

Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Report of the Expert Group Meeting*

Organized by
The Division for the Advancement of Women
in collaboration with UNICEF

Innocenti Research Centre
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*The views expressed in this document are those of the experts and do not necessarily represent the views of the United Nations

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I. Introduction

1. In accordance with its multi-year programme of work for 2007-2009, the Commission on the Status of Women will consider “The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child” as its priority theme during its fifty-first session, from 26 February to 9 March 2007. In order to contribute to a deeper understanding of the issue and to assist the Commission in its deliberations, the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the topic. The EGM was hosted by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy, from 25 to 28 September 2006.

2. The Expert Group Meeting addressed four issues related to the girl child: protection of girls, girls in especially vulnerable situations, empowerment of girls, and institutional arrangements to accelerate elimination of discrimination and violence against the girl child. The Expert Group Meeting adopted recommendations aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.

3. This report is the outcome of the meeting. It will provide inputs for the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women. The report will be widely disseminated at the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and will also be presented during a panel discussion at the CSW session.

II. Organization of work

A. Participation

4. The Expert Group Meeting on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child was attended by 15 independent experts from different regions of the world and 19 observers (6 representatives of the United Nations, 3 government representatives, 2 representatives of international organizations, and 8 representatives of non-governmental organizations). Two consultants also participated in the meeting. Three staff members of the Division for the Advancement of Women, 4 staff members from UNICEF Headquarters in New York and 3 staff members of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre attended on behalf of the organizers (see Annex I).

B. Documentation

5. **The documentation of the meeting consisted of:**

- fifteen papers prepared by experts;
- a background paper prepared by a consultant on behalf of the Division for the Advancement of Women;
- a report by the facilitator of the online discussion on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women from 14 August to 8 September 2006;
- three papers prepared by observers.

6. This report and all documentation relating to the meeting are available online at the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw>.

C. Programme of work

7. At its opening session on 25 September 2006, the meeting adopted the following programme of work (see Annex III):

- Opening of the meeting;
- Election of officers and adoption of the programme of work;
- Presentation and discussion of the background papers prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women and UNICEF;
- Presentation of papers prepared by experts;
- Working groups on issues and recommendations;
- Introduction of the draft report;
- Adoption of the draft final report;
- Closing session

D. Election of officers

8. **The experts elected the following officers:**

Chairperson: Ms. Christina Marion Nomdo (South Africa)
Co-chairperson: Ms. Judith Bruce (USA)
Rapporteur: Ms. Busakorn Suriyasarn (Thailand)

E. Opening statements

9. Ms. Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, welcomed all participants to the historic building of UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre. She underscored the symbolic significance of holding the expert meeting on the girl child in a building that has played a major role in protecting children since its establishment, in 1445, as the first hospital in the city of Florence dedicated solely to the care of abandoned or orphaned children. Ms. Santos Pais noted the timeliness of the Expert Group Meeting, in view of the submission of the Secretary-General's In-depth study on all forms of violence against women and the report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children, to the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

10. In opening the meeting, Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, expressed deep appreciation to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for their collaboration in the preparation of the expert group meeting. She thanked the Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, Ms. Martha Santos Pais, and her colleagues for hosting the expert group meeting at the Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy.

11. Ms. Hannan provided an overview of the development of global mandates on the girl child since the World Summit on Children and the Fourth World Conference on Women in

Beijing, and emphasized the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as instruments for the protection and promotion of the rights of the girl child.

12. Ms Hannan highlighted that awareness of the specific vulnerability of girls and the need for increased prevention and protection from discrimination and violence has grown considerably. There is, for example, greater awareness of the specific targeting of girls for sexual exploitation in armed conflict and its aftermath and of the fact that girls as well as boys are child soldiers with specific needs that must be addressed in post-conflict rehabilitation. The specific vulnerabilities of girls in relation to HIV/AIDS are increasingly clear - both the risks of infection through sexual exploitation and the enormous responsibilities girls shoulder in caring for siblings in child-run households, with limited access to essential resources. The precarious situation of girls in the labour market, including in domestic services which expose them to exploitative working conditions and sexual abuse, is well known. Ms Hannan pointed out that many girls are also vulnerable to abuse in contexts where they should feel safe - within their families and schools and in other community settings, such as sports arenas.

13. This increased awareness of the many dimensions of the vulnerability of girls has, however, not always translated into systematic attention to the situation of girls in data collection, research, analysis, planning, resource allocation and implementation of interventions. One of the remaining challenges was the persistent invisibility of the girl child in critical policy and programming contexts. Greater advocacy is needed to ensure that the increased awareness leads to concrete action and potential for radically improved situations for girls - reduction of their vulnerabilities, promotion, protection and fulfillment of their rights, and increased opportunities for well-being and advancement.

14. While noting that there would rightly be a strong focus on protection issues during the meeting, Ms. Hannan encouraged the experts to also think creatively about the empowerment of the girl child which was critical to eliminating discrimination and violence. She noted that empowerment during early adolescence needs particular attention as girls at this stage in their lives may be withdrawn from school, face increased labour demands from within their families which limits their free time, have less access to their peers and friends, and even be confined to the immediate vicinity of the home or forced into early marriage. Empowerment of girls requires addressing the often low levels of expectations for girls which are internalized by girls themselves, as well as the lack of opportunities, including for civic participation. One of the critical strategies for empowering girls and expanding their opportunities is addressing persistent stereotypical attitudes and behaviours. This requires a strong focus on men and boys.

15. The diversity in the situation of girls around the world was also noted by Ms. Hannan. It is important not to see the problem of the girl child as only relevant to the developing world. Girls in developed countries can also face significant discrimination and violence which must be identified and addressed.

16. The Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, Ms. Rima Salah, delivered a statement on the second day of the Expert Group Meeting. She thanked the Division for the Advancement of Women for its collaboration with UNICEF on the meeting. Ms. Salah noted that the meeting was particularly timely and had a unique potential to influence the United Nations agenda, as well as

the international and national policy debates. She stressed that the meeting was a critical contribution to the next session of the Commission on the Status of Women and a significant step toward placing girls at the heart of future policy discussions. Ms. Salah stated that the outcome of the Expert Group Meeting could also provide input to the preparations for the follow-up of the special session on children in 2007.

17. Ms. Salah noted that it was important to address the issue of the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child from a human rights perspective. Ms. Salah also pointed to the important linkages between the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Greater efforts should therefore be made to harmonize and implement these key international instruments. In this context, Ms. Salah emphasized governments' accountability in ensuring that the instruments were implemented.

18. The Deputy Executive Director identified harmful traditional practices, sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation as serious acts of violence against girls. She noted that there was no excuse for harmful traditional practices and efforts should be made to change attitudes and customs that perpetuate abuse. Ms. Salah stated that adoption of a variety of human rights conventions by the international community, often under the auspices of the United Nations, had led to dramatic changes in ending some of the deeply entrenched harmful traditional practices. UNICEF is working together with other partners to eliminate these practices. Ms. Salah stressed the importance of creating safe spaces and environments in the family, the school and the community for girls and boys.

19. The vulnerabilities of girls were addressed by Ms. Salah. She indicated that the United Nations study on violence against children, prepared at the request of the General Assembly to examine the forms, causes and impact of violence which affects children and young people, made it clear that girls were particularly vulnerable to violence and that addressing the gender dimensions of violence was vital to eliminating discrimination and violence against girls. The need to change attitudes and customs that perpetuate harmful and traditional practices was emphasized.

20. She noted that girls were at greater risk of sexual exploitation in situations of conflict and emergency situations. Ms. Salah therefore called for special measures to reach these vulnerable groups. The link between violence against the girl child and HIV/AIDS was also highlighted. Education was identified as a factor in the empowerment of girls. Participation of girls and self-esteem building were identified as practical approaches to girls' empowerment. The importance of collecting data disaggregated by sex and age on violence against the girl child was emphasized.

III. Background

21. The issue of the girl child was firmly placed on the international agenda by the 1990 Declaration of the World Summit for Children, which accorded priority attention to the girl child's survival, development and protection. At the Summit, the international community acknowledged that equal rights of girls and equal participation of women in the social, cultural, economic and political life of societies constitute a prerequisite for successful and sustainable

development. The twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly on Children in 2002 recognized that the achievement of development goals for children, particularly girls, was contingent upon, inter alia, women's empowerment.¹

22. The Beijing Platform for Action recognized that discrimination and violence against girls begin at the earliest stages of life and continue unabated throughout their lives. Girls often have less access to, inter alia, nutrition, physical and mental health care and education and enjoy fewer rights, opportunities and benefits of childhood and adolescence than boys. They are often subjected to various forms of violence and exploitation.²

23. At its forty-second session in 1998, the Commission on the Status of Women considered the theme of the girl child and adopted agreed conclusions, which outlined actions and initiatives aimed at, inter alia, the promotion and protection of the human rights of the girl child; education and empowerment of the girl child; improving the health needs of girls, the situation of girls in armed conflict, and combating trafficking and eliminating child labour.³

24. The outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly identified child labour, violence, lack of access to education, and sexual abuse as some of the obstacles that the girl child continues to face.⁴

25. The report of the Secretary-General on the ten-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action concluded that progress has been made by many countries in the advancement of the girl child, in particular in the recognition of the human rights of the girl child through the adoption of appropriate legislation, and in increasing access to primary education. It noted, however, that further efforts were needed, inter alia, to ensure equal access to secondary education and to job opportunities, to eradicate sex work by children, to ensure reintegration of the girl child after armed conflicts, and to improve collection of data on the situation of the girl child.⁵

26. At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders reaffirmed their previous commitments to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls⁶. At its sixtieth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/141 on the girl child, in which it expressed deep concern, inter alia, about discrimination against the girl child and the violation of her rights and stressed the importance of a substantive assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action with a life-cycle perspective.

27. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) contain mutually reinforcing principles to ensure protection and fulfillment of the rights of girls and to end gender-based discrimination. CEDAW General Recommendation 24 on women and health emphasizes that girls constitute a vulnerable and disadvantaged group that makes them especially susceptible to sexual abuse and, inter alia, disadvantages them in access to information about sexual health.⁷ General comments by CRC have drawn attention to hidden forms of discrimination against girls in, inter alia, education, health, including HIV/AIDS, and early marriage.⁸

28. The Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children found that girls are at greater risk for early marriage, genital mutilation, forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence, and neglect and forced prostitution.⁹ The risk of

sexual abuse at home, in the community and educational settings is greater for girls than boys.¹⁰ Refugee and displaced girls also experience sexual and gender-based violence.¹¹ The study noted that States should ensure that anti-violence policies and programmes are designed and implemented with a gender perspective, taking into account the different risks facing boys and girls with respect to violence.¹² States should also promote and protect the human rights of women and girls.¹³ A national research agenda on violence against children should be developed with particular attention to vulnerable boys and girls.¹⁴ Local government and civil society initiatives should be promoted and supported to prevent violence against children, particularly by providing safe recreational and other opportunities for boys and girls.¹⁵

29. The Secretary-General's report on the In-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1), also presented to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, examines, *inter alia*, the forms and manifestations of violence against women across their lifespan and State responsibility in eliminating such violence. The report notes that the study on violence against women found that girls and young women continue to face violations of a range of rights guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹⁶ The study revealed that girls are severely affected by harmful tradition practices including female infanticide, prenatal sex selection, dowry-related violence, crimes in the name of honour, female genital mutilation/cutting, son preference, early marriage and forced marriage.¹⁷ They are at greater risk of sexual harassment and violence in their communities and educational institutions.¹⁸ It was noted that girls who engage in sport may face the risk of gender-based violence, exploitation and harassment, from other athletes, spectators, coaches, managers and family or community members.¹⁹

30. The study highlighted the ways in which "date rape" and eating disorders are tied to cultural norms but are not often viewed as cultural phenomena.²⁰ For example, in the United States of America, researchers report high rates of violence against women in casual and longer-term romantic dating relationships, which are a culturally specific form of social relations between women and men, with culturally constructed expectations. According to one agency "40 per cent of teenage girls ages 14 to 17 say they know someone their age who has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend [and] one of five college females will experience some form of dating violence". Eating disorders, including starvation dieting (anorexia) and bulimia (binge eating), are similarly tied to cultural values: "studies show expectation of body weight and appearance, particularly oriented towards girls, come from parents, peers, the dieting industry and images in the media".²¹ Recommendations aimed at eliminating violence against women and girls were provided.

IV. The international legal framework for the protection and empowerment of girls

A. Introduction

31. An international consensus exists on the critical importance of addressing the protection and promotion of the rights of the girl child. This international consensus, forged with the participation of Governments, international organizations, including the United Nations system, civil society and other stakeholders, provides the frameworks and accountability mechanisms for

eliminating discrimination and violence against girls, and addressing their exclusion from entitlements, rights and equal opportunities.

32. This consensus is reflected in a body of international legal instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its two Optional Protocols on The Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and The Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol; the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; and the ILO Conventions 138 on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. The rights of the girl child are also protected in humanitarian law.

33. The consensus on the rights of the girl child is also reflected in policy outcomes of inter-governmental processes and their follow-up, such as the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the World Summit for Children (1990), the Millennium Declaration (2000) leading to the Millennium Development Goals, and the 2005 World Summit, as well as in Security Council resolutions 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and 1261, 1314, 1379, 1539 and 1612 on children and armed conflict.

