

**WRITTEN STATEMENT FROM THE MOLACNATs
TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
FOR THE SESSION ON CHILDREN RIGHTS
TO BE HELD ON MARCH 9th 2011**

Once again, the Movements of Working Children and Adolescents (NNATS) of Latin America, organizations publicly recognized as child-workers unions, are left out by a United Nations agency which pretend to ensure the Human Rights of children, in this case with reference to working children.

The meeting of March 9th, the preparatory documents and the submitted statement show the prevalence of some inaccuracies that we from Latin America believe do not contribute to a better understanding of the social phenomenon of working children.

1.- Working Children and Street Children.

These terms deal with two related phenomena, but they have to be distinguished. In our region, the street population to which children and adolescents belong, is not to be reduced neither to a population branded by crime, Aids and delinquency - which are the risks pointed to in the texts, neither entirely exposed to work. We are talking of unoccupied children and adolescents living on the streets whose central problem is to be systematically deprived of activities that allow them to address their situation of extreme poverty. Experience shows that in conditions where the street is a habitat, to work is one of the factors to reorganize one's life.

2.- In the confused logic of the ILO

The ideology behind some of the documents for the meeting of March 9th, is one that nourishes the ILO Convention 182, and that opposes to Street Children schools as salvation bases. The so-called «Working Children on the streets» do not exactly coincide with the children and adolescents subjected to prostitution and trafficking: they are workers. The predominating view in industrial societies considers that children who work in the formal economy and children who work independently on the streets are both reprehensible, even when we speak of protection, i.e. elimination.

This session then functions again as a stubborn assertion of an agreement like the Convention 182. It confuses crimes against children which are an offense against humanity, and legitimate self-employment activities.

3.- Beyond the world of big cities

Several decades ago, we already warned about the reductionist view that Street Children are only on large avenues, at traffic lights, in squares and parks. It is in the suburban world where there is very little state presence, that Street Children in a general meaning, and Working Children on the corners of the streets are mainly concentrated. We have the right to wonder if the session in Geneva will not be - under the guise of linking Working Children and Children on the streets, the opportunity to address once again the issue of domestic work for others on which ILO is preparing a new convention, of indigenous child labor, of prostitution, child soldiers, slavery, etc. instead of addressing in greater depth the issue of children and adolescents working in the streets.

Finally, MOLACNATs welcomes the participation of the AMWCY companions from Africa, who together with MOLACNATs and Asian movements are part of the World Movement of Working Children and Adolescents, and renews its determination to continue alerting public opinion to how millions of Working Children and Adolescents of Our America as well as their organizations are still discriminated in their societies, under the approval of national and international entities, and to how these children and adolescents also have something to say about our reality of life and work.

The defense of the right to expression, to comment on matters that concern us is closely linked to the defense of the right to a life in dignity without exploitation or exclusion of any kind. In this regard, we continue to denounce the violation of these rights.

MOLACNATs - Latin American Movement of Working Children and Adolescents **08/03/2011**



This statement is supported by the following organizations:

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