



# Strategic Plan 2000-2004

November, 2000

**IACI - INTER-AMERICAN CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE - OAS**



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## FOREWORD

On the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Directing Council, the Office of the Director General of the Inter-American Children's Institute submits this document for consideration – a document in which we have placed so many hopes.

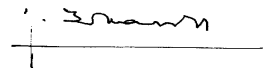
The document contains a programmatic proposal that, if approved, will constitute the axis for our action for the next four years of our administration, at the technical and political levels.

The Plan fundamentally intends to promote the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the decentralization of the IACI's activities, the increased presence of child and family issues in the political fora of the Region, and the diversification of the financing of the IACI's action, as well as the decisive incorporation of the hemispheric commitment of civil society.

The basis of the Plan is to encourage the generation of strategic products that have high technical and political impact and which constitute a model of reference for approaching issues relative to children from a management perspective. As a specialized organization of the OAS, the IACI must play the role of innovative axis for addressing child-related issues in the Region.

Thus, the Office of the Director General invites the Directing Council to deepen and debate this proposal, in such a way as to be able to incorporate it and ultimately commit its whole political support when it is carried out. The Strategic Plan, endorsed by the Directing Council, will become the compass with which we will navigate through the next four years. Each year, the Directing Council will evaluate actions taken, adjusting the course and incorporating everything it considers necessary, with the best interests of the child as the institutional goal.

We firmly believe that the IACI must constitute a space for regional reflection and dialogue, fundamentally acting as a provider of services for the Member States. The Institute is a tool that belongs to the countries of the Americas, and it is for this reason that, with due consideration and respect, we request that this honorable Body promote its work, as an effective contribution to the welfare of our children and adolescents.



Alejandro Bonasso  
**DIRECTOR GENERAL**

## **OUR VISION OF THE IACI**

The IACI has made important efforts to introduce children's issues into the Region's political agenda. However, we feel that its presence is not yet visible enough, nor has it mobilized the structures in such a way as to motivate the generation of true State Policies for children and adolescents in most of our countries.

Our approach to children's issues, in both the political and technical spheres, should promote the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents of the Americas, based on the paradigm of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The IACI must have a single institutional proposal that is based on identical principles, that is carried out in an environment of medium-term planning, and that responds to mobilizing intervention strategies. One of our fundamental strategies would be to promote and support planning processes in the National Child Systems in the Region. The scarce resources available and the magnitude of the problems in our countries impel the IACI to increase its use of systemic tools and communicational facilities that allow it to increase its impact/investment quotient. The cost-benefit relation would be measured differently if everyone had rapid, regular access to our products and if we could capture budgetary resources. This would allow us to strengthen current IACI programs of proven quality and to use “seed funds” to finance new lines of action, our portfolio of projects, and the countries' own successful projects that merit replication at a greater scale – either in those same countries or in other countries of the Region. All of this must be done without disregarding that, in our fulfillment of current mandates, our actions must be reinforced by seeking to capture more extra-budgetary funds.

## MISSION

To be an articulator of State efforts to build public child and family policies and, as such:

- To offer a space for inter-American dialogue about children's issues.
- To urge the formulation of regional and national policies, including both the public and private sectors, with shared responsibilities, in this process.
- To promote the new ideas and proposals that have proven to be successful in improving the quality of life of children in the region, and act as a gathering point for the search for solutions.
- To encourage technical rigor in the management of Child-related areas through methodologies that systematically incorporate the evaluation of impact and results.
- To stimulate the generation of strategic alliances with other Organizations of the Inter-American System and the United Nations, with the purpose of coordinating policies and action in the Region.
- To implement, by means of the preparation of the Annual Report of the Situation of Children in the Americas (a mandate of the Permanent Council of the OAS), the generation of the basic input for political decision-making in the Region.
- To promote the children's participation and their right to be heard in all matters that affect them in civil life, and to designate their representatives in national and international fora on children's issues.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### *General Objectives*

The present programmatic proposal is intended for the 2000-2004 period and is an attempt to link the policies, programs and actions of the IACI with the following objectives:

- ❖ To enhance the presence of children's issues in the region's political fora
- ❖ To reinforce the cooperation among related organizations working in the region
- ❖ To increase the exchange of knowledge, information and experiences, and to promote Horizontal Cooperation
- ❖ To strengthen interaction with organized Civil Society

