



## **Addressee: UNICEF**

**Paragraph #8 Session #2 (2003)**

### **Full Text**

The Forum notes that in order for it and the United Nations system to review the situation of indigenous children and youth, there is a need for country-specific situation analyses. Given UNICEF's unique and long experience and expertise in that area, the Forum invites UNICEF to initiate such situation analyses on indigenous children by field offices in countries with indigenous communities. The Forum also invites UNICEF to transmit such situation analyses to the Forum.

### **Comments**

(a) UNICEF has made specific efforts over the past year to conduct participatory studies in several countries on the situation of indigenous children. The studies were aimed at gathering quantitative and qualitative data to shed light on the disparities and widespread discrimination endured by indigenous children. The data have been used by UNICEF as advocacy tools to make the situation of indigenous children visible, with a view to influencing public policies to address that discrimination. In Ecuador for example, UNICEF supports a national publication on the state of children and adolescents. Indigenous children are able to use the publication to express and raise awareness of their situation through a separate plea filed with the Ombudsman for the rights of indigenous peoples. In El Salvador, UNICEF used a rights-based approach to conduct a study on the situation of indigenous peoples, which highlighted that this group lacks representation on the country's agenda. (b) UNICEF also conducts studies at the community level. In Chile, for example, UNICEF supported an opinion study with Mapuche children and adolescents from Santiago and localities of the ninth

region. The results were communicated to the media during a seminar on the protection of the rights of Mapuche children and adolescents. In the Philippines, over the past year UNICEF completed a participatory community appraisal of eight indigenous Kabihug communities in the Camarines Norte, with the extensive participation of indigenous youth as part of the research team. In accordance with the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, and with a view to securing a second round of free, prior and informed consent of the communities prior to printing, publication of the study has been postponed. The study prompted a national rapid assessment of the situation of indigenous children and women throughout the country. Among other findings, the study found that Kabihug children are almost completely uneducated, with only 12 per cent of them enrolled in primary school. Births are almost universally unregistered, and Kabihug families are routinely forced to abandon their homes and move off the plantations on which they work. The study has played a critical role in helping UNICEF to raise awareness of the extreme disadvantage experienced by indigenous children who, for the most part, remain invisible in public policies. (c) UNICEF also supports visits of government officials to indigenous areas with a view to sensitizing them to the situation of indigenous children. In Malaysia, for example, in 2006 UNICEF supported a number of study tours with senior delegations from designated ministries to remote communities in Sabah and Sarawak. The tours fostered greater collaboration and ownership of projects with those communities.

## **Area of Work**

Indigenous Children and Youth