

Panel 3

Evaluation of progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions on “The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child”

Friday, 25 February 2011, 10:00 am-1:00 pm

Mr. Saad Houry was appointed UNICEF Deputy Executive Director in January 2008. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Houry has held a number of positions in UNICEF, both at Headquarters and in field offices, since joining the organization in 1978. He has served as Director of the Division of Policy and Planning in New York, as UNICEF Representative in Burkina Faso and Deputy Regional Director in Amman, Jordan, and has carried out special assignments and programme-related activities at UNICEF offices including Oman, Madagascar, and Mozambique. Mr Houry attended the American University of Beirut and the University of London, where he received a Master of Science degree.

Ika* is 19 years old in her first year at university. She raises awareness, facilitates workshop, and acts as a peer counselor and advocate on children’s rights issues such as trafficking, sex tourism and conflict with the law. Ika has led computer courses for children in her neighbourhood. She was an actor and videographer for a movie produced by UNICEF and the Child Protection Agency Surabaya (*AYLA*). For three years, Ika has been a member of the Indonesian Women Coalition (*Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia*). She lives in an urban slum, where many children are engaged in labour and commercial sex work.

Ya Marie* is 18 years old and in her final year of secondary school. Ya Marie lives in a rural area in Sierra Leone. Her personal experiences with corporal punishment in schools and family violence has led her to the conviction that violence is wrong. Ya Marie often debates topics related to girls and their rights, including access education and genital mutilation. Last year, along with two girls from her school, Ya Marie won an inter-school debate competition on “Why Women Need to be Educated in Society.”

Lil Shira* is 20 years old, currently in secondary school, produces youth media to raise awareness and create positive change in gender issues and girls’ access to their rights. She has produced media pieces on issues such as early marriage, early pregnancies, school dropout, and education of the girl child for other youth, parents and local leaders as well. Lil Shira has also written songs and news articles about the effects of discrimination and violence against girls. She lives in a rural area.

* Ika, Ya Marie and Lil Shira are part of the delegation of Plan International to the 55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Plan International is children’s development organization with a focus on promoting gender equality and girls’ rights.