34. The findings and recommendations of the Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children and the Secretary-General's In-depth study on all forms of violence against women provide an opportunity to strengthen the international momentum to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against girls and to empower them to realize their full potential.

35. Recent benchmark development reports, including reviews of the social dimensions of globalization, underscore that discrimination and violence against girls begin before birth, and are often consolidated in early adolescence. This gives girls little prospect for catching up and undermines the achievement of both the human rights of girls and of national development goals. These reports and reviews have consistently called for expanded gender-differentiated human capital investments in adolescence.²²

36. The human rights-based approach, applied across the life cycle of girls and women, should be the overarching framework for all interventions aimed at eliminating discrimination and violence against girls. Such an approach is essential to ensure that during childhood, girls acquire the education, knowledge, skills and opportunities they need in order to realize their full potential and enjoy their rights as children and later as adults. Structures and systems are necessary to protect and promote girls' rights, while ensuring adequate provision for remedy and redress for rights violations when these occur.

B. Critical issues

37. Despite the existence of an internationally agreed legal framework, girls overall still disproportionately bear the worst human rights abuses during childhood and adolescence.²³ In particular, the absence of, or inconsistencies in, the interpretation and implementation of legal frameworks at the national and sub-national levels have contributed to continuing discrimination and violence against girls.²⁴ In addition, harmful civil and customary laws, often derived from traditional beliefs, result in millions of girls around the world facing persistent discriminatory and violent practices, often at the hands of their own families and communities.²⁵

38. A substantial proportion of girls is being actively disempowered by discriminatory, violent, unsupportive and disabling environments, beginning at home and extending to national and international levels. The very duty bearers charged with protecting and supporting the rights of girls - such as parents, siblings, guardians, teachers or law enforcement officers - have often been implicated in various forms of violence against girls, as well as in the neglect of their responsibility to protect them. Societies more generally continue to accept, and at times even foster, discriminatory attitudes that lay the groundwork for impunity for crimes against girls. In some cases, attacks on girls' physical and mental integrity are sanctified as elements of 'culture,' laying a powerful foundation for the denial of girls' rights.²⁶

39. Pervasive patriarchal gender biases and stereotypes and narrowly defined gender roles place girls on the lowest rung of the social and family hierarchies, rendering them socially invisible and marginalized. As a result of discrimination, indifference, ignorance, and the hidden nature of the widespread abuses against them, girls continue to suffer serious rights violations, often outside the public consciousness, and are left behind in human development.

40. In Section VI of the report, the Expert Group highlights groups of girls deemed "invisible" due to a combination of factors that put them at an especially high risk of discrimination and rights violations. The fact that many of their experiences of discrimination and violence happen out of public view (in private settings), or are seen as normal practices, renders them invisible. As a result, policies and programmes too often ignore or miss them.

C. Implementing the international framework

41. The Expert Group found that substantial progress towards implementation of the international normative framework could be made if efforts were strengthened in a number of areas, as outlined below.

42. Current international instruments and policies are not specific enough to protect, promote and fulfill the rights of the girl child. As a result of this lack of specificity, two of the most important international instruments for girls' rights, CRC and CEDAW, are not being adequately implemented to positively protect and promote the rights of the girl child. In addition, there are insufficient linkages between the two Conventions and their monitoring bodies.

43. There is lack of political will on the part of governments to adopt and fully implement international standards. For example, some countries have not yet ratified key international conventions concerning children, such as the ILO Convention 138 on Minimum Age for

Admission to Employment and Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Countries that have ratified these Conventions, as well as the CRC and CEDAW Conventions, have not sufficiently and effectively applied these instruments in national laws or at the sub-national level. The lack of political will is also reflected in the limited allocation of resources for girl-specific programmes, impeding progress not only on the empowerment of girls, but on the achievement of national social, economic and development goals. Security Council resolution 1325, and the subsequent Presidential Statements on women, peace and security, have not yet resulted in committed interventions concerning violence against girls in armed conflicts.

44. The trend towards larger global data aggregations over-emphasizes national-level data, masking significant sub-national variations. Many trends regarding the lives of girls are monitored and interventions designed and allocations made at the national level. Yet it is at the sub-national level that many policies and programmes fail to address the persistent occurrence of discrimination and violence against girls. The tendency of inadvertently portraying and addressing girls as a homogeneous group—by governments and civil society institutions alike—often results in the empowerment of some groups of girls and the neglect of others. It is imperative to address the rights of the girl child with due consideration of the different contexts and experiences of girls.

45. Development policies and resources on child and youth health are often gender-blind and, as a result, the special needs and priorities of girls are neglected. Many interventions target young children (for early intervention) or older adolescents (for catch-up interventions) and, as a result, many at-risk girls between the ages of 6 and 14 are missed. Policies and programmes to address the situation of girls are often reactive (“rescue and recovery”) instead of proactive and focused on prevention and protection. Yet in the face of a number of abuses discussed in this report, there is no full recovery for many of these girls. More efforts must be proactively directed towards the protection and promotion of the human rights of girls.

46. Girls often lack access to girl-friendly, safe and supportive spaces, including at school. Yet studies find that girl-friendly spaces, which are discussed throughout this report, are often among the best platforms from which governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations can protect and promote the human rights of girls.²⁷ It is important that girls have a voice and are enabled to take part in the deliberations that address their life chances and potential as human beings. Ignoring the voice of the girl child effectively prevents her from influencing decisions regarding her life and development. Girls’ right to express themselves must be promoted and protected.

V. Addressing patriarchy, gender inequalities, and negative gender values, stereotypes and practices

47. Underlying patriarchal attitudes and behaviour, as well as discriminatory gender norms and structures, are the root causes of violations of girls’ rights. In national forums and in legislation, in places of work, schools and vocational training institutions, on the street and in the home, negative patriarchal attitudes, practices and gender stereotypes favor boys and men and give them power. The result is that millions of girls and women are negatively affected in diverse and culturally-specific ways. While boys and men may also have their rights violated by rigid gender norms – and efforts should be undertaken to address this – women and girls are the most

negatively affected. There is an urgent need to challenge, and take collective action to address, patriarchy and power imbalances. This must include action by all relevant stakeholders – governments, communities, individual women, men, girls and boys.

48. Many of the worst forms of discrimination and violence against girls occur in their own homes and communities. The socialization of boys and men frequently focuses on controlling the sexuality and reproductive and productive labor of women and girls. The repression of female sexuality, including an over-emphasis on female virginity and fertility, is a driving force behind much of the discrimination and subjugation of girls. Widespread access to pornography in some settings, for both boys and girls, is a form of sex “mis”-education that reinforces negative and violent stereotypes.

49. Rigid forms of gender socialization are often generated and preserved by tradition and religion, particularly in countries where religion is used as the basis for civil law and civil codes. Negative traditional beliefs and practices can expose girls to extreme forms of violence, including female genital mutilation/cutting, female foeticide and infanticide. Systems of dowry and bride price objectify girls and treat them as property. Addressing these wrongs requires identifying and bringing attention to these harms perpetrated at all levels – in international, national and local legislation and policies, and in the everyday practices used by families and communities to socialize girls and boys.

50. Domestic work is too narrowly defined as the work of women and girls, and not as a family responsibility to be shared among family members. Property ownership and labour patterns and hierarchies within households frequently afford more power and rights to men and boys than to women and girls. Girls thus have the lowest status of all household members, as they are subservient both to adult women and men and boys. Even in countries with high levels of participation of women in the workforce outside the home, and where the majority of girls attend school, traditional divisions of labour continue to burden girl children with the care of younger children and other domestic tasks. Vocational training opportunities are also often sex-segregated, with girls being relegated to training that generally leads to lower paying professions than that of boys and men. In some countries, laws limit women’s ability to achieve economic autonomy, land ownership and inheritance, thus affecting the well-being and opportunities for their girls.²⁸

51. At the global level, unequal trade and economic policies worsen poverty and income inequalities worldwide. Global advertising campaigns frequently commercialize women’s and girls’ sexuality and bodies. This can exacerbate sexual exploitation and violence against girls, and narrow girls’ own sense of their value and humanity. Governments, in both developed and developing countries, must take responsibility and be held accountable for the impact of global and national policies and trends on the poorest of the poor, who are often young females.

52. The negative impact of globalization, poverty and social vulnerability can reinforce fundamentalism and create a backlash with negative consequences for women’s and girls’ rights. In some parts of the world, limited advances in women’s rights are leading to fundamentalist reactions that hinder the advancement of girls. These negative and fundamentalist movements must be recognized and challenged as they relate to the lives of girls.²⁹

VI. Girls at high risk of discrimination and violence: Invisible girls

53. Girls encounter various forms of discrimination and violence at different stages in their lives. Their susceptibility to sexual violence increases during puberty. Many of the experiences of discrimination and violence faced by girls happen out of public view or are regarded by families and communities as ‘normal’ practices, rendering the girls invisible. There are groups of girls at a particularly high risk of discrimination and violence because of the convergence of contexts and circumstances in which they live. The groups of girls at high risk of discrimination and violence (identified below) are highly invisible. The experts encourage the use of a life cycle approach to identify and address the discrimination and violence facing these invisible girls, while acknowledging that their invisibility may shift during their life cycle.

54. A life cycle approach looks at the entire life of a girl, including early childhood, preschool and school-going years, through adolescence to pregnancy and womanhood. A life cycle approach reveals that discrimination and violence against girl children occurs before birth, during infancy, and continues beyond childhood and adolescence into adulthood. Girls face discrimination and violence in all settings, often in places where they should be protected, in their home, school, and immediate community. They are often among the first to be victimized by violence when community structures breakdown, such as when they are outside of familial support systems or during armed conflicts.

55. While discrimination and violence exist for numerous girls across cultures, socio-economic classes and social groups, the experts identified specific groups of girls who are at high risk but are largely unaccounted for in research, statistics, policy and programme interventions. The following groups are currently among the most underserved and neglected. Girls in these groups often experience multiple forms of abuse and numerous threats against their rights. They are at high risk due to their low status, high levels of stigma, gender stereotypes, the nature of their work and livelihoods, and their enforced seclusion, including, at times, being held in detention or captivity. They are usually not reached by policies and interventions because of their isolation.

56. Due to intensified action and advocacy, governments and international organizations are becoming increasingly aware of some of these groups of girls and are beginning to develop specific policies and programmes to uphold, protect and promote their rights. These high-risk groups of girls need recognition and immediate and sustained action to realize their rights.

1. Girls facing harmful social and traditional practices

a) Sex-selective abortion and female infanticide

57. Son preference, prevalent in many societies, is the main cause of sex-selective abortions of female fetuses and of female infanticide. A study in India, for example, estimated that prenatal sex selection and infanticide have resulted in approximately half a million missing girls per year for the past two decades.³⁰ The female/male sex ratios, which are typically equal at birth or with a slight skew of around 105/100 in favor of boys in developed countries, have seen dramatic increases in some populations, notably in China and India. In some parts of India, ratios have plummeted to 800 girls born for every 1,000 boys.³¹ If allowed to continue, these practices will

have serious repercussions on the gender balance in some populations, which may result in further violence against women and girls in the not-so-distant future. Emerging evidence can be seen, for example, in trafficking of young women and girls as brides-to-be from Viet Nam to rural China, where many young women live in virtual slavery.³²

b) Girls and female genital mutilation/cutting

58. Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) continues to take its toll on girls, largely in Africa. According to studies by the World Health Organization (WHO), there are between 100 and 140 million girls in the world who have undergone FGM/C.³³ It is estimated that the practice affects 3 million girls every year.³⁴

59. FGM/C comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs, whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. Performance of the procedures is often justified by tradition. The consequences, as documented by WHO and other organizations, are multiple; infection, tetanus, bleeding, tearing during child delivery, and keloid formation are some of the results. The risk of HIV infection exists, especially when the same tool is used to cut several girls at the same time. Adverse obstetric and prenatal outcomes are among the known harmful immediate and long-term effects of FGM/C.³⁵

c) Girls at risk of child marriage

60. Social expectations and family poverty often put intense pressure on girls to marry and begin bearing children before they are emotionally, socially and physically ready. If present trends continue, over one hundred million girls will be married as children in the next decade.³⁶ In most countries, the practice of child marriage is concentrated in specific sub-national contexts or regions.³⁷

61. In many parts of the world, young girls (sometimes as young as six years old) are forced into early marriage by their families and communities, often justified by tradition and/or religion. Economic pressure is also often used as an explanation for early marriages, with parents and communities treating girls as commodities through bride price and dowries paid by their prospective husbands.³⁸ In some situations of armed conflict, practices of child marriage are exacerbated as families marry off their girls in an attempt to try and avoid rape, abduction and forced marriage, or to raise money for the survival of remaining family members.³⁹ In extreme cases, families protect their honour by marrying their girls off as early as possible.⁴⁰

62. Child marriage jeopardizes girls' health and limits their opportunities, usually disrupting their education and often violating their rights in a number of ways. Data on spousal age differences show that the younger the girl, the greater the age differential with her spouse.⁴¹ Child marriage with significantly older husbands tends to preclude the establishment of an equal, consensual relationship—child brides have limited or no capacity to negotiate sexual relations, contraception, and other reproductive decisions, including the terms of childbearing, as well as other aspects of their life.⁴²

