



Madame President,

This statement is presented by the Consortium for Street Children¹ on behalf of 73 other NGOs.

The Consortium and its network were delighted that the Council decided to dedicate last year's annual discussion day on the rights of the child to street children. The unanimous adoption of Resolution 16/12 marked a significant turning point putting the issue of street children back on the map of international debates – for the first time in almost two decades.

Following the resolution the OHCHR undertook a study on challenges, lessons learned and best practices in promoting and protecting the rights of street children. The report was presented to the Council last week and made possible through a unique partnership between the private sector, UN agencies and NGOs. As part of the study 123 street children were consulted in six countries on issues affecting them. The issue of violence, police brutality and round ups was often highlighted by the children.

Street children remain one of the most marginalised and stigmatised children, often criminalised for survival behaviours on the basis of outdated status offences. Street children therefore find themselves in direct daily contact and conflict with the law. The OHCHR study recommends, amongst others, that States should at a minimum decriminalise survival behaviours such as begging, loitering, vagrancy, and running away, to ensure that street children are not forcibly rounded up or treated like criminals or delinquents for survival activities. Such activities must instead be considered as a child protection concern and dealt with accordingly.

Madame President, we therefore recommend that the Council commit to discussing in detail the OHCHR report on street children during its 20th session in June, and work towards implementation of its recommendations and follow ups.

The Council now has a unique opportunity to realise the rights of street children. Please do not let this opportunity pass. Thank you.

¹ ECOSOC special consultative status, 1997. Oral statement on the 8th March 2012 during the UNHRC's 19th session: Annual full day meeting on the rights of the child (Res 16/12).