### *Specific Objectives*

- ❖ To develop and promote instruments that can be easily replicated
- ❖ To apply strong communicational strategies
- ❖ To foster the technical design, monitoring, and evaluation of the actions being taken in favor of children, as the only efficient ways of developing the policies directed at the sector
- ❖ To foment the adjustment of national and regional norms to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ❖ To encourage debate about child policies
- ❖ To stimulate the generation of knowledge related to child and adolescent issues
- ❖ To promote actions involving the participation of private business

## PROGRAMMATIC STRATEGY

Bearing in mind the IACI's institutional dimensions and legal nature, in order to attain its Strategic Objectives, its interventions in the region should consist of:

- ❖ Constituting a permanent Forum for all that is related to child policies,
- ❖ Acting as an Intermediary in the transfer of knowledge and as a Compiler of all the information that, more and more, is being generated,
- ❖ Processing the mechanisms that allow for the systematization of knowledge in such a way as to influence decision-making and the implementation of changes that better favor the best interest of the child.

Beyond the legitimate differences between the countries, but mindful that they all share the fundamental principles established in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is relevant to submit, to the Directing Council, the holistic concept on which all of its interventions should be based. To this end, the IACI has conceived a “NATIONAL CHILD SYSTEM” and a series of “Strategic Products” (which complement the National System) in the following areas: Legislation, Targeted Public Policies, and Information for the monitoring of the rights of children and adolescents.

The IACI's strategy will offer:

- **A proposal for a “National Child and Adolescent System”<sup>1</sup> and**
- **Five Strategic Products:**

These products will be developed throughout the period covered by the Plan.

- 1) *Prototype of Legislation on Children and Adolescents*
- 2) *Prototype for the Formulation of Targeted Public Child and Adolescent Policies*
- 3) *Prototype of an Information System for the Monitoring of the Rights Enshrined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (SINAI and SIPI)*
- 4) *Prototype of an Administrative Accounting Information System*
- 5) *Prototype of a Communications Program for Governing Bodies and Executing Agencies Related to Children and Adolescents*

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<sup>1</sup> Basic Prototype

# Plan of Action

## **PLAN OF ACTION**

In accordance with the NEW VISION of the IACI, its MISSION and its OBJECTIVES, the following PLAN OF ACTION has been developed, by LEVEL of institutional interaction.

### ***1. Political Level***

We believe it relevant to attempt a new approach to Child-related issues, one that has an impact in the field of public policies in the sector. This would involve promoting and strengthening the discussion at the political level of the decision-making organs themselves, as well as of the national and regional entities competent in the area of children.

To develop mechanisms that expedite the work of the Directing Council (and its Executive Committee) while allowing for permanent interaction with and between the Delegates of the countries. To this end, mechanisms will be implemented through electronic mail and Internet sites, to dynamize permanent participation.

To strengthen the role of the Pan American Child Congress as the highest forum for political, scientific and academic reflection on emerging issues related to children and adolescents in the region.

To reinforce the presence of the IACI and of children's issues in the Political Fora of the OAS (Permanent Council and the General Assembly) so that these fora may be sounding-boards that motivate States to coordinate policies aimed at improving the living conditions of our children, seeking rapid responses to their most serious situations.

## **Interaction with the General Secretariat of the OAS**

The IACI will seek to build alliances with those in the Inter-American System working in issues related to Women (CIM), Drug Abuse (CICAD), Indigenous Populations (Inter-American Indigenous Institute), the Promotion and Strengthening of Democracy (Unit for the Promotion of Democracy), the Rural Sector (IICA), Cooperation (Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development), Human Rights (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and Inter-American Court of Human Rights), etc. These alliances will permit us to optimize the impact of our actions and guarantee the presence of children's issues, from the perspective of integral protection at all levels. For this, the IACI must assume leadership of the “ad hoc” group on children created by the Permanent Council of the OAS and in the Inter-American Preparatory Committee for the Summit of Heads of State and Government.

The IACI should be capable of proposing solutions to problems and obtaining the support of political fora in order to be able to implement them.

