

Human Rights Council
8th Session
June 2008
Point 6, Universal Periodic Review

Thank you Mr. President.

I am speaking on behalf of Franciscans International. This statement is also endorsed by Edmund Rice International.

Mr. President,

In line with the recommendations formulated during the UPR process, we call on the government of Zambia to continue and strengthen its efforts to guarantee free and compulsory basic education by 2015, and urge the government to ensure that girls fully benefit, from the education system. The government should also support civil society organizations that provide basic education services and involve them in a permanent and open dialogue.

We are seriously concerned about the high number of street children in Zambia (A/HRC/8/43 §22). They are exposed to trafficking, physical and sexual abuse, forced labor and even police brutality. In order to address this problem, we call on the government to follow up on the recommendations expressed during the UPR process and to urgently develop and implement an effective strategy of assistance and prevention for street children in order to protect and guarantee their rights. The government should also give maximum priority to the recommendations formulated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child¹ (CRC/C/15/Add.206, 2 July 2003, § 68). We would like to underline that children themselves and civil society organizations should be involved in the planning and implementation of these strategies.

The high incidence and increasing prevalence of HIV/AIDS remains one of the main challenges for Zambia as noted during the UPR process (A/HRC/WG.6/2/ZMB/2, §27). One of the many consequences of this problematic is the increase in the number of orphan children. When orphanhood is linked with situations of extreme poverty, this often leads to withdrawal from school, lack of access to adequate health care and social services and the phenomenon of street children previously mentioned. The Committee on the rights of the Child already expressed its concern about the insufficiency of alternative care for these children (CRC/C/15/Add.206, 2 July 2003, §50). We therefore call on the government of Zambia to urgently develop and implement specific assistance and protection programs for these orphans.

¹ The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Undertake a study to assess the scope and the causes of and consider establishing a comprehensive strategy to address the high and increasing number of street children, with the aim of preventing and reducing this phenomenon;
- (b) Ensure that street children are provided with preventive and rehabilitative services for physical, sexual and substance abuse, protection from police brutality and services for reconciliation with their families, and that authors of violence against street children are prosecuted and punished; and
- (c) Take all effective measures to ensure that street children are provided with adequate food, clothing, housing, health care and educational opportunities, including vocational and life-skills training, to support their full development.

Finally, we welcome the commitment of Zambia to continue engaging with all stakeholders in the follow-up of the UPR and to working towards the observance of all its regional and international human rights obligations (A/HRC/8/43 §57).

Thank you, Mr President.