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Addressee: UN System, Member States

Paragraph #57 Session #5 (2006)

Full Text

The Permanent Forum confirms its commitment to making indigenous children and youth an ongoing part of its work. In so doing, it acknowledges the efforts made by organizations representing indigenous peoples, United Nations bodies and States to address the urgent needs of indigenous children and youth, including in the areas of education, health, culture, extreme poverty, mortality, sexual exploitation, militarization, displacement, removal by missionaries, incarceration and labour, among others.

Comments

The Government of Switzerland reports: "This is an important recommendation. Youth plays a fundamental role in social development. Switzerland participates actively in the meetings of the Commission for Social Development, at which issues relating to the young, including indigenous children and youth, are discussed in depth. Switzerland has ratified ILO Conventions Nos. 138 (Minimum Age Convention) and 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention), and financially supports the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour in Pakistan."

The Russian Federation reports that in August 2006 it approved an ethnonational education policy. The document identifies the problems that indigenous peoples face in the field of education and is an update to the current policy on educational

development for numerically small indigenous peoples. The Russian Federation will provide the assistance necessary for solving these problems, both on the federal and regional levels. Some urgent tasks to be implemented in 2007-2010 are (a) increasing the professional level of teachers who specialize in the programs with an ethnocultural regional component, teach in native (non-Russian) and second (Russian) languages, or participate in the theoretical or methodological development of ethno-national education policies; (b) creating a new generation of bicultural and polycultural humanities textbooks, also for different civilizational-cultural zones of the Russian Federation; (c) creating management mechanisms to ensure equal opportunity access to quality education, taking into account local linguistic and sociocultural characteristics, also for children whose parents lead a nomadic lifestyle.

The Government of Spain reports: “(a) On 7 and 8 July 2005, AECI hosted and funded the First Ibero-American Meeting on the Rights of Indigenous Children and Adolescents, organized jointly by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and the indigenous peoples. Spain is carrying out activities pursuant to the declaration adopted at this meeting. (b) Support for better education and for the achievement of educational equity has been particularly significant. The Strategy attaches great importance to bilingual intercultural education. This has been expressed through the provision of 1,100,000 euros for the Programme of Basic Bilingual Education for Youth and Adults (PRODEPA KO’E PYAHU), carried out jointly with the Organization of Ibero-American States; and 290,000 euros for the Bilingual Intercultural Education Project in the Loreto Region (EBI-LORETO), carried out jointly with the Hispano-Peruvian Cooperation Fund of the Republic of Peru. Funding in the amount of 202,000 euros was also provided in support of a project for the development and implementation of a basic intercultural education programme from preschool to third grade in schools located in the territory of the Kuna people of Panama; funding was also provided for efforts to strengthen community education processes in the territory of indigenous peoples of the Department of Cauca, Colombia, in accordance with lifestyle plans that they themselves developed.”

UNICEF is very active throughout the Latin American region in addressing malnutrition among indigenous children, especially young children. In Paraguay, a nutritional survey in two indigenous communities showed a very high prevalence of underweight and stunted growth among children under five years of age. The delivery of nutritional supplements led to a 70 per cent reduction in the underweight prevalence. In parallel, a number of actions were carried out, such as training the personnel of local health-care centres, for the detection and care

of cases of malnutrition, the elaboration of a system of nutritional surveillance of children, the provision of supplements as well as nutritional education to the families. The experience conducted with the two indigenous communities led to the expansion throughout the whole country of a nutritional programme for children under five years of age and underweight pregnant women. In Panama, a nutrition study in indigenous communities has been undertaken and will be used to promote inclusive social policies. Birth registration is a child right, the realization of which is essential to the fulfilment of other rights. However, registrars are often not easily accessible to indigenous peoples because they are located far from the community, imply a complex procedure, are not culturally sensitive and involve user fees. UNICEF has made significant efforts to promote birth registration in indigenous areas. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, UNICEF promoted the establishment of civil registry hospital units, leading to birth registration rates of 92 per cent in the Amazonas and 86 per cent in Zulia, two regions with a high indigenous population. In Ecuador, the campaign entitled "Together for Identity" is a registration project that enabled more than 6,000 children in the province of Morona to be given identity documents. Part of the registration strategy for remote areas of the borders involves the establishment of a registration brigade in the river health unit, which was provided with computer equipment. The brigade will be instrumental in enabling inhabitants of the riverbanks to gain access to registration services in the future. In Nicaragua, UNICEF promotes birth registration through the commitment of mayors, civil registrars and indigenous community leaders in alliance with traditional authorities, teachers, the local media and parents. An important innovation was the pre-registration carried out by community registrars, with the subsequent entry of the details at official birth registration centres. UNICEF believes that children's rights can be best realized in an environment where children can grow and develop happily and where their families and communities have the capacity to protect their rights and provide for their needs. Land is an essential spiritual and economic element to indigenous communities, and deprivation thereof affects the integrity of the community, which in turn has an impact on children's ability to develop harmoniously within their communities. In this context, UNICEF calls on all actors to prevent disruptions in indigenous peoples' ways of living and ensure in all circumstances a protective environment for their children.

Area of Work

Indigenous Children and Youth