Assembly Rapporteurship,  
3rd Pan-American Child Forum

Child and adolescent representatives from the Americas and the Caribbean, participants in the General Assembly of the 3rd Pan-American Child Forum, chaired by: Colombia (representing South America), Mexico (representing Central America and the Dominican Republic), and Barbados (representing the Caribbean and Canada), present the rapporteurship on their dialogue:

- **RIGHT TO CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION**

Barbados: Speaking on participation, sometimes expectations for child and adolescent participation are quite low. Children and adolescents are not part of decision-making.

As we put pressure on our governments, we must also remember that all rights must be addressed as responsibilities. It is our duty to take mechanisms that exist, and in other cases to create them, in order to create the countries that we want.

**Colombia:** In the right to participation, it is important to take into account the following:

Being present, creating spaces, providing support, expressing ideas, listening to voices, and taking into account what has been said and affecting decisions. One example of this is what we are doing here in this forum.

The presidency of the General Assembly of the 3rd Forum congratulates Emilia, the delegate from Colombia.

**Nicaragua:** Our recommendation is that children and adolescents should be taken into account in decision-making.

**Panama:** It is important that we bear in mind that we have many challenges. We recommend establishing more facilities for advisory councils, creating more participation spaces, and not neglecting those that already exist.

**Paraguay:** The demonstrations of organized children and adolescents must not be criminalized, for example: student demonstrations are in some cases prosecuted and threatened.

- We recommend the creation of departmental and municipal councils for the participation of children and adolescents; to this end, it is important to recognize the participation of the rural population, migrants, and youth, etc.

- We recommend a greater distribution of wealth, greater public investment in children, leisure, and recreation for children and adolescents.
We need national councils to be activated, including departmental councils. We believe that we do not have a real policy on education or health. Children and adolescents are not being heard, we do not have a real voice, and we are participating in REDNNA, but not completely.

**Peru:** - We recommend the creation of participation spaces comprising indigenous people, rural people, people with disabilities, etc.

- We recommend that States (local, regional, and national governments) prioritize the activities of advisory councils for children and adolescents, and that the integration of children and adolescents from all regions of the country be considered; thus, there will be no barriers between urban and rural areas.

- We suggest that these participation spaces be allocated budget, as there is mostly centralism there.

- We recommend being multipliers for children and adolescents that are starting to participate.

**Uruguay:** Participation is a governing principle of the CRC; when participating, we seek to report on the rights of children and adolescents.

- We recommend promoting child and adolescent participation in all issues that affect them and having direct dialogues with authorities.

- We recommend promoting the creation of participation spaces for children and adolescents, and that these calls cover all levels, including children and adolescents with disabilities.

**Children's Villages:** Participation is very important in helping the rights of children and adolescents; we would like to recommend that all children and adolescents with disabilities have more constant participation in the issues that are related to their rights.

- We recommend promoting leadership, citizenship, and de-institutionalization, and the elimination of sexual abuse against children and adolescents.

**REDNYYAS:** We participate through child and adolescent networks or collectives. In Governments, we are not always considered in the advisory councils, as we are civil society.

- We want methodologies that take into account our right to recreation.

- We recommend that organizers consult children and adolescents in order to build agendas.

- We recommend that States consider us, and that the participation of children and adolescents be a cross-cutting axis.

**World Vision:** We propose that children and adolescents be present in the design of public policies, including forest and rural areas in each country.
RENACER Foundation: - We recommend that children and adolescents advocate for the prevention of the violence that affects us. Participation must be real and occupy a leading role. We seek to exert advocacy in different spaces in the city, in order to prevent commercial sexual exploitation. We defend participation as a cross-cutting axis for the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation.

Recommendation of the Chair of the General Assembly of the 3rd Forum: We recommend that emphasis be given to the participation of children and adolescents with disabilities in the design of public policies.

JAMAICA: We want to make it clear that the right to participation is important, participation promotes development and self-esteem. When children and adolescents participate, they become involved in issues that affect them. It is important for all children and adolescents to participate without discrimination.

Participating helps children and adolescents develop skills and abilities. There are many programs and instruments that talk about the right to child and adolescent participation. We would like to highlight the role of Jamaica’s NNA advisory program, which promotes participation in decision-making.

In some cases, not all children and adolescents may participate, even when the rights of children and adolescents established in the CRC determine so.

- We recommend that States consider article 13 of the CRC.

Save the Children: We recommend encouraging participation and increasing it in all areas (family, school, social areas, community, and others).

We would like to mention that other children and adolescents want to participate, and that is why we must close the existing gaps.

PROTECTION OF CHILD WORKERS

MOLACNNATS: We are a movement of child and adolescent workers; we defend the rights of children and adolescents. We have been working from a very young age. We are educated children, we play, we would like to mention that adolescents go to work in order to support our studies and contribute to our households.

We consider work as a cultural issue in the countryside, depending on each child’s development or capacity. We recommend that States interpret different forms of work, differentiating child and adolescent work from exploitation, such as sexual exploitation, work in mines, or armed conflicts. Work helps us grow, and it is therefore necessary to define what is exploitation and what is work. Another suggestion is to interpret article 32 of the CRC, which states that every
child and adolescent must be protected from all forms of labor and economic exploitation, acknowledging that children may work in a protected space.

**LUMOS:** ARTICLE 20 Family is the natural environment for children and adolescents, the CRC mentions that children must grow under the wing of their family; however, children that live in institutions that care for them do not live under that right.

