

10-14 April 2022

Documentation of the Work of The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) NMUN Simulation*



Conference B

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United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

Committee Staff

**Director
Chair**

Jasym Mireles Venegas
Ryan Miglio

Agenda

- I. Fostering Digital Civic Engagement by Young People
- II. Providing Violence Response and Access to Justice for Children and Youth

Resolutions adopted by the Committee

CODE	TOPIC	VOTE (FOR-AGAINST-ABSTAIN)
UNICEF/1/1	Providing Violence Response and Access to Justice for Children and Youth	Adopted without a vote

Summary Report

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) held its annual session to consider the following agenda items:

- I. Fostering Digital Civic Engagement for Young People
- II. Providing Violence Response and Access to Justice for Children and Youth

The session was attended by representatives of 19 Member States. On Sunday, UNICEF set the agenda to II, I, and focused most of its time on developing solutions toward Providing Violence Response and Access to Justice for Children and Youth. By the end of Monday, UNICEF had five working papers containing a plethora of ideas, strategies, and best practices for the international community to consider. The committee then collaborated and merged their work into three working papers by Tuesday morning.

In the spirit of great collaboration and multilateral friendship, the committee then proceeded to merge the three working papers into one, which was approved as a draft resolution shortly thereafter. These draft resolutions called upon Member States to work with UNICEF, other UN bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academia on the expansion of mental health resources in response to violence and the improvement of justice systems to eradicate violence; helping children recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically assessing and improving the exposure of children to violence as a result of remaining at home; and suggesting the implementation of the H.O.P.E Framework to eradicate violence against children and youth in all its forms.

The resolution was adopted without a vote at the end of day on Wednesday. Overall, the flow of committee remained collaborative, energetic, and enthusiastic, and proved for an immensely fruitful session.



Code: UNICEF/1/1

Committee: The United Nations Children's Fund

Topic: Providing Violence Response and Access to Justice for Children and Youth

The United Nations Children's Fund,

Recognizing the importance of Member State sovereignty in the United Nations' (UN) recommendation-making,

Recalling the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989),

Fully aware of the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) in ensuring that the resolutions are future-centric and sustainable, in particular SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions that calls for ending all forms of violence against children and reforming the justice system,

Highlighting the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF's) commitment to support Member States in ensuring the safety of children at the local, regional, global level,

Affirming the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme On Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation through education, advocacy, and providing young girls with psychological support, health resources, and access to justice to eliminate the fear of discriminatory action when speaking out,

Keeping in mind the 1995 World Programme of Action for Youth that focuses on fifteen fields of action including education, health, environment, and juvenile justice to protect the rights and freedoms on children and youth,

Keeping in mind UNICEF's collaboration with The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) through the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage,

Noting with regret the prominence of physical, emotional, and sexual violence against children and youth as noted in the 2006 World Report on Violence against Children,

Considering the 2020 UNICEF report on Protecting Children from Violence in the Time of COVID-19: Disruptions in Prevention and Response Service, which noted that COVID-19 has increased the vulnerability of children due to lockdown measures that have potentially disturbed households,

Emphasizing that education is imperative for children and adults to prevent all forms of violence, as noted in the 2019 UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO), and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) collaboration report School-based violence prevention: A practical handbook,

Noting with deep concern that various Member States lack the accessibility of financial expansion in education regarding violence against adolescents as recognized in the 2020 UNICEF Global Annual Results Report 2020: Goal Area 3: Ensuring that every child is protected from violence and exploitation,

Bearing in mind the need to improve communication between legal staff and victims of child abuse, especially within vulnerable communities, so they may understand each other and prevent future communication difficulties,

Acknowledging that political leaders and law enforcement are a part of the process to protect children,

Fully aware of the alarming number of cases of homicide against children and adolescents presented by UNICEF's Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children,

Affirming Human Rights Council resolution 22/32 on "Rights of the child: the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health," which calls for initiatives and development regarding access to justice for children and youth,

Recognizing the need for the protection of youth and children, with a special focus on the legal protection of girls and young women within the justice system as defined within the *UN Common Approach to Justice for Children* (2008),

Acknowledging the work Orchid Project has done with the UN General Assembly in over 90 countries to aid in the eradication of female genital mutilation (FGM),

Alarmed by the lack of access to proper information and legal aid due to both linguistic and cultural differences for indigenous children and youth,

Recognizing children's judicial needs may differ from adults and require a more lenient approach, as stated in the 2013 *Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems*,

Alarmed by the fact that a third of all human trafficking cases are children according to UNICEF,

Fully aware of regional and local differences and the need for targeted approaches when addressing violence against children in different contexts,

