

Resolution 1

BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING IN SCHOOLS

Proposed by: Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)

Seconded by: Mexican Federation of University Women (FEMU)

The 32nd GWI General Assembly wishes to reaffirm Resolution 1998/9 and resolves that:

- 1. National Federations and Associations (NFAs) urge their respective governments and ministries to raise public awareness on the detrimental effect of bullying and cyberbullying, uphold the legal remedies already in place, and advocate for such policies where there are none;**
- 2. NFAs advocate for educational institutions to establish or develop programmes which train educators and counsellors to recognise bullying and cyberbullying, and address the issue by integrating appropriate training into their core curriculum and ongoing professional development; and**
- 3. NFAs encourage institutions to provide educational programmes for parents and guardians to recognize, understand, support and teach anti-bullying strategies.**

Suggested Plan of Action

1. NFAs should investigate whether anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying programmes and resources are available in local school settings and included in the curriculum
2. NFAs should investigate what legal remedies are in place locally
3. NFAs should make themselves aware what training on the subject is available to staff and teachers in their area
4. NFAs should encourage the use of media to raise public awareness of the issue and sources for help
5. GWI should use its consultative status to raise awareness among other NGOs and international bodies

6. NFAs should advocate for legal remedies and programmes if none are available and the continuation and enhancement of ones that are in place

Supporting Statement:

GWJ Resolution Violence at School (1998, No. 9) mentioned bullying in a list of many forms of violence but this resolution deals specifically with the issue of bullying and its new adjunct-cyberbullying. Bullying is defined as the repeated domination and harming of another by coercive and aggressive means which use physical, verbal and psychological tactics. This is the result of a situation where an imbalance of power leads to a stronger person or persons taking advantage of a weaker person by being deliberately mean, harassing and/or threatening. With the expansion of information technology, cyberbullying is used to carry out bullying over electronic media such as the computer and cellular telephones where derogatory information, photographs and/or videos are posted via the internet by e-mails, text messages and social media for all to see. Research indicates that the majority of young people who bully online also bully others in person.

Cyberbullying, a more recent form of bullying, has become a fast growing problem in our society and though laws exist in certain areas, many places still do not have specific legislation to combat the problems ensuing from cyberbullying.

Some bullying actions are considered criminal, such as harassment or hazing; but bullying alone is not illegal. Various studies cited by the Government of Australia in June 2014, place the range of victimisation rate for cyberbullying from 6% to 40 % of young people. Recent news stories abound with tales of cyberbullying that have resulted in victims 'suicides.

Education at all levels is the primary line of defense that must be used to bring about meaningful change and aid in the understanding of the power of a new technology and the laws that must govern its responsible use. Educating students to use technology wisely and to realise that technology can be an instrument of serious harm is vital. It is also imperative that this education starts at a young age and progress is made in an age-appropriate manner.

Teachers need to be trained not only to teach students the subject matter but also appropriate behaviour. Teachers must also be educated to identify early signs of bullying and cyberbullying, and the procedures necessary to address the issues, confront the perpetrator(s) and comfort and help the bullied. Programmes are needed not only for students but also for parents.

The above measures are important in order to meet obligations under Article 19, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Convention affirms that states have an obligation to take all appropriate measures (whether legislative, administrative, social or educational) to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has stated that Article 19 applies to: "Psychological bullying and hazing by adults or other children, including via information and

communication technologies (ICTs) such as mobile phones and the Internet (known as 'cyberbullying')."

REFERENCES:

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<http://publications.mcgill.ca/droit/2012/09/11/cyberbullying/>

<http://www.unicef.org/crc/>