

### **Consideration of the UPR report of Zambia**

Mr President,

Thank you for giving us the floor.

Save the Children on behalf of the Children's Coalition in Zambia welcomes the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Zambia and the Government's acceptance of several UPR recommendations relating to children's rights including the prohibition of corporal punishment of children in all settings; the separation of children and adult prisoners, allocation of specific funding for child, maternal and reproductive health and sufficient funding to the education sector to meet the needs of children in rural areas and children with disabilities.

However, the Children's Coalition in Zambia would like to express its concern on the fact that the Government has not clearly expressed its position on the recommendations that were pending and would like to highlight the following key issues:

#### **1. Anti-Human Trafficking Act of 2008 and Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol 1, 2 and 3 (OP-CRC-AC, OP-CRC-SC and OP-CRC-IC)**

UPR Recommendations 103.3 and 103.11 call for the ratification of the three Optional Protocols to the CRC and full implementation of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act. . We believe that ratification of the OP-CRC-IC will provide opportunities for children to seek international redress in cases where national systems fail. Ratifying the OP-CRC-SC will complement and reinforce the implementation of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act of 2008. Equally the ratification of OP CRC AC will reaffirm Zambia's commitment to ensuring that children are protected in any given circumstance including armed conflict. This will ultimately contribute to a strengthened child protection system and reinforce the commitment that Zambia has made by ratifying the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).

#### **2. Definition of the child and Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility**

Recommendation 103.26 calls on Zambia to establish a definition of the child in accordance with Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and review legislation and customary law on minimum ages in different sectors; including in relation to criminal responsibility. Redefining the minimum age of criminal responsibility will result in younger children being protected from passing through the criminal justice system and prevent them from being put at risk of abuse in prisons and correctional facilities and from being initiated into deeper criminality.

We therefore call on the Government of the Republic of Zambia to harmonise the definition of the child in all relevant pieces of legislation in line with Article 1 of the CRC and to consider increasing the age of criminal responsibility from the current 8 to at least 12 years as recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

### 3. Free Birth Registration

The Children's Coalition calls upon the Government of Zambia to implement recommendation 103.54 calling for measures to guarantee easy and effective access to free birth registration.'

Every child has a right to citizenship and identity and birth registration is integral to the realisation of other children's rights. Birth registration will ensure that all children in Zambia are counted and Government will be able to effectively plan for the welfare of the children.

The Children's Coalition appreciates the Government's willingness to consult with civil society in the UPR process and is looking forward to the Government's continued cooperation with civil society organisations in the follow-up to the UPR.

Thank you.