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Independent Expert Manfred Nowak Presents an Update
on the Global Study at the UN General Assembly

On 9 October 2018, Professor Manfred Nowak presented an update on the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty and its progress in the 2018 year. COPE has been involved in this study as an NGO focal point in the thematic research group of Children Living in Places of Detention with their Parents. This thematic research group is one of six within the study. The study was created in order to address what the UN deemed “an invisible and forgotten group in society”, children deprived of liberty. The massive costs to children, governments and societies resulting from this issue are explored in the study.

Professor Nowak’s update to the UN General Assembly addressed the study’s progress and needs following the study’s approved extension in 2017. Professor Nowak reported that: “in February 2018 a questionnaire from the Global Study was circulated to all member States and other stakeholders...” and a following reminder was sent in June 2018. The Study has since received 86 replies. He also mentioned that six consultations had been carried out with another four occurring soon. These consultations serve to address regional differences and raise awareness on the issue while simultaneously gathering information for the study. The six completed consultations included a thematic consultation in Pretoria and additional consultations in Paris, Addis Ababa, Bangkok and Warsaw. The four upcoming consultations will be in New York, Montevideo, Tunis and Jamaica and will be completed by the end of 2018. In addition to these consultations two expert meetings occurred; one in 2017 and one in 2018.

The primary challenge facing the Study has been and continues to be funding. The implementation phase of the Study was delayed due to lack of funding. The fundraising initiatives that took place worked to bring in around 1 million USD, resulting in the Study’s commencement in early 2018. Professor Nowak informed the General Assembly that there is still a need for funding and the study is operating on 1/5 of their total budget. He urged the General Assembly to ensure that financial constraints not deter the protection of children globally.

Professor Nowak made exciting predictions for the future milestones of the Study. The Study will enter its last phase, desk research, in 2019 and will constitute the majority of the work. Data will be analysed by research groups and consolidated into chapters. There will also be more expert meetings in the coming year to review all information gathered.

These meetings will also include the active involvement of children, as Professor Nowak aptly says: “they are experts in their own rights.”

Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE)

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