63. Child marriage typically transits girls from sexual abstinence to high levels of unprotected sexual relations, often with older partners. In the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, this significantly increases the risk of HIV/AIDS, and indeed prevalence rates among married girls are often strikingly higher even compared to sexually active age mates. Married girls who have been abandoned, divorced or widowed may be at a particular risk of HIV/AIDS as a result of their vulnerability post-marriage.⁴³

2. Child mothers and girl heads of household

a) Child mothers

64. Young brides often become mothers before they are physically and emotionally ready. Other young girls also become mothers as a result of rape, commercial sexual exploitation and forced marriage. Millions of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 – both married and unmarried – give birth each year. For this age group, complications of pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death, with unsafe abortion being a major factor. There is a strong correlation between the age of the mother and maternal mortality and morbidity. Girls under the age of 15 are five times more likely to die in pregnancy and childbirth than women in their twenties.⁴⁴ Early childbirth is linked to the risk of obstetric fistula (see section 4.b). Teenage mothers are more likely to have children with low birth weight owing to inadequate nutrition and anemia.⁴⁵

Child mothers resulting from early marriage

65. Girl brides and subsequent young mothers have often been neglected in the reproductive adolescent health agenda⁴⁶ due to the incorrect assumption that their married status ensures them a safe passage to adulthood. Married girls usually end up as young mothers and, in some settings, are much younger than their husbands, which has been associated with a particularly pronounced risk of early childbearing.⁴⁷ They have limited access to friends or other social support and limited or no schooling options, with resulting low levels of educational attainment. These girls have restricted social mobility, limited access to modern media and lack of skills to be viable to the labour market.⁴⁸

Child mothers resulting from rape and sexual exploitation

66. The educational, employment and future marriage prospects of girls who become mothers due to sexual exploitation and abuse are typically severely curtailed. Young mothers who have given birth to children as a result of rape, particularly in conflict situations, face significant social stigma and may find themselves completely marginalized in their communities, without support, income or access to social networks. Their children may experience similar or even worse forms of stigma, exclusion and physical and mental abuse.⁴⁹

Child mothers resulting from forced marriage to members of armed forces and groups

67. The practice during armed conflict of armed groups and forces abducting girls and young women and forcibly marrying them, as well as forcing parents to give their daughters to them as wives in exchange for security, is widespread.⁵⁰ Significantly, several elements of forced marriage are crimes codified within international law, most notably in the Rome Statute of the

International Criminal Court, including rape, enslavement, torture and forced pregnancy.⁵¹ The violations experienced by girls and young women subjected to forced marriage are often severe and long-lasting and encompass a number of psychological, emotional, physical, social, economic and cultural elements.

68. Among these elements are forced pregnancy, child-bearing and the raising of children born of rape in societies where those children are often rejected and physically abused by members of the extended family and community members (including by withholding of food and medicines). These young mothers report that because they are often cut out of family and social networks, they struggle to provide education, food and health care to their children. Many of these young mothers have lost years of education and lack the skills needed to pursue productive livelihoods. Their situation is exacerbated by the stigma they face from their past experiences and their exclusion from social networks.⁵²

b) Girl heads of households

69. Extreme poverty, disease and armed conflict have resulted in increased numbers of child-headed households in many parts of the world, including many households headed by girls. A girl who acts as a head of household must serve as parent, home-keeper, breadwinner and protector of her younger siblings. As a result, she has little time or resources to ensure she is able to participate in education and or exercise other basic rights regarding her own development. With no adults to protect her, she and members of her household are at a high risk of exploitation and violence. In order to maintain the household, she may be forced into sexually exploitative activities, including prostitution, or engage in criminal activities, thus putting her at risk of physical and sexual abuse, HIV infection, early pregnancy, and incarceration.

70. The number of child-headed households grows during armed conflict. Such child-headed households often lack adequate shelter, food, basic materials for cooking or agricultural tools.⁵³ Child heads of households face enormous challenges in trying to acquire material goods to sustain their families. During times of armed conflict, they must contend with adults in a struggle over increasingly scarce resources. Girl heads of households are particularly marginalized in such contexts.⁵⁴ They experience low status as female adolescents, the social stigma of being without parents, and a lack of protection.⁵⁵ During armed conflict, girl heads of household may be at additional risk of having to leave the relative safety of their village or town to search for food or fuel. In trying to ensure the survival of their families, they may have to fend off sexual advances and harassment or submit to abuse. Girls who head households are at an extremely high risk of contracting HIV due to rape and coerced sex in exchange for items they need to support themselves and their siblings and/or parent(s), who may be disabled.⁵⁶

3. Girls in the worst forms of child labour

71. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 218 million children around the world are engaged in child labour, of whom 126 million are in hazardous work. Seventy-four million children occupied in hazardous work in 2004 were under the age of 15.⁵⁷ In 2000, the ILO reported that 5.7 million children were in forced or bonded labour, 1.8 million in prostitution and pornography, and 1.2 million were victims of trafficking.⁵⁸

72. Girls as well as boys are engaged in child labour, many in its worst forms. ILO reports that girls and boys aged 5-11 years are involved in child labour at roughly the same rates (51 per cent for girls and 49 per cent for boys), but six out of ten working children aged 12-17 years are boys.⁵⁹ The 2004 statistics suggest a decline in child labour (down 11 per cent from 2000), with steeper reduction in the number of children working in hazardous conditions.⁶⁰ However, these statistics may not accurately represent the reality of child labour, particularly concerning girls. Existing official statistics tend to focus on the more visible forms of child labour in the industrial sector where more boys are usually found, while undercounting the informal sector, where more girls are concentrated. Emerging statistics indicate that millions of school-age girls worldwide are working in domestic service, which is among the most invisible of female-dominated occupations.⁶¹

a) Girls in child domestic labour

73. The ILO estimates that more girls under the age of 16 are working in domestic service than any other category of work or child labour.⁶² ILO and UNICEF-commissioned studies indicate staggering numbers of children in domestic service (nine out of ten are girls) in all developing regions of the world.⁶³ In India, 20 percent of all children under 14 working outside of the family are in domestic service.⁶⁴ Estimates compiled by non-governmental organizations usually put the figures higher.

74. Girls in domestic service often belong to an ethnic minority, indigenous, tribal and migrant communities—the groups often excluded from the educational systems and over-represented in domestic service. An increasing number of young women and girls are employed as domestic workers in foreign countries. Their low status makes them vulnerable to discrimination and violence. Foreign domestic workers often have their passports confiscated by their employers.⁶⁵ Many girls enter domestic work at young ages, usually around 12-14 years old, but some are as young as 5-7 years old.⁶⁶ Parents often send their girls into domestic labour with the mistaken belief that it is safe work and similar to that which girls are already involved in their own homes. Many girls' primary motivation to enter domestic service is their desire to earn and save money to pay for their own education. But education systems systematically fail to provide the needed venues for girl domestic labourers to have the opportunity for meaningful education and self development.⁶⁷

75. Working away from home, girl domestic workers are isolated behind closed doors with little to no protection or social support. Girl domestic workers may work up to 15 hours or more and often are on-call 24 hours a day. They can be subject to verbal, physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Physical injuries are common, especially among younger child domestic workers, who are too young to perform tasks that are considered fit or safe for children. Injuries from cleaning fluids, hot water burns, fire hazards or ironing are common. There is growing evidence of a strong link between child domestic labour and sexual abuse and exploitation, as many of these girls suffer sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape from their employers and other extended family members of the household.⁶⁸ Many girl domestic workers are not allowed by their employer to leave the house, so they are virtually held in detention or slavery.⁶⁹ In addition, during situations of armed conflict, girl domestic labourers have been locked in the homes of their employers to protect their property, while the employer and their family fled, putting them at risk of harm during fighting and of sexual attacks by fighting forces.⁷⁰

76. Another concern is girls who perform domestic chores within their own households. Child labour statistics do not take into account household chores within the household as child labour, as it is not considered an economic activity, regardless of the number of hours dedicated to this activity. Nonetheless, a recent ILO-World Bank-UNICEF study found that girls work significantly longer hours than boys performing domestic chores within their own households.⁷¹ Girls' involvement in domestic chores within their own household contributes to their limited enrollment in schools and lower levels of achievement, thus increasing their likelihood of living in poverty.⁷²

77. Many governments are reluctant to recognize child domestic work as a form of child labour, including as a worst form of child labour, because of the prevailing tolerance for use of children as domestic servants. The absence of clear legal measures and effective law enforcement against rights violations of child domestic workers remains a serious impediment to expanding efforts to address the problem.⁷³

b) Girls affected by slavery-like practices

78. Many children fall victim to trafficking through abduction, use of force or deception. Due to poverty, many poor families decide to send their children to seek work opportunities away from home. Girls are among the nearly six million children in forced or bonded labour, including in agriculture, mining, quarrying, the sex industry and pornography.⁷⁴ While boys are more often engaged in agriculture, mining and quarrying, girls are the majority of those involved in the sex and pornography industries.⁷⁵ These children are often captives in slavery-like conditions and their rights, as outlined in the CRC and CEDAW Conventions, and ILO Conventions 138 and 182, are violated. Girls are at high risk of physical and sexual violence and HIV and other sexual infections.

c) Girls associated with fighting forces

79. While international law clearly prohibits the use of girls and boys in hostilities, their use by armed forces and groups is widespread. Although exact numbers are difficult to come by, it is believed that the number of children in armed forces and groups is in the hundreds of thousands. In the last five years, children have been recruited, conscripted, enlisted and used in active conflict in 28 countries.⁷⁶ In all of these countries, boys and girls, often in large numbers, were forcibly recruited. Worldwide estimates suggest girls may account for between 10 to 30 percent of children in fighting forces.⁷⁷ Since 1990, girls have participated in armed conflict in over 58 countries.⁷⁸ Girls are most often present in armed opposition groups, paramilitaries and militias, but they are also used by government forces.⁷⁹

80. Girls may join armed forces and groups for reasons of protection, access to food, shelter and medicine, revenge, and religious and political beliefs.⁸⁰ At times, girls join in an attempt to provide themselves with protection from violations by state forces or other armed groups, to seek protection against unwanted marriages or sexual abuse within their homes, to take revenge against attackers, to increase their own empowerment as females, or to expand their experiences outside the rigid gender dimensions in their societies and cultures. Girls are also abducted or forcibly conscripted.⁸¹ These captive girls are often forced to witness or participate in killings, torture and beatings and other violent practices, and are denied food, water and medicine by their

commanders. During their time in the fighting forces, girls are forced to perform a variety of roles, including as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, medics, spies, lookouts, raiders, and domestic and agricultural labor. They are also forced to serve as sexual slaves to numerous males in forces, or, they may be given to one male for his exclusive use as a captive “wife”, adolescent girls provide the majority of domestic and agricultural labor that sustains the fighting forces.⁸²

81. Information regarding girls associated with fighting forces finds that those who return from the forces face a wide variety of challenges in their attempts to reintegrate. Their experiences can include physical disability, severe mental problems resulting from trauma, and rejection by their own communities. Others find the ability to cope mentally and physically and are treated well by their families, peers and communities. Girls, especially those who return home with children, appear to have higher rates of rejection by their community and more problems reintegrating than do their male counterparts.⁸³ In addition, girls rarely gain access to formal demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programmes. When they do have access to these programmes, their priorities and special needs are inadequately provided for.⁸⁴

4. Girls and health⁸⁵

a) Girls with limited access to reproductive health information and/or services

82. The reproductive health needs of adolescents as a group have been largely ignored by existing reproductive health services,⁸⁶ causing many girls and young women to be at high risk of unwanted pregnancy and HIV/AIDS infection. In both developing and developed societies, adolescents face pressures to engage in sexual activity. Young women, particularly low-income adolescents, are especially vulnerable. Sexually active adolescents of both sexes are increasingly at high risk of contracting and transmitting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and they are typically poorly informed about how to protect themselves.⁸⁷

b) Girls suffering from obstetric fistula

83. Obstetric fistula accounts for eight percent of maternal deaths worldwide. Over two million women and girls live in shame, isolation and abject poverty because of the stigma linked to obstetric fistula. Those affected are primarily from marginalized groups in impoverished areas. The fistula, or tear, happens during obstructed labor when the tissue between a female's vagina and bladder and or rectum is torn. This results in the continuous leaking of urine or feces, an unpleasant smell and unsanitary conditions.⁸⁸ Adolescent girls are particularly susceptible because their pelvises are not fully developed, and those who have been subjected to female genital mutilation/cutting are at higher risk.⁸⁹

84. When a girl contracts an obstetric fistula, she is often abused and or abandoned by her husband and family. The abandonment and subsequent stigma and ostracism have terrible psycho-social implications for the girl and her development. Obstetric fistula in the context of child marriage leads to abject poverty for the girls because of the often subsequent divorce, separation, abandonment, stigma and ostracism. Such girls often end up on the streets and are therefore at further risk of sexual exploitation, prostitution and trafficking.⁹⁰

