

**Kindly inform us of any comments you may have on the
CAIRO DECLARATION
Regional Consultation for the Middle East and North Africa
(MENA)**

**The UN Study on
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN
Cairo 27-29 June 2005**

The Participants of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children held in Cairo from 27-29 June 2005.

1. Convey their utmost gratitude and appreciation to Her Excellency Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, First Lady and Chairperson of the Technical Consultative Committee of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) in the Arab Republic of Egypt, for sponsoring and addressing this important regional conference, and grateful for the warm hospitality and significant efforts exerted by technical secretariat of NCCM for the success of its proceedings.

2. Express their appreciation for the preparations undertaken for this conference at the local and regional level marked by the outstanding participation of representatives from governments, civil societies , by children, UN organizations and development partners; consider this event, as one which has contributed to raising awareness within countries of the region on violence against children and the necessity to confront this by means of cooperation among all partners. This was translated by the initiative of many countries in the region to establish multidisciplinary national committees for combating violence against children. Also express their appreciation that this event surpassed the study by establishing the foundation for societal endeavour to seriously address the issue of violence against children.

3. Commend the efforts exerted by countries in the region for promoting the rights of the child and protection of children from violence; recognize their commitment to the Convention on the Rights

of the Child and its two Optional Protocols indicated by regular submission of reports to the Committee of the Rights of the Child; participants are also aware that more efforts should be exerted to ensure the full implementation of legislations for guaranteeing the rights of the child in its entirety including, the right of protection from violence, maltreatment or exploitation.

4. Fully aware of the real problems and constraints confronting the effective implementation of measures to protect children from all forms of violence including poverty, occupation and armed conflict; participants confirm the need to adopt integrated national action plans based on attainable objectives within a time frame and defined budget, as well as indicators to monitor realized progress, problems and means to overcome them.

5. While recognizing that children are citizens and fundamental partners in the democratic process, participants bear in mind that all policies, programs and mechanisms pertaining to combating violence against children should be in conformity with the principles spelled out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, namely; best interests of the child, “non-discrimination”, the right to life, survival, development, and respect for views of the child and the right of the child to express these views in the family, the school, and all institutions; and that due consideration are given to these views when taking decisions; formulating and implementing programs affecting the child’s life .

6. Approve the final recommendations of the MENA Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children, which should govern the national action for the protection of children from violence.

7. Commit themselves in particular to harmonize national laws and legislations in every country with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols and other relevant international standards; to expedite the preparation of specialized researches, statistics with a focus on the necessity to establish disaggregated data base and a situation analysis of the problem.

8. Also commit themselves to ensure protection of children from corporal punishment and explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings including in the family; schools and other institutions.

9. While taking pride in the exalted status of divine principals in our value system, which elevates the rights of the child, in particular protection from all forms of violence, yet some abuse these principles as a pretext to commit violence against the child. Equally proud of our customs and traditions which embrace children with care and love, nonetheless there are certain alien practices introduced in our culture that constitute a blatant violence against our sons and daughters. These practices must be banned in compliance with our inherent genuine values and traditions.

10. While Recognizing the strength of the family institution in the MENA Region, participants are aware of the pressures facing the family which can lead to incidence of violence. Since Violence starts and ends with the family, therefore the solution lies in the family. Consequently it is imperative that, the family be accorded protection; and becomes the center of attention when providing solutions to the problem of violence namely raising awareness of non violent means of discipline, and the dissemination of a non-violent societal culture starting with breaking the silence that conceals violence against children

11. Affirm the necessity to achieve integration among social prevention mechanisms and legal protection measures; and to review laws and legislation that will ensure reporting on acts of violence, incriminating any neglect in this regard, punishing perpetrators of violence; abandoning impunity, ensuring timely monitoring of violence with the provisions of adequate mechanisms for social and legal protection by reaffirming the social responsibility of adults, public and private sector institutions.

12. Conscious that the elimination of violence against children demands building the capacities of children, parents as well as all professionals dealing with children including teachers, social and health workers, experts, along with judiciary and law enforcement

sectors; Call for increased consultations and exchange of expertise among MENA countries particularly in the realm of success stories in order to raise awareness; and affirm the protection of marginalized children who are more vulnerable to violence and those suffering from discrimination on multiple grounds including disability, poverty gender etc.

13. *Affirm* their commitment to establish a follow-up mechanism, for the works of the MENA regional consultation on Violence against Children and call upon the organizers to continue their efforts to ensure that countries in the region follow up implementation of the recommendations.

14. *Commit themselves equally* that the issue of violence against children is highly placed as a permanent item on the agenda of the summits of Arab League, the African Union and the Organization of Islamic Conference.