

# Child Safeguarding Policy

## **WCC Child Safeguarding Policy – June 2018**

Date of next review: June 2021

### **Acronyms**

CPMS	Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Settings
CSP	Child Safeguarding Policy
EAA	Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance
EAPPI	Ecumenical Accompaniment Program for Palestine and Israel
EDAN	Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network
EHAIA	Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiatives and Advocacy
EWN	Ecumenical Water Network
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
WCC	World Council of Churches

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## 1. Preamble

- a) In March 2017 the World Council of Churches published an open invitation to the WCC member churches and partners under the title: “Churches’ Commitments to Children” as an answer to the message of the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of WCC in Busan, Korea, in November 2013, to address the needs of children as an integral part of the ecumenical commitment to the pilgrimage of justice and peace. It invited the churches “*to promote child protection through church communities, promote meaningful participation by children and adolescents, and raise church voice for intergenerational climate justice, supporting initiatives for and with children and adolescents*” (Churches’ Commitments to Children p. 7). In line with the first recommendation, WCC now proposes a child safeguarding policy to its member churches.
- b) According to the scriptures all children are given by God and created in the image of God. God cares for them all (Isaiah 49:16). Harm done to children, being precious members of the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12) harms the whole community and breaks communion within the *whole body of Christ*. Those especially responsible to exemplify love and making misuse of their position face grave consequences (Matthew 18:6).
- c) The church therefore welcomes children through baptism or blessing (Mark 10:13-16). Moreover, Christ upholds children as examples of salvation (Matthew 18:4-5). Children are given an active and distinctive role among the believers and among those who hear and proclaim the word of God (e.g. I Samuel 3). Scripture reminds us to listen to children, nurture their spiritual journey and be perceptive of signs of danger (II Samuel 13).
- d) It is the duty and commitment of the church to safeguard and respect all children, not only those inside our church community without any discrimination or distinction. Our personal authority and responsibility in relation to children is expressed in diakonia, which means self-sacrificial care for their spiritual and physical well-being, following the example of Christ (Philippians 2:5-8; Matthew 25).
- e) Each person within the community should be aware of and should carry its personal responsibility to exercise their authority and responsibility in the right way and to hold each other accountable.
- f) Where abuse is discovered, the legal system takes its own course and the church must co-operate with it. At the same time, as the body of Christ we have a responsibility to:
  - accompany victims, placing them at the centre of our compassion and healing care, and
  - accompany perpetrators towards repentance and restoration.
- g) In the context of our calling, as a member of the body of Christ, we need a safeguarding policy to assist us in fulfilling our responsibilities towards children.
- h) We encourage the member churches of WCC to receive, adopt, and implement this child safeguarding policy, and to share your reflections and experiences with us.

## 2. Commitment to Safeguarding Children and Guiding Principles

The WCC is committed to the safety and well-being of all children. The WCC takes its duty of care seriously and will aim at all times to provide the safest possible environment for children. This will be achieved by identifying and managing risks that may lead to harm, and dealing immediately with concerns and reports if they arise. This policy creates clear standards for the WCC as an organisation and for the behaviour of staff and others.

The WCC’s Child Safeguarding Policy is based on three key pillars:

- a) **Zero Tolerance of Violence, Coercion, Exploitation, Neglect and Abuse:** the WCC believes that all children have a right to be safe at all times, and that all children have equal rights to protection from all forms of violence, coercion, exploitation and abuse, regardless of their gender, nationality, religious or political beliefs, family background, economic status, legal status, ability, physical or mental health or criminal background. Any form of child abuse or exploitation is unacceptable.
- b) **Recognition of the International Legal Framework for Child Protection:** the WCC recognizes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and its guiding child rights principles. The UNCRC is the main international human rights convention for children. It has four

guiding principles: 1) survival and development; 2) best interests of the child; 3) non-discrimination, and; 4) children's participation. A majority of the 52 articles within the UNCRC are concerned with children's rights to protection from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

- c) **Adherence to Child Protection Legislation:** In countries where WCC staff and others travel and work, the WCC will adhere to local and international child protection legislation, and international laws and conventions in relation to all forms of child abuse and child exploitation, including but not limited to: child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, child labour and child pornography.

### 3. Scope of this Policy

Adherence to the WCC's Child Safeguarding Policy and its Child Safe Code of Conduct is a mandatory requirement for all staff, volunteers, consultants, interns, contractors, representatives, partners and those invited by the WCC to visit projects (hereafter referred to as staff and others) serving programmes in which interactions with children may take place (such as, but not limited to, EAA, EAPPI, EDAN, EHAIA, EWN, Indigenous Peoples, Child Rights, etc.). All staff and others serving programmes in which interactions with children may take place will be made aware of the child safeguarding policy and their responsibilities as stated in the policy during their orientation<sup>1</sup>.

