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Good Schools

Asia
Regional Hub

Joint Statement by Civil Society Actors on International Day to End Corporal Punishment of Children

On 30th April 2026, as we observe the International Day to End Corporal Punishment of Children, we, a network of Civil Society Actors (CSAs) working across South and South East Asia dedicated to addressing Violence Against Children (VAC), reaffirm our unwavering commitment to fostering safer schools, communities, and education systems where every child is valued and protected from harm. This day serves as both an opportunity for reflection and a rallying call to action, especially as we anticipate the Inter-ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children in Manila in November 2026.

Our collective experience across regions underscores a clear truth: Ending VAC cannot be achieved through top-down policy commitments alone. It must be rooted in the lived realities of children, families, and communities. Civil Society Actors, especially those working directly with children and on the front-lines, are indispensable to this effort. CSAs' role in shaping norms, delivering services, and ensuring accountability is not supplementary; it is foundational.

Recent reflections from youth-led engagements in South East Asia highlight both the urgency and the possibility of meaningful participation. Even in challenging contexts, including situations of political uncertainty and shrinking civil society spaces, young people continue to demand safe spaces where their voices are heard and acted upon. Governments have a responsibility to enable these spaces and be the primary actors, but CSAs are often the indispensable partners who make them real, accessible, and responsive.

At the same time, we recognize persistent structural barriers. CSAs continue to face limited recognition and insufficient resourcing, often positioned as implementers rather than equal partners. This imbalance undermines the effectiveness of collective efforts to prevent violence against children. Despite their critical contributions to innovation, community trust-building, and long-term social change, CSAs receive only a fraction of global funding and are too often excluded from key decision-making platforms.



We therefore call for a renewed and deliberate commitment to a tripartite partnership model — bringing together governments, multilateral agencies, and Civil Society Actors as equal stakeholders. Such collaboration must go beyond consultation to include shared leadership in agenda-setting, resource allocation, and accountability mechanisms.

In the lead-up to the Inter-ministerial Conference, we urge the following actions:

- Ensure meaningful representation of civil society, including grassroots organizations and children & youth-led groups, in all planning and decision-making processes.
- Facilitate inclusive, country-level, sub-regional/regional consultations to reflect diverse realities and priorities.
- Support the development of complementary civil society reports that highlight both progress and persistent gaps.
- Commit to transparent and equitable funding mechanisms that recognize the full value of civil society contributions.

Civil society is adaptive, responsive, and deeply embedded in the communities it serves. Its impact is visible in shifting social norms, improved child protection systems, and the empowerment of children and families worldwide. Recognizing and strengthening this role is essential to achieving sustainable, large-scale change.

As we mark this important day, we call on all stakeholders to move beyond rhetoric and toward genuine partnership. Ending corporal punishment and all forms of VAC requires courage, strong collaboration, and the full inclusion and active participation of those closest to the issue. Together, we can—and must—build a future where every child grows up free from violence and can thrive to reach their full potential.