The State must guarantee special protection for us. We recommend that we receive care with love, we suggest that our views be taken into account for decision-making at all foster homes.

We recommend that children and adolescents that are under protection measures be provided with more homely and friendly institutions, and that they receive all care from caregivers. These institutions should be smaller, as some ICBF institutions are now caring for up to 180 children and adolescents, and they are not provided with friendly care. We recommend that ICBF standards be less rigid, as this affects the stay of children and adolescents in these institutions.

**Chicos.net:** We are a network of children and adolescents that seek to reduce violence against children and adolescents, through our key action. The right to protection is important and fundamental for our full development, as reflected in article 3. In Mexico, it is highly violated, and children and adolescents have been violated the most.

There was a confrontation between armed groups recently, and this reflects the violence that occurs in Mexico. Violence deprives us of a happy and fulfilled life.

This makes us feel unsafe. We recommend that the protection of children and adolescents be guaranteed and that we be taken into account in decision-making. Ultimately, we are the ones that suffer from these situations.

Our recommendation is greater security. We seek to increase order, not control. We recommend consulting the population in order to identify where it is needed.

**Costa Rica:** Social and family security is the right that is violated the most in Costa Rica, and there is very little security. There are people ingesting alcoholic beverages, robberies in public spaces, and therefore, recreational spaces are not utilized, as children and adolescents and their families feel too unsafe to use these recreational spaces.

In some families, children and girls are ill-treated, they are forced to work. As a recommendation, we call for the implementation and strengthening of institutions that protect children and families, and for the assurance of social protection and the protection of recreational spaces.
Canada: We are promoting articles 12 and 13. It is important to mention that one right could not exist without the other. In Canada, our institutions take into account child and adolescent participation.

Our institutions cannot exist without freedom of expression. Our laws are linked to the CRC, but I would like to mention that if instances of hate speech exist, these must be penalized. For example, on Halloween, children dressed up as members of the military, and this brought criticism from adults, who said, how is it possible that they dress up with the uniforms of people who may have died, just for fun?

These kids may be penalized just for this, so: can anything be considered hate speech? In other words, if we promote a shift in paradigms or ideas, or if we disagree, we may be judged?

This is related to the right to participation: if adults disagree with what we think, we cannot be part of decision-making? Or, if we cannot say anything, but we are at the table, it is just as well as not being there.

RIGHT TO SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY

Mexico

Substantive equality is a right that recognizes children as subjects on a level playing field in terms of rights, and fosters equity rather than equal treatment.

We would like to invite Member States, with all due respect to their self-determination principles, as provided by our Mexican diplomacy, to the enactment of a general law on the rights of children and adolescents promoting participation, because, despite the fact that the right to participation exists on a constitutional level, it is not guaranteed correctly.

Therefore, we continue to strongly recommend the government that they make their participation 100% effective, recommending joint coordination between the governments in each country.

It is important to emphasize that substantive equality is an indispensable foundation for all rights, as it facilitates their implementation and complements them.
RIGHT TO EDUCATION

International Plan

We chose this right because nowadays, and for a long time, Colombia has strengthened its defense of the right to education through the social mobilization of children and adolescents to demand the guarantee of the right to quality education.

The right to education is responsibility of all States. In Colombia, for about a year now, national strikes have been occurring in the educational sector, where agreements were established that have not been fulfilled.

Colombia is also a country that has suffered an armed conflict, and therefore, it is necessary to strengthen education as a remedial element in order to build a society with critical thinking and gender equality, and not to grow up with hatred.

Education with gender equality will enable women to be on a level playing field with men, minimizing the negative influence that sexism has generated.

RIGHT TO PERSONAL INTEGRITY

El Salvador

The right that we chose is personal integrity, given that it includes the right to health, information, and education, physical integrity, sexual integrity, etc. In this case, we want to focus on sexual integrity, because in 2017, every day 52 girls (children and adolescents) became pregnant. In 2018, this figure was reduced to 50, but it is not yet enough.

One of the greatest problems that may be seen in terms of sexuality is that adolescents do not have information about sexual education, because it is conceived as a taboo topic, and therefore, it is not addressed in educational institutions, or by parents, or in other spaces navigated by children and adolescents.

We emphasize once again that personal integrity brings sexuality and physical aspects together, but it also has a major social impact, because girls and adolescents that become pregnant drop out of school.

In El Salvador, we call for a comprehensive guarantee of sexuality to reduce early pregnancies, and therefore, we recognize the great importance of including information about sexuality, which should be particularly accessible for girls in order to avoid early pregnancies, and also to promote gender equality.
RIGHT TO FAMILY

Ecuador

We wanted to intervene on this right, because, in our country, non-nuclear families are not taken into account by the government.

Non-nuclear families have been disregarded not only by society, but also by the government. For example, in education, there is no guidance regarding the formation of extended families, which is causing harm to children and adolescents belonging to this type of families.

Therefore, we call for programs that provide guidance that will make it possible to understand the formation of different family typologies.

It is important for the government to advance in terms of awareness and development of regulations for the 7 types of family that exist now, with an emphasis on the rights of LGBT+ people, not only so that they may get married, but also, so that they may gain access to adoption and thus form a family, noting that these measures would not only help LGBT+ people, but also provide opportunities for many children and adolescents to be able to have the chance and the guarantee that their right to have a family and not be abandoned will be safeguarded.