This policy has three key objectives:

- a) To create and maintain protective environments for children in delivery of WCC activities or WCC-funded activities.
- b) To create mandatory organisational standards for the WCC to prevent, mitigate and respond to child protection risks.
- c) To create and enforce mandatory behavioural standards – as set out in the annexed Child Safe Code of Conduct – for all staff and others and those visiting projects by invitation of the WCC in order to prevent, deter and immediately respond to risks posed to children by WCC activities and its representatives.

### 4. Definitions:

- a) **Contact with children:** means working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve contact with children, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment. This includes indirect contact with children in the community<sup>2</sup> (also see 'working with children' below).
- b) **Child Abuse:** Abuse happens to boys and girls of all ages, ethnicity and social backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and political persuasion. Child abuse includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, bullying, discrimination, child labour and domestic violence. Abuse can be inflicted on a child by men or women, as well as by other children.
- c) **Child:** A child is any person under the age of 18 years, unless a nation's laws recognise adulthood earlier. However, for the purposes of this policy, the WCC will always consider a child to be anyone under the age of 18, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- d) **Child Protection:** In its broadest sense, child protection is a term used to describe the field of actions that individuals, organisations, countries and communities take to protect children from acts of maltreatment (abuse) and exploitation e.g., domestic violence, child labour, commercial and sexual exploitation and abuse, HIV, and physical violence, to name but a few.
- e) **Child Safeguarding:** Child safeguarding refers to the actions taken by an organisation when working with or around children to prevent and respond to the abuse of children by its own staff, volunteers or others associated with the organisation, including any partners or other contractors delivering services on behalf of the organisation. Child safeguarding is a sub-set of the broader field of 'child protection' (see definition above). Child safeguarding applies to any organisation that WCC works with, regardless of whether their activities are child-focused or not.
- f) **Child-Safe Environment:** A child-safe environment is one where all children are protected from all forms of harm, and where there are clear, established guidelines and procedures for conduct, reporting abuse and follow-up.

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<sup>2</sup> DFAT [Establishing Child Protection Risk Context September 2016](#)

- g) **Discrimination:** Discrimination includes the exclusion of, mistreatment of, or action against an individual based on age, disability, ethnicity, family responsibilities, gender, marital status, nationality, place of residence, political opinion, race and/or colour, religion or belief, sexual orientation, social origin, state of health and state of pregnancy.
- h) **Duty of Care:** Duty of Care is a common law concept that refers to the responsibility of the organisation and individual to provide children with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is the duty of the organisation and its individuals to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risk of or real injury.
- i) **Emotional abuse:** Emotional abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected or frightened by threats. This may involve name calling, being put down or continual coldness from parent or caregiver; to the extent that it affects the child's physical and emotional growth.
- j) **Neglect:** Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide a child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.
- k) **Others:** For the purposes of this policy, 'others', as referred to in the scope of this policy, refers to volunteers, consultants, contractors, donors, representatives, partners, and those invited by the WCC to visit projects.
- l) **Physical abuse:** Physical abuse occurs when a person purposefully injures, or threatens to injure, a child or young person. This may take any form of physical treatment including but not limited to slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take any form including but not limited to bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.
- m) **Protection:** Protection includes all activities aimed at ensuring respect for the letter and spirit of international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. For the WCC protection focuses on preventing, mitigating or responding to violence, coercion, deliberate deprivation and abuse.
- n) **Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse is actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions, and possession of child exploitation materials.
- o) **Sexual exploitation:** Sexual exploitation is any abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Sexual exploitation includes using one's position of authority, influence or control to pressure, force or manipulate someone to do something against their will knowingly or unknowingly, by threatening them with negative repercussions such as withholding project assistance, not approving an employee's work support requests, threatening to make false claims about an employee in public etc.
- p) **Social Media:** Social media refers to any form of internet or mobile phone technology, including personal websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, Instagram, and others. In the context of this policy, this includes both social media used for work purposes, as well as the personal social media of staff or others.
- q) **Staff and Others:** refers to all staff working for or contracted by the World Council of Churches or by any other organisation providing staff to work for the WCC (seconded staff), interns, volunteers, contractors and consultants, those representing the WCC and those participating in WCC organised project visits. Staff refers to those employed by WCC, or any other organisations to work on WCC activities either full time, part time, and/or staff serving on a temporary, short term, long term, indefinite basis, paid or non-paid, working in any place of the world.
- r) **Working with Children:** means being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid work (also see 'contact with children' above).
- s) **Working with Children Check:** is a prerequisite for anyone assessed as working with children by the WCC. It involves a national criminal history check and review of findings of workplace misconduct. The result of a Working with Children Check is either a clearance to work with children for five years, or a bar against working with children. Cleared applicants are subject to ongoing monitoring and relevant new records may lead to the clearance being revoked.

