

## **UNICEF and the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association work to enhance Child Justice Systems**

**Turks and Caicos Islands, 5 October, 2009-** Senior judicial officials from across the Commonwealth and UNICEF have agreed to a resolution which is aimed at enhancing the delivering of justice to children who come into contact with the law.

The “Providenciales Resolution on Justice for the Next Generation” came out of the October 1-2 Colloquium on the Child and the Law in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands. The forum was sponsored by UNICEF and the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association (CMJA).

The resolution commits CMJA members and UNICEF to urge Governments of the 54 Commonwealth nations to take urgent steps to introduce and implement child justice systems in line with international standards as identified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other international treaties.

Additionally, the parties to the resolution also committed to encouraging governments and judiciaries across the Commonwealth in the establishment and enhancement of child justice systems in line with international standards.

Measures the CMJA members and UNICEF will promote include: “the development and promotion of court procedures which are child appropriate and gender and disability sensitive; as well as the systematic use of child rights principles, including the primary consideration of the best interests of the child in the administration of justice”.

They have also agreed to promote “the use of deprivation of liberty of children only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible time”.

UNICEF Representative for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Tom Olsen, said he was very happy that the over 250 judges and magistrates attending the conference had agreed to partner with UNICEF to enhance the delivery of justice to children.

“As we move towards marking the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child this partnership can only auger well for children now and in the future. Great strides have been made in promoting and protecting the rights of the child, but more still needs to be done and this is a step in the right direction,” Olsen said.

During the two-day colloquium various panels examined the issue of legislation regarding juvenile justice and sought to identify any difficulties and problems in utilizing guiding international instruments such as the CRC at a national level. They also shared good examples on how the Treaties have been integrated in the juvenile system at a national level and identified strategies through which this can be further achieved.

**For further information, please contact:**

Patrick Knight, [pknight@unicef.org](mailto:pknight@unicef.org), UNICEF Barbados

Tamar Hahn, [thah@unicef.org](mailto:thah@unicef.org), UNICEF Latin America and the Caribbean

**About UNICEF:**

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

[www.unicef.org/lac](http://www.unicef.org/lac)