



**Human Rights Council - 40<sup>th</sup> Session**  
**Annual Day – Rights of the Child**  
**Delivered by: Defence for Children International (DCI)**

Defence for Children International (DCI) welcomes the opportunity to speak at the Annual Day on the Rights of the Child.

We commend the theme of the empowerment of children with disabilities for the enjoyment of their human rights for this year's Annual Day. Empowerment is particularly important for children deprived of their liberty in closed institutions, such as residential care homes, orphanages, or group homes. Children deprived of their liberty in institutions often remain invisible and forgotten. They are exposed to increased risk of sexual violence, discrimination, lack of access to quality health care and quality inclusive education, and denial of other civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Furthermore, children in closed institutions may have limited or no access to comprehensive sexuality education and information, or to knowledge of their rights.

We note that there has been an increased focus on and some progress concerning children in institutions in recent years. This includes the United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, which will be delivered later this year. However, we remain concerned that there is a lack of information concerning how children end up deprived of their liberty in institutions, how many are in such institutions, the conditions of deprivation of liberty, and the duration of children's stay.

As such, we call on States to:

- Take steps to ensure that alternatives are found to placing children in residential institutions and to set in place a process to end this practice;
- Collect quality, disaggregated data on children deprived of their liberty in institutions including on the number of children, disaggregated by type of disability and other demographic markers;
- Monitor and report on institutionalisation of children; and
- Comply with international legal obligations, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and engage with international processes, including the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty and its follow-up.

Thank you.