

Abuse appeal goes to UN

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Children's welfare campaigners will meet UN officials this week to call for a special Hong Kong commission to help fight child abuse.

They also want a Child Ordinance and a Child Policy to protect children's legal rights and improve welfare.

On Wednesday the Government will present its first report on children's rights to the United Nations in Geneva.

But in a damning two-page document the Hong Kong Committee on Chil-

dren's Rights accused home affairs chiefs of complacency and claimed they had "side-stepped" key issues.

Chairman Dr Patricia Ip Lai-sheung said a survey showed 45 per cent of parents were in favour of corporal punishment and 90 per cent thought child abuse only involved children who were seriously injured.

The committee is also particularly worried about the number of children who die when they are left home alone.

Between 1989 and 1995, 127 children under the age of

nine died after being left to fend for themselves.

Committee director Priscilla Lui Tsang Sun-kai said firemen had to break into 150 homes each year to rescue children and babies.

In one tragedy two children under six were burned to death after playing with their father's lighter. In another, four youngsters died in a blaze caused by an electrical fault.

Dr Ip and Mrs Lui expect the UN to support their calls for a Children's Commission to investigate complaints and conduct research.