including DCI)

During her stay in Geneva the SRSG met with NGOs, UN bodies and other partners. DCI met with her on two different occasions, first when she met with the Advisory Council on Violence against Children (in which DCI is represented by DCI-Costa Rica president Virginia Murrillo Herrera) - see box for a short presentation - and later when she met with the Geneva-Based Working Group on Children and Violence (where the IS sits). On both occasions, Ms Santos Pais recalled the importance of a strong collaboration and exchange of information with NGOs around the world and presented her three strategic areas of priority.

The IS presented to the SRSG the report on "Ending Violence against Children in Justice Systems", and recalled the importance of paying attention to the issue of violence against children in detention.

DCI will continue supporting the work of the SRSG and will contribute to NGO lobbying initiatives in Geneva and around the world to support her work and obtain the renewal of her first 3 year mandate.

[Click here to download the full report](#)



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Marta Santos Pais *(continued from page 5)*

About the NGO Advisory Council for the follow-up of the UN Study on Violence against Children:

Following the decision by the UN General Assembly to ask the Secretary-General to carry out a study on Violence against Children, international children's rights NGOs came together in an independent Panel with the mission of supporting the Study and in particular the Independent Expert that was mandated to coordinate it.

During the drafting phase of the Study, the “**NGO Advisory Panel**” collected and provided information on the Study's thematics, supported the Independent Expert in carrying out his work and also was responsible to organise a consultative session on one of the 5 areas of the Study's: violence in institutions (care and justice systems).

Once the Study was terminated and officially presented by the Secretary-General, the international Advisory Panel was dissolved; a “**NGO Advisory Council for the follow-up of the UN Study on Violence against Children**” was established to focus its work on the follow-up of the UN Study Recommendation.

This new International NGO body has a more balanced geographical representation, with regional and international NGOs. The selection of NGOs involved a serious and participative process for the nomination of the representatives. The Advisory Council lobbied for the nomination of a SRSG on Violence Against Children, and, after Ms Santos Pais was nominated and started her mandate, took on the mission to support her work by providing advice and information.

DCI has been a member of both the NGO Advisory Panel and of the “International Advisory Council” since the beginning. The other members of the Advisory Council are: ECPAT; World Vision; CRIN; Save the Children; Human Rights Watch; Global Initiative to end Corporal Punishment; Plan International; World Organization Against Torture-OMCT; WAO Afrique; Red por los Derechos de la Infancia, Child Help Line; Children's Rights Center; Child Workers concerned center -CWIN, The Cradle Children's Foundation; Center for the Promotion, Advocacy and Protection of Children's Rights Foundation Inc; and the Arab Council for Childhood and Development.

DCI committed to contributing to ensuring the follow up to the Study's recommendations and more specifically to the recommendations on “Ending violence in justice systems”. The [Kit on Violence](#), the 2008 [International Conference](#) organized in Brussels and the 2009 report produced by the IS on [NGO Follow-up strategies](#) are all follow-up initiatives.



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Visit to DCI-Netherlands

On Monday 15 March, representatives from the IS and IEC paid a visit to the Netherlands section. It was a welcomed opportunity to see the section's new office and to meet with the interim director and other staff members.

The office is located in an impressive historic building in Leiden. The structure was refurbished by a Dutch philanthropist who is now renting out the space for a reasonable amount of money to organisations involved in child rights and child protection.

The meeting coincided with a special day for the DCI office, as it was celebrating recent press coverage. The organisation's name was on the front page of a national newspaper in a story about a campaign at the Council of Europe on undocumented children and child asylum seekers. Several radio programmes have expressed their interest in interviewing Carla van Os, who is among the promoters of the campaign.

For more details:

<http://www.defenceforchildren.nl/p/43/522/mo89-mc97/english>



Meeting with DCI-Switzerland

DCI Switzerland, located just next door to the International Secretariat in Geneva, finally got the chance to meet with Ileana Bello, the new Director at the IS. The meeting was the first official one between the section and the IS and was meant to strengthen their ongoing co-operation in juvenile justice issues. DCI-Switzerland is very much committed to juvenile justice reform in Switzerland. The

section is currently implementing a project funded by the Loterie Romande and working on the drafting of an alternative report to the UN CRC. (For its part, the Swiss government is still hesitating in submitting the official report.)

To find out more about the section, visit <http://www.dei.ch>.



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DCI-Sri Lanka has moved its office

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Please note that the articles contained in this newsletter are the individual contributions of DCI's national sections and the International Secretariat, and as such do not constitute the official position of the IEC members or the movement as a whole.