Road book:
National preparatory sessions
CONTEXT

Today, the futures of the one billion children affected by violence hang in the balance. Building on the hard-won progress of the field in recent years, it is now critical to re-set collective ambitions for the next stage of action; to realise the Agenda 2030 commitment for every child to live free from violence. In a competitive policy space, we need to generate increased incentive to act and to prove prevention is possible - making a compelling case for the urgency of action and the jeopardy of inaction.

THE CONFERENCE

The Global Ministerial Conference on ending violence against children being hosted 7-8 November 2024 in Bogota under the leadership of the governments of Colombia and Sweden will signal a shift, representing a high-level policy moment. Delivered successfully, a first-ever international mobilisation of Ministers mandated to lead on the prevention of violence against children will lock-in significantly enhanced commitments to child protection.

This will be an ambitious, inclusive, ‘positively disruptive’ Conference, that shifts the expectation of action on VAC. **Proposed Ministerial Conference outcomes** may include:

- Revitalize country commitments for preventing and ending violence against children (building on existing efforts, including those through CRC, UPR and INSPIRE)
- Announce renewed collective child protection member state-led initiative (‘Pathfinders 2.0’)
- Launch of a first-ever child/youth-led, movement dedicated to child violence prevention (building from 2024 exploratory process)
- Agree an inter-governmentally consulted Declaration (possibly calling for Decade of Action)
- Host additional high ambition convenings on issues relating to ending violence against children

Practically, the Conference will offer the opportunity for mandated ministries, and non-governmental allies, to share lessons learned around implementation and define ways to scale up proven strategies.

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1 Note May 2021 WHA VAC resolution recommendation (OP.1): “to establish an inter-ministerial coordination process to prevent and eliminate VAC... with support from the highest levels of government”. There is ample UN precedent for ‘inter-ministerial coordination processes’ that convene tens of different national governments.
MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE PARTNERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundational Partners</th>
<th>Government of Colombia, Government of Sweden, UN SRSG VAC, UNICEF and WHO</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member State Partners</td>
<td>Friends of Conference (FOC): Zimbabwe, Cote D’Ivoire, Kenya, Jordan, Sweden, Georgia, UK, Colombia, Brazil, Jamaica, USA, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting Partners</td>
<td>FOC member states, the Brave Movement, ISPCAN and Joining Forces</td>
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<td>National CSO and multisectoral VAC working groups</td>
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<td>National champions/advocates</td>
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<td>Youth and Survivor groups</td>
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<td>Philanthropic organisations</td>
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<td>Media</td>
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NATIONAL MINISTERIAL PREPARATORY SESSIONS (NPS)

CONTEXT

National Preparatory Sessions are an important and concrete contribution to the Ministerial Conference – maximizing the level and likelihood of commitment to child protection.

All 193 member states have received an official invitation to attend the Ministerial Conference. We encourage all member states to undertake preparatory efforts to determine their progress and additional commitment to ending violence against children. A sub-set of governments – identified as potential ‘Pathfinder+’ (who have proven commitment to the issue and shown propensity to implement policy and practice change at national level) will be invited to deliver a National Ministerial Preparatory Session, as part of the official pre-Ministerial process.

These NPS should be convened by the senior Government focal point (ideally the Minister/Ministry mandated on VAC and likely to attend the Ministerial), with support from WHO and/or UNICEF country office.
OBJECTIVES

National Preparatory Sessions are intended to deliver three key objectives:

1. **To consider and capture the national VAC story:** To achieve consensus amongst attendees on key areas of national progress as well as priorities in scaling up evidence-based strategies to end violence against children, as informed by the Global Status Report and latest data available at country level. Practically, this will result in identification of the national success story to be showcased at the Ministerial (including evidencing that prevention is possible) and short-listing of key actions necessary to scale up priority programmes in line with National Action Plans and/or INSPIRE.

2. **To agree on an enhanced national commitment to VAC:** To collectively explore and agree on a transformative commitment to VAC, to be announced at the Ministerial. It is expected that this statement of commitment (inclusive of indicative political and financial details) will be signed off, and presented, at Ministerial level at the Conference. These commitments will be coherent with, and additional to, those developed through relevant past processes such as those related to the Solutions Summits of 2018 and 2020 of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.

3. **To initiate discussions on a re-invigorated member State led- initiative to end violence against children - "Pathfinding 2.0":** To explore appetite to work with other Pathfinder governments towards the announcement of a re-commitment to a collective member-state-led initiative at the Ministerial. Practically, at the NPS feedback will be obtained on the concept and governance of Pathfinding 2.0, and the readiness of senior Government focal points to participate in this mechanism will be assessed (https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/content/pathfinding-countries).

PARTICIPANTS

In each country, the NPS is likely to represent the official, dedicated, cross-departmental preparation effort in advance of the Ministerial. It is therefore critical that the attendees of the Session are politically senior enough to shape and sign-off the objectives /outcomes (to rapidly stock-take on national success story and next steps as well as clarify enhanced commitment).