## 5. Context:

Child abuse is a global problem which affects both boys and girls. It has existed since the beginning of time and is deeply rooted in cultural, economic and social practices. Children can be abused physically, sexually, emotionally and through neglect and discrimination.

Most violence against children remains hidden; children who face violence, as well as those who witness it, often remain silent for fear of retribution and because of the stigma that violence carries for both victim and perpetrator. Many people, even children, accept violence as an inevitable part of life. Often, children who have suffered violence or those who are aware of such violence keep quiet because there are no safe or trusted ways to report the violence or get help. Many times, the perception of what is considered abusive or harmful to the child differs from culture to culture, and even among different individuals within the same cultural group.

Worldwide, there is a chronic lack of data on violence against children, which undermines understanding and action.

- In 2012 alone, 95,000 children and adolescents under the age of 20 were murdered – almost 1 in 5 of all homicide victims that year.
- Around 6 in 10 children between the ages of 2 and 14 worldwide (almost a billion) are subjected to physical punishment by their caregivers on a regular basis.
- Close to 1 in 3 students between the ages of 13 and 15 worldwide report involvement in one or more physical fights in the past year.
- Slightly more than 1 in 3 students between the ages of 13 and 15 worldwide experience bullying on a regular basis.
- About 1 in 3 adolescents aged 11 to 15 in Europe and North America admit to having bullied others at school at least once in the past couple of months.
- Almost one quarter of girls ages 15 to 19 worldwide (almost 70 million) report being victims of some form of physical violence since age 15. Around 120 million girls under the age of 20 (about 1 in 10) have been subjected to forced sexual intercourse or other forced sexual acts at some point in their lives. Boys are also at risk, although a global estimate is unavailable due to the lack of comparable data in most countries.
- 1 in 3 adolescent girls ages 15 to 19 worldwide (84 million) have been the victims of emotional, physical or sexual violence committed by their husbands or partners at some point in their lives.
- About 3 in 10 adults worldwide believe that physical punishment is necessary to properly raise or educate children.
- Close to half of all girls ages 15 to 19 worldwide (around 126 million) think a husband is sometimes justified in hitting or beating his wife.<sup>3</sup>

While most child abuse occurs within families and communities, children may experience abuse and exploitation from staff or organisations which provide them with support and services. Physical and emotional abuse and neglect in organisations and institutions is often unintended, and is the result of poor conditions, lack of clear guidelines for behaviour and reporting abuse, and negligent management. However child abuse, in particular sexual abuse in organisations, may also be planned and premeditated. Child sex offenders target organisations working with children, in particular organisations where their abuse may go undetected, including those with inadequate recruitment and supervision practices. This can particularly be the case in emergency and humanitarian settings, where normal societal and government structures may be weakened or destroyed, and there is an influx of humanitarian workers. In emergency settings, the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPMS) should be applied whenever possible.<sup>4</sup>

## **6. Child Safeguarding Risk Management**

### **Establishing Risk Context**

The WCC recognizes that there are a number of potential risks to children in its work, particularly where staff or others come into contact with children, including humanitarian response activities (including accompaniment), workshops organized for or in relation with children. In recognizing these risks, the WCC will proactively assess and manage risks to children to reduce the risk of harm, and will comply with and build on sector minimum standards such as Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPMS).

This includes:

- In relation to the WCC's activities such as fundraising and communication

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<sup>3</sup> [Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children. UNICEF 2014](#)

<sup>4</sup> Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Settings, Global Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) 2012: <http://cpwg.net/minimum-standards/>

- Working to identify all potential risks to children in program design and implementation.

### **Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment**

The WCC will assess the level of risk of child harm, abuse or exploitation, using the Child Protection Risk Assessment tool<sup>5</sup>, in order to determine the level of contact with<sup>6</sup> and risk to children, and the standards and mitigating measures that need to be put in place. Appropriate to the level of overall risk, this process will ensure that specific risks are identified and measures to mitigate those risks are incorporated into the project risk management matrix and also into program design, and program monitoring.

There are generally two types of risks to children that need to be considered in the risk assessment:

- Risks to children by personnel during implementation
- Risk of harm to children through design or implementation of activities<sup>7</sup>.

Both types must be considered and included in the child safeguarding risk assessment and included in the WCC risk management matrix and subsequent monitoring.

### **7. Use of Children's Images**

The WCC marketing and fundraising material will at all times portray children in a respectful, appropriate and consensual manner. Guidelines on the use of children's images are included in Annex 1 Child Safe Code of Conduct.