5. Girls infected with and affected by HIV and AIDS

85. The face of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is increasingly young, poor and female. In some settings, the latest incidence of HIV/AIDS is reaching a female to male ratio of 8:1 among those aged 15-24.⁹¹ The HIV/AIDS epidemic is threatening the poorest, youngest, and least powerful segments of society composed of individuals with limited social and economic assets, unable to avoid, mitigate the effects of, or leave unsafe sexual relationships. Hundreds of millions of poor and socially excluded girls are at significant risk of sexual exploitation, economically driven sexual relations and child marriage, all factors that put them at increased risk of contracting HIV. Another high risk group includes the millions of girls who are not living at home with their parents or attending school.⁹²

86. Girls infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS face enormous challenges in realizing their rights. UNICEF-ILO studies find that girls infected by HIV are twice as likely to be engaged in child labour and its worst forms. In these circumstances, girls are often required to assume additional household responsibilities, such as caring for ill family members and younger siblings at the expense of opportunities to attend school and build their social networks. In an effort to provide for the basic needs of their families, whose livelihood inputs have been weakened by HIV and AIDS, young girls may be pushed into exploitative environments where they are at risk of child labour, physical abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking. Moreover, the youngest girls affected by the epidemic are less likely to have access to basic health services or receive proper nutrition when their primary caretakers are ill or are children themselves.⁹³

87. Female heads-of-households, some of them infected by their now deceased husbands or sexual partners, struggle to provide food and shelter for their children. In some cases, girls are pulled out of school due to lack of resources or the need for them to engage in activities to help support their families. When parents or caregivers die, girls may have to take on the role as head-of-household. Girl heads-of-households often experience higher levels of sexual abuse and exploitation as they try to provide for their siblings, thus increasing their risk of exposure to HIV and AIDS.⁹⁴

88. HIV and AIDS destroys families due to the death of parents or caregivers. Significantly, 13 of the 17 countries with over 100,000 children orphaned by AIDS are either experiencing armed conflict or are on the brink of an emergency situation.⁹⁵ Girls in situations of armed conflict are also at heightened risk of contracting HIV and AIDS. Armed conflict breaks down social structures, community protection networks and legal protection mechanisms and fosters an environment where sexual violations and exploitation increase. Sexual relations can become increasingly violent, the number of partners can increase and girls become sexually active at younger ages. Occurrences of rape, sexual slavery, trafficking and forced marriages also increase, with more and younger girls subject to these violations.⁹⁶ All these factors facilitate the spread of HIV/AIDS, with girls in particular at high risk. In addition, military personnel often have higher HIV/AIDS rates than civilian populations, which means that girls within war affected communities are at greater risk of exposure to the disease than previously.⁹⁷ Moreover, in most war affected areas, testing and treatment of HIV/AIDS affected children is non-existent.⁹⁸

6. Refugee, asylum-seeking and internally displaced girls

89. There are over 23.7 million refugees and internally displaced persons, the majority of whom are women and children.⁹⁹ Refugee and asylum-seeking girls are protected not only by human rights law but also by refugee law, which obliges states not to return them to territories where they would face persecution and, once recognized as refugees, to provide them with a range of rights in the country of asylum.

a) Refugee and asylum-seeking girls

90. Refugee and asylum-seeking girls have been forced to flee persecution and/or armed conflict in their home country. They may face numerous violations of their rights, not only in their country of origin and during flight, but also in the country of asylum.

91. Girls who are refugees may be forced to trade sex for food or clothes and run the risk of rape when leaving the camps in search of fuel or water. If they are living in urban situations, they are vulnerable to child labour exploitation. They face greater challenges accessing services and protection, especially if they are separated from their families, are unaccompanied, or are child heads-of-households.¹⁰⁰

92. Girls seeking asylum are detained, sometimes for long periods, in countries while their asylum claim is being decided. They may be held in reception centres where they are not accommodated separately from men or young boys who may abuse them. If the process of decision-making takes a long time, they may become further harmed by the experience. Unaccompanied and separated girls seeking asylum face particular problems and may be moved from one authority to another. They may disappear and can fall victim to traffickers or to other exploitation and abuses.¹⁰¹

b) Internally displaced girls

93. Internally displaced girls can encounter many of the problems faced by refugee girls. In addition, they are more likely to be within or close to areas of armed conflict and are more at risk of human rights abuses, including abduction, sexual exploitation and forced military recruitment. The state responsible for their welfare is their own state, however the state may be unable or unwilling to protect them. Identification of internally displaced girls can present particular challenges because they are often less visible than men and boys. Girls may not perceive themselves to be subjected to human rights violations, or be able to report such incidents, particularly if these occur in the private domain.¹⁰² Internally displaced girls are also protected by different bodies of international law, primarily human rights and humanitarian law.

7. Girls in marginalized groups

a) Girls in pastoral and nomadic minority groups

94. There are over 100 million pastoral and nomadic people in the world today. In many countries, pastoral and nomadic communities are at the bottom of human index indicators, faring even worse than communities experiencing armed conflict within the same country.¹⁰³ In a

number of locations, pastoral and nomadic communities are subject to frequent deadly attacks by armed raiders and, at times, armed government forces.¹⁰⁴ In research and data on pastoral and nomadic communities, attention to girls is almost entirely absent.

95. Girls within pastoral and nomadic communities suffer discrimination and rights violations due to gender stereotypes, negative practices related to property ownership and inheritance, early marriage, and lack of decision making power regarding issues that affect their lives. The vast majority of pastoral and nomadic girls receive no schooling due to early marriage, lack of priority to education of girls by families, including because of strong son preference which results in resources being spent on sons, not daughters.¹⁰⁵ Pastoral and nomadic girls also have little to no access to reproductive health services. Most have no ownership of or decision-making regarding the animals that they rely on for their survival.¹⁰⁶ During armed attacks by raiders, they are at heightened risk of abduction, rape and sexual abuse.

b) Lesbian girls

96. As girls grow up and discover their sexual identity, they may find that their sexual orientation differs from the prevailing norm. As a minority group, they can face harassment and discrimination.¹⁰⁷ They can be victims of violence, including being attacked, beaten up, raped (to teach them what they should prefer), tortured and murdered.¹⁰⁸ Perpetrators of these crimes include family and community members, peers, school officials and the police.¹⁰⁹ Lesbian girls as a group are often invisible within societies, and it may be very difficult for them to find safe spaces where they can express their views and fears and find support.

97. These girls lack access to information about their reality and life experiences and are often denied the right to associate among themselves or other homosexual youth. Suicide among homosexual girls and boys is overlooked and means to prevent it are often not identified. Mental and physical healthcare for lesbian girls is underdeveloped, and often does not address their physical and reproductive health needs. There is a need to significantly increase efforts to oppose violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and to enhance respect, tolerance, and the full recognition of human rights for lesbian girls.¹¹⁰

c) Girls with disability

98. Today, there are over 150 million children who are born with or who have acquired a disability, with more disabled children found in developing countries.¹¹¹ Families of children who have disabilities in both the developed and developing worlds are more likely to live in poverty than families with healthy children. This is a result of increased expenses, including for medications and specialized equipment. In addition, time demands of daily care giving lessen the time available for work. The inflexibility of work schedules and lack of child care options contributes to the unemployment or under-employment of disabled girls' caretakers. Lack of vocational education for disabled girls during their teen years has long-term negative consequences on their employment prospects. Poverty also lessens the likelihood that children, especially girls, with disabilities will have access to specialized equipment, services, and assistance that would help them reach their full potential.¹¹²

99. Children with disabilities are less likely to have their birth registered, as the stigma of having a child with a disability remains high in many cultures. This limits access to many

necessary services. Disabled girls are more likely to be excluded from education, especially in the developing world. The additional impact of gender inequality is significant for girls with disabilities who are excluded from education as they will not add to the workforce. Even when included, girls often lack the access to specialized equipment or skilled staff that would allow their full participation.¹¹³

100. These children also face higher levels of parental abandonment and are susceptible to physical and sexual abuse. Girls with disabilities are at risk of HIV/AIDS infection as a result of such abuse. Because children with disabilities face obstacles in identifying perpetrators or communicating to others about abuse, their abusers are less likely to be identified and girls are more likely to remain in abusive environments. Armed conflict exacerbates all these factors, as the number of children with disabilities resulting from the fighting grows.¹¹⁴

d) Girls in detention

101. An estimated one million children and adolescents are believed to be in detention worldwide,¹¹⁵ the majority of whom have committed small property-related crimes such as petty theft. Detention is psychologically and physically damaging to children. Youth criminality is a politically sensitive issue, and governments often choose to criminalize so-called “delinquent” children and adolescents (especially those who are poor), than to embark on the more complicated path of addressing the root causes of their marginalization from society. This trend is evidenced by the push in many countries to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility.¹¹⁶

102. Issues faced by girls in detention include pre-trial and post-trial violence, including physical and sexual violence and harassment by adult detainees, staff/guards and peers (staff often allow or encourage youth to abuse other youth); violence as a result of detention conditions; disciplinary measures (including as part of sentencing); and arbitrary/prolonged detention.¹¹⁷ Detention conditions are often poor, with overcrowding, co-mingling with adults, and poor sanitary facilities.¹¹⁸

103. Because there are many more boys than girls in criminal justice systems around the world, girls are often inserted into the system with little recognition that their needs are different. Because of the relatively low numbers of young female offenders, specialized custodial facilities, whether pre-trial or post-sentence, rarely exist, with the result that girls are often held in places far from their family. For similar reasons, they are more likely than boys to be held with adults. The practice of mixing girls with adult female detainees is justified by the authorities in some countries as being positive for girls, although no decisive evidence of this appears to exist. Overall, girls are more likely than boys to be deprived of educational opportunities when detained. The special hygiene needs of girls are usually overlooked.¹¹⁹

104. When mothers are deprived of liberty, all efforts should be made to provide the best possible conditions for children, including girls, cared for by mothers in prison, taking into account early childhood development issues for young children, and schooling and health care issues for older children.¹²⁰ Girls in the system need to be protected through the provision of adequate gender-sensitive staff, facilities and services, including gender-sensitive health services.

VII. Empowering girls to realize their human rights

105. The human rights of girls enshrined in international instruments cannot be attained without the empowerment of girls themselves. An informed and empowered girl is better able to exercise agency over her own life, to be an actor rather than a recipient of rights and services, and to become a visible and active member of society.

106. Empowerment is an active and inclusive process centered on the girl that engages all stakeholders -- parents, guardians, teachers, elders, the community and the state at large. Effective empowerment results in girls who are transformed through the acquisition of knowledge on their rights and their bodies, and the skills and tools needed for developing a strong and proud sense of their own identity.

107. The Expert Group Meeting, mindful that girls need to be empowered and have their social capital built up from a very early age (beginning with processes at the family level), have identified four key interlinked strategies for fostering the empowerment of girls and furthering the realization of their rights:

- a) Creation of safe and supportive girl-friendly spaces and environments;
- b) Building girls' social assets;
- c) Provision of education, information and skills-building for girls;
- d) Creation of channels for girls' participation, especially vulnerable girls, in decision-making processes;
- e) Engaging men and boys as allies in questioning traditional and discriminatory gender socialization.

108. Effective programmes must take into account the underlying structural causes of the marginalization and discrimination and violence against girls. This necessitates distinguishing among different groups of girls and between different levels and types of factors that make girls vulnerable. It also requires implementing specific girl-targeted interventions that seek to address factors that contribute to discrimination and violence against girls. An integral part of intervention is the engagement of men and boys as allies and active participants in overcoming patriarchy.

1. Creation of safe and supportive girl-friendly spaces and environments

109. Girls, like boys, have a basic right to a community and to spaces that are safe. Personal safety is essential if girls are to have meaningful access to the most basic rights to life, shelter, food and water. Safety of girls in their homes, communities, and schools is the basis for all other efforts at citizenship building and empowerment. As defined by the World Health Organization, a safe and supportive environment is part of what motivates young people to make healthy choices. "Safe" in this context refers to the absence of trauma, excessive stress, violence (or fear of violence) or abuse. Supportive means an environment that provides positive, close relationships with family, other adults (including teachers, and youth and religious leaders) and peers.¹²¹

110. In many communities in the world, while younger girls may be visible in the street, their sisters approaching puberty are withdrawn because of nominal safety concerns. Girls—often in

stark contrast to boys—have few opportunities to meet their same-sex peers outside of their home, or even in the context of school, in a reliably accessible and safe place. Perhaps those with the least access to a safe and supportive space are newly married girls—transited from natal homes to marital homes far away, disconnected from family social networks which may have nurtured them.¹²²

111. The freedom to move around safely in public spaces, to attend school, and to be viewed an integral part of families and communities, are denied to girls individually and collectively in many communities.¹²³ Physical and sexual abuse is common in many communities and high proportions of girls report being afraid of the public space where their reputations and physical integrity are attacked.¹²⁴ Harassment and physical attacks starkly reduce girls' opportunities and violations such as abduction, marriage, and sexual violence take rights away permanently.

112. Safe, girl-friendly spaces are essential social platforms through which to deliver programmes, as well as venues in which girls can develop protective friendship networks, explore their problems, learn about their rights, develop strategies to protect their safety and their health, practice team-building, develop leadership and play. Social connectedness and affiliation are essential human needs and rights, and a critical and joyful part of childhood and self-realization. Such connections contribute to the long term possibility of developing a positive self-image, defending one's rights and making responsible and informed decisions on matters affecting their lives.