- The national government focal point for ending violence against children should officially convene the NPS and establish the list of participants. It is envisaged that the session will be attended by senior representatives from all Ministries/Departments engaged in child protection and violence against children. This will vary by country but is likely to include: the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Finance.
It is recommended that strategic partners and stakeholders who contribute to child protection have the opportunity to contribute to the preparatory process for the Ministerial Conference. It is the prerogative of the member state to determine whether this equates to, for example, members of the national CSO stakeholder platform participating in elements of the NPS, and/or complementary dialogues to contribute to pre-Conference preparedness. An open and inclusive approach – that is responsive to the perspectives of CSOs, survivors, children, and young people, is strongly encouraged for all National Preparatory Sessions. Likewise, governments are encouraged to have civil society representation in their delegation to the Ministerial Conference.

Further, to enhance communication and impact of the national story of success, and commitment to further action, NPS hosts may consider engaging the media. This is likely most strategic after the Session – to capture the outcomes of the discussion and/or in the run-up to the Ministerial Conference, to drive attention to the efforts of the government.

PRACTICALITIES/MODALITIES

The National Preparatory Sessions should be in-person events, convened by the national government focal point. If requested, the preparation and hosting of the session can be administratively supported by WHO/UNICEF (HQ or Country Office staff).

The total time needed for the NPS is estimated at 4-6 hours, plus the time required for preparation and follow-up.

Complementary to the NPS - to elevate the level and likelihood of commitment – it is hoped that the following activity will also be delivered in ‘Pathfinder+’ countries:

- Bi-lateral meeting with line Minister responsible for child protection, and Minister of Health
- Meeting with Civil Society Forum and partners focused on ending violence against children
- Meeting with key in-country donors investing in the prevention of violence against children
- Mobilising journalists to brief on Ministerial and national success story
PROCESS AND REPORTING

Attached is an NPS template agenda for member states to use as the basis for in-country dialogue. The expectation is that each Session will result in two written outputs:

- A clear, compelling ‘story of success’ highlighting the efforts and progress that the member state has made since 2015 in preventing/reducing violence against children. This should be captured in short form (no more than 500 words) and positively profile how the government – and potentially strategic partners – have made a concerted effort on child protection. The story should reference specific initiatives and commitments made and be presented in an easily accessible style. These stories will feature throughout the Ministerial Conference, recognizing champions and demonstrating that ‘prevention is possible’.

- A specific, measurable and actionable pledge that represents an enhanced concrete national commitment to ending violence against children. The Ministerial Conference represents a pledging platform for governments, non-governmental actors, and donors to drive a step-change in support for SDG 16.2 (ending all forms of violence against children). Each Ministerial delegation attending the Conference will be allocated a high profile to announce, and be recognized for, their enhanced commitment. An example commitment statement is included in the annex of this document.

PLEDGING GUIDANCE

A high-quality pledge is:

- New or additional - meaning that the pledge is not announcing a commitment already made
- Quantifiable – providing, where possible, an implementation timeline and detail on the activities and beneficiaries
- Needs-driven – aligning with the thematic priorities for pledges detailed below
- Measurable – within a specific time period

Further considerations in developing commitment pledges:

- Individual or joint pledges – member states and other stakeholders may announce individual or joint pledges
- Consultation with stakeholders – member states are encouraged to engage with stakeholders to ensure the pledge is appropriate, accessible, and inclusive
- Pledge implementation plan – member states are encouraged to develop pledge implementation plans outlining the steps, timeline, budget, ministerial line leadership and partners required
Pledging priorities

All pledges that contribute to the prevention or reduction of violence against children are welcome. To provide a strategic focus and maximise the impact of the Ministerial Conference, pledges are specifically encouraged to scale-up of proven INSPIRE strategies:

Implementation and Enforcement of Laws
  - Example potential pledge: The government of [country] commits by [year] to introduce legislation to prohibit corporal punishment of all children in all settings (the home, schools, and alternative care)

Norms and values
  - Example potential pledge: The government of [country] commits by [year] to strengthen norms and values that support non-violent and gender-equitable relationships.

Safe Environments
  - Example potential pledge: The government of [country] commits by [year] to create safe physical and online environments where children and youth spend time

Parent and caregiver support
  - Example potential pledge: The government of [country] commits to ensuring the provision of 12 parenting support classes to all new parents by [year]

Income and economic strengthening
  - Example potential pledge: The government of [country] commits to improving family economic security alongside parent and caregiver support programs.

Response and support services
  - Example potential pledge: The government of [country] commits to establishing a multidisciplinary team in each province/district to deliver child a continuum of child centered, gender-sensitive services to victims-survivors of sexual violence (including technology-facilitated) by [date]

Education and life skills
  - Example potential pledge: The government of [country] commits to the integration of positive discipline and anti-bullying curriculum in pre-service and in-service training of all teachers by [year].

Governments are invited to make ambitious pledges to a singular thematic priority or to announce a pledge that locks in a commitment to the implementation of any number of INSPIRE strategies.
Establishing or strengthening existing integrated child protection systems.