### **8. Guidelines for interviewing and reporting on children**

Interviewing and reporting on children has its special challenges. The WCC has adopted the guidelines developed by UNICEF, and included in the Annex 1 Child Safe Code of Conduct.

### **9. Use of Social Media**

The WCC staff often use social media, both for work purposes as well as privately. The same guidelines for the use of children's images outlined in the WCC's Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct apply to images and video posted on work-related social media. Staff will at all times uphold the values and beliefs of the WCC when using work-related social media. While staff and others are encouraged to share material and information about their work for WCC through their private social media accounts, such sharing shall always be done with caution and responsibility, and also in line with Annex 1 Child Safe Code of Conduct. Staff and others shall not use photos or videos of children taken during a work trip on their personal social media sites for purposes other than that intended and/or agreed. Unless required by the program, communicating privately with beneficiaries met during a field visit is not allowed. Staff and others must never communicate through their own personal email, Facebook, or other social media accounts with any beneficiaries under the age of 18.

### **10. Employment of Staff and Contractors**

The WCC is committed to preventing a person from working with children if they pose an unacceptable risk to children. The WCC's commitment to child safe recruitment, selection and screening practices aims to recruit the safest and most suitable people to work in our programs. The WCC has robust recruitment screening processes for all personnel in contact with children and additional screening measures for positions working with children. Our child safe recruitment practices are included in Annex 3.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct (Annex 1) outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relation to children. The WCC requires all staff and others to comply with the Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct throughout their period of employment/engagement with the WCC. Failure to do so may result in a transfer to other duties, suspension or dismissal, depending on the nature of the offence. Criminal behaviour will be immediately reported to the proper authorities.

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<sup>5</sup> DFAT Establishing Child Protection Risk (available from the [DFAT Child Protection Policy 2017](#))

<sup>6</sup> No contact or impact, contact with or impact on children, working with children.

<sup>7</sup> DFAT Child Protection Guidance Notes are available resources to support this. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/child-protection-policy.aspx>

## 11. Reporting Breaches of the WCC Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

### Confidentiality of Reporting

All information about child safeguarding concerns and reports is to be kept confidential. Reports are to be made directly to the Child Safeguarding Focal Point who will coordinate an investigation team as appropriate. The general secretary and the deputy general secretaries are to be notified immediately that a report has been received. The Child Safeguarding Focal Point is to update the general secretary and the deputy general secretaries on progress with the investigation, to ensure that documentation is kept in a secure file. Reports can be made by staff and others and by any external party.

Concerns and reports can be made verbally, by email or by completing the WCC Child Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form (see Annex 4). The WCC Child Safeguarding Reporting Framework in Annex 2 must be followed.

If a WCC staff member is unsure whether an allegation amounts to child exploitation or abuse, they must contact the WCC Child Safeguarding Focal Point for confidential advice and further information ([childprotection@wcc-coe.org](mailto:childprotection@wcc-coe.org)) or by phoning the WCC office +41.22.791.60.06).

While noting that any investigation needs to be conducted thoroughly, in such a way as to best address risk, all efforts should be made to complete investigations within 60 days.

Any actions necessary to meet the protection needs or the mental and physical health needs of the child MUST be taken at the same time that any reporting and/or follow-up investigation is taking place.

If a WCC staff member is requested not to take any further action by the person making the allegation, for instance out of fear for the security of the child, the WCC staff member must advise the requesting person that they are still obliged to notify WCC Child Safeguarding Focal Point and will pass on the protection concern.

If the incident constitutes a criminal behaviour, the Child Safeguarding Focal Point will immediately notify the police and other relevant authorities.

## 12. Educating the Organisation

The WCC is committed to providing child safeguarding training for all staff and others serving the WCC. The child safeguarding policy is included in the orientation procedures for all new staff and referred to in contracts for consultants and contractors. Staff members serving programmes in which interactions with children may occur, as well as members of the Staff Leadership Group (SLG), the Human Resources Department, and the Communication Department attend regular Child Safeguarding training sessions. The Child Safeguarding Focal Point and other staff with child safeguarding specific duties such as those responsible for use of images and social media will be encouraged to attend training on child safeguarding policies and practices provided by recognised external agencies.

The policy will be made available to all staff and others.

All staff and others will sign and acknowledge understanding of the Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct as a requirement of recruitment/engagement.

The policy will be accessible on our website at all times.

## 13. Reviewing the Child Safeguarding Policy

The WCC's Child Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if required by changes occurring in the context, with partners or State or National Legislation or international law.