## **Function of the Directing Council and its Executive Committee**

The Directing Council and its Executive Committee should have available the instruments that allow them to act swiftly and clearly in child policy matters. The communicational tools necessary for the adequate functioning of the political organs with the Office of the Director General should also be developed.

Using the Internet, the IACI will seek to implement the mechanisms that enable the Directing Council to meet in a virtual manner, regularly and permanently, so as to increase interaction between the Delegates.

In this way, the Delegates will be able to increase their participation and commitment, and interactively take part in the development of the Strategic Plan through the products and services offered by the IACI. The Delegates will participate in the preparation of the work plans for their respective countries during the period.

To all of these ends, we will seek to organize, jointly with the Delegates, a “national representation” for Member States, with minimal infrastructure and negligible cost, that will give the IACI a minimum of visibility and presence at the national level in all of the countries of the OAS.

## ***2. Technical Level***

In order to generate a concentrated, measurable regional impact, the Office of the Director General proposes a Programmatic Strategy that, if approved by the Directing Council, would be the proposal with which the IACI would work in the Region.

It is the IACI's interest to produce and promote a set of tools that address the different aspects involved in the administration of children's issues in a country. These prototypical tools would form the bases of a model that would promote changes in States' ability to respond to Children's issues. However, the generation of this set of tools cannot, and must not, constitute an end in itself. These tools must be part of a political, communicational, and technical assistance strategy which is complemented and supported by training that is vital for the sustainability of the actions involved.

The development of a Regional Training Component for promotion, study and research based on these prototypes will certainly generate a base for their use. This Component of the Plan must be implemented with modern techniques of Attendance-Based and Distance Education, as well as with permanent courses on specific problems. The Training Component will be coordinated cooperatively, given that it will involve all of the IACI's programs. The intention of the Office of the Director General is to implement this strategy through institutional alliances with the Academic Sector in our countries, in order to enhance the quality of the courses.

The Plan also contains another Component that crosses all of the technical programs. This is a Portfolio of Cooperation Projects that the IACI is prepared to present, using its previous experience and the new programmatic strategy. This is an institutional capital that is open to new proposals and requirements formulated by the countries. The IACI could operate this component as a fundraiser and guarantor, charging overhead, or as a technical coordinator in charge of selecting national counterparts and supervising and evaluating the execution of projects.

