



## Caribbean Coalition for the Abolition of Corporal Punishment of Children

[www.endcorporalpunishmentcaribbean.org](http://www.endcorporalpunishmentcaribbean.org)

### Newsletter Issue 3 – August 2014

#### About the CCACPC

The Caribbean Coalition for the Abolition of Corporal Punishment of Children (CCACPC), formed in 2013, aims to speed the prohibition and elimination of corporal punishment of children across the Caribbean. Hazel Thompson-Ahye, based in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, is the part-time Coordinator for the Coalition.

This newsletter provides an update on developments, action and progress in the region and gives information about how the CCACPC can support work for prohibition of corporal punishment. Please send questions and comments to [hazel@endcorporalpunishmentcaribbean.org](mailto:hazel@endcorporalpunishmentcaribbean.org).

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#### 1 DEVELOPMENTS

##### CARICOM's work promotes prohibition

The tenth meeting of the CARICOM Task Force for Child Rights and Child Protection was held in Trinidad on 22-23 May 2014. CARICOM's framework for monitoring the implementation of the Regional Framework of Action for Children 2002-2015, which was reviewed at the meeting, includes "Member Countries adopt explicit legal prohibition of corporal punishment against children and adolescents in all settings" as a priority action for 2013-2015.

CARICOM was represented at a meeting of regional inter-governmental organisations which agreed to promote prohibition of corporal punishment of children. The Cross Regional Meeting for Advancing the Protection of

Children from Violence (30 June – 1 July 2014) was organized by the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children and hosted by the Government of Jamaica in cooperation with UNICEF. The [conclusions and recommendations](#) of the meeting state that representatives of the Caribbean Community, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Council of Europe, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the League of Arab States, MERCOSUR and the Latin-American and Caribbean Movement for Children have agreed to support the prevention and reduction of violence against young children, including through promoting law reform to ban all forms of violence against children including corporal punishment.

### **Barbados: Education Minister opposes school corporal punishment**

In June 2014, the Hon. Ronald Jones, Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation called for an end to physical punishment by teachers, in his address to the opening of teacher training courses at the Erdiston Teachers' Training College (*The Barbados Advocate*, 29 June 2014). The Minister has previously called for abolition of corporal punishment in schools.

### **Dominica: review of overall human rights record recommends prohibition**

In April/May 2014, Dominica's overall human rights record was reviewed at the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the Universal Periodic Review. During the review, the Government confirmed that corporal punishment is lawful in schools, and stated that efforts were being made to discourage its use. Three recommendations concerning corporal punishment were made, including one to "take appropriate legislative and administrative measures to combat domestic violence and physical ill-treatment against children, including the prohibition of the practice of corporal punishment". The Government has until September 2014 to respond, including to formally accept or reject the recommendations.

### **Guyana: new Education Bill does not prohibit corporal punishment**

In June 2014, the Education Bill 2014 was tabled in the National Assembly. The bill does not prohibit corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is not mentioned in guidelines on discipline, but the bill allows for the Minister to make regulations in relation to corporal punishment. [Forward Guyana](#) is working for prohibition.

### **Trinidad & Tobago: Government concerned about corporal punishment**

In April 2014, the Prime Minister reportedly stated that the State should take a more active role in protecting children at home and that legislation against parents assaulting their children could be considered (*Trinidad and Tobago Newsday*, 24 April 2014). Her comments were made in the context of media attention to the issue of violent punishment, after a woman posted a video online of herself beating her daughter. In a press release, the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development expressed concern about the video and advised parents that "there are different forms of discipline which should be considered when dealing with children", stating that it "strongly advocates the use of non-physical forms of discipline" (*Trinidad and Tobago Guardian*, 23 April 2014). The Children Act 2012 would prohibit corporal punishment in all settings except the family home but has not yet been brought into force.

### **St Lucia: Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends prohibition**

In June 2014, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child examined St Lucia's implementation of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child for the second time. In its concluding observations, the Committee regretted that some recommendations from its first examination of St Lucia in 2005 – including on corporal punishment – had not been fully addressed. It noted efforts to consult on school corporal punishment but expressed concern that it is still seen as a lawful way of disciplining children and is widely used in the family and other settings. The Committee recommended strengthening and expanding awareness raising on the issue, the promotion of non-violent parenting and education, and the amendment of legislation to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in the family, schools and institutions.

