



Third Committee – Draft Joint Statement

Agenda Item 69

Promotion and protection of the rights of children

New York, 10 Octobre 2017

Joint Declaration by Austria and Switzerland

Thank you Mr. President

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Austria and my own country Switzerland.

We thank the Independent Expert Professor Manfred Nowak for his ongoing dedication to his mandate as lead author of the Global study on children deprived of liberty and for engaging with Member States in the Third Committee today.

In December 2014, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/157, inviting the Secretary General to commission an in-depth Global study on children deprived of liberty. Austria and Switzerland both supported this resolution and welcomed your nomination, Professor Manfred Nowak, to lead this study.

First of all, we would like to thank Mr. Nowak for the work he has undertaken until now as independent expert entrusted with leading the study. We are encouraged by the support he receives from a number of stakeholders, in particular from civil society. The UN Task Force on the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty plays a key role in developing the study and we call upon them to continue to step up their efforts to make the study a reality.

Depriving a child of liberty is not only a serious threat to its fundamental rights, but also a threat to society at large. Children behind bars are often children on the move, migrants, homeless, mentally ill or imprisoned as a result of external factors like poverty, parental condition, conflict. They are especially vulnerable to different forms of abuse and violence, including psychological violence, rape, torture, ill-treatment. For all these reasons, children deprived of liberty require the attention of the States.

Currently, there is a lack of data on the number, the circumstances and the conditions of children deprived of liberty. Sadly, there is a blind spot concerning children deprived of liberty, walled up in silence, without access to education or justice. Their number is not known and the conditions in which they are detained neither.

The Global study on children deprived of liberty aims at gathering data, broadening our knowledge as a basis for better informed policy decisions and coordinated action to advance the rights of children worldwide.

Austria and Switzerland already pledged to financially support the Global study. We are deeply concerned to hear that the study's viability will be seriously impacted without more financial support from Members States and other stakeholders, including UN agencies. We therefore encourage all Member States and agencies to consider supporting the study. If we don't find ways to address the issue of children deprived of liberty, we will fail to ensure a brighter future for the millions of children and generations to come. We need to seize this opportunity and are calling for joint and determined action now.

Professor Nowak, against the backdrop of the information you have researched so far, how do you assess the overall relevance and possible impact of the study? Is there a strategy to "reframe" the Global study if the initial financial requirements are not met?

Thank you.