

Corporal Punishment Press Conference, 1 June 2018

At the conclusion of this two-day High Level Conference on the Universal Prohibition of Corporal Punishment, let me once again, express my gratitude, to the team at my Office; the team at my Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society; and to our collaborators, the Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion.

Please permit me to also thank our distinguished keynote speakers and panelists, for making this conference such an enriching and fruitful experience.

In particular, I must acknowledge the contributions of Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children; Virginia Gamba, United Nations Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict; Regina Jensdottir, Head of Division and Programme Coordinator for Children's Rights in the Council of Europe; and Caterina Chinnici, co-chairperson of the European Parliament Intergroup on Children's Rights.

I am truly proud of what we have achieved, by working together to create a space for dialogue; a space for sharing; and a space for us to move forward and take practical action.

We are not only highlighting the universal prohibition of corporal punishment. Most importantly, we are promoting the intrinsic dignity of each and every child.

Let me also say that I have been so inspired, by the contributions of all the participating delegates, who have joined us from so many countries around the world.

Malta's decision to host this third edition of the Conference reflects our country's aspirations to promote, to protect, and to prioritise children's rights.

In this context, let me reiterate our commitment to support the next edition of this Conference, which will take place in another Mediterranean country, in Tunisia, in 2020.

I would like to hereby declare that we are ready to make our expertise and our experiences available to our Tunisian friends, sharing best practices to organise the next conference, in the best interests of children and their rights.

The presence of so many delegates from countries all over the world, during these global conferences, is sending a powerful message.

We are giving further visibility to the importance of a zero-tolerance approach, when it comes to all forms of violence against children, whether that violence is physical, psychological, sexual, or emotional.

Let me also take this opportunity to commend the National Statements, expressed by the various delegations, on behalf of their countries. These statements express our united desire to improve the ways in which our countries protect and safeguard children.

Let me also celebrate the contribution which was made by Maltese and Gozitan children. Through the work of my Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, we have ensured that the participation of children was kept high on the agenda.

Furthermore, the fact that so many national delegations have signed the Declaration of Support, to prohibit corporal punishment in all its settings, is sending an even stronger and

more powerful message, about our united commitment to keep this issue on the global agenda.

We must take effective action, to ensure there is no ambiguity about the negative and far-reaching effects of corporal punishment on our families, communities, and societies.

We must promote strong and supportive policies for positive parenting, to ensure that caregivers exercise discipline in dignified, respectful, and non-violent ways.

Finally, we must continue to raise awareness about the rights of each and every child, first and foremost, amongst our children themselves.

All our children must feel empowered to access and enjoy their rights, and to know that they have the space and the opportunity to share their experiences.

Children are the experts on childhood, and their voices must be heard by our politicians, legislators, policy-makers, and activists.

It is only in this way, by working together, that we can continue along our journey to achieve the universal prohibition of corporal punishment, for the benefit of all our societies and our nations.

Thank you.