Noting with satisfaction the progress of the INSPIRE framework developed by WHO, which is a set of seven strategies for ending violence against children,

Acknowledging the Signal For Help initiative created by The Canadian Women's Foundation, which allows women to easily make a hand signal when they require immediate help, and recognizing that such a sign does not exist for children,

Reaffirming the precedent set by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), which focuses on preventing child abuse by responding immediately to allegations of violence for a child's safety,

Recognizing the 2021 *State of the World's Children* 2021 report, which examines and highlights the mental health issues young children face,

Guided by the importance of the nine core capacities presented in UNICEF's 2021 *What Makes Me?* publication, and convinced that these capacities are central in the development of children's mental health and resilience towards abuse and violence,

Acknowledging the role of both non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organizations in raising awareness and implementing preventive measures that reduce violence against children and youth,

Bearing in mind that according to the 2019 *Global Burden of Disease* study by The Institute of Health Metrics, 1 in 7 adolescents experiences a mental disorder,

Aware of the statistics presented in *The State of the World's Children 2021* report, which reveal more than 13 percent of adolescents aged 10–19 live with a diagnosed mental disorder,

Convinced of the importance of providing mental health resources for children and the youth due to the mental health consequences that result from violence,

Taking note of factors such as school closures, increased physical distance and reduced access to healthcare systems that makes access to justice difficult for children especially during the COVID-19 pandemic,

Noting with satisfaction that the UNICEF Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Project in China has provided over 625 schools with mental health resources and training,

Emphasizing the need to recognize and address the heightened vulnerability to violence of children in crisis, humanitarian, and war zone situations as stated by article 61 of Goal Area 3 in the *UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025*,

1. *Advocates for* the implementation of violence prevention education for children through:
 - a. Classes in schools focusing on safety guidelines and positive interventions as well as implementing anonymous skills and confidence building practices;

- b. Collaborating with regional NGOs in order to expand the violence prevention education programs to children who do not attend formal schools, including homeschooled children and those living in unstable conditions such as armed conflicts;
 - c. Suggesting that empathy and the other eight core capacities presented in the UNICEF's 2021 *What Makes Me?* publication be implemented in school curriculums;
 - d. Using of global training programs such as empowerment self-defense which would include self-defense techniques, awareness skills, and confidence building practices;
2. *Encourages* the establishment of strong child violence mentoring programs to educate both adult and children on preventative measures regarding violence against children with open discussions facilitated by professionals and counselors through:
- a. An online platform for children to interact with other children and feel free to express themselves;
 - b. Counseling services available to youth to support their mental health needs through Crisis Centers built off of The Women and Children Crisis Center from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women which will have:
 - i. Trained therapists and counselors on hand to talk with children when needed;
 - ii. An access to Member State-based support groups that may include domestic abuse, mental health, and LGBTQ+ support;
 - iii. Academic programs consisting of tutors and study groups to aid any child not getting help at home;
 - iv. Resources like law enforcement, lawyers, doctors, and social workers present to ensure children are protected;
 - v. Opportunities for volunteer work, if of age, with the help of counselors and supervisors to protect children from precarious situation where they would be more subjected to violence;
 - c. Encouraging collaborations between UNICEF with The World Bank Group in order to build a sustainable financing structure for the mentoring programs;
3. *Proposes* that courses in the Crisis Centers cover topics such as, but not limited to, sexual education, relationships, post-abuse education, friendship, puberty, human rights, and further topics that can be recommended to Member States based on the current needs that each Member State may inquire;
4. *Recommends* providing products in the courses such as, but not limited to, informational brochures, drink covers, technologically advanced products focused on safety tailored with an aim towards nations with different levels of development, snacks, water, sexual protective products, menstrual products;
5. *Supports* fostering a child-friendly justice system and child protective services with respect to each Member States' regional policies;
6. *Reaffirms* the importance of aligning with SDG 16.2 in making justice accessible to children, as well as establishing platforms for protection and aid during their passage through the justice system by:
- a. Increasing the supply of services and of the capacities for violence prevention;
 - b. Calling attention to the legal and protection services sector;
7. *Strongly encourages* Member States to educate and train justice professionals, including but not limited to lawyers, judges, police, and correctional officers;
8. *Encourages* the training of justice professionals, particularly with regards to juvenile rights and the needs of a child, while respecting the distinct cultural and judiciary aspects of each Member State;

