

Geneva, July 2016

Dear colleagues,

Hoping this message finds you well, the International Secretariat of Defence for Children International (DCI-IS) shares the latest updates from Geneva, particularly with regard the UN and the recently concluded 32nd regular session of the Human Rights Council (HRC-32), which took place from 13 June – 01 July. Key themes during this HRC session included migration, women's rights, and some important new initiatives (mental health; youth, sexual orientation and gender identity). All relevant documentation on this session is available [online](#) (in English, French, Spanish and Arabic).

➤ **JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN**

The [Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty \(GSCDL\)](#): We continue to work towards the concrete advancement of this important Study and to this end DCI continues to coordinate the NGO Panel, which is currently made up of over ninety NGOs from around the world. The preliminary phase (March 2014 – ongoing) which included the DCI led campaign calling for the Study and galvanizing political support should conclude soon. Once funding is secured, an apposite Secretariat will be set up at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva and Independent Expert will be appointed (expected date: September 2016). DCI national sections will be actively involved in the implementation phase of the Study and the IEC will be discussing and mapping an action plan to this end.

DCI also made a formal contribution to the draft **CRC General Comment on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence** (CRC/C/GC/20), particularly on paragraph 92 which addresses deprivation of liberty. The General Comment will be adopted at the next session of the CRC Committee in September 2016.

➤ **MIGRATION**

The HRC-32 included an interactive dialogue with the **Special Rapporteur on migrants**, Mr. Crepeau. During which, DCI delivered a [joint oral statement](#) together with the International Detention Coalition (IDC), reminding States to expeditiously and completely end the immigration detention of children, in line with the recommendation of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (DGD 2012). DCI also submitted an [individual written statement](#) reiterating the fundamental human rights of children in migration situations.

The HRC-32 also adopted its biennial thematic resolution on migrants, led by Mexico, which focused on “**the protection of the human rights of migrants - Strengthening the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants including in large movements**” ([A HRC 32 L.22](#)). The text reaffirmed the importance of respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of all migrants who leave their countries, regardless of their migratory status. The text also called on the organization of an interactive dialogue on “The human rights of migrants in the context of large movement” during the HRC-34 (June 2017).

During the session a side-event was held to launch the [Recommended Principles to Guide Actions concerning Children on the Move and other Children affected by Migration](#). These principles are set to remind States and all stakeholders of the basic human rights standards specific to children affected by migration and are deliberately not branded. More information available [here](#).



The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) are in the midst of developing a [Joint General Comment \(JGC\) on the human rights of children in the context of international migration](#).

DCI is active member of the [Interagency Working Group \(IAWG\) on ending child immigration detention](#), which held its annual meeting during the HRC-32 session. The IAWG is comprised of UN, intergovernmental and civil society organizations. The IAWG actively lobbies member States and the UN agencies on how to best address and prevent human rights violations for children in the context of migration. On 19 September 2016 there will be a [UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants](#) in New York to address the issue of migration, and the Child Rights resolution of the UN General Assembly (71st session) this year will also focus on migration. DCI will be lobbying around both of these activities, specifically through the channel of the IAWG.

➤ **HEALTH**

DCI lobbied around the [UN General Assembly on the world drug problem](#) (March & April 2016). Together with other NGOs, DCI drafted a public [statement](#) advocating that children's rights be holistically addressed and considered in these discussions. DCI is establishing an informal Task Force to follow-up on this issue, particularly as drug use and drug production are highly linked to deprivation of liberty and thus a key issue to address as a means to prevent and reduce the number of children being deprived of liberty.

In follow-up to these activities, during the HRC-32, DCI delivered a [joint oral statement](#) during the interactive dialogue of the **Special Rapporteur on health**, whose thematic report this year was dedicated to adolescents ([A/HRC/32/32](#)), with clear mentions of children's involvement in drug use, trade and production. In addition, and as aforementioned (see section "Justice for Children"), DCI also made a formal contribution the draft CRC **General Comment on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence** (CRC/C/GC/20), not only on paragraph 92 (related to deprivation of liberty), but also paragraph 72 which underlines article 33 of the UNCRC.

In addition, during this session a first-time resolution on **mental health** was adopted ([A/HRC/32/L.26](#)), reaffirming the obligation of States to ensure that policies and services related to mental health comply with international human rights norms. DCI contributed to the text, ensuring specific explicit reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children and deprivation of liberty. The resolution requests the OHCHR to present a report on the human rights perspective in mental health during the HRC-34 (June 2017). DCI-IS consistently ensures that the mental (as well as physical) health of children in detention is always taken into account (e.g. [report of the HRC-22 event](#)), and is presently drafting a project with key European universities to examine the mental health of children in detention.

