



Save the Children

MORE ACTION

To: The Editor

From: Save the Children Fiji

Date: 21 June 2019

Save the Children Fiji (SC-Fiji) is deeply concerned by the recent figures on the acts of violence against children highlighted in the media for the past months.

The last three months' cases reported in the media included child sexual abuse, bullying, teenage pregnancies, child exploitation, missing children, abduction, incest and other violent behaviours committed against children. With the development benefits of great connectivity through the internet, new forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation are enabled as consumers upgrade broadband networks.

While SC Fiji applauds and commends the Government of Fiji for imposing harsh penalties as deterrents, such measures need to be connected between Government agencies, the private sector, faith based groups and civil society organisations to strengthen the safety net to keep children safe.

Violence perpetrated by service providers needs addressing. Since the banning of corporal punishment, an analysis needs to be conducted on how service providers have coped with alternative forms of discipline, especially in schools where teachers have expressed challenges. Where Child Protection Policies exist, this needs to be reviewed and seriously implemented to ensure that there are sufficient reporting procedures, that the policies are understood and that it provides a clear description of appropriate behaviour.

Article 19 on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Fiji signed in 1993 states that children must be protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation therefore as a signatory of the Convention, duty bearers must ensure that children's safety and protection is paramount.

SC Fiji calls on the state and everybody to collectively commit ourselves to end violence against children now – this is a national issue that needs urgent national attention.

Fiji, unlike other countries, is well positioned to work together in a strong alliance between all stakeholders to strengthen the social cohesion we have in place given our strong national and traditional governance systems and with strong faith based network.

Let the best interests of the children of our Fiji be of paramount concern and let us all work together to protect them from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and all other emerging issues,
