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**Human Rights Council – 42<sup>nd</sup> session**

**ITEM 3 – Interactive Dialogue with Working Group on Arbitrary Detention**

**Delivered by Defence for Children International (DCI)**

Mr. President,

Defence for Children International (DCI) welcomes the opportunity to speak in this dialogue on behalf of the NGO Panel for the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, comprised of 170 NGOs.

The NGO Panel thanks the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention for its country report and we commend the Group for highlighting that deprivation of liberty of children, should be for the shortest appropriate period of time, making it clear that any form of administrative detention or custody must only be applied as an exceptional measure of last resort, as their deprivation of liberty has long lasting negative psychological effects. Furthermore, children should in all circumstances be separated from adults whilst in detention, except if it is in their best interest.

We also welcome the recognition that it is preferable to divert children away from the criminal justice system with diversion programmes. These programmes should be available at all stages in the proceedings within the context of a child friendly justice system. Although pretrial detention of children should be avoided, we support the recommendation for children in pretrial detention to have access to education and adequate opportunities to participate in sports and leisure-time activities and we urge all States to adopt these steps.

The increased awareness of the deprivation of liberty of children around the world has enabled the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty to be carried out, and it will be presented to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee of the UN General Assembly on 8<sup>th</sup> October, whilst the full report will be presented in Geneva on 19<sup>th</sup> November. The NGO Panel for the Study remains concerned that children continue to be deprived of their liberty in many different settings around the world despite the detrimental effects on their health and wellbeing, and that we lack quality, disaggregated data concerning these children.

We call on Member States

- to support the Global Study and its recommendations, including specific mechanisms to continue data collection and to implement good practices on alternatives to detention.
- And furthermore, to ensure an effective follow up of its recommendations

This engagement is crucial for the success of the Study and its impact on the lives of millions of children deprived of their liberty all over the world.

Thank you.