## 14. Resource List

- a) **DFAT Child Protection Policy 2017** and **DFAT Child Protection Guidance Notes:** <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/child-protection-policy.aspx>
- b) **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:** <https://www.unicef.org/crc/>
- c) **Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. Child Protection Working Group (2012):** [https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource\\_document/CP-Minimum-Standards.pdf](https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/CP-Minimum-Standards.pdf)
- d) **World Council of Churches Child Protection Resources**(summary table with links to external resources): <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources-children>

- e) **ECPAT International:** <http://www.ecpat.org/>
- f) **IASC Child Protection Thematic area guide for :** Integrating gender-based violence interventions in Humanitarian Action: [http://gbvguidelines.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TAG-child-protection-08\\_26\\_2015.pdf](http://gbvguidelines.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TAG-child-protection-08_26_2015.pdf)
- g) **Keeping Children Safe - A toolkit for child protection:**  
<http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/keeping-children-safe-toolkit-child-protection>
- h) **Setting the standard – A common approach to Child Protection for international NGOs:**  
<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/1603.pdf>
- i) **United Nations World Report on Violence Against Children:** [www.unviolencestudy.org](http://www.unviolencestudy.org)
- j) **ACFID Guidelines for development of a child protection policy:**  
[https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource\\_document/Guidelines-for-the-development-of-a-child-protection-policy.pdf](https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/Guidelines-for-the-development-of-a-child-protection-policy.pdf)
- k) **Keeping Children Safe Online:**  
[https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource\\_document/KCS\\_Online\\_Guidance\\_2014.pdf](https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/KCS_Online_Guidance_2014.pdf)
- l) **UNICEF, Child Protection in the Digital Age:** National responses to online child sexual abuse and exploitation in ASEAN Member States (2016):  
[https://www.unicef.org/eapro/Child\\_Protection\\_in\\_the\\_Digital\\_Age.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/eapro/Child_Protection_in_the_Digital_Age.pdf)
- m) **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child In Child Friendly Language:** [Poster](#) and [brochure](#)
- n) **IAWGCP, Children's Participation in Decision Making:** Why do it, when to do it, how to do it (2007)

## **Annex 1. Child-Safe Code of Conduct**

*Note: This Code of Conduct is to be read in conjunction with the WCC Child Safeguarding Policy*

Staff and others representing or visiting WCC activities in which interactions with children may take place are responsible for maintaining a professional role with children, which means establishing and maintaining clear professional boundaries that serve to protect everyone from misunderstandings or a violation of the professional relationship. This Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct sets out the behaviour which WCC expects from all people associated with or representing it.

The WCC condemns all forms of child abuse, discrimination and sexual exploitation, and is committed to creating and maintaining a child-safe environment. Child abuse occurs when adults or other children hurt children or young people under the age of 18, either physically, emotionally, sexually, through neglect, or in some other way.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have read and understand WCC's Child Safeguarding Policy, *and agree that in the course of my association with the WCC,*

### **I WILL:**

- Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent with the values of the WCC.
- Treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, family responsibilities, gender, marital status, nationality, place of residence, political opinion, race and/or colour, religion or belief, sexual orientation, social origin, state of health and state of pregnancy.
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Keep confidential all information that I am a party to regarding child protection cases, disclosing and discussing information only with the Child Safeguarding Focal Point or the deputy general secretaries, or other parties as designated by them and/or according to reporting procedures.
- Respect cultural differences.
- Encourage open communication between all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers, and allow children and young people to participate in the decisions that affect them.
- Report any concerns of child abuse in accordance with WCC reporting procedures.
- Be transparent in my actions and whereabouts.
- Take responsibility for ensuring I am accountable and do not place myself in positions where there is a risk of allegations being made. Wherever possible, I will ensure that another adult is present when I am working in the proximity of children. I will discuss other measures as necessary with the WCC Child Safeguarding Focal Point.
- Self-assess my behaviour, actions, language and relationships with children.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding abuse by a fellow worker, volunteer, contractor, consultant, visitor, or partner personnel via the WCC child safeguarding incident reporting mechanisms.
- Comply with all relevant local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures.

### **I WILL NOT:**

- Engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children.
- Use inappropriate, offensive, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, culturally inappropriate or discriminatory language when speaking with a child or young person.
- Invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- Hit or physically assault children. This includes refraining from physical punishment or discipline of children (excluding my own children).
- Develop sexual relationships with children or relationships with children that may be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Engage in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts, with any child under the age of 18.
- Behave provocatively or inappropriately with a child. Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way.

- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes. If this is necessary, for example for a child with a disability, I will inform my supervisor first and be as open as possible in my behaviour.
- Sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present if possible.
- Seek to make contact and or spend time with any child that I come into contact with in my role as a representative of the WCC outside of the designated times and activities set for performing my role as a representative of the WCC\*. This includes not making contact by email or social media. I will not seek to connect with or "friend" any children I meet in the field on my personal social media account, including Facebook or any other social media platform.
- Condone or participate in behaviour of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of children.
- Release or discuss any personal or confidential information about suspected or proven child abuse or protection cases other than with the Child Safeguarding Focal Point, the deputy general secretaries, or other parties as designated by them and according to reporting procedures.
- Use any computer, mobile phone, or video and digital camera to exploit or harass children. I will not access child pornography through any medium (see also 'Use of Children's Images' below).
- Hire children to perform domestic labour or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury.

