

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Save the Children PH Joins Global Call to End Physical and Humiliating Punishment of Children

About 42 million Filipino children do not have full legal protection from all forms of violence specifically in places where they should be safe such as the homes. The Philippines joins 134 countries all over the world that's bereft of a legislation to curb physical and humiliating punishment against children.

Dahlia, not her real name, from Parañaque would scream each time her mother burns her arm with mosquito coil for household chores left undone. Whenever Dahlia passes by her mother's stall in the market, she often hears her mother gossip about her to other vendors calling her a "prostitute" for coming home late. She ran away from home when her stepfather strangled her just because her radio was playing loud. She lived temporarily with friends until her boyfriend got her pregnant. At 16, she will soon give birth to a baby she is not ready to care for.

Sadly, but true, Dahlia's case is but one of the many children in the country whose lives took a downright spiral because the caregivers expected to protect them were the abusers. In situation like this, the government is expected to provide protection and security for the most vulnerable members of our society, our children. However, the Philippines has yet to pass a policy on the protection of children against physical and humiliating punishment, as an agreed target among member-nations to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals of 2015.

"We join the clamour of children for protection from punishment that hurt, humiliate, and denigrate them. We appeal to our legislators to pass 'The Positive Parenting of Children's Act' (Senate Bill 2036)," said Atty. Alberto Muyot, CEO of Save the Children Philippines.

SB 2036, authored by Hon. Risa Hontiveros in the Senate, aspires to assist Filipino parents in adopting parenting methods that align with healthy child development and effective parenting. The method will ensure the rights of children are respected, especially their right to a life free from all forms of violence, including physical, humiliating, and degrading forms of punishment.

Save the Children explains that only one in seven children globally are protected by laws against physical and humiliating punishment which is the most common form of violence against children.

Physical and humiliating punishment of children often happens at the hands of parents, teachers and caregivers. Every year, thousands of children die as a result of violence at home, at school and other settings, and many more are seriously injured.

Many forms of violence against children would be considered torture if they were carried out on adults. It can include smacking, but can also involve kicking, shaking, burning, and forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions. It also includes humiliating treatment which belittles the child.

Support Save the Children Philippines' advocacy work on children! For opportunities for partnerships, please email supportercare@savethechildren.org.

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR:

Save the Children Philippines believes every child deserves a future. We are leading the advocacy for legislative measures in Congress that will address the prevalence of physical and humiliating punishment in all settings and support the pending bills, more particularly on the development of a national policy on positive parenting through a multisectoral approach, with the participation of children, and providing appropriation for its implementation, as well as the possibility for a multi-year funding to ensure sustainability of program implementation.

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