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Strengthening Safe from Harm in the Scout Movement

Support Document for Draft Resolution 2021-D
and Constitutional Amendment 01

by World Scout Committee



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Conference**
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SCOUTS
Creating a Better World

Strengthening Safe from Harm in the Scout Movement

by World Scout Committee

This Conference Document presents the background information on Keeping Scouts Safe from Harm since 1990; explains how the World Safe from Harm Policy facilitates the development and implementation of necessary policies and procedures across the Scout Movement; emphasises the need to significantly strengthen Safe from Harm compliance and support to Member Organizations; and presents the progress made to date and proposed actions for the future to reach this strengthened approach to Safe from Harm across the Scout Movement.

Conference proposal: Draft Resolution 2021-D Constitutional Amendment 01

Related document: Conference Document 4A
Conference Document 7A

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This is important for the Scout Movement as it aspires to be the world's leading educational youth movement. Through making a strong declaration and positioning Safe from Harm as a matter of highest priority, Scouting will be well positioned to be a global leader in child and youth protection practices.

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Languages

The official languages of the World Organization are English and French. The World Scout Bureau will make all Conference Documents available in both languages. When possible, it endeavours to make them available also in Arabic, Russian and Spanish - the three additional working languages of WOSM. In the event of a conflict arising out of the interpretation of this Conference Document or any other official document of the World Organization, the English text shall prevail.

1. Safe from Harm as World Scouting's main priority

World Scouting is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all young people in the Scout Movement, and beyond. A safe environment enables the self-development of young people, as well as the creation of positive and healthy interpersonal relationships between all.

Dr Najat Maalla M'jid, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children, during their visit to the 24th World Scout Jamboree in 2019 said:

"Safe from Harm is a very important initiative developed in the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) to help to protect children, Scouts from violence and other harm. It is what will make it possible to inspire others to reach the ultimate goal of ending violence against children in the next ten years."

2. Background

The importance of keeping children and young people safe has a long history in the Scout Movement. Here is a summary of some of the key milestones and actions taken.

A vertical timeline with purple circular markers for each year, containing text boxes with key milestones and actions taken.

- 1990**
 - Adoption of Conference Resolution 1990-16: Convention on the Rights of the Child.
 - National Scout Organizations (NSOs) were invited to play an active role in encouraging their Governments to ratify the Convention.
 - NSOs were encouraged to find creative means to familiarize their adult leaders with the articles of the Convention to better understand the needs of children and young people.
- 2002**
 - Adoption of Conference Resolution 2002-07: Keeping Scouts Safe from Harm.
 - Highlighting the importance of NSOs having policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of young people, including the need for a comprehensive approach to Safe from Harm through their youth programme, adult leadership and management of the NSO.
 - Several developments at World, Regional and National levels have since contributed to the implementation of this Conference Resolution.
- 2007**
 - Mandatory training for all adult staff and volunteers attending World Scout Jamborees was first established for the Jamboree in the United Kingdom. This training is now a requirement in the World Event hosting guidelines.
 - Online training prepares adults to handle various event scenarios regarding Safe from Harm.
- 2015**
 - WOSM's Child and Youth Protection Position Paper was published.
 - The principles outlined in the position paper are used to guide work on Safe from Harm in the Scout Movement and supported the development of the World Safe from Harm Policy.
- 2017**
 - Adoption of Conference Resolution 2017-05: World Safe from Harm Policy.
- 2019**
 - Establishment of the WOSM Service on Safe from Harm providing resources and expert consultants to offer tailored support to NSOs.

3. World Safe from Harm Policy

The aim of the World Safe from Harm Policy is to facilitate the development and implementation of necessary policies and procedures at national level to create a safe environment for all children and young people within the Scout Movement. It strives to ensure that appropriate support mechanisms are in place in NSOs, to facilitate proper promotion and development of National Safe from Harm policies, strategies and procedures. The World Safe from Harm Policy sets a minimum level of implementation

around prevention and reaction, consistent with the expected performance of NSOs regarding Safe from Harm and should complement other national policies, strategies and procedures.

In addition, the World Scout Youth Programme Policy and the World Adults in Scouting Policy include specific elements to raise the safety of children, young people and adults within the Scout Movement. These elements are an integral part of the implementation of National Youth Programmes and in the areas of adult recruitment, appointment, training, support and retention.

