

# Lahore Declaration On Child Rights 2017

---

*First South Asia Regional Conference on Child Rights and 12th National Child Rights Conference of PPA; 15- 17th November 2017*

## **General declaration**

We, the representatives of educational institutions, media, professional bodies, organizations of children and other non-governmental organizations from Pakistan and across the world and representatives of the Government of the Punjab, Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Gilgit Baltistan and Federal, in total more than 1000 delegates participated in the First South Asia Regional Conference on Child Rights and 12th National Child Rights Conference of PPA and its pre- and post-conference events , from 15- 17th November 2017 at University of Lahore, Lahore, Pakistan.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the organizers of the Conference 2017: PAHCHAAN, Child Rights Department UOL, Pakistan Pediatric Association - Child Rights Committee, University of Lahore in collaboration with the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN), Pakistan Pediatric Association Punjab, Punjab Higher Education Commission, VCAN student society for their hard work in making the Conference successful.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that a child is anyone below the age of 18 and has survival, protection, developmental and participation rights.

We reaffirm our commitment to work together in accordance with the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Child and Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030. During the course of this conference we focused on the theme:

## **"Promoting and defending child rights in South Asia:**

*...with the following sub themes*

---

- a) Rights based programming
- b) Children in Disasters
- c) Managing abused and neglected children
- d) Diversity and children with special needs
- e) Preventing maltreatment in schools
- f) Children in Institutional Care
- g) Promoting positive parenting
- h) Preventive health as a right of the child
- i) Legal frameworks for children
- j) Online safety and role of media
- k) Investing in children: Resource mobilization

# Lahore Declaration On Child Rights 2017

---

## *We agreed on the following recommendations:*

---

- a) A human and child rights approach along with public health approach towards planning, programming, policy development and legislation for children should be taken; ensuring non-discrimination and equality, participation and inclusion, universality and indivisibility and the best interests of the child.
- b) The state should respect, protect and fulfill the rights of children and must take positive measures to do so. Civil society, professional bodies and key stake holders should play an important role in promoting children's rights via awareness, research and advocacy and hold the state accountable for their actions.
- c) Research with children should follow ethical principles. Data on the situation of children in this region is urgently required to identify priorities for interventions.
- d) Child rights education should be provided at school, college and university level. It should be incorporated in the curriculum and should be taught according to the age of pupil.
- e) To promote and protect children, coordination and cooperation of the state with civil society and with human rights defenders should be strengthened. The civil society should be given space to voice their concerns and advocate for child rights.
- f) We call upon all governments to take the necessary actions to eliminate child labor, exploitation of children and prevent all forms of violence against children.

## **Children in Disasters**

Children and families who have survived disasters or violence and/or are on the move require special attention. Policy and programs should address the growing concerns for children affected by exposure to violence, political violence and disasters, being on the move and provide health & psycho-social assistance to them case by case, in a short and long term manner.

## **Managing abused and neglected children**

- I. All professionals working with children (health, social, educational and law enforcement) should be trained to identify and manage cases of child maltreatment and violence. Training on child abuse and neglect should be integrated into the existing pre-service curricula for all professionals whose future work will bring them into contact with children and families.
- II. All health care settings should have a child protection unit, acting as a referral point for the management and reporting of child abuse and neglect cases, and providing psychological, social, medical and legal help to victims.

# Lahore Declaration On Child Rights 2017

---

## **Diversity and children with special needs**

The wider education system should be made free, compulsory and inclusive by providing equitable, quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities. Support should be provided to schools, teachers and families in order to achieve relevant and effective learning outcomes of education for all. Teacher education curricula should be refurbished to align it with the inclusive philosophy.

## **Preventing maltreatment in schools**

To provide an enabling environment for learning, schools must eliminate discriminatory practices and discipline practices that involve physical and/or mental violence. Teachers should be qualified, sensitized and trained to be able to use alternative, non-violent forms of disciplining children. In all schools a comprehensive child protection policy should be adopted and fully implemented.

## **Children in Institutional Care**

Alternative care systems, small-scale institutions, standard operating procedures and reporting mechanisms must be developed by the state. Orphanages, shelter and temporary centers should be inspected and monitored by the state.

## **Promoting positive parenting**

Positive parenting and caretaker programs and campaigns should be implemented. All those working with children and families should be trained in how to support parents responsibility to provide guidance for their children in non-violent ways.

## **Preventive health as a right of the child**

All children have the right to quality preventive and curative care. Furthermore all states must actively promote and protect breastfeeding as well as all evidence based policies and actions aiming to protect women and children's survival, health and wellbeing.

## **Legal frameworks for children**

Child rights and child protection related laws should be in line with international convention for the rights of the child and its optional protocols. They should be made a part of the curriculum for lawyers, judicial officers and law enforcement agency workers. There should be harmonization of all laws that affect children, specific courts to deal with children in conflict with law that are separate from adult courts, availability of borstal homes for children and young people aged under 18 years, psycho-social rehabilitation centers for these children and quality legal representation of children at state expense should be ensured.

# Lahore Declaration On Child Rights 2017

---

## **Online safety and role of media**

- I. We call upon all government to review all legislation relating to the safety of children online and to ensure that this provides the maximum protection to children in cyberspace, including all points of access to the internet. This includes responding to allegations of exposure of children to pornography or the involvement of children in the making of pornography, the appropriate protection of the materials involved in order to protect the child from embarrassment and shame, and to ensure the greatest protection of children who are testifying in court.
- II. We request all Departments of Education to ensure that where internet access is provided in the school environment, teachers and scholars are provided with training on the potential benefits and risks of access and that a school policy is developed to support safe internet use.
- III. We call upon the providers of all hardware that facilitates internet access to place in the packaging of such hardware, information underlying the importance of safe internet access for children and for parents, caregivers and teachers to be alerted to programmes that can be downloaded from the internet to block content unsuitable for children.
- IV. Media should ensure sensitive reporting on children matters and vulnerable children should be protected from exposure by the media.

## **Investing in children**

- I. In implementing the different strategies of Agenda 2030, all States must associate youth and children in a meaningful way all along the process.
- II. Specific budget must be allocated to provide services to children and their families.

*(Presented and unanimously adopted in the First South Asia Regional Conference on Child Rights & 12th National Child Rights Conference of Pakistan Pediatric Association on 15- 17th November 2017 Lahore)*