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Washington, D.C. 20006  
United States of America

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May 13, 2010

Ms. Navanethem Pillay  
High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Office of the High Commission for Human Rights  
Palais des Nations, Geneva

Dear Ms. Pillay:

Pursuant to your letter of March 3, 2010, please find attached a summary of the actions taken by the Organization of American States (OAS) to protect the rights of child migrants.

Please note that we have no objection to the information provided herein being made available on the OHCHR.

I wish to reiterate our commitment to continuing to working closely with your institution.

Sincerely,

José Miguel Insulza  
Secretary General



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## **Brief Report on Actions taken to protect the Rights of Child Migrants**

### **Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN)**

The Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN), as an OAS Specialized Organization, has contributed to strengthening promotion and protection measures taken in connection with the migratory events which are affecting the region.

The IIN adopts the principle established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that all children must maintain contact with both parents and that they must not be separated from them or from their family setting, particularly when children are taken from one country to another, and especially when seeking family reunification or during migration for economic reasons. In any of such cases, the States must make special efforts to provide special protection to migrant children who are travelling unaccompanied by their parents.

In compliance with the request received by the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN), this report provides an overview of the principal activities carried out from 2006 to the present with regard to the protection of child rights in the area of migration (child migrants). The Institute has contributed to strengthening the steps taken in connection with migratory events which affect the region. These contributions translate into the following actions and agreements carried out between 2006 and 2010:

### **I – Participation in International Forums and Meetings:**

**1) Ibero-American Conference of Ministers and Authorities Responsible for Children, "Migration and its effects on child rights", 5-7 October 2006, Montevideo.** The IIN participated in different ways:



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- a. Keynote Address by Mr. John Biehl del Río, Acting Director General of the IIN, on the subject *"Migration; from solidarity to insensitivity: an overdue yet vital debate"*
- b. As part of the technical committee which organized the event during the period July-October 2006, and as part of and chairing the technical discussion groups with specialized technical staff who accompanied the ministerial delegations and which met concurrently with the Ministers' Meeting

### **2) III NGO Forum on the Children and Adolescents of Ibero-America, Thematic Committee on "Migrations", 3-5 October 2006, Montevideo.**

The IIN took an active part in the event's technical committee (composed by NGOs and international organizations) which drafted the forum's working paper. In addition, significant and current information was provided on the focal issue, derived from the documentary database in the IIN's Information Programme.

### **3) Childwatch International's Third Latin American Network Conference, "Childhood and Youth: Dislocations and Changes", 17-19 July 2006, Mexico City.**

The IIN has been part of the Childwatch International Research Network for several years. On this occasion the Institute participated in the event's discussion panel on "Dislocations and Changes", with a research paper produced especially for this event, entitled "Children, Rights and Migration".

### **4) Publication of a book on "Public Policies and Children's Human Rights – General Comments of the Committee on the Rights of the Child", jointly with the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2007.**

General Comment N° 6 refers to the treatment of unaccompanied minors who are separated from their families outside their country and constitutes a highly specialized body of doctrine in the protection of the rights of unaccompanied migrant children. It should be adopted as an essential component in the design and implementation of public policy.



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Means of cooperation with Party States established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The IIN provides technical assistance for States which require it when drafting their regular report or for the application of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, with special emphasis on the **protection of the rights of migrant children**.

### 5) Mission to the United States of Mexico:

Within the context of the implementation of the IIN's Action Plan 2007-2011 and in answer to an invitation issued by the Government of Mexico, the IIN carried out a mission from 5 to 11 December 2007, in which the following activities were included:

- Participation in the **IV International Congress on Child Rights** (state of Sonora), with a paper on the ill-treatment of children with special reference to **migrant**, unaccompanied, repatriated or deported children.
- On 7 December, a public conference was given in the Federal District of Mexico on "*Child and Youth Migration in Latin America and Public Policy with a Rights-Based Approach*", organized by the National System for the Comprehensive Development of Families (SNDIF for its acronym in Spanish). Subsequently, the organization of a **sub-regional meeting** devoted to **improving the protection of migrant children's rights** in America, particularly on Mexico's northern and southern borders, was discussed with the area's national authorities. Issues focused on the situation of child migrants in Mexican territory, particularly with reference to the northern border. A diagnosis was carried out with input from official statistics. The need to strengthen the programmes indicated was highlighted, as was the need to foster regional cooperation between OAS Member States with regard to the country's northern and southern borders.
- Participation in the "1st Family Shelter Seminar: a further Option for Family Life" (state of Nuevo León), with a keynote address relating family shelter to the different vulnerabilities of migrant children.

