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UN envoy backs 'World Day' to stop violence against children



19 November 2010 – A global initiative to protect children from abuse and violence has received the support of the United Nations envoy dealing with the issue, who stressed that much more needs to be done to safeguard millions of young people around the world.

In a message delivered in Geneva on the anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Marta Santos Pais expressed support for adopting 19 November as a World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Violence against Children.

“Violence against children remains hidden and socially accepted, and it has a serious and lifelong impact on the lives of children, compromising their physical and emotional health, development and education,” said Ms. Pais, who is the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children.

“This anniversary reminds us that much more need to be done and prevention is crucial in protecting children from violence in all its forms.”

She said that violence and abuse remain difficult to survey because of their sensitive nature, despite existing international standards.

The Special Representative highlighted three critical goals which she will be pursuing, which are the development of national comprehensive strategies against violence worldwide, a global legal

ban on violence against children, and the promotion of a national data collection system and research agenda.

In spite of the challenges, Ms. Pais also noted some positive developments, including the fact that various countries have built significant legal prohibitions on violence against children.

“At present, 29 countries have a comprehensive and explicit legal ban on all forms of violence against children,” she said.

“Several countries have reinforced their legislation to address specific forms of violence and to protect children from ill treatment and abuse in schools, from child trafficking and sexual exploitation, as well as harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and early and forced marriage.”

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