



DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL DNI  
DEFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNATIONALE DEI  
DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL DCI

**1st SPECIAL NEWSLETTER**  
***Salvador, Brazil, 12 and 13 April***

Defence for Children International (DCI) is attending the twelfth UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Salvador, Brazil, from 12 to 19 April 2010. The reason for our presence is to encourage States to undertake progress towards the consolidation of Juvenile Justice systems and make them effective, fair and respectful of rights, complying with international commitments.

More specifically, DCI wants to raise awareness around the issue of institutional violence within the Juvenile Justice system, and encourage further action to overcome this situation. DCI also considers it important that Member States comply fully with their commitments towards the implementation of sanctions and correctional measures that don't include deprivation of liberty. Another priority issue is the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility: States should consider raising it as high as possible and maintain the maximum age at 18 years, in accordance with international juvenile justice standards. To present these thematic priorities to representatives of States participating in the Congress, DCI prepared an Appeal to States for specialized Juvenile Justice systems, which, so far, has received support from about 30 organizations and coalitions of civil society worldwide.

During the first two days (Monday 12 and Tuesday 13 April), the Congress discussed the topic of Childhood, Youth and Crime. DCI presented its position and proposals by participating in various side events and disseminating materials to representatives of States and of the United Nations.

In his presentation on 12 April, Mr. Manfred Novak, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, discussed the specialized nature of Youth Criminal Justice in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 10 and other international standards. In addition, he drew attention to the need to put an end to violence in the justice system, to the importance of having sanctions which don't involve the deprivation of liberty and to maintaining the minimum age of criminal responsibility at 12 years (or possibly raising it to 14), as recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Only one State—Argentina—expressed concerns about the possibility of mentioning the age of criminal responsibility in the final declaration, considering that many States would not be able to endorse it.

On Wednesday 14 April, informal negotiation meetings among State representatives centered on the discussion of the final text of the Declaration of the XII Congress. DCI proposed some amendments to the draft Declaration, inviting States to include a mention of the minimum age of criminal responsibility, as well as the need to reduce institutional violence. These two themes are considered priorities, in accordance with the CRC and other international standards.