

press release

For immediate release

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Ending physical and humiliating punishment – new reports

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Save the Children Sweden has seized the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children as an opportunity to seek relevant information that could increase insight and provoke interest on the deep rooted practice of physical and humiliating punishment of children in various countries including Ethiopia.

The studies undertaken in Uganda, Sudan Kenya, and Ethiopia revealed that the prevalence and the magnitude of the problem of physical and humiliating punishment in those countries very alarmingly are high. Almost all children who were involved in the study as respondents confirmed that they had been subjected to various forms of PHP with varying degree of impact on their quality of life.

Most children interviewed disclosed that after physical and humiliating punishment administered on them, they had gone through very unpleasant experiences among others feeling of hatred to the person committing the act, revenge, hating oneself, loosing respect, etc. Above all, quite a large number of respondents affirmed that they have now learnt more violent means as accepted way of dealing with society unapproved behaviors. Amongst measures recommended to effectively end PHP, the following have been strongly expressed by various actors including children:

- Banning of (PHP) corporal punishment by the government in all learning institutions and all other settings.
- Taking into account the prevalence of physical and psychological punishment, existing interventions aimed at awareness-raising are not comprehensive and effective enough in addressing the problem. As the problem is very much one of deep-rooted culture and tradition, the necessary change may not materialize through simply introducing the idea of children's rights in the community.
- As a component of enforcing the existing laws protecting children, practical works need to be carried out aimed at increasing the reporting of violent acts against children.
- Effective enforcement of existing laws.
- Enhance the participation of children at all levels and promote the culture of good communication or interaction with children with effective, systematic and sustainable mechanisms being established.
- Promoting non-violent ways of disciplining.

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Save the Children Sweden started working in Eastern and Central Africa in 1965. It has offices in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Nairobi, Kenya; and Khartoum, Sudan. Save the Children Sweden has long-term child-rights based development programs in Ethiopia and Sudan, and it supports local partners in Kenya, Eritrea, Somaliland and Uganda.

The organisation focuses on building the capacity of local people, community-based structures and organisations. In Eastern and Central Africa, it works with more than forty different non-governmental organisations and government bodies. In addition, it has adopted a direct implementation approach in southern Sudan and the refugee camps of western Ethiopia. All of the work in the region focuses on children's rights, and tackles issues that affect marginalised children. The core of the work focuses on children affected by conflict, discrimination, abuse, exploitation, and HIV/AIDS. Save the Children Sweden's focus also includes education, child participation and good governance in the best interest of the child.

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