The HRC-32 adopted another resolution on **access to medicines**, stressing the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health ([A HRC 32 L.23 Rev.1](#)). The Council also adopted a resolution on promoting the **right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health** through enhancing capacity-building in public health ([A HRC 32 L.24 Rev.1](#)).



➤ WOMEN

The HRC-32 - as all June sessions - held a **full-day annual discussion on the human rights of women**. The day was divided into two panels, a morning one focusing on “violence against indigenous women and girls and its root causes”, and an afternoon one focusing on “women’s rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: delivering on the promise to leave no one behind”. The **Special Rapporteur on violence against women** ([A/HRC/32/42](#)) and **Working Group on discrimination against women** ([A/HRC/32/44](#)) presented their reports and held respective interactive dialogues. The thematic report of the United Nations Entity for **Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women** on the activities of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women ([A/HRC/32/3](#)) was also presented during the HRC-32.

The Council adopted a resolution on accelerating efforts to **eliminate violence against women**: preventing and responding to violence against women and girls, including indigenous women and girls ([A HRC 32 L.28 Rev.1](#)). Furthermore, in a resolution on the **elimination of discrimination against women** ([A/HRC/C/L.7/Rev.1](#)), the Council called upon States to ensure women’s and girls’ equal access to accessible, affordable, available, appropriate, effective and high-quality health care & services. The Council, in another resolution ([A/HRC/32/L.25](#)), requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a **report on the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence in the context of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance on the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls**.

The HRC-32 also adopted a resolution on the **elimination of female genital mutilation** ([A HRC 32 L.31 Rev.1](#)), urging member States to place special emphasis on education, in particular of youth, parents and religious, traditional and community leaders, about the harmful effects of female genital mutilation. The **right to education by every girl** was also addressed by a resolution ([A/HRC/32/L.30/Rev.1](#)), in which the Council urged all States to intensify their efforts to realize progressively the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl. Lastly, a resolution was adopted to reaffirm **women’s equal nationality rights** in law and in practice ([A HRC 32 L.12](#)).

➤ PROTECTION OF THE FAMILY

In follow-up to last year’s HRC resolution ([A/HRC/29/L.25](#)) on the protection of the family, a subsequent regressive resolution was tabled by the group of “like minded States”. This year the resolution focused specifically on **the role of the family in supporting the protection and promotion of human rights of persons with disabilities** ([A HRC 32 L.35](#)). The text established that a one-day intersessional seminar on the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development ([A/RES/70/1](#)) be convened before the HRC-34 (June 2017), and that the High Commissioner present a report on the seminar at the HRC-35 (September 2017).

DCI together with other child rights NGOs had formed an apposite **Task Force** with the aim to counter this regressive trend and ensure that children’s rights are not undermined, but are considered as autonomous individuals within the family structure. To this end, during the HRC-32 session, the Task Force published an advocacy brief to lobby States, underlining how children are individual rights-holders and children’s right to non-discrimination and identity. In addition, DCI, with Child Rights Connect and other NGOs, delivered a **joint oral & written statement** (20 June).



➤ YOUTH

A first-time **HRC resolution on Youth** ([A/HRC/31/L.1](#)) decided to convene at HRC-33 (March 2017), a panel discussion on the theme “Youth and human rights” with the objective to identify challenges, best practices and lessons learned in the exercise of human rights by young people. Also to note, World YMCA held first ever **Youth Forum** in preparation of the HRC (10 June). On this topic it is also important to flag the book “[International Law on Youth Rights](#)”, which was launched in Geneva in December 2015 by the European Youth Forum.

➤ SEXUAL ORIENTATION & GENDER IDENTITY

The Council created the mandate of an **Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity** ([A/HRC/32/L.2/Rev.1](#)), to assess the implementation of existing international human rights instruments with regard to ways to overcome violence and discrimination against persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

➤ TRAFFICKING

The Council adopted a **resolution** calling on all States to protect people, particularly women, children and other vulnerable groups in conflict-affected areas, and people fleeing conflict, from all forms of trafficking in persons ([A/HRC/C/L.6](#)). Furthermore, the **Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children** presented her thematic report ([A/HRC/32/41](#)) on the nature of trafficking related to the complex situation of conflict.

➤ SPORTS & HUMAN RIGHTS

HRC-32 held a **Panel on the Use of Sport and the Olympic Ideal to Promote Human Rights for All**. During the Panel, DCI presented a joint [oral](#) and [written](#) statement presenting recommendations for the use of sport to promote human rights for all.

