

# **“Unofficial Translation”**

**In the Name of God the Compassionate and the Merciful**

## **DECLARATION**

### **“Conference on the Role of Religions and Religious Leaders in Confronting Corporal Punishment of Children in the Family and Educational Settings”**

**We, the Participants, being duly aware that:**

1. Today violence against children is increasing across the world and the physical and mental harm caused by such violence and its dire consequences on children’s development, particularly when violence is demonstrated in the form of corporal punishment, is undeniable;
2. Although efforts are being made for protection of children and reduction of violence against them, capacities of religious leaders must be appropriately utilized as well to establish the required convergence in confronting violence against children. In addition to the highly effective social role of these leaders, all divine religions include advanced and highly developed teachings for protection of children. In our religious society, the religious authorities and sources of emulation, the clergy, and leaders of other religions can assume a significantly constructive and effective role in raising the awareness of various groups of the society with regards to confronting violence against children;
3. In line with confronting violence against children, the Kyoto Declaration was issued at the Eighth World Assembly of Religions for Peace in 2006, which emphasized on the role of religious leaders in protection of children;
4. Unfortunately, in most countries across the globe, there exist various forms of violence against children in settings such as family, schools, the society, child care centres, work environments, virtual spaces, etc. However, violence in these settings can be gradually reduced through elaboration and promotion of religious viewpoints which prohibit child abuse and violence against children. Thus, holding national and international inter-religious conferences on prohibition of violence against children, with the participation of leaders of officially recognized religions in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as scholars and experts, can result in strengthening the role of religious leaders in creating a violence-free environment for children.

**Believing that:**

1. Based on teachings of all religions, due observation of human dignity and esteem, particularly that of children, and observance of the principle of the best interest of the child, are among the most important priorities. Accordingly, any form of violence against children must be prevented;
2. All children, regardless of their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, color, gender, language or membership in any specific social group, are entitled to protection against violence, and there are numerous religious teachings that recommend the entitlement of children to such rights;

3. Religious leaders have more opportunities and capabilities to create effective, wide-spread and deep-rooted awareness with regards to respecting children's dignity and the principle of the best interest of the child, as well as the negative and adverse consequences of violence against children. In addition, they are in a unique position to assume an active role in changing mindsets and approaches, and ultimately preventing and eliminating all kinds of violence against and degrading treatment of children;
4. As is clearly stipulated in the Kyoto Declaration of the World Conference of Religions for Peace 2006, "Our religions share principles of compassion, justice, love and solidarity that are great strengths in dealing with the difficult presence of violence in human society."<sup>1</sup> thus;

**We are determined:**

1. To provide the society with principle guidelines for non-violent disciplining and ways to confront all forms of violence against children in written, audio and visual formats through the mass media, holding periodic and regular conferences and workshops, and creating valuable works, and to make serious efforts for elaboration and promotion of religious teachings and viewpoints of religious leaders in this field for the purpose of raising the society's awareness in this regard;
2. To exert every effort to raise the awareness of the society and to inform religious institutions regarding the necessity to respect children's dignity, the principle of the best interest of the child, the adverse effects of any form of violence against children, and the need for serious efforts to create fundamental changes in the society's attitudes and treatment of children that result in violence in the home, family and educational settings;
3. To make efforts to expand the scope of cooperation among religions in order to confront all forms of violence against children, to help child victims of violence, and to send the common message of all religions in this respect to all human societies, using existing facilities and reasonable methods. Thus;

**We invite:**

1. All religious leaders and their followers to make efforts, based on religious teachings, to utilize all their capabilities to build the culture of respecting children's dignity and the principle of the best interest of the child, and to confront violence against children, particularly violence in the form of corporal punishment in the home and educational settings. Moreover, religious leaders and their followers should make efforts to provide the society with guidelines and solutions for confronting violence against children in written and audio and visual formats which can be disseminated through the mass media, and by holding periodic and regular conferences and workshops and creating valuable works. In addition, followers of divine religions must make serious efforts to raise awareness of societies by promoting the ideas of religious leaders on confronting violence against children;
2. Followers of religions to be more diligent in protection of such divine blessings and, in order to bring up a calm, healthy, pure and responsible generation, to refrain from using corporal punishment, and to pay adequate attention to modern tools for child upbringing

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<sup>1</sup>A Multi-Religious Commitment to Confront Violence against Children, Eight World Assembly of Religions for Peace, Kyoto 2006.

and development; as, in religious traditions, corporal punishment has not been recognized as an effective method of child rearing;

3. All guardians and custodians of home and school settings to make use of modern violence-free educational methods and to make every effort to confront corporal punishment in these settings as, based on the viewpoint of divine religions, home and school are considered as two sacred and fundamental pillars of the society, and children spend most of their time in these two settings;
4. All official entities, particularly concerned government organizations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, to confront violence against children by adopting prudent measures based on teachings of Islam, as well as dynamic and efficient ideas and thoughts of scholars, religious leaders and domestic laws and, additionally, to make use of provisions of internationally accepted conventions and to pay more attention to them– bearing in mind the emphasis that divine religions, particularly Islam, place on delivering promises, and ratification of several relevant international treaties, including the Convention of the Rights of Child, by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Qom – October 20, 2011