9. *Proposes* implementing the possibility for children to be heard in court and judges to respond to testimonies voiced by a child, as stated in *The UN Common Approach to Justice for Children* (2008) regarding the need for family courts to hold jurisdiction over all delinquent juveniles so family courts can provide medical and psychological evaluations;
10. *Recommends* the implementation by Member States of group cases to hasten the legal procedures in urgent crisis for children with the same legal situations;
11. *Calls upon* Member States to consider implementing strategies aimed at providing equitable justice for girls and young women, through formal education on safety, protection, and knowledge of violence which includes but is not limited to providing access to the legal justice system and referring girls and young women to assistance provided by entities such as The Office on Violence Against Women;
12. *Recommends* maintaining support of The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme, especially focusing on ending child violence and child marriage;
13. *Encourages* Member States to establish campaigns consisting of collaborations, awareness projects, and forums with parents, orphanages, legal guardians, and other entities with the same responsibilities to openly converse about the mental health impacts that arise from children having to interact with the justice system as well as the solutions that come with it;
14. *Further invites* Member States to expand The SEL Project, which improves access to trained counselors, by:
 - a. Implementing the program in schools and classes designed to inform children of the importance of mental health;
 - b. Providing children and their caretakers with recovery classes focused on mental health recovery from violence;
15. *Suggests* that Member States encourage mental health sensitive training by healthcare workers for professionals in contact with child victims and offenders of violence, such as members in the education field, law enforcement field, juvenile justice systems, and social workers to help create community-based security nets for these victims;
16. *Further encourages* the creation of child abuse hotline and regional reporting systems which are easily accessible through school workshops and that would be:
 - a. Managed and operated by UN volunteers who would inform the population of their right to give anonymous tips to police stations within their communities about cases of child abuse, and establish public trust in the hotline, therefore encouraging a swift response;
 - b. Publicized by public information campaigns that will spread awareness about the hotline and teach children, educators, and caretakers how to access this hotline;
17. *Recommends* prioritizing the mental and physical health of children while in detention centers and other legal settings;
18. *Strongly encourages* willing and able Member States to fund mental health research and awareness initiatives;
19. *Invites* Member States to incorporate the INSPIRE Framework that was created for the sole purpose of ensuring progress towards SDG target 16.2 and 16.3 by:
 - a. Strengthening the implementation and enforcement of laws by increasing training programs that train officials to properly deal with child abuse and neglect;

- b. Providing support for increasing enrollment in primary schools and secondary schools, which relays the importance of safe school environments;
 - c. Providing a rapid response from the judicial system in order to address children's cases promptly;
- 20. *Encourages* Member States to become a Pathfinding country, which aim to raise awareness, stimulate leadership commitment, galvanize action, and establish a standard of national violence prevention, throughout the world by:
 - a. Making a formal, public commitment to comprehensive action to end all forms of violence against children;
 - b. Facilitating collaboration among public and private organizations with the goal of achieving SDG 16;
- 21. *Further recommends* the continued development of the *Global Status Report on Violence Against Children*, and *Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence Against Children* (2014) as it is crucial for database creation, in order to:
 - a. Identify places where violence against children occurs and provide reliable information on all forms of abuse, neglect, and harassment;
 - b. Encourage Member States to implement laws and practices based on the research presented in these databases;
 - c. Accurately represent the data of subdivided regions to ensure response to violence against children, tailored towards political and geographical regions;
 - d. Work in close cooperation with United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) to further the UNODC human trafficking database to:
 - i. Allow countries access to major human traffickers' information located in multiple regions and countries thus encourages them to create task forces and minimize traffickers affects;
 - ii. Give parents and children the ability to talk with trusted officials in the safe havens that can provide them with the information from these databases;
- 22. *Promotes* the use of the sign for help involving a the closure of the thumb followed by the closure of the rest of the fingers for children in a moment of danger to alert for help;
- 23. *Further encourages* NGOs and educational institutions on all levels to promote the sign for help and its specific meaning when used by children;
- 24. *Encourages* Member States to collaborate with NGOs and civil society organizations working to eliminate gender-based violence against children through supporting advocacy campaigns within NGOs such as the Orchid Project and the Child Friendly Cities Program and through connecting young female victims of gender-based violence to advocacy centers;
- 25. *Strongly supports* the implementation of Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE) Framework in solidifying and strengthening protection channels against violence for children coming from low-income families, marginalized communities, and other vulnerable sectors, by:
 - a. Having devoted attention tracked through a monthly reporting system on the existing projects and outreach activities by UNICEF;

- b. Observing the nations, cities, and more localized governments wherein vulnerable children and adolescents are likely to come from such as war zones, conflict-prone areas, and the homeless population in order to identify problems and their solutions;
- c. Prioritizing the protection of children and mitigation of long-term mental health impacts in the general approach of the current justice system as it deals with children instead of investigation, and criminalization;
- d. Encouraging all Member States to commit to this cause in providing a better and safer environment for children in all the means that they can within the power and bounds of their own sovereignty and constitution.