



Geneva, April 2014

Dear colleagues of DCI,

I hope all is well in your respective countries. I write to inform you all about the recently concluded 25th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC-25) which took place 03-28 March, and other activities (Committee on the Rights of the Child & Human Rights Committee, inter alia). Please note that all documentation of the HRC-25 is available (in English, French, Spanish and Arabic) at the following link: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session25/Pages/Documentation.aspx>

- **JUSTICE**

The Annual Day on the Rights of the Child (ADRC) took place on 13 March and was dedicated to the theme "access to justice".

Mr. Tom Julius Beah of DCI – Sierra Leone participated in the panel discussion along with representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Penal Reform International (PRI), amongst others.

At the end of the session, the Council adopted a resolution on access to justice for children which calls upon States to take steps to remove any possible barriers to children's access to justice. The annual resolution also defined the theme for next year's Annual Day: "towards better investment in the rights of the child".

See our press release for more details:

https://www.defenceforchildren.org/images/stories/Press%20Release_AnnualFullDayMeeting_FINAL.pdf

- **Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty**

The 13 March also saw the official launch of the Call for a Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty. DCI launched this Call with the support of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the SRSG on violence against children, numerous NGOs and the States of Austria, Ethiopia, Qatar and Uruguay. The event also marked the inauguration of the official website: <http://www.childrendeprivedofliberty.info/>

Be sure to raise awareness of this initiative within your country and specific networks: we need strong support for the United Nations General Assembly to officially request this Study be carried out. We are currently preparing a special edition of DCI Newsletter that we will be sharing with you soon.

- **VIOLENCE**

The annual report (A/HRC/25/47) of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Violence against Children (SRSG/VAC) was presented, highlighting the benefits of restorative justice programs.

A resolution on violence against children was also adopted, calling for a panel discussion (HRC-27, September 2014) on ways and means of accelerating global efforts to end violence against children.

DCI, as part of the Working Group on Children and Violence – WG/CAV & the International NGO Council on Violence against Children – InCo (<http://www.crin.org/en/library/organisations/international-ngo-council-violence-against-children>), had a chance to meet privately with the SRSG/VAC to discuss her activities: The report on "Creating a non-violent juvenile justice system" was launched in New York last October, regional launches are foreseen in the coming months: in Latin America it will be most probably launched in November at the time of a Congress to celebrate the CRC. The report is available online (http://www.crin.org/docs/InCo_Report_2013.pdf) and is being translated in French and Spanish.



The SRSG discussed the urgent need to influence the post-2015 agenda of the United Nations General Assembly (GA) so as to encourage the inclusion of violence against children among its priority issues.

The SRSG/VAC also informed that her focus for the future would be on armed and gang violence and that she is contributing to the report on the same topic that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) will be releasing soon. Her next report to the General Assembly will be on the theme of media and children (coinciding with this year's theme for the Day of General Discussion of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, to take place on 12 September).

The Special Rapporteur on Torture also presented his annual report (A/HRC/25/60), focusing on the exclusionary rule in judicial proceedings and States' responsibility. The HRC-25 also saw the High Level Panel Discussion on the Question of the Death Penalty (05 March) which recognized the death penalty as a perpetual injustice and violation of human rights and that States must move swiftly to abolish such practice.

A summary (A/HRC/25/33) of the panel discussion on the human rights of children of parents sentenced to the death penalty or executed of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was also presented.

Special Rapporteur (SR) on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Ms. Najat M'jid Maala, presented her annual - and final of her mandate - report (A/HRC/25/48). The report recognized that worldwide protection of children remains insufficient and that legislation must be made more effective, factoring in the new challenges of the globalized world we live in. The SR also stated that the post 2015 agenda should take into account economic development and how this is related to children. Note that the next SR on sale of children is to be appointed in April (as elections were postponed).

- **ARMED CONFLICT**

The Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG/CAAC) presented her report (A/HRC/25/46) making specific mention of the need for armed forces and armed groups to stop military use of schools, as "access to education is not only a fundamental right, it is also the key for development and peace".

DCI-IS as (now ex-) convener of the Working Group on Children and Violence (WG/CAV), facilitated a private meeting of the Focus Group on CAAC with the SRSG to discuss the plans of her mandate, the launch of her campaign (no children in armed forces by 2016) and expectations from the NGO community.

