



**Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 17th Session,
Vienna, Austria, 14-18 April 2008**

**Oral Statement on behalf of members of the
Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice (IPJJ)**

Madame/Mister President,

Distinguished members of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice,

Thank you for giving me the floor on behalf of the following members of the Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice: Defence for Children International (DCI), the International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates (IAYFJM), the International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJO), Penal Reform International (PRI), Terre des hommes Foundation (Tdh), the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

1. The Panel was established following Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 1997/30 that called for a "coordination panel on technical advice and assistance in juvenile justice." It is currently composed of thirteen members, including United Nations agencies and non-governmental organisations, active in child justice reform.

2. The work of the Panel is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular articles 37 and 40 thereof, and other relevant United Nations standards and norms.¹

Child Justice Reform

3. We would like to recall ECOSOC resolution 2007/23 entitled *Supporting national efforts for child justice reform, in particular through technical assistance and improved United Nations system-wide coordination* adopted on 26 July 2007 at the suggestion of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its 16th Session.

4. We would like to reiterate the resolution's invitation to Member States to adopt comprehensive national action plans on crime prevention and child justice reform containing, in particular, specific targets with regard to reducing the pre-trial detention and imprisonment of children, including through the use of diversion, restorative justice and alternatives to imprisonment and ensuring that proper detention conditions prevail.

¹ Including, amongst others: the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules); the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (JDLs); the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines); the Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No.10 (2007) "Children's rights in juvenile justice" and the Vienna Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System (Vienna Guidelines).



5. We would also like to welcome the resolution's explicit support for the work of the Panel and its members, including the Panel website, the Panel publication *Protecting the rights of children in conflict with the law* (2006) and the UNICEF/UNODC *Manual for the Measurement of Juvenile Justice Indicators* (2007).

6. In this respect, we would like to inform the Commission that since May 2007 the Panel has sought to increase its cooperation and effectiveness on juvenile justice by establishing a permanent Secretariat based in Geneva. The Secretariat has sought to develop and strengthen the work of the Panel, including by: increasing cooperation and visibility of the issue through outreach to members at the international, regional and country level; making information, tools and resources available on juvenile justice, notably through the Panel website in English, French and Spanish (www.juvenilejusticepanel.org) and a monthly electronic newsletter (www.juvenilejusticepanel.org/en/newsletter); developing common tools to strengthen technical assistance, including a roster of juvenile justice experts; and sharing requests for technical advice and assistance in the area of child justice amongst members. We encourage Member States to make use of the Panel and its tools and to share their own good practices with the Panel Secretariat.

Violence against Children in Conflict with the Law

7. According to article 37 of the CRC, the arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child should only be used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time. We are concerned that an estimated 1, 1 million children worldwide are deprived of their liberty, of which 59% are in pre-trial detention.²

8. Although prohibited by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), we are strongly concerned that some countries still impose the death penalty for crimes committed by children under 18. We are also strongly concerned that corporal punishment and life imprisonment continues to be used by countries as a sentence for crimes committed by children. We call on all Member States to abolish such sentences and to comply with their obligations under international law.

9. In this respect, we would like to recall the recommendations in the *Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children* (2006) (A/61/299) and the *World Report on Violence against Children* (2006). In particular, we call on Member States to implement all of the recommendations for the protection of children in conflict with the law against violence, including the specific recommendations concerning the reduction of detention, legal reform, registration and collection of data, and the establishment of child-focused juvenile justice systems, as well as those relating to: the regular assessment of placements; ensuring effective complaints, investigation and enforcement mechanisms; ensuring that children are aware of their rights and can access the mechanisms in place to protect these rights; ensuring effective monitoring and access to all places where children in conflict with the law may be held; and the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

² UNICEF, 2008



10. We would also like to welcome the UN General Assembly resolution on the *Rights of the Child* adopted on 16 November 2007 (A/RES/62/141) that requests the UN Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative on violence against children for a period of three years. In this regard, we invite Member States to collaborate in the follow-up to the recommendations of the UN Study and to support the work of the Special Representative who will soon be appointed.

Thank you.