### ***3. Organizational Level***

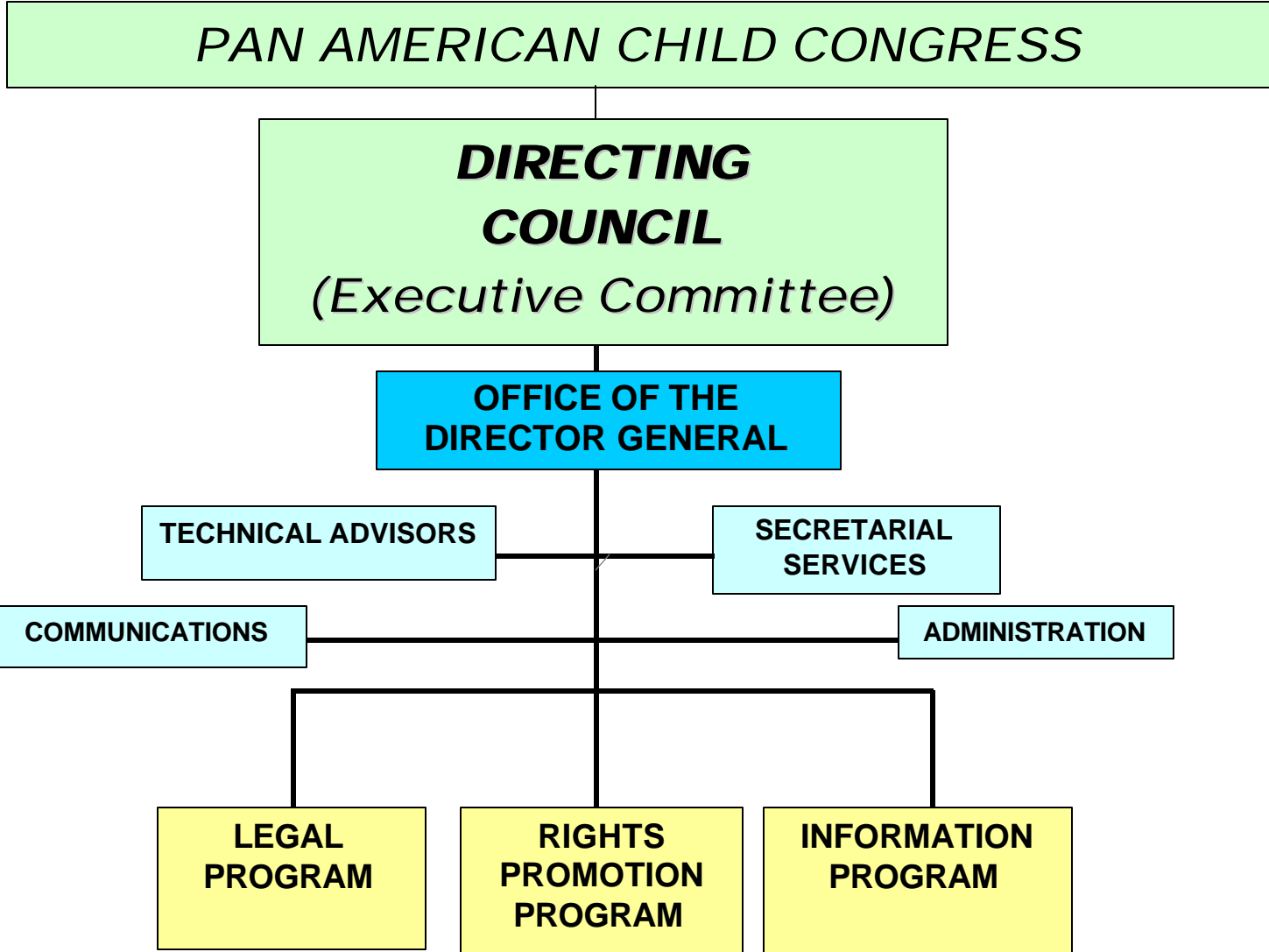
The IACI today has a small organizational structure, with the strengths and weaknesses that this involves. The IACI has not been untouched by the restructuring done by the OAS, which is debated upon in an attempt to strengthen all of the substantive elements for the fulfillment of its roles.

The hiring of stable personnel is already stretched to the limit, a subject that will be approached with an institutional and regional perspective, with a preference for performance contracts. The Office of the Director General, with the support of the Program Coordinators and other technical experts, will constitute an itinerant team at the service of the countries.

We will attempt to progressively strengthen the human group, combining technical resources at a high professional level with young professional resources.

The Office of the Director General will optimize its administration, rationalizing the use of IACI Human Resources, valuing their versatility and promoting teamwork and the use of the IACI's space as a site for regional gathering.

At the Organizational Level, we will seek to avoid programmatic dispersion, concentrating the administration on three substantive programs (*see following page*).



### ***3.1. Legal Program***

The IACI's Legal Program will promote the instruments that are developed in the sphere of the strategic products, particularly in the Legislation Prototype. It will encourage the training and professional development of legal workers in the countries, using attendance-based and distance courses that will be permanent and short-term. Advisory services will also be provided in matters of legislation related to children and adolescents.

The IACI's Legal Program will advocate the ratification of regional instruments relative to children and adolescents. Specialized Inter-American Conferences on Private International Law (CIDIP), as well as International Conventions will be the central motive of its action, from the points of view of legislation as well as doctrine.

The Program will urge the permanent updating of legal norms of the Member States in terms of:

- Legislation on Children and Adolescents
- Legislation on the Family
- Special Legislation (children in conflict with the law, child labor, adoption, etc.)

### ***3.2. Children's Rights Promotion Program***

Through this Program, the IACI will channel all of its action relative to the social realm and will promote Child Policies in the area of rights.

The Prototype of Targeted Public Policies will be promoted, and those agents capable of mobilization with respect to the Program's issues will be trained, using a combination of attendance-based and distance methods.

This Program will also manage the projects and activities within its scope. These will include:

- Commercial Sexual Exploitation
- Prevention of Drug Abuse and Promotion of Mental Health
- Disability
- Domestic Violence
- Adoption

### ***3.3. Information Program***

This Program will be responsible for promoting information on Children and Adolescents throughout the Region, deepening its work at the level of formal and informal Networks, using the Internet as the appropriate tool for its activities.

