

Comments On Violence And Peace On The Anniversary Of International Children Day Of Broadcasting

– Janet Jagan, MP.

On this International Children's Day of Broadcasting, I would like to talk about children and peace as opposed to children and violence. We are told that children are heavy television viewers, which we all know as a fact, that is, among those who have the opportunity to watch television. It is said that children, on the average, watch TV up to 20 to 30 hours per week.

Television, for many children, is part of their education process outside of school. From television, children learn all about the world in which they live, about different people, customs, religions and ways of life including what is going on in the environment, man's flights into space, wars, scientific developments and just plain entertainment in the cartoons and films we see on TV.

The world and most of what is in it are played out on television. Those who lived before television was invented, can better appreciate the wide horizons brought to most people through television and of course, radio broadcasting, which has been with us most of this century.

It is unfortunate that television and films have used so much valuable time on violence, bloody encounters, people using guns to kill others in cold blood, hate and murder... We see violence on television almost every time we turn it on. The screen is filled with guns blasting off, blood and screaming, hate filled language, man hunting down man, fighting one another and soon, the violence is seen so often that it no longer frightens or worries or even fazes the viewers. We get accustomed to violence in the same way that we view the violence of wars and invasions and children suffering, maimed and in hospitals. We see hungry children, children who have lost an arm or leg from land mines, scattered all over many parts of the world, a permanent threat to those who walk the land and plow the fields.

On the other hand, do we see enough of the joys and security of peace? Can children,

viewing television, learn to respect the peaceful settlement not only of international conflicts, but conflicts between neighbours, brother and sister, in the family, in the streets or wherever?

We are living in a world of violence, in which hate, assassinations, the inability of states to live in peace side by side which lead to wars, over and over again. Those who suffer the greatest in wars and civil conflict are not the combatants, the soldiers, but the women and children who become homeless, who are obliged to live in refugee camps with next to nothing for comfort or even the basic necessities of food, sanitation, shelter and water.

It is not even possible to compare the pain and suffering of the victims of violence endured at the domestic level to that at the international level. There are no calculators that can add up the varieties of pain, physical or mental, which victims of all kinds of violence endure.

There are many things we must strive to achieve in order to make the lives of children better, more secure, happier and purposeful. Not only must all nations strive for peace and settle their differences peacefully and not by the use of armed force, but within each country, the focus must be on the education of children, their health care, the elimination of poverty and the stability of family life. Without strong efforts at unity, nations will be torn apart internally with the violence of hate engendered by racial, religious, tribal or cultural and language difference. When we watch television we see the horrors of these internal divisions and what it does to all people, but mainly the women and children.

It is fitting that on this International Children's Day of Broadcasting we focus on peace, peace at every level, country to country, people to people, within the family, with our friends and schoolmates. We have to throw out the use of violence as a way to settle scores. All of us must call on those who have responsibility for television and radio to stop promoting violence by showing films of violence and hate, but aim at material which will help build the nation, promote concepts of unity and which will help in the growth and development of our children and their future. ->