

Statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children

Visit to the Maldives — 3–8 May 2013

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Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children

Male, Maldives — 8 May 2013

Opening Remarks

I am delighted to conclude this official visit to the Maldives, which has provided me with a valuable opportunity to learn first-hand about the situation of children in this country and to engage in frank and constructive dialogue with senior government officials, civil society organizations, and — most importantly — children themselves.

Achievements and Positive Steps

I commend the Government of the Maldives for important legislative and policy advances in child protection. The Family Law Act and the Child Rights Act provide a strong legal foundation. The establishment of the Child Rights Protection Authority demonstrates a serious commitment to mainstreaming child rights across all government functions.

Concerns

Despite these advances, violence against children remains a serious concern. Corporal punishment continues to be practised in the home and in schools. Sexual abuse, including within families, is underreported. Children in conflict with the law face conditions that do not meet international standards. I urge the Government to take urgent action to address these issues.

Recommendations

- Adopt and implement a comprehensive National Plan of Action to End Violence against Children.
 - Explicitly prohibit all forms of corporal punishment in all settings.
 - Strengthen child-sensitive complaint and reporting mechanisms.
 - Invest in training for professionals working with and for children.
 - Establish a child-friendly justice system in line with international standards.
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For further information, please contact the Office of the SRSG on Violence against Children.
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