The Program will expand the action of the RIIN (Inter-American Child Information Network), which currently reaches 15 countries.

The Program must deepen the work that has already been initiated in some countries, seeking Key Child-related Persons that may become sounding-boards for the work of the IACI, giving permanent feedback.

The “Dr. Luis Morquio” specialized library will be revitalized as an information service for all of the countries, including attention to users at headquarters.

The Information Program will promote the strategic product that corresponds to the System for the Monitoring of the Rights of the Child, which must be the basis on which to build a Regional System for the Monitoring of the Rights of the Child.

The work of the Program will incorporate elements related to the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the different care programs in the region.

Its action will be focused on:

- The Inter-American Child Information Network (RIIN)
- Information Systems for the Monitoring of Rights
- Site for Reporting cases of violations

#### ***4. Communicational Level***

The characteristics and dimensions of the IACI, coupled with the level of development of communications, mean that action in this field must be prioritized. The work of the IACI's communications area should be centered around four axes:

##### **4.1 Axis of Institutional Documentation**

To administrate an accessible site to be used by the Delegates to the Directing Council and the Ambassadors of the Member States to the OAS. Among the offerings of this site would be: Minutes of Directing Council meetings; Resolutions of the Directing Council; Resolutions of the Permanent Council; Resolutions of the Pan American Child Congress; Resolutions of the General Assembly of the OAS relative to the IACI and its field of expertise; current IACI Programs and their main activities; and the Executive Letter.

##### **4.2. Axis of National and Regional Media**

We must stimulate the coordinated insertion of children's issues into the media, in keeping with the strategic action being developed.

##### **4.3 Axis of Promotional Activities**

The area will promote regional journalism and research contests in order to foster the dissemination of issues relative to the IACI's strategic programming, as well as cultural events and events that publicize child and adolescent rights. DIVERCINE is one example of this kind of activity.

##### **4.4 Axis of a Campaign “For the Children of the Americas”**

The IACI has already begun to develop a powerful campaign whose purpose is to restore its visibility in the Region, in favor of the children of the Americas. This will allow us to gain the political will of societies and their governments, to improve budgets for national protection systems, to involve the Third Sector, and to obtain extra-budgetary resources with which to enhance institutional policies and programs.

### ***5. Budgetary Level***

The Plan will include diverse non-traditional mechanisms for obtaining funds additional to the regular budget of the IACI, making its execution possible. These include: sale of services, hiring of fundraisers, alliances with private business, creation of a Foundation as a mobilizing entity in terms of children's issues and resources for children in some sub-regions. We also plan to organize events with high potential for raising funds, which would also have the simultaneous effects of institutional marketing and sensitization of public opinion.

# Strategic Products

## **STRATEGIC PRODUCTS**

### **NATIONAL CHILD SYSTEM (SNI)<sup>2</sup>**

The NATIONAL CHILD SYSTEM detailed in the diagram on the following page is a design that is adaptable to the different countries. It has been conceived for the implementation of a State Child and Adolescent Policy that enjoys the widespread support of the political system.

Its Paradigm is the CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, as it works from the concept of the child as a SUBJECT OF RIGHTS and is based on the doctrine of INTEGRAL PROTECTION. It is designed to be an organizational, participatory scheme that defines A POLITICAL and PROGRAMMATIC PLURALITY with the aim to ensure that no child in our societies is excluded from the rights conferred upon him or her as a person and as a citizen.

