

**Expert Consultation on Effective Child sensitive counseling, complaint and reporting mechanisms**

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I am delighted to welcome you all to this Expert Consultation on Effective Child sensitive counseling, complaint and reporting mechanisms.

I would like to thank the OHCHR and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children for their support in organizing this consultation.

I would like to thank warmly all the high level experts coming from various backgrounds who are joining us today, and among them, many friends with whom I already had the opportunity and pleasure to work with.

I would to tell you how much I am happy to share these moments of exchange and debate with all of you who will be intense and productive and very helpful for the joined report that Marta Santos Pais and me are preparing effective and child-sensitive counseling, complaint and reporting mechanisms to which children can safely report incidents of violence, including sexual violence and exploitation

I'm not going to repeat what was told by the previous panelists but just recall and stress some points

1. I want to recall some commitments and recommendations

- that the establishment of child sensitive counselling, complaint and reporting mechanisms are an obligation under art. 4 CRC, irrespective of their form; General Comment no. 2 of the CRC sets out further elements of child sensitive complaint and reporting mechanism which is accessible to children.
- The UN Study on Violence against Children recommended the creation of accessible and child-friendly reporting systems and services. It recommended States to establish safe, well-publicized, confidential and accessible mechanisms for children, their representatives and others to report violence against children.
- the political commitments that were undertaken at the RIO Congress to States to establish by 2013 an effective and accessible system for reporting, follow up and support for child victims of sexual exploitation.
- The resolution A/HRC/RES/13/20 adopted by the Human Rights Council on 26 March 2010 entitled “Rights of the child: the fight against sexual violence against children” the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children who invited to report to the Council at its sixteenth session on effective and child-sensitive counseling, complaint and reporting mechanisms to which children can safely report incidents of violence, including sexual violence and exploitation

2. I want to stress some issues and challenges that we have to address during this consultation:

- How these mechanisms could be more accessible to all children, age appropriate, protecting their privacy and confidentiality?
- How enable the State, in cooperation with other actors, to monitor and follow up on instances of violations – to track trends, to protect child victims and to provide recourse to them?
- How such mechanisms should fully respect the rights of the child and offer children (and where appropriate, their families) the necessary protection without undue delay?
- How such mechanisms could be more child-sensitive, gender-sensitive and disability-sensitive, recognizing children as active subjects of right , taking children’s rights, interests and specific needs into account ?
- How these mechanisms could be more efficient, adapted to and focused on children’s needs, which respects their rights, including the rights to due process, to participation and to understanding the proceedings, to privacy and to integrity and dignity?
- How these mechanisms could be an integral part of the larger and integrated child protection system (intersectoral , multidisciplinary, approach..) ?

### 3. Regarding our joined report and it's added value :

- I recall that a number of reports and evaluations have been undertaken (eg by OHCHR, ongoing by UNICEF) in the past few years on existing child complaint mechanisms, and States Parties regularly report on progress relating to existing mechanisms to the CRC.
- To follow up on what has been said by my fellow panellists, the objective of the joint thematic report is to set an overview and to elaborate a form of tool for States parties and practitioners of the diverse spectrum of mechanisms and institutions, and to highlight good practices as well as challenges encountered in establishing and implementing child friendly complaint and reporting mechanisms, especially as regards the issues of (i) accessibility, (ii) protection, (iii) ensuring the confidentiality/privacy of child victims, efficiency of the mechanisms (iv) child participation We hope the report might fill some gaps in the ongoing assessment of such mechanisms. This report will be also an advocacy tool for the establishment of effective child sensitive counseling, complaint and reporting mechanisms
- We would thus like to hear from you, the experts, who work regularly and on the ground, with children and child victims, as we work together to ensure that mechanisms are practical and accessible (to children, without discrimination, across the territory), recalling that children are part of the system , actors and vectors of proposal. In this regard, I strongly echo Marta's emphasis on the value of child led initiatives.
- From the perspective of my mandate, I invite you to consider/cite examples of how your organization has dealt with violations related to sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography – good practices, challenges: trends you witness? What kinds of practices have worked well for you? Challenges in your work day to day? What improvements/recommendations would you have?

- *Just before concluding, I want to recall the Children Declaration to End Sexual Exploitation, done during the Rio Congress and these are some opinions and recommendations done by children :*

*“it is not enough to just give us a voice but you MUST listen. Listen to our calls for urgent action, listen to our experiences and most importantly listen to our solutions.*

*We ask for :*

- *Creating the office of ombudsman with regards to children’s rights in each country to ensure the full and effective implementation of children’s rights ;*
- *Reforming in all sectors to promote a more child friendly service, and efficient prevention, monitoring and handling of cases of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents;*
- *Establishing Child Protection Agencies and Centres in local communities to protect those that remain vulnerable to sexual exploitation”.*

In conclusion, I look forward to a fruitful discussion, with a focus on concrete and practical proposals that will enable us to move forward towards stronger promotion and protection of the effective child sensitive counseling, complaint and reporting mechanisms.

Once again , Many thanks for your participation and contributions