### **Use of Children's Images**

*When photographing or filming a child for work purposes, I must:*

- Not post photos taken of children during a field visit on any of my personal or private social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blog, website, etc.), without clear references to my work and profession.
- Assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before filming or photographing a child.
- If circumstances allow, obtain informed consent from the child's parent or guardian before taking a child's photography or filming them. As part of this I must explain how and where the photograph or film will be used and for what purpose. I will use the Media Consent Form to record all details of the image taken. This form will be kept on file at the WCC Communication office as important evidence that consent has been given.
- Ensure photographs or films present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts.
- Ensure children are portrayed as part of their community.
- When appropriate, ensure file images do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically.
- When appropriate, ensure there is no identifying information of the child used in the publication of images with their location. I will ensure all recorded identifying details are stored confidentially.
- Ensure a risk assessment is conducted before live streaming, expectations of privacy are considered and the same principles outlined above are applied.

### **Guidelines for interviewing children (adoption of UNICEF's guidelines)**

- Avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental, insensitive to cultural values, that place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation, or that reactivate a child's pain and grief from traumatic events.
- Do not discriminate in choosing children to interview because of sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.
- No staging: Do not ask children to tell a story or take an action that is not part of their own history.
- Ensure that the child or guardian knows they are talking with a reporter. Explain the purpose of the interview and its intended use.
- Obtain permission from the child and his or her guardian for all interviews, videotaping and, when possible, for documentary photographs. When possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing. Permission must be obtained in circumstances that ensure that the child and guardian are not coerced in any way and that they understand that they are part of a story that might be disseminated locally and globally.

This is usually only ensured if the permission is obtained in the child's language and if the decision is made in consultation with an adult the child trusts.

- Pay attention to where and how the child is interviewed. Limit the number of interviewers and photographers. Try to make certain that children are comfortable and able to tell their story without outside pressure, including from the interviewer. In film, video and radio interviews, consider what the choice of visual or audio background might imply about the child and her or his life and story. Ensure that the child would not be endangered or adversely affected by showing their home, community or general whereabouts.

### **Guidelines for reporting on children (adoption of UNICEFs guidelines)**

- Do not further stigmatize any child; avoid categorizations or descriptions that expose a child to negative reprisals - including additional physical or psychological harm, or to lifelong abuse, discrimination or rejection by their local communities.
- Always provide an accurate context for the child's story or image.
- Always change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified as:
  - a. A victim of sexual abuse or exploitation,
  - b. A perpetrator of physical or sexual abuse,
  - c. HIV positive, or living with AIDS, unless the child, a parent or a guardian gives fully informed consent,
  - d. Charged or convicted of a crime,
  - e. A child combatant, or former child combatant who is holding a weapon or weapons.
- In certain circumstances of risk or potential risk of harm or retribution, change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified as:
  - a. A former child combatant who is not holding a weapon but may be at risk,
  - b. An asylum seeker, a refugee or an internal displaced person.
- In certain cases, using a child's identity - their name and/or recognizable image is in the child's best interests. However, when the child's identity is used, they must still be protected against harm and supported through any stigmatization or reprisals. Some examples of these special cases are:
  - a. When a child initiates contact with the reporter/journalist, wanting to exercise their right to freedom of expression and their right to have their opinion heard.
  - b. When a child is part of a sustained programme of activism or social mobilization and wants to be so identified.
  - c. When a child is engaged in a psychosocial programme and claiming their name and identity is part of their healthy development.
- Confirm the accuracy of what the child has to say, either with other children or an adult, preferably with both. When in doubt about whether a child is at risk, report on the general situation for children rather than on an individual child, no matter how newsworthy the story.

These behaviours are not intended to interfere with normal family interactions.

I understand that the onus is on me, as a person engaged or associated with the WCC, to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child abuse when engaging in WCC activities, projects, meetings, workshop or visiting locations in which WCC activities take place.

I have read the WCC Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct and discussed its contents with the WCC human resources manager and my supervisor. I am aware that the WCC expects me to uphold at all times the standards of behaviour described in the Code of Conduct above. I also understand that disciplinary measures and legal steps will be taken if I am found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct. I understand that in making this report, the WCC may have to inform other authorities, in a confidential manner and only if necessary for the safety of the child, the staff member, or the agency, or to meet obligations to funders.

