



Review of the II Pan American Child and Adolescent Forum

Opening Ceremony– 9 December

Prior to the 21st Pan American Child Congress and during the 89th Regular Meeting of the Directing Council of IIN, the official opening ceremony for the Pan American Forum took place, attended by authorities representing the States and the region's adolescent representatives. During this event, two representatives of Brazil welcomed their Forum peers and used the occasion to reflect upon the situation regarding violence and the need to use the Forum as an opportunity to discuss its significance.

Two hours before, the adolescents had taken part in preparation activities in the rooms set aside for the Forum, during which all of the young people met their peers as each delegation introduced itself. This led to the organization of the work to be carried out during the Forum, with the States initially divided into three groups:

a) The Centre and the Caribbean: El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Antigua, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia, Jamaica, Barbados, Colombia and Suriname b) South 1: Ecuador, Brazil A, Peru, Chile and Bolivia, and c) South 2: Paraguay, Brazil B, Uruguay and Argentina.

At this time, there was talk about participants' interest in addressing the issue of violence during the Forum and the outcomes that they expected. Some time was then devoted to discussion of the Forum's coexistence agreement and security rules, in order to ensure their participatory validation.

The members of the Style Committee were also chosen at this time. This group was constituted by adolescents and adult facilitators, and was responsible for producing a summary of the recommendations arising from the working groups. The selection was effected according to the agreed methodology and the States selected were: Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

First Day of the Forum – 10 December

As a first activity, the adolescent representatives attended the opening ceremony of the 21st Pan American Child Congress. Attending on behalf of the OAS was Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Albert Ramdin. For the government of Brazil, Ms Ideli Salvatti, Minister of State, Head of the Human Rights Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic and Ms Angélica Goulart, Chair of the 21st Pan American Child Congress and National Secretary for the Promotion of Children's Rights of the Human Rights Secretariat of the Presidency of the

Republic. Also present was Ms Zaira Navas, President of the Directing Council of IIN-OAS. In their addresses, these authorities referred to the presence of adolescents at the Congress.

As a second activity, there were presentations on the subject of violence against children. Sixteen States presented information on violence against children in their countries. They fulfilled the proposal of producing creative presentations and included dramatizations, simulated television newscasts, informative video films and other formats. It should be mentioned that the presentations themselves acted as a trigger for the interventions of the adolescents, who were able to take over this period of analysis and showed themselves very willing to give their opinions and be heard.

These presentations were a vehicle with which to fulfil the process of learning, which is the first step in enjoying the right to participation, through the right to be informed.

For the third activity, the adult facilitators who helped organize the sequence of presentations in groups, guided the young people's discussions, making it possible to return to sharing information and gather the opinions of participants.

Finally, the process concluded with the drafting of recommendations, which were then sent to the Style Committee for the final draft.

The adolescents' Style Committee met while the remaining representatives took part in organized games. The Committee put the proposals into categories and into four subject headings according to priorities. The drafting of each proposal was set as a task that the adolescents carried out separately with a view to sharing results on the following day.

The evaluation carried out by the team of facilitators at the conclusion of the activities was very valuable. As a result, it was noted that it was necessary to rethink the group division, prioritize the games suggested by the adolescents, make times allocated to debate and drafting recommendations more flexible and have a single presentation and analysis period by subject and not by group division.

Second Day of the Forum – 11 December

The adolescent representatives started out their day at the Forum by attending the keynote address on Juvenile Justice delivered by Rosa María Ortiz, Rapporteur on Childhood at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, as part of the Pan American Congress schedule. They were able to interact by means of questions in writing for the speaker.

After this, they initiated the specific 2nd Forum activities with some organized games, which led to an even more relaxed and inclusive atmosphere among the young people. Immediately after, they started their work for the day by separating into their country groups.

The methodology was designed according to the “learn - analyse - act” process, which made it possible for the teenagers to learn about the issues based on the talks given by the experts attending the 21st Pan American Congress, and on the presentations made by each country on the issues prioritized at the 2nd Forum.

In keeping with the schedule for the day, the issues discussed were sexual exploitation and juvenile justice. Thus, for the phase on “learning”, in their groups, all of the countries presented the issue on the basis of their experience. There was time to share information from

the perspective of the adolescents, which led to learning about the problem beyond their own countries, and to attaining a more regional outlook.

Once this regional perspective of the relevant issues had been acquired, the delegations analysed the content presented, pointing out coincidences and aspects that required to be addressed as a priority.

After concluding their group work, the adolescents made their recommendations by means of continuous discussion, debate and idea-sharing. It was important for them to give reasons for prioritizing certain subjects over all of those sifted out throughout the day. The delegations showed a strong grasp of the subject matter, capacity to assimilate the perspective of other countries and analytical skills, although of all of their abilities, the most notable was their willingness to participate and engage in dialogue.

Finally, their recommendations were delivered to the Style Committee, who organized them by priority and summarized the similar and key ideas arising from group debate. This task extended into the evening and resulted in the final draft of the recommendations.

Third Day of the Forum – 12 December

The Pan American Forum's closing activities began with the presentation of the final recommendations produced by the Style Committee, which led to new opportunities for reaching consensus when a group of adolescents requested that a further issue be included among the recommendations. On this occasion, two positions were heard regarding this proposal, a vote was taken among the Forum representatives and as a result, it was decided to keep the final recommendations as drafted by the Style Committee.

A final group dynamics activity was conducted, in which all of the representatives exchanged a gift with one of their Forum peers; this was the time to say good-bye and socialize.

The closing ceremony of the 2nd Pan American Forum was held simultaneously with the closing ceremony of the 21st Pan American Congress, and included a reading of the Forum recommendations, for which the Committee chose Chile, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay as its representatives.

Upon the conclusion of the ceremony, the host State staged a cultural show with drums, with the Forum adolescents joining in unreservedly.