



REPORT

APPASYMPOSIUM ON CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFETY  
16<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2023

# 25th Scientific Conference of the Sri Lanka College of Pediatricians

## Introduction

The 25th Scientific Conference of the Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians featured a thought-provoking symposium on Child Protection and Safety. Prof Iqbal Memon President Asia Pacific Paediatric Association (APPA) opened the symposium. He thanked the Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians and the APPA Technical Advisory Group on Child Rights & Environment and Child Health for organizing this important symposium.

The symposium was aimed to address various aspects surrounding child protection, including the establishment of child protection services, the challenges faced by low and middle-income countries, the impact of natural disasters, and the effects of climate change on child health. Four papers were presented, covering diverse topics related to child protection. This report provides a summary of each paper and the key points discussed

### **PAPER TITLE: "SETTING UP OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES IN SRI LANKA-STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN IMPLEMENTATION"**

**Presenter: Prof. Harendra De Silva**

Prof. Harendra De Silva presented a comprehensive paper on the establishment of child protection services in Sri Lanka. The paper highlighted the establishment of Presidential Task Force and National Child Protection authority, amendments in legal framework, institutional setup, and policies necessary for safeguarding the well-being and rights of children. Prof. De Silva discussed the initiatives taken to create an effective child protection system in Sri Lanka and shared insights into the challenges faced and potential solutions. He said that the initiative took a flying start in the beginning but faltered with the passage of time. He said that lack of resources, lack of professionalism couples with the resistance to change and the perceived threat to territory of individuals were the main reason behind failure.



**PAPER TITLE: "SETTING UP CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM IN LOW AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES: INDIAN EXPERIENCE".**

**Presenter: Dr Rajeev Seth (India)**

Summary: Rajeev Seth from India delivered an enlightening presentation on setting up child protection systems in low and middle-income countries. Citing the Indian experience, the paper shed light on the unique challenges faced by these nations in establishing effective child protection frameworks. Dr. Seth discussed strategies, best practices, and innovative approaches to ensure the safety and well-being of children in resource-constrained settings. The presentation provided valuable insights for countries grappling with limited resources and highlighted the importance of collaboration and knowledge sharing.



**PAPER TITLE: "CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS EFFECT ON CHILD HEALTH" PRESENTER:**

**Dr Kurniwan Taufiq Kadafi (Indonesia)**

Summary: Dr. Kurniwan Taufiq Kadafi presented an insightful paper on the effects of climate change on child health. Dr Kadafi said that children as a group of individuals are more susceptible to climate change and the resulting natural disasters. This is because children have unique characteristics that are different from adults. These characteristics include the unique anatomy and physiology of children that makes them more susceptible to experiencing emergency situations such as dehydration and hypovolemic shock if there is an outbreak of diarrhea while staying in a relief camp. The paper highlighted the various health risks posed by climate change, including increased prevalence of infectious diseases, malnutrition, and mental health challenges.



Dr. Kadafi emphasized the importance of understanding and addressing these impacts within the context of child protection. The presentation discussed potential strategies for adaptation, resilience-building, and advocacy to protect the health and well-being of children in the face of climate change.

**PAPER TITLE: "CHILD PROTECTION IN NATURAL DISASTERS"**

**Presenters: Dr. Tufail Muhammad and Dr. Naeem Zafar (Pakistan)**

Summary: Dr. Tufail Muhammad and Dr. Naeem Zafar jointly presented a paper on the critical topic of child protection in natural disasters. Their presentation explored the specific vulnerabilities and risks that children face during such events and the importance of developing disaster management plans with a strong focus on child protection. They told that the main challenges during natural disasters are physical safety and wellbeing, separation of children from families, protection from abuse and exploitation, access to education and health care and lack of resources. The presenters shared experiences and lessons learned from Pakistan with a special focus on establishment of child friendly spaces. They also highlighted the importance of disaster preparedness and other strategies to mitigate the impact of natural disasters on children and enhance their protection in emergency situations.



## CONCLUSION

The symposium on Child Protection at the 25th Scientific Conference of the Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians provided a platform for sharing knowledge, experiences, and innovative ideas related to the protection of children. The papers presented by esteemed speakers from Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, and Indonesia shed light on crucial aspects of child protection, ranging from establishing effective systems to addressing the impact of natural disasters and climate change. The symposium offered valuable insights for pediatricians, policymakers, and stakeholders, emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts and evidence-based approaches to ensure the safety, well-being, and rights of children in diverse contexts.

