

PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE UN, GENEVA

16TH SESSION of THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

(28 February - 25 March 2011)

Annual full-day meeting on the Rights of the Child

(09 March 2011)

Statement by India

Mr. President,

India welcomes the convening of an annual full-day meeting on the Rights of the Child on the topic of adopting a holistic approach for the protection and promotion of the rights of children working and/or living on the street.

02. India being a country with considerable numbers of vulnerable children, including street children, a concerted effort is being made by the Government, especially our Ministry of Women and Child Development, the National Human Rights Commission and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, to protect children in vulnerable circumstances. The Ministry has adopted an Integrated Child Protection Scheme, which includes the Integrated Programme for Street Children, the Programme for Juvenile Justice and the Childline service.

4. The main objective of the Integrated Programme for Street Children is to prevent destitution of children and facilitate their withdrawal from life on the streets. Under the programme, financial assistance is provided to eligible NGOs working for the welfare of street children and for provision of services such as shelter, formal and non-formal education, vocational training, nutrition, healthcare, sanitation and hygiene, safe drinking water, recreational facilities, and protection against abuse and exploitation. Such financial assistance and technical support has been provided to several NGOs across the country for over a decade now, with the

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allocation of funds for the current year running over 100 million dollars. In view of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000, which specifically promotes partnerships with NGOs in the management of homes for rehabilitation of children, the Government has involved NGOs in implementing programmes for street and working children.

5. In 1998, the Government launched the Childline Service, a 24 hours free phone service, which can be accessed by a child in distress or an adult on his or her behalf. The service focuses on the needs of children living alone on the streets and child labourers working in unorganized sector. It provides emergency assistance to a child and subsequently, based upon the child's need, the child is referred to an appropriate organization for long-term follow up and care. Since its inception, the Childline service has responded to over 20 million calls from children/concerned adults for medical assistance, shelter, repatriation, protection from abuse, emotional support and guidance, and information and referral to services.

6. The Government has proposed amendments to certain sections of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, to enable the provision for registration of births of street children.

7. We look forward to gaining from the discussions held at this meeting, in particular the sharing of good practices. We remain committed to protecting and promoting the rights of children, in particular street children; and shall continue to strive towards the vision of providing a childhood to every child.

Thank you, Mr. President.
