



11th UN CONGRESS ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL (DCI)

PREVENTING YOUTH AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

In urban marginalized areas of big cities in Latin America, Asia and Africa, an important population of adolescents and youth in highly vulnerable conditions live in social exclusion, reflected in the absence of a family, an educational system, a community or even the State, to look after their needs and provide them with opportunities for the enjoyment of their rights.

These populations lack protection and suffer from ill-treatment within their family environment. They are also segregated from the educational system, stigmatized and rejected by their communities, mass media and also by the State. For these reasons these adolescents join the so-called “gangs”, seeking for survival.

When strategies of survival find obstacles and difficulties, we can get a clearer picture of the activities involving violence against the physical integrity of people, some of these being catalogued as crimes.

Prevention consists in the creation of necessary opportunities for these juveniles to exercise their rights. If they are not given necessary protection, access to adequate housing and public services, including health, areas for them to play, to learn and forums where they can participate, we can expect that they will come into conflict with the law. In other words, this is linked to the real and effective implementation of the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Repressive models are not adequate for the treatment of social problems. The best penal policies are the social policies. The effective implementation of the principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child constitutes the best way to prevent violence and crime. DCI calls for the immediate implementation of article 40 par. 3 (which refers to the need for States Parties to take all necessary measures to promote laws, proceedings, specific authorities and institutions for children who are allegedly in conflict with the law) and of article 12 par 1. of the Beijing Rules (which goes in the direction of a specialized training of police officers dealing with children in conflict with the law). They should utilize adequate measures, and respect the applicable human rights standards and also take into consideration the fact that the populations they are dealing with are very vulnerable, in processes of development and training.

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