

PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE  
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

GENERAL COMMITTEE

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DRAFT DECLARATION

ON VIOLENCE AGAINST AND EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

(Presented by the delegations of Paraguay and Uruguay and cosponsored  
by the delegation of Bolivia)

(Approved by the Committee at the meeting of May 21, 2014)

THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND HEADS OF DELEGATION OF THE  
MEMBER STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS) gathered in  
Asunción, Paraguay, at the forty-fourth regular session of the OAS General Assembly,

RECOGNIZING that violence against and exploitation of children occur everywhere and in  
all their forms, in all countries and societies and among all social groups, and make no distinction of  
class, culture, race, religion, gender, or nationality, particularly in vulnerable groups;

RECOGNIZING the significant positive impact of child welfare assistance programs on  
education, school retention, malnutrition reduction, and social inclusion;

RECOGNIZING FURTHER that such violence takes place in all environments in  
which children live, grow, develop, and interact, *inter alia*, in families, at home, in schools, and in  
communities and the media, within social welfare systems, and in juvenile justice systems;

CONCERNED at the higher rates of violent deaths that occur among adolescents, especially  
adolescent boys in traditionally excluded and/or vulnerable groups;

CONCERNED ALSO about the high incidence of sexual violence against children, particularly girls, through abuse, exploitation or trafficking; as well as bullying in schools; and corporal punishment as a form of discipline in schools, institutions, and homes;

CONSIDERING that the human rights of children are recognized in the main human rights instruments of both the inter-American system and the United Nations system, as established in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;

CONSIDERING ALSO that the OAS, particularly through the Inter-American Children's Institute, as well as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, has emphasized the importance of effectively promoting and protecting the rights of children in the Americas;

CONSIDERING FURTHER that countries in the Americas actively participated in the process for preparation of the World Report on Violence against Children commissioned by the Secretary General of the United Nations, and remain committed to promoting initiatives that help to end violence against children;

MINDFUL that countries with high rates of child labor tend to have low rates of school attendance; that children who study in a violent environment have low academic performance; that children who are victims of abuse and exploitation are harmed emotionally, mentally and physically, impairing their ability to learn and socialize;

CONSIDERING FURTHERMORE that preventing and responding to violence and exploitation is essential to ensuring children's rights to survival, development, and well-being, and that violence against children not only threatens their personal integrity, but endangers their lives and adversely affects the realization of other rights, such as the rights to development, education, and health, as well as to recreation;<sup>1</sup>

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1. The United States recognizes the role governments play in ensuring a child's survival and development. While this concept is contained in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United States is not party to that treaty, nor are survival and development framed as rights in that instrument. It is also not the place of the OAS to recommend drafting protocols to UN Conventions.

MINDFUL that it is essential to strengthen national systems for promotion and protection of children's rights, particularly at the local level, through programs on prevention of and response to violence against children, as well as through families, schools, and the community;

MINDFUL ALSO of the progress that member states have made in preventing and responding to violence against children, as well as the significant contributions of the inter-American human rights system, in particular the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child;

MINDFUL FURTHER that, in order to continue promoting the positive impacts achieved through the Millennium Development Goals, any new post-2015 global development agenda must deal with violence against and exploitation of children,

DECLARE:

1. That responses to violence against children should be gender-sensitive, of a holistic nature and encompass prevention of violence against children, the early detection of cases of violence against children, care and rehabilitation for victims, protection action and measures to ensure children's safety, enhance strategies to ensure that violence is prevented, and promote the establishment of community child protection networks to reduce secondary victimization, as well as restitution and reparation and the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of violence against children.

2. That it is vital that the post-2015 development agenda address the issue of violence and exploitation perpetrated against children.<sup>2/</sup>

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2. Ecuador is of the view that effectively tackling the issue of violence against and exploitation of children as part of the post-2015 development agenda calls for a diagnosis of the reality in the countries with respect to the issues of violence against and sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, including development of a registration system for those victims.

3. That implementation and follow-up of public policies aimed at eradicating violence, begging, and the worst forms of child labor must be strengthened, taking into account gender, multiculturalism, and disability.

4. That it is essential that states not only continue deepening changes and improvements made for children in the areas of child survival, education, gender equality, and HIV/AIDS, but also address with the same commitment and vigor the issue of violence against and exploitation of children, unaccompanied or separated migrant children, and those living on the streets or caught up in organized crime.

5. That they urge governments to ensure that the issue of violence and exploitation perpetrated against children has clear and measurable sex-disaggregated targets and indicators to guarantee that children are free from violence and exploitation.

6. That sex-disaggregated indicators could include statistics on the number of children involved in the worst forms of child labor; on the number of children subjected to any form of sexual violence in schools; on the number of children subjected to the most serious forms of violence in the home or community, defined as those that are banned by national laws; on the number of children who lack adequate care or are at risk of inadequate care; and on the number of children removed or rescued from illegal armed groups involved in armed conflict.

7. That they encourage governments, where appropriate, to harmonize their laws with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to design and consider introducing Protocols on prevention, protection, and dealing with violence against children, in all its expressions.