

**DPI/NGO Briefing**  
**United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children**  
17 November 2005  
Summary

The DPI/NGO Section held its regular weekly NGO briefing today on the Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children, which focuses on raising awareness on violence against children in five settings (home and family, schools and educational settings, other institutional settings, the community and on the streets, and in work situations). The final report will be presented to the General Assembly next year by the Independent Expert, Professor Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, who was appointed by the Secretary-General in 2003.

Joan Kirby, Chair, NGO/DPI Executive Committee, shared information about upcoming events including the Town Hall Meeting and Communication Workshop.

H.E. Roman Kirn, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the United Nations; Amaya Gillespie, Director, Secretariat, United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children; and Mali Nilsson, Member, the International Save the Children Task Group on Violence Against Children, spoke about key elements of the Study.

Amaya Gillespie outlined the strategy of the Study, which would include more than 250 public submissions and research based on over 2000 existing reports. Expanding partnerships and networking made a Study of this calibre possible. An impressive amount of government responses to questionnaires, 125 to date, showed the interest and willingness of governments to address the issue. Child participation has been an integral part of the Study. Over 250 children participated in the nine Regional Consultations, but these children represented thousands of others, including those who participated in national consultations around the world. The participation of children was so important because of the perspectives they offered. Children were able to articulate difficult issues and could offer suggestions of what they would like to see happen. Lastly, expert thematic meetings played an important role by focusing on cross-cutting issues, such as gender based issues, sexual violence, and children with disabilities. Dr. Gillespie then discussed the nine Regional Consultations, which proved that despite economic disparities, every nation had something to learn from another about violence against children. The Consultations resulted in outcome reports, declarations, recommendations, and plans for follow-up. To conclude the Study, there would be three publications to be presented in 2006. The first would be a short (less than 50 pages) final report to the Secretary-General and the General Assembly, the second a more elaborate publication with in depth information and recommendations, and the third a child-friendly version of the report.

H.E. Roman Kirn affirmed that Slovenia felt strongly about this issue and without hesitation supported and contributed to the Study. Slovenia was the host of the Regional Consultations for Europe and Central Asia. This was one of the largest Consultations with participation from 51 countries. Held in July, the Consultations had three goals, to provide input, mobilize political commitment, and set an agenda for action. Child participation was very visible, integrated, and valuable. Ambassador Kirn said there were nine final conclusions resulting from this meeting. They were to create an action plan to prevent violence, ratify relevant treaties, give high political importance to prevention, evaluate reporting mechanisms, collect systematic data, create appropriate interventions, create education programmes about violence, strengthen partnerships and create opportunities for children to be more involved. In conclusion, Ambassador Kirn stated six important features of the Regional Consultations. Because of the Consultations, there was high

political support for the issue, which was needed to generate the effects that the Study hoped to have. He reiterated that the meetings would not have been so successful without the participation of children. The media, domestic and foreign, played an important role by supporting the cause and raising public awareness. The Regional Consultations brought countries together to share experiences that would contribute to useful findings both on regional and global levels. A human rights framework was used to address child human rights. Lastly, partnerships proved to be valuable and efficient.

Mali Nilsson spoke about the importance of the Study to her organization, Save the Children, a member of the NGO Advisory Panel for the Study. According to Ms. Nilsson, the Study was a priority because it was her organization's duty to protect children from violence. Save the Children also saw the Study as an opportunity to challenge and change current attitudes about violence against children. Save the Children believed in the right of every boy and girl to live free of violence. Their aim was to have all parts of society recognize and take action to eliminate all forms of violence. Ms. Nilsson reiterated the importance of perspectives brought by child participation, and also that their participation could have positive effects on the children, such as healing their pasts and enhancing self-esteem and confidence. To conclude, Ms. Nilsson listed some of the achievements and contributions of Save the Children, such as production of advocacy materials, child-friendly publications, facilitating workshops on child participation and the inclusion of children in formulating outcome documents.

The panel discussion was followed by a question-and-answer session.

A question was raised about the role of the media in the Regional Consultations. Ambassador Kirn responded by saying that the media contributed to public awareness on the issue

Some NGOs present at the briefing expressed an interest in contributing to the study. Both Dr. Gillespie and Ms. Nilsson welcomed the initiative and offered to pass on any follow-up information to them through the DPI/NGO Section.

In response to a question about the outcomes, findings, and recommendations of the Study, Ms. Nilsson said that there were several examples of best practices; such practices would be applied to outcome documents. Dr. Gillespie stated that the Study was not yet completed, and the activities planned during 2006 with a range of partners were designed to generate momentum and provide some tools and strategies already, so that when the final recommendations were presented next year there would be more drive to implement them. Ambassador Kirn stated that implementation was also dependent upon each government. States needed to take into account their own situations and what was an appropriate course of action for them.

The briefing was well attended by about 150 representatives of non-governmental organizations, UN and Permanent Mission staff. The briefing was broadcast live by a Canadian Public Affairs channel. UN TV and Radio and Inter Press Service News Agency also covered the event. The briefing was webcast live and archived for future reference at [www.un.org/dpi/ngosection](http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection).

To encourage feedback from the participants, a briefing survey was distributed. The results will be used to improve the format and the substance of DPI/NGO briefings in the future.