



Global Initiative to
**End All Corporal Punishment
of Children**

MARSHALL ISLANDS

BRIEFING FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW – 9th session, 2010

From Peter Newell, Coordinator, Global Initiative

info@endcorporalpunishment.org

Corporal punishment of children breaches their rights to respect for human dignity and physical integrity and to equal protection under the law. It is recognised by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and other treaty bodies, as well as by the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children, as a highly significant issue, both for asserting children's status as rights holders and for the prevention of all forms of violence.

The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (www.endcorporalpunishment.org) has been regularly briefing the Committee on the Rights of the Child on this issue since 2002, and since 2004 has similarly briefed the Committee Against Torture, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Human Rights Committee. There is growing progress now across all regions in challenging this very common form of violence against children. But we are concerned that many States persist in ignoring treaty body recommendations to prohibit and eliminate all corporal punishment. We hope that the UPR Process will give particular attention to states' response, or lack of response, to the concluding observations from treaty bodies, on this and other key issues.

In June 2006, the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted General Comment No. 8 on "The right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment", which emphasises the immediate obligation on states parties to prohibit all corporal punishment of children, including within the home. Other treaty bodies, and regional human rights mechanisms, have condemned all corporal punishment. In October 2006, the report of the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children was submitted to the General Assembly. It recommends universal prohibition of all corporal punishment as a matter of priority.

Summary

This briefing describes the legality of corporal punishment of children in Marshall Islands despite the repeated recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. We hope the Review will highlight the importance of prohibition of all corporal punishment of children, including within the family home, and strongly recommend that the government enact and implement legislation to ensure complete prohibition.

1 Legality of corporal punishment in Marshall Islands

1.1 Corporal punishment is lawful in the **home**. Provisions in the Child Abuse and Neglect Act (1991), the Domestic Relations Act (1966, amended 2002) and the Criminal Code (1966, amended 2005) are not interpreted as prohibiting corporal punishment in childrearing.

1.2 Corporal punishment is prohibited in **schools** by the Rules and Regulations of the Ministry of Education (1992).

1.3 In the **penal system**, corporal punishment is unlawful as a sentence for crime. It is reportedly prohibited as a disciplinary measure in penal institutions under the amended Criminal Code, but we have been unable to verify this. The Criminal Procedure Code and the Juvenile Procedure Code make no provision for corporal punishment.

1.4 Corporal punishment is lawful in **alternative care settings**.

2 Recommendations by human rights treaty monitoring bodies

2.1 The **Committee on the Rights of the Child** has twice recommended that legislation be enacted to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment of children in all settings in the Marshall Islands, including within the family – in 2000 (CRC/C/15/Add.139, Concluding observations on initial report, para. 37) and in 2007 (CRC/C/MHL/CO/2, Concluding observations on second report, para. 42).