

A new Global Partnership to End Violence against Children

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by ChildFund Alliance

Governments from all over the world gathered in New York recently to adopt the new Global Goals for Sustainable Development and a new Global Partnership to end violence against children was launched.

ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages International, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, and World Vision International co-hosted a side-event entitled 'Building a world that is safer for children,' where the partnership was announced.



The event took place on September 27th 2015, at UNICEF headquarters in New York, and was an opportunity to draw attention to the partnership, to target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to engage senior government officials and influential leaders, and garner a public commitment from them.

H.E. Mr. Juan Sandoval, Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, opened the meeting. Ambassador Sandoval referred to the importance of addressing violence against children, and called target 16.2 a historic landmark. He further highlighted the need for data, and recalled the creation of a national commission to measure social impact in Mexico, as well as the issuing of legislation to protect children from different forms of violence. "The partnership should provide a platform to learn from each other's experience, and foster concrete and measurable results," he said.

Ms. Yoka Brandt, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, remarked on why putting an end to violence against children is so important and urgent, and recalled the staggering statistics published in UNICEF's Hidden in Plain Sight last year. "Sometime over the course of my brief remarks, a child will die from violence. Violence against children not always claims their lives, but it always claims their childhood," she said. She also highlighted the fact that violence against children is not inevitable and that there are concrete solutions to this problem, including changing social norms and providing social services. Finally, Ms. Brandt reaffirmed UNICEF's support for the partnership: "Together we're stronger and better than the sum of our parts," she concluded.

Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children, called attention to the historic opportunity provided by target 16.2. "This agenda was inspired by the voices and tireless efforts of thousands of children all over the world. And their priority is to be free from violence. They are ready to join us as agents of change and serious partners," she said. "We now see this goal reflected in the new development agenda." She also provided examples of concrete actions that are being effectively implemented across the world to end violence against children.

H.E. Dr. Yohana Yambise, Indonesian Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, referred to the importance of commitments from countries to preventive and responsive actions to tackle violence against children. She highlighted the strategies that are being implemented in Indonesia to address this issue, including a survey for children through social media on the priority actions that their government needs to take, support for peer-to-peer networks to address bullying, and an enhancement of the evidence base. "The more we learn, the more meaningful our interventions are," she stated.

Mr. Gary Cohen, founder of Together for Girls, recalled the history of the foundation of Together for Girls, as an example of multi-stakeholder action on violence against children, focusing on gathering evidence, supporting national plans of actions, and doing global advocacy and raising awareness.

Ms. Meg Gardinier, Secretary General of ChildFund Alliance, highlighted the importance of working together to end violence against children. Speaking on behalf of ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages International, and World Vision International, Ms. Gardinier stated: "We are fully aware of the importance of working together, with governments, UN entities, civil society organizations, as well as children and young people. As civil society, we realize the importance of this partnership and its great potential to ensure an inclusive, open and transparent forum to catalyze change and create knowledge."

Mr. Etienne Krug, Director of the Department for Management of Non-communicable Diseases, Disability, Violence and Injury Prevention at the World Health Organization, talked about the value of a cross-sectoral approach to end violence against children. He called attention on the need to have data in order to implement effective actions to protect children from violence and exploitation. "A plan without data is a nightmare. With data we'll have a much stronger case to move forward," he emphasized.

Ms. Charlotte Vuyiswa McClain-Nhlapo, Global Disability Advisor in the Social, Urban, Rural and Resilience Global Practice of the World Bank Group, called attention to the vulnerability of children

with disabilities to violence, and also remarked on the importance of including all children in the efforts to prevent and respond to violence. “Having good disaggregated data that can provide a strong and robust narrative is fundamental,” she said. “Enabling legislative frameworks and creating a social movement to end violence against children are also important.”