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Children Demand World Leaders Free Them From Violence and Exploitation

Richmond, Va., Sept. 26, 2013 – Member organizations of the ChildFund Alliance believe a focus on child protection can foster a global mindset that prioritizes and protects children. To this end, the Alliance is working hard to ensure that child protection appears among the global priorities that will follow the Millennium Development Goals for reducing poverty worldwide.

ChildFund Alliance’s global campaign “Free From Violence” (www.freefromviolence.org) has been set up to advocate to governments for the inclusion of the prevention of violence and exploitation of children as one of the development priorities in the post-2015 agenda and to raise awareness at all levels of these issues.

The Alliance also asked the children on whose behalf it is acting about their views on violence and exploitation. It turns out they have much to add to the conversation. The ChildFund Alliance conducted 50 focus groups of more than 1,300 children from 41 of the 58 countries where Alliance member organizations, including ChildFund International, serve children. The subject was their experiences of violence and exploitation and what it means to be free of those.

The children made it clear that they want to be heard. Too many of them experience violence and exploitation that children should never have to — the most often-cited forms were sexual violence, exploitative labor conditions and physical and humiliating punishment. They know such treatment is not right, and they often feel powerless against it, even in school, where sexual harassment and corporal punishment are everyday occurrences in many communities.

Children have ideas about how the situation might be improved, and they are clear that they want a role in that change. First, they know their rights, and they want to see them fulfilled. In the focus groups, they stated their wishes for their parents and government leaders to enter into dialog with them. They want legislators to raise awareness around the issues of violence and exploitation, to create and enforce legislation that protects children and to provide support at both local and global levels.

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“Children have made it clear that we should not miss this once-in-a-generation opportunity to make them free from violence and exploitation,” said Andrew Johnson, deputy secretary general of ChildFund Alliance. “Although the size and scale of the problem are enormous, solutions are possible, and we must make a start by listening to children as our report highlighted.”

“Children articulated that we all must play our role in freeing them from violence,” he added. “This global campaign highlights that individuals only have to take one small action to generate change.”

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ChildFund International is a global child development and protection agency serving more than 17.8 million children and family members in 30 countries. For 75 years, we have helped the world's deprived, excluded and vulnerable children survive and thrive to reach their full potential and become leaders of enduring change. As a member of ChildFund Alliance, we create supportive environments in which children can flourish. [To sponsor a child in need, visit the ChildFund website.](#)