



STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION

Revised: Apr. 16, 2008

INTRODUCTION

Concern for children is the cornerstone upon which Compassion International has been built.

We are opposed to all forms of child abuse and exploitation and will do everything within our power to ensure that no harm comes to any child registered in our program due to his or her involvement in the ministry of COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL.

It is the policy and expectation of Compassion International to protect children in our programs from abuse by instituting reasonable guidelines and procedures to direct the interactions of Compassion International staff, partners, sponsors and other visitors with registered children.

DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE

Compassion International adheres to the World Health Organization [WHO, 1999] definition of child abuse: "Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power."

ACTIVE PREVENTION AND IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

In support of Christ's mandate to care for and protect children, Compassion International is committed to safeguarding children in our programs from all forms of abuse and exploitation. In partnership with local churches, we do this by:

- Providing a positive and safe environment where children can learn and develop to their fullest potential
- Engaging the active commitment of the caring adults who surround the children to care for them with dignity, respect and integrity at all times
- Preventing and/or reducing the risks of the incidence of abuse through enforcing child protection policies, strategies and procedures.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES

We believe that all of Compassion International's staff and church partners and the vast majority of our sponsors and donors share and support the Organizations' values of respecting and caring for children. But we must regrettably acknowledge that some people might seek to use our child sponsorship program to gain access to children for inappropriate purposes. In response, the following policies have been developed to direct all interactions of assisted children among Compassion employees, church project staff, project visitors and sponsors.

- Child Protection – Employee Interactions with Compassion-assisted Children
- Child Protection – Project Staff Interactions with Compassion-Assisted Children
- Appropriate Visitor and Child Interactions
- Allegations of Child Abuse against an Employee
- Travel of a Young Person Outside of their Home Country
- Travel of Sponsored Children to Visit Donors Outside of their Home Country

COMPONENTS OF CHILD PROTECTION IMPLEMENTATION

- **Training and Education** – All Compassion employees, church partner staff and Volunteers, and Compassion – assisted children will receive training on the principles and guidelines of child protection.
- **Screening and Recruitment** – All Compassion employees and job applicants at the Compassion-assisted church projects and volunteers will undergo appropriate character reference checks before hiring.
- **Local Plan of Action** – All Compassion field offices and all Compassion-assisted church partners will develop a local plan of action on child protection which includes both prevention and response to allegation of child abuse.. Compassion field offices and church partners will designate Child Protection Coordinators to manage the implementation of local plans of action.
- **Child Visitation Guidelines** – Visitors to Compassion sponsorship projects will be informed of child protection measures prior to receiving approval to visit any of the church-based projects and assisted children. Guidelines will be made available through brochures and the Compassion website.
- **Communication** – Compassion is committed to child protection in its publicity and external communications. All communications shall seek to preserve the child's dignity and protect each family's privacy.
- **Allegations of Child Abuse** – All complaints of child abuse will be handled with strict confidentiality and investigated immediately. We will thoroughly investigate every allegation of child abuse against a Compassion employee and make a determination about the validity of the allegation. Church partners will likewise develop a local plan of action to respond to allegation of abuse by their staff or volunteers.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Compassion staff, sponsors and local church partners shall sign and adhere to a code of conduct and behavior that defines appropriate behavior and interactions with Compassion-assisted children.

The following guidelines shall be observed and practiced by Compassion Officers and Employees, Local Project Staff and Volunteers, Church Leaders, Sponsors and Donors, and Project Visitors

- I will promote proper respect and dignity for all children, and will demonstrate Christian love and care to them, regardless of their race, gender, age, religion or disability, social background and culture.
- I will never act in ways that will shame, humiliate, or perpetrate any form of verbal, emotional, sexual or physical abuse on a child.
- I will promote the enforcement of disciplinary measures that: are based on Biblical principles of dignity and value of children, teach children responsibility, and reflect reasonable expectations for the age of the child.
- I will never use inappropriate language, physically strike children, or develop physical or sexual relationships with them.
- I will not be alone or traveling alone with a child. I will be engaged in children's activities in open or visible places.
- I will not solicit a dating relationship with a Compassion-assisted child or youth.
- I recognize that I may face substantial adverse consequences for breach of this code of conduct.
- I am aware that allegations of abuse will be reviewed and, as determined necessary by Compassion, investigated. I recognize that, if I violate this code of conduct, I may be subject to applicable local laws and to organizational disciplinary measures.

PLEDGE OF COMMITMENT

[This pledge shall be made by all Compassion Employees and Local Church Partner Officers, Staff and Volunteers.]

I, _____, have read and understood Compassion's Statement of Commitment to Child Protection, including the Code of Conduct.

I acknowledge that this Commitment states Compassion's expectations of me in my service and/or association with Compassion. With my signature affixed herein, I agree to abide by this Commitment.

NAME: _____

JOB TITLE/POSITION: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____