113. Friendships themselves are protective social assets for girls. In the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, more socially connected girls are less likely to debut early sexually, to be sexually coerced, to have exchanged sex for money, and to have multiple sexual partners.¹²⁵ They are also more likely to seek HIV testing.¹²⁶ In particular, girls who save or who have financial goals (even if these are not yet realized) are more likely to have a realistic view of their risks of HIV, as well as greater exposure to information about HIV/AIDS, and more accurate knowledge of HIV transmission modes.¹²⁷

Box 1

The *Ishraq* programme: spaces to play, grow and learn

In four villages in the traditional Minya governorate of Upper Egypt, Save the Children and the Population Council joined forces with the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), Caritas, and the Egyptian Ministries of Youth and Sports, and Education, to create an innovative two and a half year programme for out-of-school girls aged 13-15. Using youth centres and local schools, girls meet four times a week for three hours a day for a programme of literacy, life skills, and sports. Girls learn to read and write, make educational visits to neighbouring villages, learn about their rights, develop confidence and ownership over their bodies, and begin to envision new roles for themselves in Egyptian society. With strong support of parents and community leaders (indicated in part by the waiting lists for girls wanting to participate), these programmes have been successful in improving girls capabilities and opportunities, leading to plans for expanding the programme to 120 villages across three of the socially conservative Upper Egyptian governorates.¹²⁸

2. Building girls' social assets

114. Social isolation is a reality of life for the vast majority of disadvantaged and marginalized girls. Migrant girls, girl child domestic workers, girls living in situations of armed conflict, girls living on the streets and other groups of high risk girls are often living separately, or even totally isolated, from their immediate families, and therefore away from the basic protective unit of society. Research has demonstrated that a substantial portion of adolescent girls aged 10-14 are effectively de-linked from key protective structures—they are neither living with their parents or families nor attending school.¹²⁹

115. Building girls' social assets includes informing them about their rights and helping them build the skills to exercise these rights. It entails helping to build connections with same-sex friends, developing safe spaces to meet friends, having adults in their lives to whom they can turn in times of need, and mentors who help them aspire to their future goals. Building social assets means giving girls opportunities to experience being part of a team and developing leadership skills. Girls' social assets can only be built if they find their own voice and recognize their ability to identify their own needs and act on them as full members of society. During later childhood/early adolescence, in order to enter into decent work, girls must learn to identify themselves as economic actors and acquire basic financial literacy.¹³⁰ It is important for girls to understand that they will likely be the sole or substantial economic providers for themselves and their families¹³¹. Around the time of puberty, girls need positive understanding of the changes in their bodies, to be aware of their rights to their childhood, and to have the ability and perspective to choose when and how they wish to become sexually active, including whether and when to enter into marital partnerships and have children. The value of social assets to girls' attainment of their rights and health is clearly seen in the many links between educational attainment and health and social outcomes.¹³²

116. All girls seek and enjoy the company of other girls. Even girls in extremely difficult circumstances, such as girls married as children, can be formed into communities of support and learning.¹³³

Box 2

Connecting young married girls in India

In an example of building girls' social assets, the Deepak Charitable Trust (in Vadodara, Gujarat) and the Child In Need Institute (in South 24 Pargana, West Bengal) in India, with research support from the Population Council, have organized groups of married girls as a key component of the First Time Parents Project. Groups address social vulnerabilities and isolation of married adolescent girls/first time mothers. The vast majority of these girls had never met their husband before they were married, and few had friends in their new homes. Less than two percent were members of a group or club. Their participation in the groups increases their contact with peers and mentors, exposes them to new ideas, and helps them engage in participatory learning approaches, covering subjects such as legal literacy, vocational skills, pregnancy and postpartum care, government schemes that women can access, public amenities, gender dynamics within and outside of the family, relationship issues, and nutrition. The project has been able to mobilize over 750 girls into dynamic groups of roughly 8 to 12 girls per group, who work together on development projects, celebrate common festivals, and organize welcome ceremonies for newly married members.¹³⁴

3. Provision of education, information and skills-building for girls

117. Education represents one of the largest investments that most governments make in the children of their countries. The potential of schools and other educational institutions to transmit knowledge and teach girls and boys essential life and livelihood skills, such as financial literacy, sexual and reproductive health, and critical thinking, is immense. In many contexts this potential remains, however, unfulfilled.¹³⁵

118. While the education of girls has received much attention in recent decades (including being listed as a key goal in the Millennium Development Goals), how and when education empowers girls is a complex process. Experience shows that despite successful efforts to enroll more girls in primary school, girls in many settings are more likely than boys to repeat classes or drop out of school altogether. Schooling *per se* will not empower girls unless the current focus on enrollment in schools is expanded to give more attention to the quality, content of education, and the social structures that reinforce schooling and reward a schooled girl.¹³⁶

119. The school environment for many girls contains many negative aspects, such as obsolete and gender-insensitive textbooks and teaching methods that reproduce gender stereotypes.¹³⁷ Many girls experience harassment or violence on their way to and from school, as well as in the school environment itself. The simple threat of harassment violates girls' human rights and keeps many of them out of school, irretrievably harming their lifetime chances. Even when school enrollment is free of charge, education carries hidden costs, which may be born differentially by the girl, or differentially predispose her family to reduce her school options. Hidden costs, such as school uniforms, textbooks and other essentials, or transportation to and from school are often substantial and prevent poor families from sending their girls to school.¹³⁸ In creating a girl-friendly environment in schools, it is important to engage boys (as students and brothers) and men (as fathers and teachers) in questioning traditional gender norms and holding men and boys accountable for discrimination and violence against girls in the school setting. There are emerging examples in some parts of the world that are engaging boys as allies in protecting girls in the school system.¹³⁹

120. In some settings, a high proportion of girls may need to be re-introduced into schooling and/or some groups of girls - such as migrant girls, girls in domestic service and married girls - may require special educational programmes because they have had severely restricted access. Others, especially gifted or talented girls, have aspirations and talents that must be nurtured and supported, not only so they may realize their own human potential, but so they may serve as role models for other girls. All school-going girls have advantages over non-school-going girls—even if they enter school late or not at grade for age and may be in poor quality schools. School-going girls have a better ability to negotiate a later marriage, protect themselves from unwanted sexual relations and pregnancy and to build the social negotiation skills necessary for a decent livelihood.¹⁴⁰

121. Not all teachers are good mentors for girls. Both male and female teachers need special training and capacity building to develop patterns of support and understanding of the challenges girl children face in the school setting. Women teachers are particularly valuable and, with proper training and motivation, can serve as positive mentors from within the community.¹⁴¹ Mentoring, which provides girls with positive role models who are slightly older than themselves, can have a

lasting positive impact on girls' empowerment. It can serve as a welcome complement to formal schooling, and provide girls with a freer space to express themselves, without feeling the pressure to succeed. In Serbia, extracurricular science programmes for gifted girls successfully engaged older girl "graduates" of the programmes as mentors, which was viewed positively by both mentors and mentees.¹⁴²

122. Alternative education is a means of providing basic education to those living in especially difficult and vulnerable situations, such as street children, domestic labourers, child brides or child mothers, or children living in situations of armed conflict, for whom access to formal (typically state-run) education is an impossibility. While governments must ensure that the greatest number of the most marginalized girls is reached by formal education, alternative education, which is typically provided by civil society and faith-based organizations, has successfully reached out to the most disadvantaged in many countries. Such alternative forms of education are not simply "catch up" schools—they may often be the first time some of the most disadvantaged children have entered school. The current emphasis of many interventions on the 15-24 year of age group, while carrying some benefits, will irremediably remove chances of all children being schooled. It is essential that alternative and "catch up" education programmes be offered before the onset of puberty, so as to empower girls before the increased sexual and exploitative pressures begin to be placed on them.¹⁴³

123. Street schools or one-room schools, as well as classrooms in refugee camps, or functional literacy classes in the context of married girls' clubs, are all examples of successful alternative school arrangements. In the Philippines, the government has contributed positively to girls' empowerment by recognizing alternative programmes of education, such as the Visayan Forum's multi-pronged programmes for child domestic workers that combine crisis intervention, education, and networking.¹⁴⁴ In Upper Egypt, the regional government has recognized that girls who pass a functional literacy examination (following two years in a girls' learning club programme called *Ishraq*) will be mainstreamed back into conventional secondary school.¹⁴⁵

124. Informal education refers to continuous learning outside of formal (and alternative) school settings, and includes participation in extracurricular or after-school activities, youth organizations, networks, associations and clubs. These institutions present a tremendous potential to provide safe spaces for girls, offer further opportunities for life skills learning and socializing. For example, in Uruguay, a youth organization called DESYR, focusing on sexual and reproductive rights, organized and ran a radio programme encouraging other young people to speak out on issues related to their lives, including specific subjects such as drug abuse, discrimination, and education, and organized street theatre to promote safe sex among teenagers across the country.¹⁴⁶

4. Creation of channels for girls' participation, especially vulnerable girls, in decision-making processes

125. Girls have the right to participate in matters that affect them, their families and communities. Participation is both an individual and a collective concept. At the individual level, a girl must feel that she is able to express herself, and has a forum in which to do so. At the collective level, there is a need for organized channels through which girls—especially the least

visible and girls at greatest risk—articulate their needs, which are often different from those of more privileged girls.

126. Many national and international organizations, including United Nations entities, have in recent years begun to include girls' voices in designing and evaluating their policies and programmes. However, it is important that participation of girls—particularly girls from poorer households and in more marginal circumstances—be meaningful and not a token gesture. Participation mechanisms must explicitly acknowledge the great diversity of girls and seek to ensure the participation of the least privileged and highest risk girls.

Box 3

Reaching out to girl domestic workers in the Philippines

The Visayan Forum Foundation began reaching out to girl and boy domestic workers in public parks, shopping malls and other places where these children gather. The Foundation has found that organizing and empowering child and adult domestic workers increases the impact and sustainability of other aspects of programmes to assist vulnerable populations, in particular crisis intervention, education and networking. Through these informal meetings, young domestic workers organized themselves into a worker's group called SUMAPI (meaning "to join") in 1995. Started in Manila, SUMAPI has now over 5,000 members with core groups and chapters in a number of provinces and districts. As members of SUMAPI, girl domestic workers attend workshops to discuss and learn from their experiences as domestic workers, gain knowledge about their rights, and participate in social activities and networking with other child domestic workers. Potential core group leaders and advocates among SUMAPI members are identified and given training on leadership, team building, organizing, counseling and self-development. SUMAPI members are actively involved in policy advocacy for child domestic workers in the Philippines and abroad.¹⁴⁷

127. Participation includes not only the ability and opportunity to express oneself but also the engagement with others as a team member and leader. Such experiences are an essential part of girls finding their voice, as well as a practical way by which their points of view and priorities can be identified and their energies for change tapped. Current youth service programmes have created, in theory, spaces for learning and participation for young people. However, the proportion of girls' participation (even financially better-off girls) in typical peer youth clubs and peer education programmes is often far less than one half. Furthermore, out-of-school and other disadvantaged girls' participation in these youth-serving programs is negligible or nonexistent.¹⁴⁸

5. Engaging men and boys as allies in questioning traditional and discriminatory gender socialization

128. There is a growing international consensus on the need to engage boys and men in improving the well-being of women and girls and redressing discriminatory gender socialization. There is, furthermore, a growing base of programme examples that have sought to engage men and boys in questioning traditional gender socialization. Such programmes include group educational activities (involving men and boys in questioning traditional gender norms), community outreach (engaging gatekeepers, community leaders, local religious leaders and others), and national policy initiatives to include men and masculinities within national gender monitoring mechanisms. In addition, a growing number of programmes are using a gender approach to engage both boys and girls in questioning rigid and discriminatory gender socialization and gender norms.

129. A small but growing base of impact evaluation has confirmed that such programmes can have an impact, and have demonstrated changes in attitudes and behaviors of men and boys who have participated in, or been reached by, such activities. Most of these initiatives have engaged boys and men aged 15 and up.¹⁴⁹ There is a need to consider interventions and policies that engage even younger boys, including engaging men to a greater extent in the care of young children as a way to change discriminatory gender socialization from the earliest ages.

130. At the policy level, ministries of women's affairs and gender equality should examine and review their policies to identify concrete ways to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality. This may include policies related to paternal leave, policies to encourage men's participation in antenatal and maternal care, and campaigns and policies to eradicate the trafficking of women and girls and sexual exploitation, in HIV/AIDS prevention and sexual and reproductive health, among others.

Box 4

Helping boys challenge traditional male socialization

There are concrete, evaluated interventions starting at the community level that have been proven to impact on how boys and girls, as well as families and communities, view gender roles. It is during childhood and adolescence that boys and girls internalize and rehearse the gender roles they will assume as men and women. Traditional gender norms are linked to increased risk of HIV/AIDS, violence, and (for girls) early unwanted intercourse and pregnancy. In hopes of fostering more equal relationships between men and women, and to reduce the risk that young men themselves currently face, some programmes are now focusing on helping boys question traditional male socialization. Within the framework of these programmes, small groups of boys are organized to meet on a weekly basis over at least three to six months. The curricula often emphasize social themes over health information, addressing such issues as violence and sexual coercion, what it means to be a man, homophobia, and women's rights as human rights. Other programmes carry out community campaigns or engage community leaders in questioning discriminatory, traditional norms. A cross-cutting concern is to identify boys' own rationale for change and to teach them critical thinking skills to help them question inequitable views about gender equality. Innovative programmes in Nigeria, Brazil, Mexico, and South Africa are among those documenting positive outcomes related to sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence, as well as attitudes toward gender roles in general.¹⁵⁰

VIII. Indicators of progress on ending discrimination and violence against girls

131. The Experts identified indicators for monitoring progress on ending discrimination and violence against girls. These data should be collected, compiled, analyzed and disseminated at both the national and sub-national levels.

