



Communication with the Committee on the Rights of the Child

The delegates from the grassroots groups in Lima, Iquitos, Piura, Lambayeque, and Apurimac of the National Movement of Boys, Girls and Adolescent Workers in Peru *Movimiento Nacional de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes Trabajadores del Perú - MNNATSOP* have met in the city of Lima between the 15th and 21st of February to prepare together a communication to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. We have read the State Party report submitted by Peru and also the Committee's Concluding Observations (CRC/C/PER/CO/3 of March 2006), in relation to Peru's previous report. In addition, we have analyzed what takes place in our regions in Peru and the problems we encounter every day.

We have sent this communication because we know that the Committee will analyze the report presented by the Peruvian government, and we also know that the Committee is interested in knowing the opinion of the boys, girls and adolescents. We hope that this communication serves the Committee well when formulating its Concluding Observations to the Peruvian government and that such recommendations will improve the implementation of the rights of children and adolescents in our country.

1. We do not like to be called street workers "*trabajadores callejeros*", some of us are boys and girls who work in the streets, but we do not want to be labeled, this makes us feel humiliated and discriminated. We do not like when the municipal police persecutes us and take away our merchandise. We ask for protection, not persecution. WE FIGHT

FOR THE RIGHT TO LIFE! IF WE HAVE TO WORK IN ORDER TO SURVIVE,
HOW CAN THEY TAKE AWAY OUR RIGHT TO WORK?

2. It is not true that the children who work do not want to study. We want to study, and many of us work so that we can study. We learn many things by working: for example, figuring out the math, speaking with the people we offer our products to. Some of us quit studying because teachers and some students discriminate against us. Sometimes if we arrive late to class and we are not allowed in. Many of us quit studying because we do not have enough resources to buy the school uniform (even though the Ministry says that it is not mandatory, the teachers demand it). Sometimes we do not have money to support school activities (they ask for “voluntary” collaborations for Mother’s Day, Christmas, etc.), and if you do not bring anything or do not collaborate, you are excluded or get a low grade. In some classes, if you do not have the required materials you will fail the class. That is the reason why many children stop going to school.
3. We, girls, boys and adolescents, who work, think that the schools do not prepare us for life. For example, we are often not taught any crafts, and if we are taught, we are not given a certificate that states that we have learned a specific job skill.
4. We are concerned that the schools in the country do not receive equal support from the State. We would like that all the schools in Peru were provided the same resources as the public elite schools “*colegios emblematicos*”; however, that is not the case. For example, in the IE Rosa Carrera de Martos (Piura – Piura), we do not have a library or a laboratory; to have our gym class we have to cross the highway to go to a dirt field, where the students had to buy the gym equipment, etc.
5. We find it unfair that the children from the rural communities who want to study in secondary school have to go to the cities and have no support at all once in the city. Since there are no secondary schools in their communities, they often have to live by themselves in the cities, in small rented rooms, eating what their family can bring once in a while. Malnourished and with no support, they cannot perform well. Many of them

face poor working conditions. Having this situation, the government cannot just stand by with indifference, there should be support programs and integrated service for adolescents from rural communities who study in the cities; the programs should provide shelter, food, tutoring, strengthening learning, healthcare, recreation, etc.

6. We do not agree with the institutions that fuel tension between children. For example in Iquitos, the telecommunication company Telefonica conducted a campaign against child work with the messages printed in flyers distributed in the schools. The teachers obligated some of the student leaders “*fiscales escolares*” to hand out the flyers. Many who refused, received low grades.
7. The government makes campaigns to eradicate child labor, but does nothing to change the poor conditions in which many children work; also, they do not provide any alternatives that relates to our reality. For example, in Iquitos, the local child ombudsmen offices (Defensoría Municipal del Niño y del Adolescente – DEMUNA) organizes raids in night clubs, where children who sell snacks outside are taken to shelters and later to their parents, and end up going back next day to work because there is no support for the families. The government should have family support programs so that parents find jobs and obtain work skills.
8. We, the working boys, girls and adolescents, reject labor exploitation and sexual exploitation. These are crimes that should be fought against without confusing the people. That is why we do not agree that the government and the ILO 182 consider sexual exploitation of children as one of the worst forms of child labor. It must be considered a crime and not as work.
9. The government states in its report that the social programs of *Juntos* provide good help to mothers. We know cases of mothers whose money is taken away by their husbands to drink alcohol. The government also says that it helps families with working children. We know children in Andahuaylas whose mothers are in the *Juntos* program, but they are still working because the *Juntos* program cannot meet their needs. Would it not be

better if the *Juntos* program taught people how to work? To teach families how to fish, not just give the fish to them? Why does the government not ask us working children what kind of support we need or ask us about their social programs?

10. We as organized children know the Convention, we know that children's rights exist and we know the Concluding Observations of the Committee; but most children do not know about this because the government does not disseminate the information. They do not teach us in school that the State has obligations. If the children do not know the State's duties, or our rights, how can we claim these rights and ask that they be respected?

Thanks

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