

Key messages
ENDING CORPORAL AND OTHER FORMS OF HUMILIATING PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

03 November 2008

The Southern African Network To End Corporal And Humiliating Punishment Of Children has identified the following:

- There is a serious infringement on the human rights of children, particularly upon their right to dignity, physical integrity, and equal protection of the law and also their right to be protected from all forms of violence.
- In addition to slapping and smacking children are subjected to kicking and to beatings with fists, sjambocks, whips, sticks, hosepipes and belts. Children experience a range of other forms of physical and degrading punishment including that they are burnt, tied up, locked up, required to kneel on hard and uneven surfaces, pinched, forced to undertake excessive labour and to stand in the hot sun for long periods of time. This results in a range of injuries to children including fractures, loss of consciousness, burns and permanent disability.
- It is essential that domestic laws must be extended to reflect the necessity of providing protection to the most vulnerable and marginalised citizens.
- Corporal punishment can have serious psychological effects in that children feel humiliated and degraded and they become angry and resentful towards those who punish them this way. This leads to repressed anger which can be manifested in hatred towards themselves and others.
- Governments must provide for education and support to parents broadly in society as a preventative measure as well as an early intervention for parents using corporal punishment.
- The prosecution of parents is seldom in the best interest of the child and thus should only be instituted if it is in the child's best interest, where parents use corporal punishment there must be reliance on (early) intervention through child protection and diversions systems in these cases.
- Corporal punishment is linked with significant violence against/abuse of children and may perpetuate a culture of violence in many societies. Prohibition is an attempt to address this.

The Southern African Network To End Corporal And Humiliating Punishment Of Children would like to urge the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to:

- At its session in November 2008 adopt a written statement urging States in Africa to prohibit corporal and other forms of humiliating punishment of children in all settings and to urge States to promote measures to implement and promote this prohibition.
- Ensure that member States provide information on their progress in eradicating the use of corporal and other forms of humiliating punishment of children in all settings in their periodic reports.
- In the Committee's recommendations to individual member States, draw attention to measures that member States need to undertake to fulfil their obligations under international and African human rights instruments.

- Continue to urge individual members of the Committee to promote a ban on corporal punishment of children in their individual interactions with government officials and other relevant stakeholders.
- Support our position to fully address general societal violence and ensure that children are raised in homes and communities that instil a strong sense of self-discipline and an abiding respect for the rights and dignity of all.
- Support the recommendation in the *Africa Declaration on Violence Against Girls* for the African Union to establish a Special Envoy on Violence against Children to support the efforts of the Committee towards preventing, reporting and monitoring violence against children on the Continent.

END