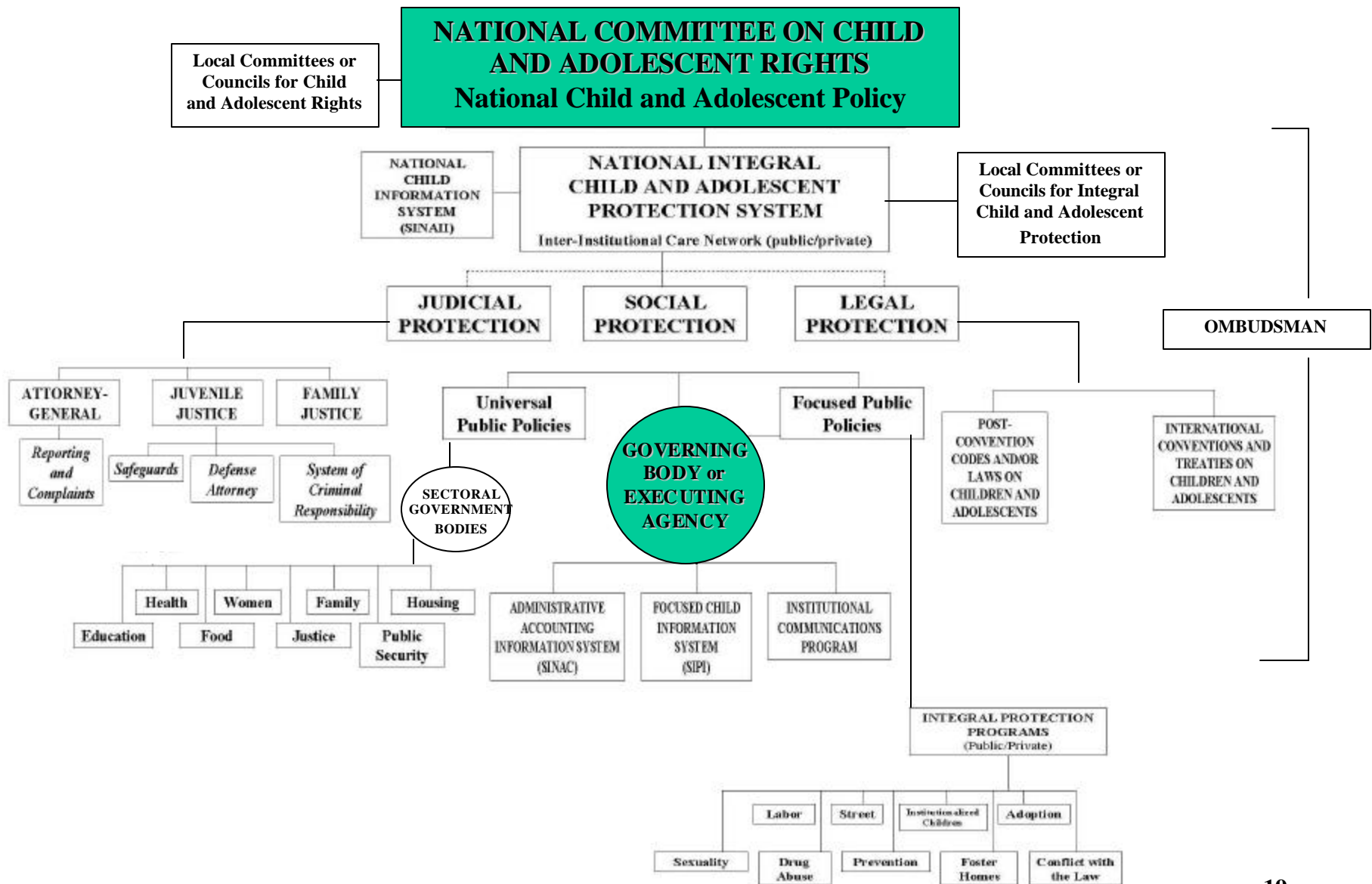
This is a “theoretical system” that defines the relations of the child-related institutions in a country, their respective areas of competence, and the participation of Civil Society. It intends to facilitate the systemic analysis of institutions in each country: their profile, their responsibilities, and their relations; it also allows for the study of the channels of interaction between administrative and judicial organs. It also analyzes relations between public and private institutions in the country, as well as their interaction and complementarity, since it is the link between the State and Civil Society Organizations that provides integral protection services to thousands of children in the region. It also establishes the profile that the Governing Body on Child Policies should have, as well as the profile that should be had by the institutions linked to the at-risk population.

In sum, the SNI attempts to structure and systematize the relations between all of the actors in order to make the rights recognized by the Convention effective.

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<sup>2</sup> Basic Prototype

# NATIONAL CHILD SYSTEM



## **PROTOTYPE 1 LEGISLATION ON CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

Given the experience, history and contributions of the IACI to Child and Family Legislation since the 1930s, it seems opportune and appropriate to promote the development of a prototype of legislation on children and adolescents, which would be a reference for the formulation of new codes and for the generation of doctrine on the subject.