4. Making Safe from Harm an obligation

The topic of child and youth protection has received growing attention in recent years, with examples in several NSOs reminding us that these situations can negatively impact both the reputation and survival of NSOs and the Scout Movement globally. This proves that it is the critical moment to take action in implementing the World Safe from Harm Policy to keep young people in Scouting Safe from Harm. Additionally, as Scouting aspires to be the world's leading educational youth movement, this comes with the clear requirement to be a global leader in child and youth protection practices.

By mandating compliance with Safe from Harm as a constitutional membership criterion (V.5)¹, the World Scout Committee wishes to make it clear that it is compulsory for all Member Organizations to comply with their country's national child and youth protection laws and laws towards the safety of adults. A Constitutional Amendment would further create a clear mechanism to enforce compliance with the World Safe from Harm Policy.

The first two objectives highlighted through the Draft Resolution on Safe from Harm need to be implemented over the coming triennium. This will significantly strengthen the capacity of NSOs worldwide in the area of Safe from Harm (objective 1) and establish a systematic assessment mechanism for compliance against the World Safe from Harm Policy (objective 2). The Draft Resolution then proposes that the Constitutional requirement on Safe from Harm be enforced as of 2025.

It is important to note that Constitutional Amendment 01 and Draft Resolution 2021-D stand on their own terms, with the Draft Resolution continuing to highlight the critical importance of this area of work and compliance of Member Organizations with the World Safe from Harm Policy.

5. Objectives for strengthening Safe from Harm

Despite the adoption of the World Safe from Harm Policy, research shows that many NSOs are not currently meeting the criteria of this policy. According to our data from February 2021, only 50 out of 223 NSOs and National Scout Associations (NSAs) have a Safe from Harm Policy in place and 20 are developing one with support through WOSM Services.

As such, it is recognised that many NSOs need to significantly strengthen their capacity to be able to comply with the criteria set out in the World Safe from Harm Policy. World Scouting is prepared through the following four objectives to substantially progress and strengthen its support to NSOs in this important area of work.

Objective 1 – Strengthen WOSM's Safe from Harm support to NSOs to assist implementation of policies and procedures at national level

This objective focuses on raising awareness, building partnerships and embedding Safe from Harm in NSOs through their Youth Programme and across all areas of work.

Key Successes:

- Established a WOSM Service in 2019 with trained consultants to provide direct support to NSOs.
- Development of WOSM Service resources to strengthen support for NSOs, such as the Safe from Harm Self-Assessment Tool and the National Safe from Harm Policy Guidelines.
- Development of Safe from Harm eLearning modules for adults to develop in the area of understanding and mitigating issues in Scouting and local communities.
- Development of the Safe from Harm framework for the Youth Programme providing educational material such as the Anti-Bullying Toolkit and the Online Safety Toolkit.

¹ New and existing Member Organizations and Accredited National Scout Organizations would be obliged to comply with the Constitutional Amendment if approved, based on Article VII 3.a of the Constitution of WOSM stating that "Member Organizations shall have the following obligations: (a) Continued acceptance of and conformity with the requirements of the Constitution of the World Organization."

- Conducting various activities and workshops on Safe from Harm at events, including the Better World Tent and the Global Development Village of the 24th World Scout Jamboree (2019), World Scout Academy (2020) and Jamboree-on-the-Air and Jamboree-on-the-Internet (JOTA-JOTI).
- Providing support through the WOSM Ethics Committee to Regions and NSOs on guidance for handling Safe from Harm and ethical issues.

For the future:

- Translate all Safe from Harm materials to WOSM’s working languages and provide assistance for translation into other languages.
- Continue organising World and Regional events and initiatives to further strengthen support to NSOs, such as meetings and training events for NSO Safe from Harm coordinators.
- Provide support to Regional Events including Jamborees, Conferences and Safe from Harm dedicated events to ensure alignment across World Scouting.
- Use established World Events as catalysts for furthering discussions on Safe from Harm (eg JOTA-JOTI, World Scout Moot 2022, World Scout Jamboree 2023).
- Communicating the importance of promoting the need to keep all young people Safe from Harm as a global priority at every opportunity both within and outside the Scout Movement.
- Actively promoting effective practices used by NSOs to implement policies and procedures.

