



MEDIA RELEASE

World-first ISO Requirements for child-friendly services for victims of violence launched today during the 58th Human Rights Council

- Coinciding with the Human Rights Council's agenda focus, 'violence against children', the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has today launched the world's first **Requirements and recommendations for child-friendly multidisciplinary and interagency response services for children who are victims of violence**.
- With over one billion people experiencing violence during childhood, the new ISO initiative seeks to transform the way child victims receive care, justice and protection.
- Launched jointly with the Permanent Mission of Iceland at the 58th Human Rights Council, these groundbreaking international requirements set a new global benchmark for child-friendly services.

MEDIA ALERT: Media are invited to attend for interview, filming and photograph opportunities:

WHAT	Launch of new ISO Requirements for child-friendly services for victims of violence during the 58th Session of the Human Rights Council
WHEN	Wednesday 12 March, 13:00 – 14:00
WHERE	Palais des Nations, Room XXIV
WHO	Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Jürg Lauber, Ambassador & President of the Human Rights Council Speakers include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Matthew McVarish, Co-Founder of the Brave Movement• Erna Kristín Blöndal, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Children, Iceland• Sergio Mujica, ISO Secretary-General• Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid, UN SR SG Violence against Children• H.E. Sylvie Bollini, Council of Europe• Regina De Dominicis, UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia
CONTACT	Katie Clift, ISO Public Relations, +351 913 976 202 Catherine Infante, ISO Communications and Engagement, +41 79 307 0522

Geneva, Switzerland | 12 March 2025 – In a historic move to combat the global crisis of violence against children, ISO has today unveiled the world's first **Requirements and recommendations for child-friendly multidisciplinary and interagency response services for children who are victims of violence**.

Announced jointly with the Permanent Mission of Iceland during the 58th United Nations Human Rights Council, the new initiative aims to transform the way child victims receive care, protection and justice.

UNICEF estimates that over one billion people experienced violence during childhood. Every four minutes, a child dies due to violence somewhere in the world. 650 million girls and women – one in five – live with the trauma of sexual abuse. The consequences of such violence are devastating and lifelong, affecting brain development, mental and physical health, and a child's ability to learn.

To address this critical issue, ISO proudly developed the first-ever **global guidelines for child-friendly services for victims of violence**, to enhance support and protection through a holistic and child-centred approach, providing internationally recognized standards for a coordinated response.



Permanent Mission of Iceland
Geneva

ISO Secretary-General Sergio Mujica said at its core, the initiative sought to uphold and advance the human rights of children.

“With these new **international requirements**, ISO is establishing a global approach that ensures child victims receive the compassionate, coordinated support they need, without being retraumatized by the very systems meant to help them,” Mr Mujica said.

“The requirements establish a consistent global baseline for multidisciplinary and interagency services, ensuring that child protection efforts meet a high standard worldwide while allowing for adaptability to different legal, cultural, and social environments.

“These recommendations enable governments and frontline services, from social workers to law enforcement, healthcare professionals and legal entities, to collaborate efficiently, ensuring a global, standardized response to child victims of violence and abuse.

“We are proud to launch the requirements today at the 58th United Nations Human Rights Council. Importantly, the guidelines have been developed with the input of child abuse survivors, children, and key global partners, making it a truly inclusive approach for addressing violence against children.”

Development of the important guidelines was proposed by the Ministry of Education and Children of Iceland, **a member of the Human Rights Council**, and led by ISO members Icelandic Standards (IST) and Swedish Institute for Standards (SIS). It involved the active participation of more than 100 contributors including the Icelandic Government, UNICEF, the Council of Europe, Europol, Eurojust, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children.

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Children, Iceland, Ms. Erna Kristín Blöndal, said Iceland led the proposal for the standardization of the requirements for child-friendly services for victims of violence.

“These recommendations are rooted in the Icelandic Barnahús (Children’s House) model, which provides a child-friendly, multidisciplinary, and interagency approach to support children who are victims or witnesses of violence,” Ms Blöndal said.

“While this model has been widely adopted and endorsed by prominent international organizations, inconsistencies in its implementation across countries have emerged in recent years.

“The launch of today’s guidelines seeks to address these disparities by developing internationally recognized guidelines to harmonize the implementation of the Barnahús model, with the potential to incorporate conformity assessment processes in the future.

“Our hope is that this development will address challenges posed by fragmented services and emphasize the importance of integrated, holistic approaches to safeguarding children from further harm.”

UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, Regina De Dominicis, said, “Violence against children is pervasive, and the consequences are lifelong. Yet, the services and support children affected by violence receive are often substandard, compounding children’s trauma.

“This universal framework for child-friendly services has the power to change this through standardization of child protection models like Barnahús, ensuring that every child receives the same level of quality care and protection.”



Permanent Mission of Iceland
Geneva

The development of the recommendations was a truly inclusive process, shaped by the voices of children and survivors. Through workshops led by Samfés in Iceland, child and survivor insights were directly incorporated, ensuring the final requirements reflect real-life experiences and needs.

The initiative also reinforces global commitments to child protection, aligning with the United Nations **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** – notably Target 16.2, which seeks to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children, and Target 16.3, which promotes equal access to justice for all.

The new requirements are freely available for download via <https://www.iso.org/standard/89302.html>.

More information about ISO is available at www.iso.org.

ENDS

For more information or interviews, please contact:

Katie Clift
Public Relations, ISO
+351 913 976 202

press@iso.org / ext-clift@iso.org

Vanessa Von der Mühl
Head of Communications & Engagement, ISO
+41 79 842 97 34

vondermuhl@iso.org

About ISO:

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 170 national standards bodies. Through its global network, it facilitates the development of voluntary and market-relevant International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges. ISO has published more than 25 000 International Standards and related documents covering almost every industry, from technology to food safety, to agriculture and healthcare.

About the Permanent Mission of Iceland:

The Permanent Mission represents Iceland at the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the United Nations Office and agencies, as well as other international organisations located in Geneva. The Mission serves as the Embassy of Iceland to Switzerland, Liechtenstein and the Holy See.