The IACI has also made essential contributions and has marked its presence in other fields, such as the preparation of special child legislation (on disability, drug abuse, children in conflict with the law) at the national level, as well as the preparation of four Inter-American Conventions (child trafficking, international return of children, child support obligations, and adoption). This would make the IACI the appropriate instrument for providing advisory services in these matters and for developing the present legislation prototype.

As a complement to the above, the Plan includes the generation of comparative studies and the development of plans for the training of juvenile and family court judges, lawyers, etc.

## **PROTOTYPE 2**

### **TARGETED PUBLIC CHILD AND ADOLESCENT POLICIES**

Since the 1980s, the IACI has promoted a series of initiatives in the area of public policies which make it a reference institution in the Region. These initiatives have sought to enhance the administration capacity of those in charge of public Child and Family institutions. The IACI has also launched computer instruments that strengthen Administration capacity in these issues, such as the Targeted Child Information System (SIPI).

The present Prototype intends to be a support instrument for the Governing Bodies in the Region, in order to implement Targeted Public Child and Adolescent Policies. The Prototype considers targeting to be a requirement for the administration of Public Child Policies, in order to: a) ensure coverage of the most vulnerable sectors, b) develop adequate systems for providing services tailored to the characteristics of the request, and c) to extend the opportunities and options enshrined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child to the most disadvantaged population. It will work in areas such as:

- Early Childhood Education
- Early Health Care
- Family Alternatives to Abandonment
- Family Abuse
- Adoption
- Early Pregnancy
- Children and Youth with Different Abilities
- Street Children
- Child Labor
- Prevention of Drug Abuse
- Youth in Conflict with the Law
- Alternatives to Deprivation of Freedom
- Commercial Sexual Exploitation
- Children in Armed Conflict

### **PROTOTYPE 3**

#### **INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS MONITORING**

From 1989 to the present, Targeted Child Information Systems (SIPI) have been installed, allowing for the generation of experience in monitoring the rights of children and adolescents which merits systematization as an intermediate step for the building of a regional system for rights monitoring. The bulk of information that the IACI has accumulated can be a strong point in the construction of a regional system that cannot be the responsibility of one institution alone, and which must be, for the Institute, the basis for the report on the situation of children in the Region.

The present Prototype would be implemented based on this experience, with the necessary adaptations required by the different countries according to their own specificities that result from socio-cultural reality, legislation, and needs.

The SIPI will be a model of the Prototype and will constitute an apt instrument for the administration, follow-up and evaluation of child care.

The National Child and Adolescent Information System (SINAI) will be another module of the Prototype, responsible for gathering all of the consolidated information on children and adolescents from the competent State organs.

This proposal, closely linked to the others, will also allow for the development of regional indicators for the monitoring of Rights, a tool that will enable the establishment of levels of coordination of regional policies on the subject. The IACI must also promote strategies for training and recycling of human resources with respect to this proposal.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION**

The IACI has made a series of commitments in terms of current projects and agreements that were initiated during the last administration and which should, of course, continue. However, if the present Plan is approved, it will constitute the axis of the IACI's work for the four years of the administration of this Director General.

The IACI will have an instrument around which its operations are developed, both politically and programmatically: its resources will be devoted to developing and promoting the Plan and its political entities. In turn, the Directing Council, the Executive Committee and the Pan American Child Congress will become the sounding-board of this Plan, serving as an instrument for evaluating the progress of the IACI's activities.

One strength of this proposal is that it can be carried out based on the Plan of Action that was developed previously, in the governing framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We estimate that the years 2000 and 2001 would be devoted to the first stage of the development of strategic products (prototypes 1, 2 and 3) and to obtaining the funds necessary for their development, dissemination and promotion in the Region.

During the years 2000 and 2001, we would continue with the commitments that were previously made, and, starting in the year 2001, the Training Component (mentioned as part of the Technical Level) would begin to operate. For the development of this Plan, the IACI will seek to establish strategic alliances with other National, Regional and International Organizations.

Beginning in the year 2002, and based on the Objectives, Goals and Indicators that are developed, we will initiate a process of evaluation of the impact of this kind of work plan, we will design a Plan for the updating of the prototypes, and we will begin the second stage of the development of strategic products.