



**INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**  
**OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT OBSERVER TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Third Committee

Agenda item 66:  
Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Statement by Ambassador Anda Filip  
Permanent Observer

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Mr. Chairman,

For several years now the IPU and UNICEF have developed a close partnership around child protection issues. Most recently attention has focused on the specific challenge of combating violence against children and follow up to the United Nations Secretary General's report presented a year ago.

Violence against children knows no boundaries. It is blind to race, class, religion and culture. In every country of the world children continue to fear and experience violence. There is a need to act now and fast. There is a need to mobilise all actors that contribute to make this world safe for children – and parliaments are one of such actors.

I would like to start by paying tribute to the wonderful work carried out by Mr. Pinheiro and the interagency team that assisted him in producing the study on violence against children. The IPU has closely followed the preparatory work to the Study and has informed its members regularly of developments. The Study includes a wealth of information, recommendations and guidelines that require urgent follow up. To this effect, the IPU and UNICEF worked on the production of a Handbook for Parliamentarians on Violence against Children. This short, targeted, booklet – which we produced in only six months - brings together the major recommendations of the study tailoring them to the needs of members of parliament. The Handbook also highlights what parliaments can do to prevent and to put an end to violence against children.

The Handbook was launched at the 116th IPU Assembly held in Indonesia in May 2007. On that occasion, IPU and UNICEF organised a parliamentary panel focussing on violence against children at school. Panellists included members of parliament from South Africa and Chile, the Children's commissioner from New Zealand and a senior manager from Microsoft, to highlight public/private partnerships in combating violence against children.

The IPU-UNICEF Handbook is the first main project aimed at enhancing parliamentary action in following up to the Secretary-General's study. This is just a start and we hope that parliamentary action will trickle from the international spheres down to initiatives at the national level. We are already seeing many positive initiatives taken.

Members of parliament and UNICEF national offices have joined forces in several countries to produce national versions of the Handbook, thereby contributing to national awareness raising efforts required to follow up on the study. The Handbook was produced in Korean, Nepalese and French and is due to be released in Russian, Bahasa and Arabic in the coming months. Launches in parliament were also organised

so as to open the debate on violence against children. This for instance took place in the parliaments of Korea and in New Zealand.

Going down one step further, MPs in Australia have begun discussions and work with UNICEF with a view to providing legal aid to victims of violence against children as one way of strengthening implementation of legislation. Next week, the IPU and UNICEF will organize a briefing on violence against girls at the United States Congress. The briefing, which will focus on issues of sexual abuse and exploitation, will bring members of parliaments from around the world together with members of the House of Representatives and their related caucuses – on human rights, on children's issues, on missing and exploited children, and on human trafficking – with a view to comparing legislation and lessons learned in the various national contexts.

We are convinced that many more parliamentary initiatives around the world have and will be taken. This will no doubt contribute to building a safer world for children.

Allow me to end with a quote from Professor Pinheiro who recently stated “Children are tired of being told they are the future. They want to see us fulfil our promises in the present, and enjoy their right to be protected from violence today.” This is an objective the IPU is committed to pursuing and we look forward to continuing work with UNICEF and other partners in this endeavour.

I thank you for your attention.