2006 will be an important year for the UN Study on Violence against Children. The Study report will be finalised and presented by Professor Paulo Pinheiro to the UN General Assembly. A number of activities are planned during 2006 to ensure the participation of children in the launch and to build on the participation experienced in 2005. In addition to expanding our networks, it is also important that girls and boys involved in the UN Study processes to date continue to remain linked to the process in a meaningful way; that they continue to receive feedback and information about the further development of the UN Study, and that they have the opportunity to participate in the dissemination and implementation of the Study's report and recommendations. To this end, the following opportunities for under-18s are highlighted in a calendar of children's events (see next page).

The Newsletter for March focuses on activities relating to the participation of children in the lead up to the launch of the Study at the end of 2006 and beyond. The previous newsletter focused on activities, commitments and priorities of the three UN supporting agencies of the Study: WHO, OHCHR, and UNICEF. (See web-site: http://www.violencestudy.org/IMG/pdf/3rd_Newsletter_with_updated_calendar_9.2.06-2.pdf).

The Newsletter is distributed widely and also available on the Study web-site (www.violencestudy.org). If you would like to add an address to the distribution list send an email to: secretariat@sgsvac.org.

NEWSFLASH FROM THE STUDY SECRETARIAT

The first high-level Inter-Agency Group Meeting on Violence Against Children (VAC) - took place in New York on 2 March. The meeting was convened by UNICEF and brought the UN partners together to discuss the key emerging issues from the Study so far, to talk about the communications plan for the launch of the Study, and to facilitate coordination of follow up actions. Participants expressed strong support for the Study, and for working together on follow-up.

Activities of the Independent Expert - The Independent Expert made a presentation on international human rights instruments and the global challenges faced by juvenile justice during the seminar “After Roper v. Simmons: The Role of International Human Rights Standards in Administering Juvenile Justice in the United States” (24 January). He met with the new European Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Thomas Hammarberg (1 February), and undertook a mission to India, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand (12-25 February) to discuss key issues affecting children.

Report development - The draft chapters were handed over to the writer/editor for the Study after the last Editorial Board (EB) meeting in December. Most chapters have received peer review and will be revised for the next EB meeting (23-24 March).

121 responses to the government questionnaires received so far (see website http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/study.htm).

SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING QUALITY FOLLOW UP WITH CHILDREN

2006 will be an important year for the UN Study on Violence against Children. The Study report will be finalised and presented by Professor Paulo Pinheiro to the UN General Assembly. A number of activities are planned during 2006 to ensure the participation of children in the launch and to build on the participation experienced in 2005. In addition to expanding our networks, it is also important that girls and boys involved in the UN Study processes to date continue to remain linked to the process in a meaningful way; that they continue to receive feedback and information about the further development of the UN Study, and that they have the opportunity to participate in the dissemination and implementation of the Study’s report and recommendations. To this end, the following opportunities for under-18s are highlighted in a calendar of children’s events (see next page).
CALENDAR of Children’s Events in 2006 and beyond

A small follow-up children’s meeting will take place in New York from 23-25 May. The focus of the meeting will be for children to discuss the format and content for the child-friendly materials of the UN Study. Preparation for children’s involvement in the launch of the UN Study report at the General Assembly in October 2006 will also be a feature of the meeting. This small follow-up meeting will involve children from the Study regions and will include NGO Advisory Panel members and other partners.

CRC Committee: General Comment on corporal punishment, Geneva, May-June 2006
The Committee has made numerous references to outlawing corporal punishment throughout the 15 years of its operation, and is now preparing a General Comment on corporal punishment which is expected to be endorsed by the Committee at the 42nd session of the Committee in May-June 2006. The Study welcomes this initiative.

Council of Europe - ‘Building a Europe for and With Children’, Monaco 4-5 April, 2006
The Council of Europe will launch its new programme on children’s rights and the protection of children against all forms of violence at this conference to be hosted by Monaco. The programme was set up following the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 2005) and comprises two main courses of action. The first will focus on the promotion and protection of children’s rights from a legal standpoint. This will entail devising the structures, instruments, tools and training programmes and materials needed to assist member states in honouring their commitments to children in this field. The second course of action, under the heading ‘Children and violence’, will focus on specific forms of violence and where they take place – at home, at school, in the family, in resident institutions, in the community, the media or in cyber-space. Programmes to stop violence against children will be based on the four pillars: prevention of violence, protection of children, prosecution of criminals and participation of children. The objective is to help national and local authorities develop comprehensive prevention strategies.

The programme will provide a forum for all stakeholders, open to children, governments, parliaments, local authorities, NGOs, experts, professional networks and the business sector. The programme also foresees the reinforcement of partnerships between the Council of Europe and leading intergovernmental organisations and institutions such as UNICEF, OHCHR, the World Health Organization and the European Commission. It shall in particular seek to implement the recommendations resulting from the UN Study on Violence against Children. For further information on the programme and this launching conference: http://www.coe.int/children.

C8 Children’s Forum, St. Petersburg, Russia, July 2006
The C8 Children’s Forum is a version of the G8 meeting for children and young people, providing a platform for children to discuss issues that affect them. UNICEF aims to work with young people to give them a genuine forum at the highest level to express their views to the G8 leaders. The C8 is not only an opportunity for young people to discuss, but to act and to influence.

In 2005, the first C8 was held in Scotland. Young people from eight of the world’s poorest countries met with young people from G8 countries to discuss some of the most important problems in the world today, including trade, aid and debt, together with the Millennium Development Goals. They prepared a list of recommendations that were transmitted to the G8 leaders, including their concerns about violence. The next C8 will be held in St. Petersburg, Russia in July 2006. For more information on the C8 Children’s Forum visit the website at: http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_2403.html.

CRC Committee General Day of Discussion: The Right of the Child to be Heard, Geneva, 15 September 2006
The next Day of General Discussion of the Committee on the Rights of the Child will focus on one of the general principles of the Convention, “The Right of the Child to be Heard”. A tentative programme and an outline soon will be posted on OHCHR’s web site at http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/index.htm.

Children’s involvement in the launch of the UN Study report, New York, October GA 2006
The exact date for the presentation of the Study report at the General Assembly has not been confirmed by the UN yet. However it is envisaged that the Study will host an exhibition at the UN and that a small group of representative children and young people will attend and participate in the launch of the Study Report in New York with the Independent Expert. After the international launch in New York, regions and also individual countries are encouraged to conduct their own local launch, so that local issues and responses can be highlighted. Follow up meetings in the regions will also provide opportunities for children to respond to the draft report and recommendations, and to put forward their ideas on involvement in the launch.

Prepared by the United Nations Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Children
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