132. Collecting data and reporting findings at the sub-national level is essential for presenting an accurate picture of the situation of girls and accelerating progress in identifying and addressing specific challenges facing particular groups of girls in particularly vulnerable situations.

133. Experts agreed that it is paramount that data be systematically disaggregated not only by sex, but also by age:

- Female/male infants to 5 years of age
- Girls/boys 6 to 9 years of age
- Girls/boys 10 to 14 years of age
- Girls/boys 15 to 19 years of age
- Young women/men 20-24 years of age.

134. The Expert Group recommends that governments, international organizations including the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders, work together to collect, analyze, compile and disseminate data in order to monitor progress in eliminating discrimination and violence against the girl child in the following areas:

Health Status

135. Health status indicators identified by the Experts include:

- Prevalence of underweight girls/boys (under 5 years of age).
- Mortality rates of girls/boys (under 5 years of age).
- Proportion of girls giving birth under 18.
- Proportion of births attended by skilled health professionals, by mother's age and parity.
- Prevalence of HIV by age and sex.
- Percentage of girls/boys reporting first sexual relation was non-consensual (i.e., forced or tricked).
- Female/male ratio of incidence of new HIV infections detected in 20-24 years age group.
- Percentage of girls (5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24) who have undergone FGM/C.
- Percentage of girls/boys (5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24) who have been subjected to violence and battery inside or outside the family.
- Percentage of girls/boys with comprehensive and correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS.
- Percentage of voluntarily sexually active girls seeking to avoid pregnancy, by contraceptive prevalence rate, and by condom use at last high-risk sex.

Educational status

136. Educational status indicators identified cover:

- Percentage of girls/boys starting in grade 1 (by age 8) who reach grade 5.
- Percentage of girls/boys (10-14) out of school who have never been to school.
- Percentage of girls/boys (10-14) out of school who have 1-4 years of schooling.
- Percentage of girls/boys (10-14) who are in school at appropriate grade for age.
- Percentage of girls/boys (15-19) who completed primary school.
- Percentage of young women/men (20-24) who completed secondary school.

Protection, rights and empowerment

137. Indicators on the protection of rights and empowerment of the girl child include:

- Percentage of girls/boys who have been away from home for more than 6 months.
- Percentage of girls/boys living apart from one parent.

- Percentage of girls/boys (age 10-14) living apart from both parents.
- Percentage of girls/boys (age 10-14) living apart from both parents, and out of school.
- Ratio of school attendance of female/male orphans (age 10-14).
- Ratio of school attendance of female/male non-orphans (age 10-14).

Child marriage

138. The indicators on child marriage identified by the Experts include:
- Percentage of girls/women currently 10-24 married under age 15, and under age 18.
 - Average spousal age differences for girls married (under 15, under 18), compared to those married over 20.

Child labour

139. Indicators on child labour include:¹⁵¹

a) prevalence of child labour

- Number and percentage of economically active (working) girls/boys (under 15, under 18), i.e., girls/boys involved in work for pay (in cash or in kind), unpaid family work or domestic work in own or other household.
- Number and percentage of girls/boys in child labour:
 - Girls/boys aged 5-11 working at least one hour of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week.
 - Girls/boys aged 12-14 working at least 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week.
 - Girls/boys aged 15-17 working at least 43 hours of economic or domestic work per week.
- Number and percentage of girls/boys under legal minimum age for employment as specified in the national laws.
- Percentage of girls/boys working and not attending school (under 15, under 18).
- Percentage of girls/boys working and attending school (under 15, under 18).

b) child labour characteristics

- Types/industries/sectors of work in which girls/boys are found working.
- Average number of working hours per week (including hours performed on household chores) of girls/boys (5-11, 12-14, 15-17).
- Average number of hours per week spent on household chores of girls/boys (5-11, 12-14, 15-17).
- Percentage of girls/boys (5-11, 12-14, 15-17) who:
 - Work for own family.
 - Work for external employer.
 - Are self-employed.
 - Work away from home.
 - Are paid in cash for work.
 - Are paid in kind for work.

- Are paid in cash and in kind for work.
- Are unpaid for work.
- Percentage of girls/boys in child labour who are in female-headed household.
- Percentage of girls/boys in child labour who are in male-headed household.
- Percentage of girls/boys in child labour who are the head of own household.

c) prevalence of hazardous child labour and violence at work

Number and percentage of girls/boys (5-11, 12-14, 15-17) who:

- Work under hazardous conditions (including in domestic work).
- Work in one of the worst forms of child labour as defined by the ILO Convention 182.
- Work in one of the worst forms of child labour as specified in the national laws (in reference to Article 4 in ILO Convention 182).
- Percentage of girls/boys who suffer/are exposed to injuries or health hazards at work.
- Percentage of girls/boys who suffer/are at risk of serious injuries and illnesses (resulting in hospitalization, disabilities) or death at work.
- Percentage of girls/boys who suffer/are at risk of violence at work (including verbal, physical and psychological abuse, sexual harassment, and rape).

Participation and access to decision-making in society

140. Indicators on participation of girls and their access to decision-making in society include:
- Percentage of girls/boys of age of consent who are issued vital documents, including personal identification documentation, health certificates and other vital forms of personal identification.
 - Percentage and age distribution of girls/boys who participate in youth programmes.
 - Percentage of, and funding allocation for, girl-focused programmes within youth programmes, including programmes where girls can safely meet each other, find mentoring, develop leadership skills, and receive programme benefits.
 - Percentage of activities designed specifically to meet girls' needs that are age, sex, life-cycle and context appropriate (such as specially designed financial literacy courses, citizenship programmes, and sports).
 - Percentage of, and funding allocation for, programmes focused on reaching disadvantaged and marginalized girls/boys.
 - In youth-serving initiatives, percentage of peer educators, peer leaders, and mentors that are female/male.
 - Percentage of girls/boys that participate regularly in group sports.
 - Collect by age, sex and marital status for those (10-14, 15-19) who have:
 - Regularly attended a youth programme or youth centre within the last week.
 - Had contact with a peer educator.
 - Been a peer educator or leader.
 - Attended a lecture on HIV/AIDS.

Community support, safety and protection

141. The indicators on protection and support at community level include:
Percentage of girls/boys (of the specific age categories noted above) who:

- Have trusted adults to whom to turn.
- Have many friends in their neighborhoods.
- Have a place in which to reliably and safely meet same-sex peers.
- Feel comfortable in their neighborhood.
- Have an emergency place to spend the night if necessary.
- Have someone from whom they can borrow money in case of an emergency.
- Are able to live and move about in their neighbourhoods without fear of being beaten or assaulted.
- Have experienced harassment and crime.

IX. Conclusions and recommendations

142. The Expert Group proposes overarching conclusions and recommendations that apply to actors at all levels to address discrimination and violence against girls. It proposes three sets of recommendations specifically addressed to particular groups of actors: firstly, on the application of international human rights instruments and legislative and policy reforms, addressed mainly to States and international bodies; secondly, specific recommendations relating to programming, implementation and follow-up, addressed to States, United Nations agencies, donor agencies, and organizations working directly with children; and finally, recommendations addressed to non-governmental and civil society organizations.

1. Overarching conclusions and recommendations

a) Adopt an integrated and rights-based approach for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, including ratification of international instruments.

143. The protection and promotion of girls' human rights should be the explicit focus of all actions to eliminate discrimination and violence against the girl child. International human rights instruments provide the framework and accountability mechanisms for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. These instruments include, but are not limited to, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its two Optional Protocols, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol, ILO Conventions No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime.

b) Strengthen the implementation of human rights instruments at the national, sub-national and local levels.

144. All Member States should ensure a more consistent implementation of international human rights instruments, particularly at the sub-national and local levels. All national strategies regarding development, humanitarian responses, and peace and security, as well as laws, policies, programmes and plans of action, should comply with the standards of these instruments. To allow for a more integrated and effective implementation, linkages should be established among the existing human rights instruments and their bodies, in particular between CRC and CEDAW. Member States, supported by the United Nations' system, civil society and all other relevant stakeholders, should also work to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children and the Secretary-General's In-depth study on violence against women.

c) Increase support and funding to gender-responsive research to identify groups of girls at high risk of discrimination and violence, using a life-cycle approach.

145. As many potentially high-risk groups of girls remain "invisible," (i.e., not given explicit attention or not clearly identified) in policies, reports and interventions, research should be

gender-responsive in design, methodology and data collection, and analyses should be disaggregated by age, sex, stage in life-cycle, education, marital status, family characteristics, geographical location, ethnicity, and income. Member States and organizations working on girls' issues should also ensure systematic collection of qualitative as well as quantitative data, mapping of the situation of specific groups of girls and broad dissemination of research findings. Lessons learned and good practices should be widely shared and built upon. Research findings should be disseminated among children in child-friendly formats wherever possible. A life-cycle approach to identify high-risk groups of girls in life stages, from birth to womanhood, is encouraged.

d) Give special attention to groups of girls at high risk of severe and multiple forms of discrimination and violence in policies, legislation and programming.

146. Particular groups of girls are at high risk of severe and multiple forms of discrimination and violence and their rights and needs are often not recognized and addressed. The priority groups of girls requiring immediate attention and action, include girls at risk of female infanticide; girls facing harmful traditional practices, including female genital mutilation/cutting; girls at risk of child marriage and child mothers; girl heads-of-households; girls in child domestic labour; girls affected by slavery-like practices; girls affected by armed conflict, including those associated with fighting forces; girls infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS; girls with limited access to reproductive health information and/or services and girls suffering from obstetric fistula; refugee, asylum-seeking and internally displaced girls; pastoral and nomadic girls; girls with disabilities; lesbian girls; and girls in detention. Special attention to these groups of girls, through legislation, policy, and targeted programming, is urgently needed to protect and uphold their rights.

e) Prioritize protection of the rights of girls, with empowerment of girls as a critical facet of protection of their rights.

147. The notion of protection of girls should be clarified as protection of rights of the girl child. These rights are political, economic, social and cultural, including the right to life, education, health, food and shelter, as well as opportunities for learning and acquiring skills that will equip girls for decent and dignified work and living conditions. Empowerment of girls is a critical facet of protection of their rights. In childhood and adolescence, education is among the most important investments for their empowerment. This means providing girls with access to primary education, as well as placing emphasis on the quality and relevance of education they receive, the completion of schooling through secondary education, and on educational outcomes. Governments should ensure that, at the sub-national level, their formal and non-formal primary and secondary educational systems (in single-sex and co-educational options) and curricula are gender-sensitive and create a safe and productive learning environment for girls.

f) Commit and sustain long-term investment in targeted and innovative programmes to promote empowerment of girls.

148. Substantial targeted and innovative programmes, such as those given as examples in this report, should be supported with sustained, long-term investment targeting the identified groups of girls. Innovative programmes of particular relevance include those dedicated to high quality

education for girls, nutrition for early growth and development, sexual and reproductive health services, the support of mentorship programmes for girls' empowerment, available and accessible legal structures and advocates for girls, efforts to prevent and address exploitative labour, and other programming to promote girls' rights. Programming should build upon local capacities and ownership, and the interventions should take into account the particular needs within the specific cultural/political contexts and life/work experiences in each group of targeted girls.

g) Ensure participation and empowerment of girls by providing safe spaces.

149. Member States should fully implement Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which guarantees children the right to express their opinions and participate in decision-making related to their own lives. States should create or support the creation of enabling environments that are safe and supportive of the full development and protection of the rights of girls. They should be held accountable for the creation and positive impact of these environments. This includes family, school, community, workplace and other spaces. To ensure that girls have meaningful participation in the elaboration, implementation and follow up of all public policy that affects their lives, it is vital to provide adequate and sustained resources to support girl-friendly participatory mechanisms.

150. Safe and enabling spaces for girls are ones whereby girls can feel safe but also empowered. The spaces can be girl-only or mixed-sex spaces where mutual respect between boys and girls and gender equality can be fostered. A range of youth-serving initiatives, such as youth centres, peer education programmes, family and life skills programmes, and other youth services, can increase girls' participation by creating safe spaces for girls and addressing girls' needs and priorities. Special safe spaces should be created for girls with particular needs, such as married girls, young mothers, child workers, girls affected by HIV/AIDS, girls with disabilities, victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, and girls affected by armed conflict, who often have difficulties accessing normal services due to their special situations.

h) Promote public debates and zero-tolerance on gender-based discrimination and violence.

