



Human Rights Office

International Institute Maria Ausiliatrice - IIMA

NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

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Item 3 – Clustered ID - Violence against Children
Speaker: Ms Marta ALLARA

Oral Statement submitted by
IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice
And co-signed by

VIDES - International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education, Development

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Thank you Mr. President,

IIMA and VIDES International welcome the excellent contribution offered by the Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children.

As Ms. Marta Santos Pais highlighted, the issue of violence against children has to be given prominence, since it is a requirement for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As IIMA and VIDES, we remain concerned that in some regions of the world gender discrimination experienced by female children begins even before their birth and prevents them from growing with dignity. In particular, we recall the serious cases of sex-selective abortion of the female fetuses and gender change during infancy that occurs in India, where statistical data reveals that only 39% of females are able to survive infancy, compared with 61% of males. Young girls, in comparison to their brothers, receive less food, less care, less clothing, fewer medicines and - consequently- less affection. The Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PNDT) adopted in 1994 and amended in 2004 to deter and punish prenatal sex screening and female foeticide has contributed to increased awareness on the topic, but it is still lacking effectiveness in terms of prosecution and conviction of those responsible for such acts.

Moreover, we urge that child marriage be considered a violation of child protection rights and relevant domestic legislation be clearly modified accordingly in order to avoid contradictory messages. For instance, in India courts have given different interpretations of the provisions of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA) whereas child marriage is dealt with under the umbrella of women's welfare and not the section dealing with children, thus showing a lack of recognition as a child rights issue.

Mr. President,

The roots of violence against children are multifaceted. Preventing and eliminating it require a multisectoral and integrated approach.

In this regard, we invite the Special Representative to address in her future report how the local education system can contribute to spreading a new culture among children and their families that embraces the importance of girls in society and fosters an environment wherein boys and girls work together to set up the foundations for a better future.

Thank you.