➤ CIVIL SOCIETY SPACE

In a resolution on civil society ([A/HRC/C/L.29](#)), the Council called upon member States to create and maintain, **in law & practice, a safe and enabling environment in which civil society can operate free from hindrance and insecurity**; the resolution also urges States to ensure access to justice, and accountability, and to end impunity for human rights violations and abuses against civil society actors. DCI also delivered a [joint oral statement](#) as a response to the OHCHR report on “Practical recommendations for the creation and maintenance of a safe and enabling environment for civil society, based on good practice and lessons learned” ([A/HRC/32/20](#)).

➤ CONFLICT AREAS

DCI presented an [oral statement](#) on behalf of DCI- Palestine, during the General Debate under Item 7 - **human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories**, highlighting Israel's renewed use of administrative detention against Palestinian children. DCI also followed the United Nations International Conference in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace “Peace is possible - frameworks for a way forward” (29-30 June).

In a resolution on the human rights situation in the **Syrian Arab Republic** ([A/HRC/32/L.9](#)), the Council demanded that the Syrian authorities cooperate fully with the UN Commission of



Inquiry.

During an Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert for the **Central African Republic**, the need for effective accountability was stressed, particularly the need for abuses against children by armed groups and United Nations peacekeepers. Further efforts towards the prompt establishment of the Special Criminal Court and collaboration with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were also stressed.

➤ **UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR)**

The HRC-32 adopted [Universal Periodic Review](#) outcomes for 14 States, including Sierra Leone, Paraguay and Belgium – where DCI has national presence. In light of the UPR outcomes of Sierra Leone, DCI and Save the Children delivered a [joint statement](#) on the need to implement specific UPR recommendations concerning discrimination against women and girls, gender-based violence, traditional harmful practices, child labour and the delivery of public health care.

The HRC-32 also held a panel on **Contribution of Parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council and the UPR**, in order to promote a better understanding of how national parliaments promote and protect human rights and strengthen the rule of law.

❖ **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS): GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

Violence against children was excluded from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - an omission rectified by Target 16.2 of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), which calls for an end to abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children. A [Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children](#) was established to work with countries to help turn their commitments into action. The Partnership plans to prevent and respond to the issue of violence against children by establishing violence prevention as a policy priority globally. The Partnership will be officially launched at a high-level event in July 2016 in New York. DCI President, Benoit Van Keirsbilck, will be representing DCI in attending the launch and its related activities.

Also to note: next year's **HRC Annual Day on the Rights of the Child (March 2017)** will be dedicated specifically to "**Protection of the rights of the child in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**". DCI, as co-convenor and member of the Working Group on Children and Violence (WG/CAV), will continue to work on joint activities related to the effective realization of the SDGs.

❖ **33RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (HRC-33):**

The **next Human Rights Council session (HRC-33) will take place in March 2017**, when DCI's International General Assembly (IGA) will also take place (02, 03, 04 March). Issues of interest to be addressed during the HRC-33 will include: children (violence; armed conflict; SDGs; birth registration); torture; human rights defenders; integrity of the judicial system; minorities; – inter alia.

UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC COMMITTEE):



During its **72nd session** (17 May – 03 June), the CRC Committee reviewed Bulgaria, Gabon, Nepal, Pakistan, Samoa, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Gabon, Luxembourg (Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography) and Nepal (Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict).

The next session of the CRC Committee (**73rd session**) will take place from 13-30 September, wherein our colleagues from **Sierra Leone** will participate in the review of the State report, having submitted a stakeholders report as part of the national coalition. During the **75th pre-sessional Working Group** (03-07 October), our colleagues from **Cameroon** will be participating to prepare the Council for the State review in May 2017. For more details on the sessions, you can visit the official [website](#).

On 30 June 2016 in New York, UN Member States at the UN General Assembly **elected members to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**. Those selected will replace outgoing members of the Committee whose terms expire on 28 February 2017. The new/re-elected members are: Amal Salman Aldoseri (Bahrain); Olga A. Khazova (Russian Federation); Cephas Lumina (Zambia); Benyam Dawit Mezmur (Ethiopia); Mikiko Otani (Japan); Luis Ernesto Pedernera Reyna (Uruguay); Ann Marie Skelton (South Africa); Velina Todorova (Bulgaria); Renate Winter (Austria).

For further information on any of the different points, please do not hesitate to contact us here at the DCI – International Secretariat.

With many thanks & all the best,

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