151. Given that many forms of discrimination and violence against girls and women are rooted in patriarchal cultural beliefs and practices and gender-biased attitudes, a mass campaign for attitude change at the individual and societal levels is imperative. Member States, civil society and media should work together to sensitize the public about the negative impact of discrimination and violence on both girls and society in general, and promote public debates about negative gender attitudes and practices, including those justified by religion or tradition, that are used to propagate discrimination and violence against women and girls. Public campaigns to promote zero tolerance can be initiated at the national, provincial and community levels. The media should be encouraged to promote gender-equal and non-violent values, and local and national coalitions established to pressure and monitor the media to protest and sanction degrading and discriminatory messages related to girls and women.

i) Involve men and boys in efforts to fight against discrimination and violence against women and girls.

152. Efforts to change attitudes that condone, and practices that sanction, discrimination and violence against girls and women will not achieve ultimate success without the active involvement of the male members of the society, starting at the family and community levels. All actors involved in efforts to tackle discrimination and violence against girls should identify progressive traditional, religious or community leaders, especially men, to move the agenda of girls' rights and gender equality forward. Spaces should be created for girls and boys, and women and men, to have dialogue and find the common ground in questioning traditional views about gender equality, and work together towards the elimination of gender-based discrimination and violence.

j) Develop the capacity of individuals and institutions working with girl children.

153. Develop the capacity of individuals and institutions who work with girls in both preventive and rehabilitative programmes. Education and training on girls' and women's rights, as well as gender equality principles, should be provided to families, teachers, social, health and humanitarian aid workers, youth, women, community leaders, and employers of girls, to increase awareness and understanding of girls' rights, to strengthen their capacity to contribute to the empowerment of girls, and as a means to create community and social networks capable of preventing and responding to rights violations against girls. Rights training and psycho-social training on how to deal with girls who have been raped or suffered extreme violence should be required for staff of law enforcement, judicial agencies, and local NGOs. Training should also equip professionals and community activists with the skills to intervene at the family and community level on particular issues, such as child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and other harmful traditional practices, sexual abuse, domestic violence, and child labour exploitation.

2. Recommendations on international instruments and legislative and policy reforms

a) CRC/CEDAW Committees

154. The CRC and CEDAW Committees should ensure that issues and questions posed to States parties in the reporting process adequately address specific girl-child concerns in each country, at both national and sub-national levels.

155. Bearing in mind the life-cycle approach to eliminating discrimination and violence against girls and women, the two Committees should increase direct interaction with one another to ensure that both mechanisms more specifically and adequately address the girl child in their reporting processes and follow-up at national level.

156. The two Committees should develop a joint General Recommendation that clearly outlines the specificity of the human rights of girls and ways to address them, inter alia, through the interpretation of articles 2 and 3 of CRC on discrimination and the best interest of the child, and article 16 (1) (2) of CEDAW on equality in marriage and early marriage.

157. The CEDAW Committee should consider drafting a General Recommendation on women and girls in armed conflict to assist States to take actions to prevent and respond to violations of their rights during conflict and to facilitate measurement of progress in States meeting their obligations.

158. The reporting guidelines for the CRC and CEDAW Committees should require reporting on progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action critical area of concern on the girl-child, including increased attention to problems at sub-national level which may be hidden under national level statistics, data and information.

159. The two Committees should also increase collaboration and consultation with civil society, in particular women's groups and organizations, in order to monitor how national governments implement, in practice, concluding observations and recommendations of these Committees.

b) Other human rights mechanisms and instruments

160. The methods of work and procedures of the newly established Human Rights Council should devote explicit attention to the human rights of girls, including through a specific sub-item on the Human Rights Council's agenda.

161. Bearing in mind the grave violations of girls rights in situations of armed conflict, the Security Council should ensure that the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict includes a specific focus on girl children, and country reports should provide progress reviews relating to the girl child. This Working Group would take into account currently available standards, tools and resources existing in the UN System to guide and achieve a holistic approach to preventing and responding to human rights abuses at the national level. The Working Group should look at ways to improve the integration of a gender sensitive approach in peacekeeping operations.

162. National-level implementation of the Action Plan for the comprehensive Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on 5 grave abuses committed against children (in accordance with Security Council resolution 1612) should address the specific vulnerabilities of girls in armed conflict.

163. The mandate and terms of reference for the proposed Special Representative on Violence against Children, proposed in the Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children, should explicitly address the situation of the girl child.

164. Member States, entities of the United Nations system, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, should ensure that the mechanisms established for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities explicitly address the rights of disabled girls.

c) Member States

165. All States which are parties to CRC and CEDAW should take action to:

- i) Harmonize their national laws with international standards relating to girls, noting the inter-linkages between the two Conventions and their protocols. Sensitivity to sub-national variations of data on human rights abuses of girls should be incorporated in the domestic legal framework.
- ii) Organize consultations with the NGO sector in the process of writing Government reports to the CRC Committee, the CEDAW Committee and other international human rights treaty bodies, and initiate a wide-ranging public debate on the draft version of such reports before they are submitted to the respective bodies.
- iii) Mainstream issues of the girl child into the periodic reporting to the international human rights treaty bodies, in particular CRC and CEDAW.

166. All States should conduct legislative and policy reforms to eliminate discrimination and violence against the girl child. Legislative and policy reform should be combined with necessary national and local social policies, resource allocations and programmes to make implementation and enforcement of the law effective. A budget line for protection and empowerment of girls should be established in all relevant ministries and public access provided to this information. Actions required by States include:

- i) Urgently develop, adopt and implement legislation and policies that promote and safeguard the rights of the girl child and women.
- ii) Identify and fill gaps in legislation regarding the priority groups of girls discussed in this report;
- iii) Repeal all laws that discriminate against women and the girl child, for example, laws on inheritance, property ownership, divorce, and minimum age for marriage.

167. States should ratify the ILO Conventions 138 and 182, and ensure that national plans, policies and programmes on combating child labour and its worst forms (including commercial sexual exploitation, slave-like practices, forced and bonded labour, trafficking, and hazardous forms of child labour) effectively eliminate child labour of girls. A special focus should be given to especially vulnerable situations of working girls, including girls in domestic child labour, by identifying child domestic labour as a potentially worst form of child labour to be eliminated in national laws.

168. All forms of girl child labour below the minimum age for employment should be eliminated as a matter of priority, combining law reform with effective social policies, including access to education and health services. In cases of girl workers above the legal minimum working age but under the age of eighteen working within the legal limits for employment, decent

work conditions, including strict regulation and monitoring of work conditions, and the prevention and eradication of violence at work, should be ensured.

169. States should adopt a zero-tolerance policy toward child marriages and forced marriages and develop focused legal and social support efforts at national and sub-national levels to end these practices.

170. States should adopt stricter policies that contribute to the marginalization of the pornography industry, in particular monitoring and hindering the abuse of children, including girls, at pornographic websites, regulating distribution of pornographic magazines and movies, adopting regulations on sexually offensive advertising and advertisements for 'hot-lines' and escort agencies in printed and electronic media, which can lead to the exploitation of girls.

171. States should implement national-level policies – such as family and paternity leave policies, policies that encourage men to participate in pre-natal visits and exams and in childbirth, as well as in the health care of young children and fatherhood education classes – that can encourage men's participation in maternal health and in the care of boys and girls from the earliest ages. Such policies and programmes can help overcome patriarchal attitudes that childcare and domestic work are the sole responsibilities of women and girls.

3. Recommendations for programming, implementation and follow-up

172. States, international organizations including the United Nations, bilateral organizations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, should undertake the actions on programming, implementation and follow-up related to awareness-raising, capacity-building, monitoring of the administration of justice, and increasing gender mainstreaming and coordination of efforts, as well as specific actions in the areas of education, social and health policies and services, and actions to increase the participation and empowerment of girls.

a) Awareness-raising and capacity-building / training

173. To facilitate awareness-raising and capacity-building and training the following actions should be undertaken:

- i) Develop, implement, monitor and enforce policy and programming that educate and raise awareness among communities and priority groups of girls, about the rights of girls and women. Promote and provide support to community education on CRC and CEDAW for communities, families, faith-based groups and other key actors.
- ii) Encourage gender awareness training, as well as education on CRC and CEDAW in college/university programmes. Organize pre-service training on these issues for all professions relevant for protection and/or education of children, such as teachers, social workers, therapists, police officers, judges, and prosecutors.
- iii) Introduce continuous in-service teachers' training on participatory and interactive teaching methods and include systematic gender-equality training as an integral part of

in-service teachers' training, using training manuals with concrete examples of how to implement gender-sensitive approaches to teaching in regular classrooms.

- iv) Provide training for health workers and the NGO sector on reaching fathers, mothers and other family members with information on positive, gender-equitable parenting and ways to ensure the empowerment of girls.

b) Monitoring the administration of justice

174. To facilitate the monitoring of administration of justice, the following actions should be undertaken:

- i) Monitor and investigate human rights violations against girls with a view to ensuring effective prosecution of perpetrators and preventing impunity.
- ii) Provide victims with access to all necessary support services, including legal aid and defense counsel, in order to pursue remedies for violations of their rights and facilitate rehabilitation.
- iii) Ensure that existing national and local mechanisms for the protection of children's rights have an explicit agenda on the girl child, and provide sufficient funding to ensure effective implementation. For example, the criminal and juvenile justice system should be administered in a manner that enables girls' access to justice. In cases where such mechanisms do not exist, efforts should be made to establish them and integrate a girl-child rights perspective.
- iv) Create local and national accountability councils to hold governments, families and communities responsible for the rights and well-being of girls.
- v) Create local outreach groups of men to hold other men accountable for their actions toward their children, particularly their daughters.
- vi) Re-examine procedures for reporting different forms of child abuse (especially, child sexual abuse) in order to decrease/avoid re-traumatization of girl victims.

c) Education

175. The following actions are recommended in relation to education:

- i) Collect and regularly publish up-to-date sex-disaggregated educational statistics, at all levels, on access, enrollment and drop-out rates, and educational outcomes. Regularly monitor access to education of girls and boys at sub-national (regional and local) levels, taking into account various socio-economic and demographic factors specific to particular regions (for example, poverty, level of development or the ethnic structure of population). Based on such sub-national analyses, develop measures that would increase access to education of specific groups of marginalized girls.

- ii) Conduct comprehensive analysis of the quality of education at the national level, based on surveys of educational outcomes (that is, organize testing of children aimed at examining whether children have acquired appropriate life skills and knowledge). Where possible, provide cross-national comparison of findings and use them to create gender-sensitive guidelines for educational reform.
- iii) Incorporate human rights and citizenship education into the education system to provide girl children with awareness of their rights, and life skills such as age- and sex- specific financial literacy to promote safe, legal, decent livelihoods and a sense of economic competence among girls.
- iv) Promote and support girls' access to information technologies and equipment, and develop educational policies that encourage girls' interest in natural sciences, math, technology, computer science and sports.
- v) Review early childhood education and primary school practices with the goal of promoting gender equality from the earliest ages, questioning gender stereotypes, identifying the sources of violence and discrimination against the girl child, and promoting critical thinking skills about gender roles on the part of young children. Provide parent training to first-time parents, through the formal and non-formal health care system on non-gender-discriminatory child-rearing.
- vi) Develop formal or alternative/informal educational programmes for girls, who are not enrolled or have dropped out of school due to specific life circumstances (for example, poverty, child labour, abuse or exploitation, trafficking, war, displacement, pregnancy/motherhood, early marriage), and allocate appropriate resources to these programmes.
- vii) Assure that women's NGOs are involved in planning and implementing educational policy at the national level, for example, through establishing special Gender Task Forces at Ministries of Education (composed of independent gender experts and representatives of women's NGOs), which would participate in:
 - Curriculum planning (integrating gender-related topics into programmes for different school subjects), and designing educational reforms.
 - Analyzing curriculum and school textbooks from a gender equality perspective, and providing clear guidelines/recommendations to future authors of textbooks.
 - Creating programmes for pre-service and in-service teachers' training, creating gender-sensitive teaching methods and developing manuals/guidelines for teachers.
 - Monitoring educational policy at all levels (primary to tertiary), as well as practical work of educational institutions (including developing mechanisms for alleviating gender discrimination in educational practice).

d) Social and health services

176. Actions recommended on social and health services include:

- i) Given the changing shape of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its increasingly young and female character, HIV/AIDS prevention, care, support and treatment must prioritize reaching the girls most vulnerable to and affected by HIV, in a safe and supportive girl-friendly environment. Specific interventions, such as social security systems, should address the needs of HIV orphan/affected girls.
- ii) Provide girl-friendly, confidential and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services – including access to information, counseling on sexual health, access to contraceptives and condoms, voluntary and confidential counseling and testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.
- iii) Provide adequate psychological, medical and educational services for girls whose rights have been abused and violated, including an increase of resources (both financial and human) for adequate training of professionals who participate in recovery programmes for girls.
- iv) Establish multi-disciplinary teams in centres for social work that are responsible for planning, implementing and monitoring efficient protective measures in cases of violence against girls. These efforts should be undertaken through coordinated actions of different relevant institutions in the local community (police, healthcare, centres for social work, judiciary, various NGOs), as well as other local organizations that could contribute to victims' protection (schools, kindergartens, companies/firms, local authorities).
- v) Implement family support systems – including income support for the poorest families – with a view to protecting the rights of girls. Explore how existing income support and poverty alleviation initiatives can promote the rights of girls.

