

**Coexistence Agreement for the  
Twentieth Pan American Child Congress and the  
First Pan American Child Forum, to be held in the city of Lima, Peru**

**21 to 25 September 2009**

The ***Twentieth Pan American Child Congress*** and the ***First Pan American Child Forum***, to be held in the city of Lima, Peru, constitute events which highlight the importance of child participation for the States in the region.

Citizen participation and the strengthening of democracy in the Americas have long been promoted within the framework of the Inter-American System. Article 6 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter<sup>1</sup> stipulates that: ***It is the right and responsibility of all citizens to participate in decisions relating to their own development. This is also a necessary condition for the full and effective exercise of democracy. Promoting and fostering diverse forms of participation strengthens democracy.***

The right of children to active participation, the exercise of giving their opinion on the decisions which concern them and the experience of being heard by adults are basic elements in the construction of responsible citizenship.

In this respect, Articles 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child recommend and uphold the right to participation and the horizontal and equitable communication between adolescents and adults. Thus, the Convention advocates:

- That children have a right to make their views heard and to participate in all matters which concern them, including decisions which affect their private lives as well as those in the public sphere (health, welfare, education).
- Children's right to express their opinions and to exchange views with their peers and with adults.
- Children's right to freedom of conscience, thought and religion.
- Children's right to meet with their peers, to association and to celebrate peaceful gatherings.

For its part, the Peruvian State (event host), through its Children's Code – Law N° 27337 – provides guarantees for all children without exception and acknowledges their right to:

- Express their opinion freely on all matters which concern them and through whatever means they choose, including conscientious objection, and that their opinions be considered, according to their age and maturity.
- Freedom of expression in all of its manifestations.

---

<sup>1</sup> Approved during the first Plenary Session, held on 11 September 2001.

- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The right of parents, or of the persons responsible for the children, to guide them in the exercise of this right according to their age and maturity, is recognized.
- Freedom of movement.
- Freedom of association with lawful purposes and to peaceful gatherings.

Both the First Pan American Child Forum and the Twentieth Pan American Child Congress are new experiences as regards child participation, inasmuch as they will give rise to progress, challenges, opinions, experiences and recommendations to be shared between generations of participants.

They are also multi-cultural events in every sense of the term, inasmuch as we shall meet representatives of different cultures, languages, traditions, histories and knowledge, who will enrich our experience and optimize our participation and the exchange of opinions, as well as our understanding of others.

It is our wish, therefore, that this experience should be as beneficial and productive as possible for all, as well as being pleasurable and leading to commitment and new ideas.

In this regard, it is important to establish certain recommendations for appropriate coexistence and participation in the events taking place during the five days during which we shall be sharing a variety of experiences. As this is the **objective** of this Agreement, it is important that the following aspects should be borne in mind:

### **Rights and responsibilities of adolescents DURING the Forum and Congress:**

#### **Rights**

- As do other members of their delegation, the children and adolescents have the right to express their opinions, to be heard during their interventions and to consult on whatever they deem necessary.
- Prior to leaving their countries, accompanying adults should make themselves known to the children in order to become acquainted and to agree upon and establish certain relationship guidelines to follow both during the event's activities and at other times.
- They have the right to make appropriate use of the facilities set aside for the event and to use the Internet connections provided.
- They have the right to be respected in their beliefs and customs and to be treated cordially and respectfully by adults and other children.

## Responsibilities

- We should at all times be aware that we are part of an official delegation to the Organization of American States (OAS) and that we are representing the adolescents of our country; this is why it is necessary that we should be able to take part in all of the activities this event provides, giving our opinions, expressing ourselves respectfully and listening to and exchanging views with our peers and with adults.
- We should be aware of our role and of its impact, since to a large extent the fulfilment of the programme and the objectives of the event; that is, its success, is up to us.
- It is important to take part in all of the programmed events, bearing in mind that there are several planned creative and recreational activities which will provide opportunities for integration with other teenagers of the region.
- We should give our support so that the forum becomes an area in which everyone has an equal right to participate without discrimination, as well as a right not to participate if that is his or her decision.
- In order to make appropriate use of the Internet, we should bear in mind that hundreds of delegates, guests and observers will be taking part in the Forum and Congress activities and that the working programme is very demanding.
- We should bear in mind at all times that we are taking part in a multi-cultural gathering, which means respecting the customs of the representatives of all of the countries, however different they may be to our own (for example, forms of greeting, demonstrations of affection, forms of expression, etc.)
- In the face of any difference of opinion, we should always resort to dialogue, respect and the adults who are responsible for mediating in any controversy.

## Rights and responsibilities of adolescents OUTSIDE the Forum and Congress:

Recommendations are very similar to those above, but we should also always bear in mind the following:

### Rights

- It is important that the organizers should provide timely information regarding cultural activities to be held so that all may participate and become familiar with other aspects of the host country.
- The accompanying adult should be informed of the adolescents' activities (and adolescents should also be aware of their accompanying adult's schedule), since he or she is watching over their physical and emotional well-being.

## Responsibilities

- We are responsible for our physical well-being and should avoid any excess, including alcohol, drugs or any other harmful substance.
- It is our responsibility not to take part in activities which may harm us or others and to avoid any activity which poses a threat to our health, welfare and safety.
- During cultural visits, we should not leave our group, we should watch over our valuables and respect the established time limits.
- The host country is not our own; there are rules and laws which stipulate certain forms of behaviour which we must respect, even though they are not the same as those which prevail in our own country.

## Event organizers' considerations:

We propose that children and adolescents who take part in the First Pan American Forum should study this proposed agreement and incorporate a list of consequences for situations which might violate the agreement which is eventually established. In this respect, we suggest the following procedures:

- In the face of any situation which implies diverging from these recommendations, we propose communicating the fact to:
  - The designated adult companion.
  - The head of the delegation (as the person responsible for the delegation).
- Establishing a committee composed of a representative for the children, a representative for the State of Peru and a representative for the IIN. This committee will be set up on Monday, 21 September and will meet in order to deal with and resolve situations involving adolescents or accompanying adults which violate this coexistence Agreement.
- On 21 September, with the participation of the representatives of the other delegations, the guidelines and/or responsibilities it is considered necessary to add to those established in this agreement, will be determined.

Thank you for being with us during this very significant event which provides us with the opportunity to exercise our rights and responsibilities, as well as to enrich them!

Welcome to the ***“Twentieth Pan American Child Congress and the First Pan American Child Forum”***, to be held in the city of Lima, Peru.

Contact for matters related to forum organization:

At **MIMDES**

Myriam Herrera [mherrera@mimdes.gob.pe](mailto:mherrera@mimdes.gob.pe) 0051 1 6261600 extension 7013

At **IIN**

Luis Albernaz [lalbernaz@innoea.org](mailto:lalbernaz@innoea.org) (5982) 487-2150 (5982) 487-3242