## **The global context: Brazil and Bolivia prohibit all corporal punishment; high-level conference promotes prohibition**

In June 2014, **Brazil**, with a child population of nearly 60 million, became the largest country in the world to achieve prohibition of all corporal punishment. Brazil's achievement raised the percentage of the global child population to be fully protected in law from all physical punishment from 5.5% to 8.2%. In July 2014, **Bolivia** prohibited all corporal punishment of children, becoming the sixth Latin American state to achieve prohibition. The two prohibitions bring the number of states worldwide which have prohibited all corporal punishment, including in the home, to 39.

On 3-4 June 2014, the Swedish Government hosted a **high-level conference** to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sweden's pioneering ban on all corporal punishment of children. The explicit purpose was to place the issue of a legal ban on all corporal punishment on the international political agenda and to encourage states to work together to accelerate reform. Austria has agreed to host a similar international conference in two years' time.

The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children prepared a special report for the conference, *Childhood free from corporal punishment – changing law and practice*. Packed with facts and figures on reform in all regions, the report is a celebration of progress to date and a call to action for all states to complete the process of law reform. It includes a new checklist of actions that can be taken by states collaboratively to work towards universal prohibition of violent punishment of children. A limited number of hard copies is available: email [info@endcorporalpunishment.org](mailto:info@endcorporalpunishment.org).

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## **2 PROMOTING ACTION**

### **National advocacy**

The CCACPC's Coordinator is writing to governments of states and territories across the Caribbean to introduce the Coalition and call on them to work for prohibition. **We are keen to make contact with individuals and organisations with an interest in the issue in any Caribbean state or territory, and encourage national actors to advocate for prohibition, including raising the issue with their governments in follow up to the CCACPC's initial advocacy. For more information on CCACPC advocacy in your state or territory, email [elinor@endcorporalpunishment.org](mailto:elinor@endcorporalpunishment.org).**

### **Using the international human rights system**

The obligation to prohibit and eliminate all corporal punishment of children is well-established in international law (more information on the [CCACPC website](#)). Recommendations to states from UN treaty bodies and under

the Universal Periodic Review add to the pressure on governments to work for prohibition. **The CCACPC is keen to support NGOs and national human rights institutions to contribute to the process and to use recommendations for advocacy. Contact [elinor@endcorporalpunishment.org](mailto:elinor@endcorporalpunishment.org) for more information.**

**Committee on the Rights of the Child:** The **Dominican Republic** and **Jamaica** will be examined in January 2015. Information should be submitted to the Committee as soon as possible. Further ahead, the list of issues for the examination of **Barbados** will be adopted in October 2015. Information should be submitted to the Committee by 1 July 2015.

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women:** The list of issues for the examination of **St Vincent and the Grenadines** will be adopted in November 2014. The deadline for submitting information is not available but guidelines suggest it should be submitted by 24 November 2014.

**Human Rights Committee:** The Committee will examine **Haiti's** implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in October 2014. Information should be submitted to the Committee by 12 September 2014.

**Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:** The list of issues for the examination of the **Dominican Republic** will be adopted in October 2014. Information should be submitted to the Committee as soon as possible.

**Universal Periodic Review:** **Jamaica** will be reviewed on its overall human rights record at the 22<sup>nd</sup> session in April/May 2015. Information should be submitted by 15 September 2014 (please note: this deadline has changed since our last newsletter). **St Lucia** and **St Kitts and Nevis** will be reviewed at the 23<sup>rd</sup> session in October/November 2015. Information should be submitted by 1 February 2015 (provisional deadline).

## How you can help the CCACPC

**Promote support for prohibition:** Encourage other organisations and individuals in your country or across the Caribbean to sign up to show their support of prohibition of all violent punishment of children on the CCACPC's [website](#).

**Send us information:** We welcome comments and updates on the information on our website and in our publications – including information on new or planned research, relevant legislation and current opportunities for reforming the law through new laws being drafted etc. Email [elinor@endcorporalpunishment.org](mailto:elinor@endcorporalpunishment.org).

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*“Slavery implanted many of those brutalities in our psyche, because to control, you brutalize... we who are the [descendants] generally of those who were dragged here, must not, cannot and should not ever resort to the same brutality of our children that our fore-parents had to go through... So in your techniques of so-called discipline eliminate anything that causes pain to the body or to the minds of our children. Eliminate it! Get rid of it completely!”*

The Hon. Ronald Jones, Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation of Barbados, June 2014 (*The Barbados Advocate*, 29 June 2014)

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*Note: The CCACPC is supported by the [Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children](#). This newsletter is being sent to all those across the region who have indicated their support for prohibition and elimination of all corporal punishment and others who we hope will be interested. To unsubscribe from future editions email [info@endcorporalpunishment.org](mailto:info@endcorporalpunishment.org).*