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Some children are affected directly by violence and are the victims of criminal child abuse. Many more are affected indirectly and grow up in homes where violence is practised.

The responsibility for coordinating the Norwegian Government's efforts to combat violence in close relationships lies with the Ministry of Justice and the Police. However, there are a number of issues involved, which cannot be solved with the use of criminal policy instruments alone. An effective fight against violence requires close cooperation with other central government authorities with responsibility for health, social welfare and gender equality issues.

I was listening to Kristinn Johannesson with great interest. We; the nordic neighbours; do listen, AND learn of each other. It was by looking to Iceland that the Norwegian government decided to establish Children's Advocacy Centres. These Centres; or Children's Houses, as we call them, is based on the knowledge that we can not give the responsibility to the police and the court system alone.

This arrangement involves giving the child a single place to relate to; in the several relevant functions are gathered in one place. The arrangement includes interviewing, medical examination, and treatment of children who has been subjected to sexual abuse or violence or have witnessed domestic violence. The measure gives children a better integrated facilities, better security under the law, provides safeguards, and ensure multiprofessional cooperation and sound competence. Over the last few years; we have established 7 Childrens Advocacy Centres; all over Norway. Like this, we are also taking the UN convention on the right of the child even more seriously.

If the pattern of violence is to be broken, steps also must be taken to stop the perpetrator. However, it is the responsibility of the perpetrator to stop using violence. Society has a responsibility to help to prevent the development of patterns of violence, to offer the perpetrator help and treatment, and to prevent the violence being repeated and being inherited by the children.

It is the view of the Norwegian Minister of Justice, that if we are able to reach our goals, we need to join the judicial system and civil society

more closely to each other. This conference shows us not only how each country can give their own children a better future; but also how we can strengthen the cooperation between national and international levels; and between governments and NGOs, building a child-friendly future.