

**Statement during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of India in the 41st session of the UPR Working Group (7-18 November 2022) delivered by Ms. Indra Mallo, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development**

**[Geneva, 10th November 2022]**

**Mr. President,**

 I am Indra Mallo and I represent the Ministry of Women and Child Development and will address the issue of the Rights of the Child.

1.​ India is committed to ensuring the survival, protection, development and participation of children following the principle of ‘best interests of the child’.

2.​ The Constitution guarantees right to education to children between 6 to 14 years of age. In addition, the National Policy for Children of 2013 and National Plan of Action of 2016 focus on children’s access to learning, nutrition and institutional support for enabling them to grow and develop to their full potential. The school Mid-Day Meal Scheme provides nutritious food to 118 million children across 1.12 million schools.

3. ​India has one of the world’s largest outreach programme, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), which provides a package of services comprising supplementary nutrition, immunization, health checkups and referral services, pre-school non-formal education, and nutrition education. As of June 2022, there are 1.39 million operational early-education centers benefitting 77 million children from 6 months to 6 years old.

4.​ The Juvenile Justice Act of 2015 mandates a security net of service delivery structures to provide institutional and non-institutional care for children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with law through foster care, kinship-based sponsorship care, adoption and aftercare.

5.​ India has enacted stringent laws to protect children from sexual exploitation, child marriage and child labor. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act of 2012 acknowledges various kind of child sex abuse and provides stringent punishment for the same. The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act of 2006 makes child marriage a cognizable and non-bailable offence.

6. ​Under the Right to Education Act and the Juvenile Justice Act, corporal punishment is prohibited in schools and institutions.

7.​ In addition, to ensure safe cyber space for children, the IT Rules of 2011 mandate IT intermediaries such as internet, network, telecom, service providers, search engines and social media intermediaries, among others, to ensure that content harmful to minors is not displayed in anyway.

8. ​India has ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention. The Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act of 2016 prohibits employment of children.

9.​ Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act of 2005 mandates establishment of Statutory Commissions at the Centre and State levels to protect, uphold and promote child rights. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) monitors the implementation of these laws and ensure that all laws, policies, programmes related to child rights are in consonance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Constitution of India.

10.​ India remains committed to leave no child behind. Our statutory provisions and institutional mechanisms ensure that child protection and child welfare issues are addressed effectively.

**I thank you.**