An integrated child protection system is how all duty-bearers (e.g. law enforcement, judicial authorities, immigration authorities, social services, child protection agencies, education and health care, but also civil society, community, family, caregivers and legal representatives) and system components (e.g. laws, policies, resources, procedures, processes, sub-systems) work together across sectors and agencies, sharing responsibilities to form a protective and empowering environment for all children. Such an integrated approach:

- is resilient and flexible enough to respond to a variety of situations an individual encounters
- starts from the children’s needs in different environments (home, school, community, online)
- includes prevention, early identification, judicial intervention, as well as human and financial resources, governance structures, coordination, and multi-disciplinarity
- considers how the professionals need to work collaboratively and be sufficiently trained
- includes children in planning, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs

Collective pledging

In addition to individual member state commitments, the Ministerial Conference will look to deliver two additional collectively consulted/agreed outcomes; a Political Declaration and a re-imagined member state-led child protection initiative ‘Pathfinders 2.0’.

Political Declaration - Modalities for a collectively consulted Outcome Declaration are currently being determined. The process will ensure a broadly agreed statement of intent – capturing the headlines of the Ministerial Conference and the ambition to drive towards delivery of SDG 16.2 – ending all forms of violence against children.

‘Pathfinders 2.0’ - Additionally, member states are invited to consider committing to become a foundational member of a re-imagined collective member state-led initiative on ending violence against children. This will build upon the hard-won progress of the Pathfinders international effort of recent years and accelerate the level of ambition, pace and progress at the mid-point to the SDG deadline. Led by the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative on Ending Violence Against Children (UNSRSG), an engagement process is currently underway to explore the objectives, governance and institutional readiness with existing and potential Pathfinder+ governments. It is envisaged that one of the major announcements of the Ministerial Conference will be the launch of a re-imagined Pathfinders initiative (Pathfinders 2.0), globally profiling the member states who will lead this effort alongside the UNSRSG and key partners.
NATIONAL PREPARATORY SESSION – INDICATIVE AGENDA

Participants:
c. 20-25 cross Ministerial representatives (political level)
Duration:
c. 5 hours – including working lunch ‘listening session’ with CSO and child stakeholders

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AM

1. Opening Session (30 minutes)
   o Welcome and grounding exercise
   o Introduction of participants
   o Briefing on Global Ministerial Conference and Pathfinder 2.0

2. Story of success (2 hours)
   o Review of Global Status Report profile
   o In-country, independent ministries perspectives on progress towards achievement of SDG 16.2 – what has worked and why?
   o Round table discussion with Ministries/sectoral representatives
   o Discussion to agree achievements – what is the success story government of X will share?

LUNCH
(Safe and meaningful ‘listening session’ with children, survivors & CSO to share their perspectives/priorities for Ministerial)

PM

3. Taking a transformative step (1.5 hours)
   o Visioning what it would look and feel like to be a country free from violence against children (inc. bottlenecks)
   o What is the biggest and best step that government X, as a Pathfinder+ can take to realise that vision?
   o Politically, and practically, what needs to be done to lock-in that commitment at the Ministerial?
   o Beyond domestic commitment, explore appetite for stepping up as a global leader on VAC
   o Agree top-line commitment to announce at Ministerial (actionable and measurable by government institutions)

4. Close (summary of story of success and indicative enhanced commitment)

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EXAMPLE INVITATION LETTER

9th February, 2024

Dr. Olive Sentumbwe
WHO UGANDA

NOMINATION TO THE TECHNICAL RESOURCE COMMITTEE FOR THE GLOBAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN SCHEDULED ON 6th – 7th NOVEMBER, 2024 IN BOGOTA COLOMBIA

I bring you warm greetings from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

The Government of Colombia and Sweden, in partnership with WHO, UNICEF and the UN Representative of the Secretary General on ending Violence Against Children, are organizing a Global Conference on Ending Violence Against Children on 6th – 7th November, 2024 in Bogota Colombia.

As you are all aware, Uganda has a long track record of working towards advancing evidence-based prevention of Violence Against Children online, in the homes, schools and communities by among others strengthening the social service workforce through the para-social workers model.

Given the crucial role that your organization plays in the prevention and response to Violence Against Children, the Ministry hereby appoints you to this Technical Resource Committee with the following Terms of Reference;

1. Prepare an expression of interest for Uganda to participate in this first Global Ministerial Conference to end Violence Against Children.
2. Organise the National Multi-Stakeholder Meeting to generate Uganda’s VAC Story which will be shared in Bogota Colombia.

The Ministry will have the first preparatory meeting on 28th February 2024, in the Ministry Main Boardroom on Floor 8 starting at 9:00 am – 12 noon.

Please contact Ms. Lydia Wasula, the Principal Probation and Welfare Officer/VAC Focal Person for further information on Email; lydia.wasula@gmail.com or Tel; 0772-340910

The Ministry looks forward to your continued support and collaboration.

James Ebitu
For: PERMANENT SECRETARY
### EXAMPLE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

#### ORGANIZATION

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Organization</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry of women and social affairs (state Minister and coordinator)</td>
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<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
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<td>Professional associations</td>
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<td>Religious Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitators (national and international)</td>
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