e) Participation and empowerment

177. To facilitate the participation and empowerment of the girl child, the following actions are required:

- i) Encourage and financially support empowerment activities at the grassroots level, such as educating and engaging families and communities on prevention and girl-centred activities, such as peer education programmes for girls, support groups and organizations of girls at high risk of discrimination and violence.
- ii) Create community funds, monitored and controlled by women's rights groups, councils or coalitions, to support new community-level activities for engaging boys and men on gender equality, and to ensure that the activities improve the lives and well-being of girls. These activities should be carried out and assessed by and with girls and women

- iii) Encourage and support the organization of different forms of extra-curricular activities for children, taking into account specific interests of girls.
- iv) Apply models of identification of gifted students that will not be based solely on IQ scores and personality measures (although the latter could be used as additional indicators). Rather, the models of identification could take into account the interests of students, their independent creative products (artistic, scientific, etc.), essays on aspirations, or self-reported engagement in extra-curricular activities. Assure that teachers at regular schools are trained in such identification methods, as well as on internal (psychological) and external (socio-cultural) barriers to the realization of potential in gifted girls.¹⁵²
- v) Develop mentorship programmes for girls who are identified as gifted in secondary school, including mentorship based on the peer education model.

f) Systematic mainstreaming of attention to the girl child and coordination of efforts

178. To ensure systematic mainstreaming of attention to the girl child in all policies, programmes and interventions at national and sub-national levels, the following actions should be undertaken:

- i) Mainstream attention to the girl child into national policies and programmes.
- ii) Carry out “girl child impact assessments” - or specific reviews of the potential impact on the protection of the rights of the girl child of all planned interventions - in all national development programmes and initiatives, regardless of funding sources.
- iii) Make the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child an integral part of all analyses, formulation, monitoring and evaluation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes and national reporting on Millennium Development Goals and other critical national-level planning and monitoring instruments.
- iv) Identify possible gaps in policies and programmes in relation to girls (analyzing whether specific groups of girls are sufficiently represented in these policies and programmes and whether their needs are adequately addressed).
- v) Review resource allocations, identify possible imbalances in the allocations, including geographic imbalances, and reallocate financial and technical resources to programmes targeting priority groups of girls.
- vi) Assess the impact on the girl child of both international and regional trade agreements and local-level economic policy.
- vii) Evaluate the outcomes of the existing programmes for girls and define guidelines for future programming.

179. To ensure systematic coordination of efforts, the following actions are required:

- i) Increase support to and/or initiate programmes of collaboration with NGOs working at sub-national and national level.
- ii) Improve inter-agency coordination on the girl child and collaborative development of standards, protocols and strategies.
- iii) Develop common indicators for monitoring and evaluation in order to achieve agreed global commitments.

4. Recommendations for non-governmental and civil society organizations

180. Civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations and other groups and networks at different levels, should:

- a) Give priority and active support to the empowerment of girls in all aspects of life and include girls in the design of programmes and projects to ensure that their specific needs are reflected and addressed.
- b) Ensure that girls are consulted and represented in the process of drafting shadow reports to CRC and CEDAW.
- c) Ensure girls' access to youth centres and other youth-specific initiatives, including age and sex-specific spaces and sessions.
- d) Use the home visits that are part of health and child health initiatives to identify girls at risk of child marriage, out-of-school girls, girls living apart from their parents, and girls in other social conditions that are often associated with lack of immunization and elevated risk of sexual coercion and labour exploitation.
- e) Within maternal and child health initiatives, combine social and health promotion activities to prioritize reaching the youngest, first time child-brides and child mothers.
- f) Develop financial literacy and microfinance (including savings and credit) programmes for girls that are targeted specifically to age, sex, marital status, life cycle and context needs.
- g) Develop strategies and action plans to build girls' stakes in their societies and to recognize and acknowledge their rights and citizenship at an earlier age, ideally close to puberty when specific risks often undermine the rights of adolescent girls.
- h) Develop, in partnership with Governments or other relevant actors, citizenship retreats or camps conducted annually as a positive right of passage where girls and boys (in sex-specific groups) meet and share experiences. These retreats could also serve as a channel for strengthening the relationship between the child-citizen and the state, for example if children receive their personal identification (vital to future work, travel and exercise of voting rights), health certificates and other vital documents as part of these programmes.

- i) Create girl-to-girl mentoring and support structures which draw upon the talents of girls who have graduated from secondary school. Tapping the skills of these girls, and building their social capital to serve as mentors to younger girls, will both reward their schooling achievements and develop them as a cadre to connect to and deliver programmes to younger girls. A cadre of adolescent and young women is vital for successful role modeling, programming and for the provision of safety nets for younger girls.
- j) Support public education programmes and spaces for girls to, for example, carry out national level consultations, essay contests, national media events that include the voices of girls and boys in questioning gender inequalities.
- k) Establish teams within media management responsible for designing and implementing gender-sensitive editorial policy and integrating girl child issues into media programmes. Create media space for girl issues, for example dedicated minutes of broadcasting time or a dedicated column.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

A. PAPERS BY EXPERTS

- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.1** *Girl children in vulnerable situations*
Ms. Teresita Silva (Philippines)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.2** *From the kitchen to the classroom: Call for political commitment and empowerment to get girls out of child domestic labour and into school*
Ms. Busakorn Suriyasarn (Thailand)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.3** *Engaging boys and men to empower girls: Reflections from practice and evidence of impact*
Mr. Gary Barker (United States)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.4** *The impact of harmful traditional practices on the girl child*
Ms. Berhane Ras-Work (Ethiopia)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.5** *Socioeconomic empowerment: A route towards equality of the girl child*
Ms. Shahira Fawzy (Egypt)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.6** *Improving the quality of life for the girl child by using child rights and gender-sensitive budgeting: Perspectives from South Africa*
Ms. Christina Nomdo (South Africa)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.7** *“Boys’ mind, girls’ heart”: Barriers to the realization of potential in gifted girls – responding to challenges*
Ms. Biljana Brankovic (Serbia)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.8** *Girl child empowerment: A challenge for all*
Nicole Bidegain (Uruguay)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.9** *Counting invisible workers: Girls in domestic activities within their homes*
Ms. Daniela Zapata (Bolivia)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.10** *Addressing vulnerability and exploitation of child domestic workers: An open challenge to end a hidden shame*
Ms. Cecilia Flores-Oebanda (Philippines)

- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.11** *Social and economic development and reproductive health of vulnerable adolescent girls*
Ms. Judith Bruce (United States)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.12** *The girl child and armed conflict: Recognizing and addressing grave violations of girls' human rights*
Ms. Dyan Mazurana (United States)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.13** *Teacher identities and empowerment of girls against sexual violence*
Ms. Fatuma Chege (Kenya)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.14** *Violence against the girl child from a practitioner's perspective*
Ms. Shamima Ali (Fiji)
- EGM/DVGC/2006/EP.15** *Full protection of the girl child through effective legislation and enforcement*
Ms. Moushira Khattab (Egypt)

B. PAPERS BY OBSERVERS

- EGM/DVGC/2006/OP.1** *The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, Situation paper for the Pacific Islands Region*
UNICEF
- EGM/DVGC/2006/OP.2** *Need for action to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against girls*
Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Berlin, Germany
- EGM/DVGC/2006/OP.3** *Reducing Vulnerability of the Girl Child in Poor Rural Areas: Activities of the International Fund for Agricultural Development*
IFAD, Rome

C. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- EGM/DVGC/2006/BP.1** *Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child*
Prof. Savitri Goonesekere, Consultant

EGM/DVGC/2006/BP.2	<i>Report of the online discussion on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child</i> Mr. Christoph Schuepp, Consultant
EGM/DVGC/2006/BP.3	<i>Gender statistics and existing evidence</i> Gareth Jones, UNICEF
EGM/DVGC/2006/BP.4	<i>Violence and discrimination, voices of young people: Girls about girls.</i> UNICEF

D. INFORMATION NOTES

EGM/DVGC/2006/INF.1	Aide-Memoire
EGM/DVGC/2006/INF.2	Information Note to Participants
EGM/DVGC/2006/INF.3	Programme of Work
EGM/DVGC/2006/INF.4	List of Participants
EGM/DVGC/2006/INF.5	Experts' Bios
EGM/DVGC/2006/INF.6	Procedures followed in Expert Group Meetings organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women.
EGM/DVGC/2006/INF.7	List of Reference Documents
EGM/DVGC/2006/INF.8	List of Documents

ANNEX III

PROGRAMME OF WORK

Monday, 25 September 2006

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.	Registration of participants
9:30 – 9:35 a.m.	Welcoming remarks by Ms. Marta Santos-Pais, Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre
9:35 – 9:50 a.m.	Opening statement by Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations
9:50 – 10:10 a.m.	Introduction to the meeting, election of officers, adoption of the programme of work
10:10 – 10:40 a.m.	Break
10:40 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	<u>Session I: Introduction to the theme</u> Presentation of the background paper Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, Prof. Savitri Goonesekere, consultant Presentation of the report of the online discussion on Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, Mr. Christoph Schuepp, consultant Ms. Noreen Khan and Ms. Mima Perisic (UNICEF) <i>Voices of youth – Girls about girls</i> Discussion
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.	Lunch break
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.	<u>Session II: Protection of the girl child from discrimination and violence</u> Ms. Moushira Khattab (Egypt), Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child <i>Full protection of the girl child through effective legislation and enforcement</i> Ms. Shamima Ali (Fiji) <i>Violence against the girl child from in the Pacific Islands region</i>

Ms. Berhane Ras-Work (Ethiopia)
The impact of harmful traditional practices on the girl child

Discussion

4:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Break

4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Session III: Girls in especially vulnerable situations

Ms. Judith Bruce (United States)
Social and Economic Development and Reproductive Health of Vulnerable Adolescent Girls

Ms. Dyan Mazurana (United States)
The girl child and armed conflict

Ms. Cecilia Flores-Oebanda (Philippines)
Addressing vulnerability and exploitation of child domestic workers: An open challenge to end a hidden shame

Discussion

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Welcome reception
hosted by UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

Tuesday, 26 September 2006

9:00 – 9:15 a.m.

Welcome statement by Ms. Rima Salah, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF

9:15 – 9:30 a.m.

Summary of Day 1 by Rapporteur

9:30 – 10:50 a.m.

Session III (continued)

Ms. Busakorn Suriyasarn (Thailand)
From the kitchen to the classroom: Call for political commitment and empowerment to get girls out of child domestic labour and into school

Ms. Teresita Silva (Philippines)
Girl children in vulnerable situations

Discussion

10:50 - 11:20 a.m.

Break

11:20 a.m. – 1:20 p.m.

Session IV: Empowerment of the girl child

Ms. Fatuma Chege (Kenya)

Education as a tool for the empowerment of the girl child [title to be confirmed]

Nicole Bidegain (Uruguay)

Girl child empowerment: A challenge for all

Mr. Gary Barker (United States)

Engaging boys and men to empower girls: Reflections from practice and evidence of impact

Discussion

1:20 – 2:50 p.m.

Lunch break

2:50 – 4:10 p.m.

Session IV (continued)

Ms. Biljana Brankovic (Serbia)

“Boys’ mind, girls’ heart”: Barriers to the realization of potential in gifted girls – responding to challenges

Ms. Shahira Fawzy (Egypt)

Socioeconomic empowerment: A route towards equality of the girl child

Discussion

4:10 – 4:40 p.m.

Break

4:40 – 6:40 p.m.

Session V: Institutional arrangements for the promotion of elimination of discrimination against the girl child

Mr. Gareth Jones (UNICEF)

Gender statistics and existing evidence

Ms. Daniela Zapata (Bolivia)

Counting invisible workers: Girls in domestic activities within their homes

Ms. Christina Nomdo (South Africa)

Improving the quality of life for the girl child by using child rights and gender-sensitive budgeting: Perspectives from South Africa

Discussion

Wednesday, 27 September 2006

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.	Summary of discussion by the Rapporteur
9:30 – 10:00 a.m.	Establishment of working groups
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Working groups
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon	Break
12:00 noon - 1.00 p.m.	Working groups continued
1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	Lunch break
2:30 – 4:00 p.m.	Working groups continued
4:00 – 4:30 p.m.	Break
4:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Adoption of structure of expert report proposed by the Rapporteur / Establishment of drafting committee
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.	Working groups continued / Group drafting of report

Thursday, 28 September 2006

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Working groups – finalize inputs / Group drafting of report
11:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Break Consolidation of working group inputs into one overall report by the Rapporteur
11:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.	Distribution of overall report to participants Participants provide written comments to drafting committee Officers provide comments to each working group Each working group integrates participants' and officers' comments and finalizes group inputs (including lunch break)
3:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Rapporteur consolidates revised working group inputs into draft report
4:00 – 4:30 p.m.	Break
4:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Presentation and adoption of draft report in plenary
5:30 – 5:45 p.m.	Closing remarks by Ms. Marta Santos-Pais, Director, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre and Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director

Endnotes

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⁵ E/CN.6/2005/2, paragraphs 494-495

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⁷ CEDAW General Recommendation No. 24 (paragraph 6, 12 (b) and 8)

⁸ Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) General Comments No.1 (paragraph 10); No.7 (paragraph 28) and No.4 (paragraph 31)

⁹ A/61/299, paragraphs 24, 28, 30, 43, 45

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