eNEWS: 12-September-2009
On July 31, the Law of the Child Act was tabled in Parliament. We must act quickly for Tanzania's children...

In Tanzania, the Law of the Child Act was tabled in Parliament on the 31st July, 2009. We now have an extremely narrow window of opportunity for strengthening its provisions and ensuring that it promotes the best interests of the Tanzanian child.

It is vital that a high-quality, relevant and effective piece of legislation is passed - one which provides a framework for establishing good practice and minimum standards for duty-bearers who work with children. An Act which continues to allow discrimination against certain groups of children would be worse than no Act at all!

The public hearings with the Parliamentary Committee are scheduled for 7-8 October, 2009. By that date, we must have undertaken a full critique of the proposed Act which can inform these public hearings. To this end, the Caucus for Children's Rights (CCR) legal team is currently critiquing the Act. But we need you to get involved too...

Please join us and Tanzania's children in ensuring that the draft sumitted to Parliament in the October / November session meets the following requirements:

- Both domestic and customary legislation conforms fully to the principles and provisions of the Convention, thus making possible its effective implementation.
- The necessary resources are allocated for the enactment of the Act.
- A strong and effective coordination unit is established for all activities related to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Develops appropriate mechanisms to track, monitor, and influence investments and to budget allocations in favour of children.
- Sets a clear definition of a child that is in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Establishes one legal minimum age for marriage, at an internationally acceptable level, for both boys and girls.
- Is in full compliance with article 2 of the Convention, prohibiting all forms of discrimination.
- Formalizes structures of participation for children and young people, and in particular, that it provides support to the Junior Council, so that the Council can function effectively as the national representative body for children.
- Explicitly prohibits all forms of corporal punishment in the family, schools, the penal system and other institutional settings and alternative-care systems.
- Strengthens legislative measures regarding female genital mutilation.
- Prohibits the expulsion of pregnant teenagers from schools.
- Ensures the full implementation of juvenile justice standards, in particular articles 37, paragraph (b), 40 and 39 of the Convention, as well as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules) and the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines).
- Clearly establish the age of criminal responsibility at 12 years, or at an older age that is an internationally accepted standard, and ensure that children between the ages of 16 and 18 are not considered as adults and are afforded the same protection as younger children under the juvenile justice system.
- Prohibits all forms of corporal punishment for persons under the age of 18 years in penal institutions.
- Ensures that persons under the age of 18 are only deprived of liberty as a last resort, and that children, if detained, remain separated from adults.

Specifically, here's how you can help...

>> Download the draft Act <<
Read it, study it and send your recommendations for change to us at info@ccr-tz.org

---

To learn more about the CCR, please review the following:

- CCR Project Overview Infosheet
- CCR organizational brochure (trifold)
- CCR Factsheet: Why are child rights so fundamental to development?