Objective 2 – Bring all NSOs into compliance with member obligations in Safe from Harm and create a process for compliance tracking

This objective focuses on setting in place a process for regular reporting from NSOs to monitor Safe from Harm compliance. The criteria for Safe from Harm compliance will be based on the criteria set out in the World Safe from Harm Policy.

Key Successes:

- Training WOSM Consultants in all Regions for the Safe from Harm WOSM Service to provide a strong foundation of support and expertise for NSOs in their efforts to comply with the World Safe from Harm Policy.
- Establishment of the NSO role of National Safe from Harm Coordinator.
- Research conducted on other international organisations membership compliance and reflecting on a realistic compliance tool for all NSOs.

For the future:

- Promote all existing materials and processes, and increase support through WOSM Services to ensure that NSOs can effectively become fully compliant with the World Safe from Harm Policy in all areas covered by the policy
- Put in place over the next triennium a clear assessment process, building on the best practice of World Scouting’s Quality Standard - GSAT, to monitor compliance in Safe from Harm.
- Strengthen partnerships with relevant international organisations on child protection, enabling NSOs to benefit from these partnerships at national and local level.

Objective 3 – Ensure WOSM continues to implement Safe from Harm policies and procedures based on international best practices

The focus of this objective is to ensure World Scouting itself leads by example in implementing Safe from Harm and proposing approaches to assist in compliance with existing processes.

Key successes:

- Development and delivery of Safe from Harm eLearning for WOSM Volunteers and staff, and for key World and Regional Events.
- Development of procedures and designating a team to oversee online safety of participants during JOTA-JOTI 2019 and online events in the improvement of these procedures through the JOTI Special Edition 2020 and JOTA-JOTI 2020.
- Having Codes of Conduct and Safe from Harm procedures for World and Regional events, such as for the World Scout Academy and the Youth Dialogues, including establishing such procedures for the first time for the 42nd World Scout Conference and 14th World Scout Youth Forum.
- Introduction of the WOSM Code of Conduct and the WOSM Ethics Committee providing oversight of its procedural compliance.
- Creation of internal WOSM Safe from Harm Procedures to support all WOSM staff and volunteers in identifying and flagging a Safe from Harm situation during meetings, training, workshops or events.

- The establishment of two major partnerships with the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children and the Civil Society Organization Forum to End Violence Against Children to increase visibility and exchange ideas on Safe from Harm practices.
- Knowledge sharing with other international Non-Governmental Organisations such as the Big 6 Youth Organisations.
- Finalise the inclusion of Safe from Harm in the World Scout Event Guidelines.

For the future:

- Develop a support network to enable the Scout Movement to be recognised as a global leader when facing a child and youth protection situation.
- Develop further support tools for Hosts of World Events.
- Partner with international organisations to share knowledge, support others, improve procedures at national and international level.
- Strengthen partnerships with relevant international organisations on child and youth protection, enabling NSOs to benefit from these at national and local level.

Objective 4 - Establishing a clear and aligned communications approach between WOSM and NSOs on Safe from Harm messaging and crisis management

Through this objective, the focus will be on building capacity in crisis communication and supporting NSOs affected by breaches of Safe from Harm with effective messaging through building communication strategies.

Key successes:

- Facilitating direct communications between World Scouting NSOs to derive mutual support and sharing of best practice, particularly on crisis communication.
- Consultations with some of the NSOs most affected by the issue of Safe from Harm to assess what further steps could be supported in legal and crisis communication.
- Creating a crisis communication plan and establishing a crisis management team within World Scouting to support crisis management.
- Focusing our global communications to show Scouting as a safe environment for young people and to ensure this image gets translated in local messaging.
- Highlighting Safe from Harm content through social media, campaigns and videos.
- Training of Safe from Harm and Communication consultants about crisis communication.
- Training on crisis communication delivered to NSOs during the World Scout Academy and for members of the Global Communications Network.

For the future:

- Further support in creating effective positive messaging (Safe Scouting) and templates for crisis communications to enable the Scout Movement to be more agile in ensuring that positive messages reinforce Scouting as a safe environment for all its members.
- Build NSO capacity to handle crisis communications and reputation management.
- Implement the crisis communications plan and train the crisis management team to respond to emerging issues.
- Provide media and spokesperson training to respond and speak out on Safe from Harm issues.
- Strengthen relationships with new and existing partners and donors to identify funding opportunities for Safe from Harm initiatives.