



United Nations Human Rights Council
21st Session
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Item 6, Consideration of UPR reports

CONSIDERATION OF UPR REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR

Dear Mr. President:

The following statement is made on behalf of Save the Children and the Ecuadorian Observatory for Child and Adolescent Rights - ODNA¹.

The national report presented by the Ecuadorian government on March 8, 2012 describes the vast improvements that the country's children and adolescents have experienced with regard to their living conditions and the fulfillment of their rights over the last 21 years. We have acted on the recommendations 134.3, 135.6, 135.7, 135.8, 135.9 and 135.10 to do basically with themes of childhood and adolescence, since the signing of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. However, it is essential to call attention to the difficulties that Ecuador's children still suffer, and the recommendations that we would like you to consider:

Right to education

Regarding Education, the significant improvements between 2007-2012 has been increased coverage for basic education (through grade 10), nearly eliminating differences in access based on ethnicity and geography, as currently 95% of children aged between 5 to 14 years of age in the urban areas and 93% in the rural areas are accessing this right. The major problem with education now is lack of quality, and the exclusion of 17% of adolescents between 12 and 17 years of age, a figure that rises to 23% in the rural areas, especially affecting indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian young people.

Of equal importance is the need for special attention to increasing coverage for early child education. At the national level, 26% of children do not have access, and even more disturbing is that in the Amazon region, 39% of children are not receiving this education.

Child labor

Child Labor is a latent problem. Although the government has reduced child labor from 30% of children between the ages of 5 and 17 in 2001, today approximately 400,000 children are still working. For these children, the intensity of the work day, especially for girls working as domestic employees, increased from an average of 11 hours per day to 17 hours per day, and still we do not have accurate data regarding children's informal labor in mining and handicrafts, small scale banana cultivation and small scale trades, among other sectors.

There has not yet been established any appropriate strategy to support occupational safety for adolescents in this group. Such a strategy should also enable the elimination of the most hazardous practices and propose alternatives for those working adolescents in terms of helping them to be reinserted into formal or non-formal education programs, including support for livelihood initiatives involving entrepreneurship and aid to small business.

¹The Ecuadorian Observatory for Child and Adolescent Rights - ODNA, which has for 10 years been monitoring compliance with these rights and today counts among its members leaders from various sectors of Ecuadorian civil society, as well as organizations such as the Social Observatory Foundation, Save the Children, Plan International and UNICEF.

Early pregnancy

Ecuador tops the list of Andean countries with respect to early pregnancy. According to the latest population and household census, among the 346,700 girls between the ages of 10 and 14, approximately 2,100 had already become mothers, an increase of 74% in the last 10 years. More disturbing still is that among girls in the age group between 15 and 19 years, 17.2%, that is 121,288 have already become mothers. This is a social problem that has been largely ignored in Ecuador. 65% of the causes of admission to a hospital among adolescents are related to pregnancy and its complications.

Violence against children

Violence against children exists in both public and private arenas. In the year 2000, 57% of parents reported using dialogue as a way to manage problems with their children. Today, only 30% report doing the same: 42% of parents and 31% of teachers report using spanking as a way to resolve problems with children. Violence among peers is found at almost the same levels in public and private schools: 64% of students affirm that they have witnessed or participated in continuous fighting at school, 14% report the existence of violent gangs, 69% say that older children bully younger children, 74% report hearing insults, and 53% report that they have been robbed at school. Violence among adolescents is verified because the primary causes of death at that age are: transportation accidents, suicide and homicide. Among young girls ages 12 to 17, the primary cause of death is suicide, especially among indigenous girls.

The imminent establishment of the Equality Councils could subsume the Council for Children and Adolescents, with the risk of weakening the current systems for protecting children and adolescents by means of erasing the specificity of this mission.

The problems outlined above justify an immediate need to strengthen the system for protecting children, consolidating capacity to detect and monitor problems, from the levels of authority closest to the local populace upwards, (municipal governments, county seats, through to district, region and national government), with special focus given to the border regions. In this system, several Ministries must be integral participants: the Ministries of Social Inclusion, Education, Cultural Heritage, Health, Labor Relations, Foreign Relations, and Finance, as well as the Justice System, and the Police specialized in children's issues, the media and civil society. All will share the roles of prevention, attention and reconstitution of rights denied. The fulfillment of rights is a debt owed to children and adolescents, not only by the Ecuadorian state, but by all of society.

Thank You.