



DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL DNI  
DEFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNATIONALE DEI  
DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL DCI

## The Brussels Declaration

### From Bethlehem to Brussels: Towards Justice for All Children

On 29-30 September 2008 Defence for Children International (DCI) came together in Brussels, Belgium, to celebrate and hold its 10th International General Assembly. This meeting was followed by an International Conference, held from October 1-3, 2008 entitled: “Ending Violence against Children in Juvenile Justice Systems: From Words to Action”. The present Declaration is the result of the work and debates held during these two important events.

DCI is a human rights movement dedicated to the promotion and protection of children’s rights. DCI demands that States adopt public policies that effectively guarantee children’s rights and the enjoyment of those rights in societies where justice for all children prevails.

DCI believes that there are no rights without justice. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols form the fundamental basis of all our work, and are complemented by other international human rights instruments.

DCI is deeply concerned about the short and long term consequences of the current global environmental, social, political and economic crisis that affects everyone but especially vulnerable groups in society, including children. One serious impact has been the global food crisis. These combined, interactive crises have grave consequences for the situation of children in conflict with the law. There is a direct cause-effect relationship between the poor and deteriorating living conditions of millions of children resulting from this comprehensive crisis and the number of them who will come in conflict with the law. By the same token the capacity of States to develop preventive policies and to introduce a juvenile justice system in conformity with the principles set out by the Convention of the Rights of the Child is greatly compromised.

The critical situation demands that the DCI movement take the next steps in the following three years, to ensure that children remain a priority at the international, regional and national level and that juvenile justice principles as outlined in the CRC and in the Committee on the Rights of the Child’s “General Comment 10: Children’s Rights in Juvenile Justice” are fully implemented.

With this in mind, DCI continues to prioritise the issue of juvenile justice as the overarching theme of the movement at the international level. At the same time, the DCI movement continues to address other needs and concerns of children including violence against children, economic exploitation and child participation.

To achieve these priorities, the DCI movement commits itself to the following strategies :

- 1) Strengthen its advocacy, lobbying and monitoring, thereby being alert to, responding to, and **systematically** protesting grave violations of children’s rights, such as the death penalty or life imprisonment.
- 2) Build and consolidate strategic partnerships and alliances to respond adequately to the challenges that the rapidly changing global context presents.

- 3) Improve the capacity to analyse and respond to children's rights issues proactively, by establishing thematic task forces in the DCI movement, involving DCI sections and associated members.
- 4) Make better use of existing international and regional human rights instruments and mechanisms, especially the Convention on the Rights of the Child and all others that are binding and have enforcement mechanisms.
- 5) Monitor the policies of UN agencies as they are working towards the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of international and regional declarations adopted by the States.
- 6) Continue to strengthen our active presence in all regions of the world, to strengthen the capacity of all the components of the Movement and build programmes at the international, regional and national levels.

Brussels, October 3, 2008