A side event was organized by DCI and War Child Holland (WCH) concerning "Children affected by armed conflict: The Extent of the Child Protection Emergency in Syria". The main objective of the event was to provide a full picture of the needs and protection risks for children affected by the ongoing conflict in Syria; identify short and mid-term challenges, opportunities and strategies for the improvement of humanitarian situation in Syria in light of the adoption of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014); highlight specific recommendations for the application of international humanitarian and human rights law relevant to children, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child to the specific Syrian context; and discuss how to meet the gaps in responses to these serious child rights concerns. The panel was composed of experts from War Child Holland (WCH), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, Jordanian Women's Union as well as the SR SG/CAAC and H.E Ambassador and Permanent



Representative of Luxembourg. The report of the event will be made available shortly on our website: www.defenceforchildren.org

A resolution (A/HRC/25/L.5) on the integrity of the judicial system, which was adopted, requires an expert consultation to take place during the 28th session of the HRC (March 2015) for an exchange of views on human rights considerations relating to the issues of administration of justice through military tribunals and the role of the integral judicial system in combating human rights violations.

- **UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR)**

During the HRC-25 many UPR reports were adopted, among which those of Senegal, Mauritius, Nigeria and Mexico. It is important to follow-up on the UPR at the ground level and be sure the recommendations are carried through by States, by making recommendations public; monitoring their implementation; engaging in dialogue with the State reviewed to participate in their implementation; report to the Human Rights Council on the progress by making a statement at its periodic General debate (under Item 6).

The next UPR will take place from 28 April to 06 May and will see the following States reviewed: Norway, Albania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Portugal, Dominica, Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Brunei Darussalam, Costa Rica, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Qatar and Nicaragua.

You can follow the UPR live, through the webcast: <http://www.upr-info.org/en/webcast>

- **PALESTINE**

The Special Rapporteur (SR), Mr. Richard Falk presented his final report (A/HRC/25/67) declaring that life circumstances for Palestinians living under occupation has continued to deteriorate and that Israel has continuously refused to fulfill his obligations. With regard to children, the SR states that they are not receiving the protection to which they are entitled under international humanitarian law. Note that the next SR is to be appointed in April (as elections were postponed).

A report (A/HRC/25/38), on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan of the Secretary – General was also presented.

- **Committee on the Rights of the Child**

The Committee held its 65th session from 14 January – 01 February 2014. The following States were reviewed: Congo, Germany, Holy See, Portugal, Russian Federation and Yemen. The next session will take place from 26 May to 13 June, reviewing India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Saint Lucia and the United Kingdom. For details on these sessions:

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/SessionsList.aspx?Treaty=CRC

The next Day of General Discussion will take place on 12 September 2014 and will focus on "Social media and children's rights". More information will be made available here: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/DiscussionDays.aspx>

Note that this year marks the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); to celebrate Committee members will hold a virtual "Hang-out" discussion with children's groups from all over the world. Among the many activities commemorating the 25 years of the CRC, the University of Leiden will be organizing a



DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL DNI
DEFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNATIONAL DEI
DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL DCI
the worldwide movement for children's rights

specific conference around this event, for more details:
<http://law.leiden.edu/organisation/private-law/child-law/25yearsarc/>

The Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure (OP3) will enter into force on 14 April 2014. So far the following countries have ratified the OP3: Albania, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Gabon, Germany, Montenegro, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain and Thailand. Be sure to lobby for this important instrument to be ratified within your country; helpful guidelines are available here: <http://www.ratifyop3crc.org/ratificationprocess/>

The Committee is currently working on the following General Comments: Adolescents; Public expenditure and children's rights. Furthermore, a joint General Comment on Harmful Practices will be finalized in collaboration with the Committee on Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Elections of new Committee members will be anticipated to June (from December). Current members running for re-election include: Kirsten Sandberg, Jorge Cardona, Bernard Gastaud and Gaad Mahdi. Full details on membership: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/Membership.aspx>

Lastly, on Friday the 14th March 2014, Child Rights Connect (formerly the NGO Group for the CRC) held its annual General Assembly. DCI, being among its founders and members, attended the meeting, in which a new board and president were nominated. Acting president is now Ms. Anne-Sophie Lois of Plan International, and DCI (Ms. Ileana Bello) renewed mandate as treasurer for a further two years.

➤ **Human Rights Committee**

The Human Rights Committee, treaty body of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), continued drafting General Comment No.35 on the right of everyone to liberty and security of person (under Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - ICCPR). The draft will be open for comments from all stakeholders until 1 June. To make your contribution, please follow the link below with instructions on the procedure:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CCPR/Pages/DGCArticle9.aspx>

Sierra Leone and the United States of America were reviewed during its 114th session (10-28 March). For all the details, visit the apposite website: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=625&Lang=en

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to receive further information on the aforementioned documents and activities – I remain at your disposal.

All the very best from Geneva,

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Advocacy Officer