



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BULGARIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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It Takes a World:

High-level event on Ending Violence against Children

Hosted by: World Vision, Permanent Missions of Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Canada, Japan, Luxembourg, Panama, Thailand, Zambia & Zimbabwe; Global Partnership to End Violence against Children and UN- NGLS

New York, April 24, 2017, 1.15 – 2.45 pm, UNHQ, CR 12

H.E. Mr. Georgi Panayotov, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN, and co-chair of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs

Dear friends,

Bulgaria is honoured to be one of the co-hosts of this important event which has the objective to mobilize Governments, civil society and other stakeholders to step up efforts to end violence against children. We have the will and the power to do so and we owe it to the children. It is in our hands to make a better world for children and we should spare no effort until we achieve this goal.

Violence is a major impediment to a child's well-being and robs them from their future. Violence against children is never justifiable. All forms of violence against children are preventable and should be condemned in the strongest possible terms. Considering children's particular vulnerability due to their dependence on adults it is imperative to provide them with full protection from violence and ensure the realization of their human rights.

This is not just common sense and a moral standard but also an international legal obligation as defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is true that legal obligations lie with States but to combat a phenomenon as pervasive as violence against children all sectors of society and all individuals indeed should be involved. And as the title of our event today rightly points out *it takes a world to end violence against children* and I am encouraged to see so many of you here who support this cause.

Bulgaria is strongly committed to the protection of children and the promotion of children's rights in all its national policies and its external action.

Since the adoption of the Child Protection Act in 2000 Bulgaria has been building a nation-wide child protection system with a special focus on prevention, identification and response to violence against children. In February 2017 the Bulgarian Government adopted the new National Programme for Prevention of Violence and Abuse of Children and is currently developing a Comprehensive National Road Map for its implementation.

Bulgaria's legal framework prohibits violence against children in all circumstances; corporal punishment is also prohibited by law. A reporting and referral system has been established that obliges all individuals to report any alleged act of violence against children.

The Government of Bulgaria is working closely with different partners like UNICEF, civil society organizations, the private sector, media and children themselves to create an environment of intolerance to all forms of violence against children and enable the necessary shift in attitudes. The direct engagement of children is key to the success of the process; we need to ensure that children know their rights, recognize violence and are aware of existing tools to report violence.

As one of the co-founders and a co-chair, together with Luxembourg and Panama, of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs Bulgaria has been strongly advocating for integrating children's rights in all intergovernmental processes with the firm conviction that children should be at the heart of all global action and we are proud that as a result of the active efforts of the Group of Friends children have been recognized for the first time as agents of change in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda is also the first global agreement that includes clear targets to end violence against children envisaging a world in which children can grow up free from violence and exploitation.

Bulgaria firmly believes that child rights and child participation remain central to achieving the commitments made at global level and should guide the implementation of all international agreements. Only when we ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence and their rights are upheld can we indeed enable the realization of the full potential of children and live up to our promise to create a better world for children.

Thank you.