

United Network Of Young Peacebuilders

Patron: H.H. The Dalai Lama, Nobel Peace Prize Winner



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Sixteenth session

March 9th, 2011 (9:00-10:00)

Empowering Children to Transform Cultural Violence

Thank you, Mr. President.

It has been agreed that children should enjoy freedom from *all* forms of violence. Let us pay attention to the fact that the physical and emotional violence that is perpetrated against children is supported by the more subtle cultural violence that justifies or condones it.

This kind of violence is often unaddressed, while at the same time being an essential level to work on for lasting transformation. The establishment of mechanisms for redress after violence has been suffered is important. However, it is the empowerment of children and adults to transform violence in their own spheres of action that is the key to the sustainability of peace at all levels, including the intra- and interpersonal ones.

Last year marked the end of the Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)¹. The importance, relevance and efficacy of education for a culture of peace have been highlighted by the thousands of organizations promoting the Decade around the world.

Peace education is especially important so that children may have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that enable them to address violence. Children should, inter alia: have the ability to communicate their needs and seek support; understand and transform what is harmful to their emotional and physical health; be able to avoid the feelings of fear, isolation and helplessness; build trust and confidence in themselves and with others; and transform ostracism and retribution. This empowerment is essential for the transformation of violence against children; and it is possible through peace education.

The paradigm shift in the protection of children from violence is the empowerment of children and young people themselves. Peace education also recognizes the need to educate the adults, who take care of children and/or may be the perpetrators of violence against them. It is often through their lack of education or training that adults themselves become vehicles of violence for the children.

The Civil Society Report on the Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World² includes the following clear main recommendations:

1. Institutionalize peace education and infrastructures at all levels for conflict transformation and peacebuilding;
2. Support and engage youth and youth organizations;
3. Transform the violent models in the media and use technology to educate for peace;
4. Foster collaborations and partnerships among civil society, governments and the UN.

In order to make our collective efforts to transform violence against children sustainable, we ask the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children as well as Member States, UN agencies and NGOs to take these recommendations into account and to steadfastly promote the continued implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.³

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ UN General Assembly Resolution 53/25

² <http://decade-culture-of-peace.org>

³ UN General Assembly Resolution 53/243

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