

5 February 2016

**Input of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on
Violence against Children to the fifteenth session of the United Nations
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

The Office of the SRSG on Violence against Children is pleased to contribute to the fifteenth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues taking place on 9-20 May, 2016. The Office also welcomes the theme *Indigenous peoples: conflict, peace and resolution* which is very relevant to the SRSG mandate, including in the context of the 2030 Development Agenda and its Goal 16 on Peaceful and Inclusive societies.

The work of the SRSG on Violence against Children is framed by the Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children covering physical, psychological and sexual violence in five different settings: in the home, in schools, care and justice institutions, communities and in places where children work.

2016 marks the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children and the start of the process of implementation of the SDGs with its strategic target 16.2 towards the elimination of all forms of violence against children. On this strategic occasion, the SRSG mandate will launch a High Time global movement to widen support, and inspire and promote real change in children's lives to enable them to grow up in a safe and protective environment and develop to their full potential. In this regard, the SRSG Office would like to seek the advice of the UNPFII on opportunities to join hands on the occasion of the 10th anniversary and the promotion of the High Time movement and stands ready to meet at a suggested time. Additional information is available on the web site of the Office:

http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/story/2016-01-15_1416

Promoting the rights of indigenous children remains a priority concern for the SRSG mandate. Over the recent past, important attention has been given to this area. In September 2015 the SRSG Office organized an **expert consultation** in collaboration with Plan International and the Government of Norway **on community based child**

protection mechanisms¹. The consultation *Strengthening Communities to Secure Children's Right to Freedom from Violence* included a session on lessons learnt from work in indigenous communities, in which María Rosa Manobanda presented experiences among 20 indigenous communities in Ecuador in strengthening community based mechanisms to overcome non-discrimination and gender stereotypes, and ultimately to end violence against children. (For more information see <http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/page/1386>)

The SRSR-VAC participated in the First **World Congress on Juvenile Justice** in January 2015 where she focused on restorative justice approaches for children based on the extensive work of the Office in this area, including in plural legal systems and amongst indigenous groups, as highlighted by the SRSG thematic report *Promoting Restorative Justice for Children*². The final Declaration adopted in the World Congress³ captures well the importance given to diversion and restorative justice approaches throughout the Congress. The strong contribution of Judge Heemi Taumaunu from New Zealand presenting the marae-based youth court system established in the country was a crucial illustration of how indigenous communities are pathfinders for many good practices in working with young people in contact with the law. The objective of these courts is to reduce reoffending by Māori youth and to provide the best possible rehabilitative response, by encouraging strong cultural links and meaningful involvement of tribe (iwi), subtribe (hapū) and family (whanau) in the youth justice process.

The SRSG Office anticipates future possibilities for collaboration in the context of **the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty**. The study was called for by the General Assembly resolution A/69/157, para 52 (d) inviting the Secretary-General to commission an in-depth global study on children deprived of liberty, and to include good practices and recommendations for action to effectively realize all relevant rights of the child, including supporting the implementation of the United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

The Global Study will help countries to better understand this phenomenon and to safeguard the rights of children concerned. It will consolidate data and sound evidence to inform policy and law, to develop capacity-building initiatives for professionals, and promote a change in stigmatizing attitudes and behaviour towards children in detention.

An Inter-Agency Task Force, chaired by the Special Representative on Violence against Children, has been formed to support the development of the Global Study within the

¹ <http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/page/1386>

² http://www.srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/sites/default/files/publications_final/srsgvac_restorative_justice_for_children_report.pdf

³ <http://www.childrendeprivedofliberty.info/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Final-Declaration-World-Congress-on-Juvenile-Justice-2015.pdf>

UN system, and a civil society forum has equally been established. Especially the NGO Panel on the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty⁴ is active in this regard.

In addition, the SRSG Office is supporting the development of the **report of the Secretary-General on protecting children from bullying** to be submitted at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. As requested by the GA resolution (A/RES/69/158), the report will have an emphasis on causes and effects of bullying, and on good practices and guidance on prevention and response, using information provided by Member States and relevant stakeholders and in collaboration with relevant United Nations entities.

In this regard, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children would welcome contributions from UNFPII and organizations of indigenous peoples, to ensure that the unique experience of indigenous children is captured in this context. The SRSG Office would appreciate receiving inputs by end of April.

The Office of the SRSG on Violence against Children looks forward to continued collaboration with the Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues, and remains available for any additional information or support that may be needed.

⁴ <http://www.childrendeprivedofliberty.info/>