



Global Initiative to  
**End All Corporal Punishment  
of Children**

**Submission on the development of the Secretary General's Action Plan on Youth from the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children ([www.endcorporalpunishment.org](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org))**

*Corporal punishment – violence inflicted on young people by parents, teachers and other adults in the name of “discipline” – violates young people’s right to freedom from violence and their rights to life, development, health, education and participation. Despite the consensus in international human rights law that all under 18s have a right to legal protection from and the elimination in practice of all corporal punishment, and increasing progress towards prohibition across the world, corporal punishment of young people remains lawful in some settings of their lives in the majority of states. **We therefore urge that the Secretary General’s Action Plan on Youth addresses the issue of corporal punishment of under 18s and highlights states’ obligation to prohibit and eliminate all corporal punishment.***

Much violence inflicted on young people by adults *is* corporal punishment – violence used by parents, teachers and others to control young people and regulate their behaviour. The continued legal and social acceptance of corporal punishment in the majority of states worldwide is a symbol of the low priority given to the rights of under 18s. All corporal and other cruel and humiliating punishment of young people is a violation of their rights to respect for their dignity and physical integrity – yet in the majority of states worldwide corporal punishment of under 18s remains lawful in some or all settings on their lives. As at August 2012, 33 states have enacted laws which prohibit all corporal punishment of under 18s in all settings, including the home. In the other 165 states, corporal punishment remains lawful in some settings of young people’s lives: in penal institutions in 79 states, in schools in 81 states and in their own homes in 165 states. Corporal punishment, including flogging, caning and amputation is lawful as a sentence for crime for young people in 41 states. For

more information on progress towards prohibition of corporal punishment around the world, see the attached table and leaflet.

As well as violating their right to freedom from violence, corporal punishment can also violate young people's rights to life, health, development, education and participation. In preventing young people from accessing education, school corporal punishment can have a severe and long-term effect on young people's employment and participation in society. Some corporal punishment kills, injures and disables young people. Experience of corporal punishment as a child and/or young person has been shown to be a risk factor for poor mental health in adolescence and adulthood, involvement in delinquent and antisocial behaviour as a young person and violent and criminal behaviour as an adult.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has consistently made it clear that the Convention on the Rights of the Child requires the prohibition in law and elimination in practice of all corporal punishment in all settings – the home, schools, penal systems and alternative care settings. In its General Comment No. 8 (2006) on “[The right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment \(arts. 19; 28, para. 2; and 37, inter alia\)](#)” the Committee consolidated and confirmed these obligations, and it systematically recommends prohibition in its concluding observations. The monitoring bodies of other international treaties, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee Against Torture, the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, also increasingly recommend prohibition and the issue is regularly raised in the Universal Periodic Review of states' overall human rights records.

The Secretary General's 2012 Five Year Action Agenda prioritises working with and for young people, including through deepening the youth focus of existing programmes on the protection of rights. Corporal punishment is a key issue in the protection of young people's rights. **We therefore urge that the Secretary General's Action Plan on Youth addresses the issue of corporal punishment of under 18s and highlights states' obligation to prohibit and eliminate all corporal punishment.**

*The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children ([www.endcorporalpunishment.org](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org); [info@endcorporalpunishment.org](mailto:info@endcorporalpunishment.org)) aims to act as a catalyst for the prohibition and elimination of corporal punishment of under 18s across the world. Supporters of its aims include UNICEF, UNESCO and many other international and national organisations. The Global Initiative systematically briefs treaty monitoring bodies and the Human Rights Council on corporal punishment of under 18s.*