



United Nations Human Rights Council
26th Session
19th June 2014
Item 6, Consideration of UPR reports

CONSIDERATION OF THE UPR REPORT OF NEW ZEALAND

Mr President

Thank you for giving us the floor.

Save the Children New Zealand welcomes the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of New Zealand and the acceptance of the recommendations relating to children's rights, regarding child poverty and the protection of most vulnerable children through the Vulnerable Children's Bill and the Action Plan for Children.

However, Save the Children New Zealand would like to highlight the following key issues:

1. Equality and non-discrimination

Children with disabilities

Save the Children welcomes the government's acceptance of UPR recommendations 105, 136 pertaining to the protection of the rights of people with disabilities and calls for specific mention of children with disabilities. Anecdotal evidence points to some teachers not having the skills or knowledge needed to teach disabled children, limited teacher aide support and exclusion from outdoor activities. Save the Children calls on the government to ensure that disabled children, their families and schools are given adequate support and resources to enable disabled children to access school and enjoy the right to education like any other child in New Zealand. In this regard we would like to draw the government's attention to the need to take these concerns into consideration when updating the Disabilities strategy in 2015.

2. Child protection

Early marriage

Save the Children welcomes the Government of New Zealand's acceptance of recommendations 129, 130 to prevent forced early marriage. Contrary to the government's indication that current legislation provides adequate protection, Save the Children recommends that the law sanctioning marriage for people aged 16 years subject to parental consent be changed because it potentially places children at risk of forced marriage. According to the New Zealand data base of registered marriages 57 marriages (0.29%) of people under the age of 18 were recorded in New Zealand in 2013 out of a total of 21,695.¹

¹ New Zealand data base of registered marriages held by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), 2013.

International Treaties

Save the Children notes the lack of clarity in relation to recommendations 15, 16 regarding signing and ratifying the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure (OP-CRC-IC). The report reflects both "accepted" and "rejected". Save the Children regrets the Government's rejection of UPR recommendation 16. We also acknowledge that the government will consider implications of ratification recommendation 15 and call on New Zealand to follow through with signature in order to provide children access to the highest level of protection.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Hayden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Heather Hayden
Chief Executive