#### **Name of signatory:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

#### **Name of Witness:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## Annex 2. Child Safeguarding Reporting Framework

### WCC Child Safeguarding Reporting Framework

If you are concerned about the safety of a child:

If you see or suspect an abuse

If an allegation of abuse is made

If a child discloses abuse

Report concerns directly immediately (same day) to the Child Safeguarding Focal point

[childprotection@wcc-coe.org](mailto:childprotection@wcc-coe.org)

Tel : +41.22.791.60.06

You should also notify your line manager (unless the person is at the centre of your concerns).

The Child Safeguarding Focal Point can support you in reporting, and discussions should focus on: nature of concerns, risks to children, action/next steps.

Ensure detailed written records are made of all events and what the child has said in their own words (where this applies).

Where serious concerns exist and there is immediate risk to the child,  
**TAKE ACTION!**

**It is essential to avoid delay as inaction may place the child at further risk.**

Where for any reason it is not possible to discuss the matter with the WCC Safeguarding Focal Point, contact the Deputy General Secretaries or the Director of the Office of the General Secretariat.

Where immediate action is essential due to risk to the child, the Child Safeguarding Focal Point should be informed as soon as possible after the event.

### Annex 3. Child-Safe Recruitment Practices

The WCC engages the child safe recruitment practices outlined below.

#### **In position descriptions and advertisements:**

- Position descriptions are provided for all staff and others engaged to work for the WCC which describe key selection criteria and outline tasks and accountabilities.
- All positions, including where the duties of an existing position are changed, are assessed<sup>8</sup> for level of contact with children and level of risk in relation to contact with children. Subsequent actions will then be required accordingly. Positions can be assessed as:
  - No impact on/no contact with children
  - Impact on/contact with children
  - Working with children.
- Our child safe commitment is promoted on our website and in all job advertisements.
- Our website link to the child safeguarding policy is provided to all job applicants.
- Applicants will be requested to disclose whether they have been charged with child exploitation offences anywhere in the world in the application process. This will be documented.

#### **In interviews and reference checks:**

- Interviews are conducted for all positions, ideally in-person, but Skype video interviews may be necessary in the international context.
- In all interviews: behavioural-based questions are included, asking for examples of the candidate's past behaviour and experiences.
- In positions assessed as working with children, the panel will also explore the candidate's motivations for and experience in working with children, including value-based and scenario-based questions seeking information about the candidate's attitudes to children, professional boundaries, accountability, team work, how they have responded to ethical dilemmas and past behaviours and responses to certain situations. This includes existing staff within the organisation, who are applying internally, as well as staff and consultants recommended by other organisations.
- A minimum of two verbal reference checks are required for all preferred candidates, including short- and long-term positions, volunteers, interns and consultants representing the WCC. The candidate's most recent employer/supervisor must be one of these referees. The WCC will verify the identity of the referee and make direct contact with each of these referees. Written references will not be accepted. The WCC reserves the right to request additional references. Unless the position is assessed as no impact on/no contact with children, the reference check will include a child safeguarding question.

#### **In contracts:**

- All positions include a probationary period (depending on the length of the contract).
- The WCC reserve the right to refuse employment to or terminate any person's employment if they may pose a risk to children. All employment contracts, including for consultants, must contain provisions for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal for any person who breaches the Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct.

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<sup>8</sup> The Child Safeguarding Focal Point is to assess all new position descriptions, and will provide training or other support to managers altering existing position descriptions.

**Upon accepting a job offer:**

- Before engagement, all staff and others unless in positions assessed as having no impact on/no contact with children, must provide a national police check or a relevant criminal history check (this may depend on the country or countries of most recent residence)<sup>9</sup>, or by default a statutory declaration (see template Annex 5) in case of emergency to commence the work. A statutory declaration does not prevent the need to provide in a reasonable period of time a police check.
- All staff and others must sign the WCC's Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct to acknowledge they have read, fully understood, and agree to comply with, WCC's Child Safe Code of Conduct (Annex 1).
- Staff and others in positions assessed as 'working with children', must provide a "Working with Children Check" or equivalent as allowed by legislation and available in the country of residence.
- Once engaged, all staff and others will receive Child Safeguarding Orientation and attend regular Child Safeguarding training sessions.

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<sup>9</sup>Checks must be conducted for each country in which the individual has lived for 12 months or longer over the last 5 years, and for the individual's countries of citizenship.

## Annex 4. Child Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form

This form should be used to report **if you see or suspect abuse, if an allegation of abuse is made, or if a child discloses abuse**. The information you provide here will be kept **CONFIDENTIAL** and all steps will be taken to ensure you are supported by management and that your protection is considered in any actions taken.

