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Oral Statement by the Friends' World Committee for Consultation (Quakers), an international non-governmental organization in General Consultative Status with ECOSOC

Delivered by Haifa Rashed, Quaker UN Office, Geneva, on 14 September 2012.

Children of Parents Executed or Sentenced to Death

Friends' World Committee for Consultation (Quakers) welcomes the report of the UN Secretary-General on the Question of the death penalty (A/HRC/21/29). In particular, we welcome the fact that this is the first time such a report includes the children of those who are sentenced to death or executed (paras. 48 and 53).

The Secretary-General's report refers to the Committee on the Rights of the Child's Day of General Discussion in 2011 on Children of Incarcerated Parents, during which the issue of children affected by a parent's involvement with the capital justice system was raised. The report also highlights the adoption (without a vote) of the Human Rights Council's Rights of the Child resolution 19/37 on 23 March 2012¹ which included key provisions on children of incarcerated parents, specifically including children of parents incarcerated on death row.

The Quaker UN Office, Geneva, has published a booklet about *Children of Parents Sentenced to Death*² which highlights that parental execution or death sentence can have severe and long-lasting effects on children and that this is also a seriously neglected issue. In

1 Resolution 19/37, paras. 66-69, encourages States to collect statistics on children of incarcerated parents, acknowledging that they are often a neglected group. It calls on States to give detailed consideration to the rights and needs of these children, and to ensure that children whose parents or parental caregivers are on death row, the inmates themselves, their families and their legal representatives are provided, in advance, with adequate information about a pending execution, its date, time and location. They are to allow a last visit or communication with the convicted person, the return of the body to the family for burial or to inform on where the body is located, unless this is not in the best interests of the child.

2 Helen F Kearney : *Children of Parents Sentenced to Death* (Quaker UN Office, Geneva, February 2012) available in English, French and Spanish from www.quno.org

order to supplement the limited information on the subject, the Quaker UN Office has recently sent questionnaires to all Missions to the UN in Geneva requesting information on States' efforts to support these children, both materially (such as alternative care in cases where a parent's death sentence means that the child is left homeless), and in terms of psychosocial support to address trauma and grief. This questionnaire has been addressed to all States because this is an issue affecting children in many countries, including where a foreign national parent has been convicted abroad of a drugs-related or other offence and sentenced to death. We thank those States who have already responded and look forward to additional replies.

FWCC (Quakers) calls on all States who retain the death penalty or whose nationals are sentenced to death or executed in another country, to give greater attention to the impact on and needs of the children where the person concerned is a parent, and to encourage more research into the needs of such children and the short- and long-term impacts on them.

Thank you.