### Part One: About You

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your role: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of any other organisation involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Your relationship to the child or young persons concerned: \_\_\_\_\_

### Part Two: About the Child

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Male/female: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Whom does the child or young person live with?: \_\_\_\_\_

### Part Three: About Your Concern(s)

How did you come to have a concern: was the abuse observed or suspected?

Was an allegation made? Did a child disclose abuse?

Date, time and place of any incident(s) reported to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of concern/allegation:

Observations made by you (e.g. child's emotional state, any physical evidence):

Write down exactly what the child said and what you said (or another informant said):

*(continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary)*

Any other relevant information? (E.g. disability? language?)

Were other children involved or aware?

Are other children in immediate danger or at risk?

Have you already spoken to parents or carers or any other Child Protection Personnel or Agencies? Yes or No \_\_\_\_\_ If Yes, who or whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Time and date that report was submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) to whom report was made: \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. name of supervisor/manager/staff)

Advice given by that person or agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Action taken: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Please remember that all information contained in this report must be kept confidential and must not be revealed to anyone except the person you reported to. You will be informed of next actions that will be taken

Form to be completed and sent to the WCC Child Safeguarding Focal Point :

**childprotection@wcc-coe.org**

## Annex 5. Statutory Declaration

### STATUTORY DECLARATION

I,  
(*name*).....

of (address).....

do sincerely declare that:

1. I resided in (country) ..... from (date)..... to (date).....  
during which period I was employed by (organisation).....  
in the role/position of .....

2. At no time during my stay in (country) ..... was I involved in or  
convicted of any criminal offence, including an offence of or relating to child abuse, exploitation or  
child pornography,  
In (country).....

3. I have not been charged with any offence that is incomplete or awaiting legal action, nor am I aware of  
any investigation into my affairs that has the potential to lead to such charges of or relating to child  
abuse, exploitation or child pornography.

I fully understand the above, or the above has been fully explained to me by another person or interpreter  
who fully understands the above, such that I fully understand the above.

I understand that a person who intentionally makes a false statement in a statutory declaration is subject to  
legal action, and I believe that the statements in this declaration are true in every particular.

Signature of person making the declaration.....

Declared at (*place*)  
.....

this ..... (day) of ..... (month) ..... (year).

Before me, (Signature and title of person before whom the declaration is made)  
.....  
.....

## **Annex 6. Media Consent Form**

All form of media and communication

### **What is this consent form for?**

The Word Council of Churches (WCC) collects image and voice of individuals, including children, on video, audio, photographic, or any other medium (collectively referred to as ‘the recordings’) physically or digitally, for a wide range of reasons, but mainly for communication and advocacy purposes.

These recordings may be used on WCC websites, in newsletters, brochures, promotional materials, news releases and other print and digital communication channels (including social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc...).

This consent form gives permission for the WCC to own the publishing rights and to publish the recordings.

### **Who should sign the consent form?**

For Individuals above 18 years old, only the individual concerned shall sign it.

For individuals below 18 years old of age, only the signature of their parents (or guardians) shall represent informed consent. This ensures that the child is aware consent has been given, or withheld.

While the WCC will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that only appropriately authorised persons complete the consent form and sign the authorisation section, the WCC will not be responsible for circumstances in which it is misled as to the identity and authority of that person.

### **What happens to the consent form once it is filled out and signed?**

The consent form will be placed on the WCC Communications Department, Geneva, Switzerland. If requested, a copy of the form will be made available to the individual or the child’s parents/legal guardians.

Should you require any further information, please contact the director of communication or the Child Safeguarding Focal Point when a child is concerned:

[media@wcc-coe.org](mailto:media@wcc-coe.org) (Communication)

[childprotection@wcc-coe.org](mailto:childprotection@wcc-coe.org) (Child Safeguarding Focal Point).

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Name and first name)

grant to the World Council of Churches (WCC) permission to record my image and voice on a video, audio, photographic, or any other medium (collectively referred to as 'the recordings') digitally or physically.

I acknowledge that all publishing rights copyrights, title, and interest to the recordings will belong to the WCC.

The WCC may use my name in connection with these recordings. The WCC may also use, reproduce, exhibit or distribute in any medium (e.g. print publications, videotapes, online) these recordings for any purpose that the WCC, and those acting pursuant to its authority, deem appropriate.

These recordings, as well as the present Media Consent Form signed will be placed in the WCC Communications Department, Geneva, Switzerland.

I also allow the WCC to publish the text and/or transcript of my remarks. Publication includes print publications, videotapes and online distribution.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Nature, place and date of the recording)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the individual)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's/Guardian's signature (if the individual is a child below 18 years 'old)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Please return form to:  
World Council of Churches  
P.O. Box 2100  
CH - 1211 Geneva 2  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41.22.791.61.11  
Email: [media@wcc-coe.org](mailto:media@wcc-coe.org)