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Inter American
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Institute



Organization of
American States | More rights
for more people

ACTION PLAN 2015 – 2019

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN), is a Specialized Organization of the Organization of American States (OAS) in policies related to childhood and adolescence. Founded in 1927, it has witnessed different periods in the history of this hemisphere, different forms of viewing children and different ways in which the states undertake their protection.

Pursuant to the Statutes of the IIN, it is the responsibility of the Directing Council to adopt the Strategic Plan or Action Plan submitted by the Director-General for each management period. Faced with the production of a new Action Plan, which will operate as an "institutional navigation chart" for the period 2015-2019, we must assume the challenge of putting this history at the service of the demands arising from new perspectives regarding childhood and adolescence in our region's changing scenario.

The new Action Plan must maintain a balance between the continuation of actions and processes that are underway based on historical priorities and the necessary new actions informed by the priorities determined by member states. The new Action Plan must maintain a balance between the continuation of actions and processes that are underway based on historical priorities and the necessary new actions informed by the priorities determined by member states.

Thus this proposal takes its inspiration from four main sources:

- The IIN's history, particularly its recent experience in areas which continue to be a priority in improving the protection of child rights in the region.
- The renovated regional scenario, characterized by the wealth of its cultural diversity, which coexists with deep inequities in relation to access to material and cultural assets. This leads to gaps in the enjoyment of rights among the different population groups within each state, as well as between states and subregions.
- In recent decades there has been progress in recognizing child rights, in including these rights in bodies of law, and in investment by the States, which has led to stronger protection systems. Today, child rights are on social and political agendas throughout the region. However, despite these developments, there is still a long way to go along the never-ending road that leads from stipulated and recognized rights to rights that are universally enjoyed on a day-to-day basis.
- The transformations which the OAS has been implementing in recent years. Recently, the Secretary General, Dr Luis Almagro, has reaffirmed the need for a more dynamic and efficient OAS; that it should be a genuine instrument that ensures "more rights for more people". This leads to a proposal for a new strategic vision underpinned by four pillars: *Human rights which are fully enjoyed. Democracy not only as a form of government, but as a way of life. Comprehensive development with an emphasis on human development. Multidimensional security understood as a safeguard for rights.*
- In a continent where 40% of the population is under the age of 18, and with subregions such as Central America where this figure exceeds 55%, we cannot design policies on the basis of these focal points without taking children into consideration.

- The recommendations of the 21st Pan American Child Congress, the 2nd Child Forum and the 2nd Civil Society Forum.

POSITIONING REFERENCES

In the context we have described, the IIN's position for the period covering 2015-2019 will be supported by the following reference points:

- Consolidate and strengthen the rights-based perspective as the basis for institutional action. The framework for the IIN's actions is constituted by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989), the Inter-American Democratic Charter (OAS, 2002) and other international and inter-American human rights and humanitarian law instruments.
- Strengthen the Directing Council as an area for discussion and reaching agreements that boost the capacity for joint action in the comprehensive protection of children. This means moving beyond the practice of holding regular meetings, to establish a network of smooth and ongoing exchanges among senior officials responsible for childhood policies in the states of the Inter-American System.
- Promote the anchoring of the IIN within the Inter-American Human Rights System, together with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission of Women and other bodies associated with these issues.
- Contribute from the child rights-based perspective to the four pillars established by the OAS: Human Rights, Democracy, Comprehensive Development and Multidimensional Security.
- Promote systematic relationships with the United Nations System (Committee on the Rights of the Child, specialized Rapporteurs).
- Strengthen relationships with civil society, moving forward on joint projects on common priority areas.
- Promote the engagement and inclusion of the voice of children as a cross-cutting principle in all issue areas.

Approaches for Action

- Promote the gender approach. The child rights perspective and the gender approach are inseparable from the consolidation and strengthening of democracy, not only as a form of government, but as a style of life that is respectful of the dignity of all, irrespective of differences. Even before children are born, expectations are associated with their gender roles and upon their birth are settled, and they are received by a group of people organized according to these roles. A critical review of these models and involving men in the responsibilities of childcare and parenting are essential elements in child protection policies from a rights-based perspective.
- The right to a family in should be included in every protection strategy is important to

have into account the right of children to develop in the center of their family as overriding space for their development; and that, in case that is found, on base on the best interest, separated from one or both of their parents to keep personal contact, permanently and directly with him/her/they, unless the superior interest indicates it's not appropriate. In the case that the permanence in its family of origin is not possible, children have the right to a family that gives them this space for their full development.

- Establish an approach of respect for cultural diversity and ethnicities. The Americas and the Caribbean make up a very diverse region with different histories, cultures, traditions and languages. These differences, which underpin national identities, often enter into conflict with one another. The different cultures contribute traditions, child-rearing practices, and mechanisms used in response to adversity, which should be considered and assessed when designing inclusive policies.
- Consider within the inclusive policy and the Right of no discrimination to children and adolescents with disabilities promoting their participation in every action and activity.
- Produce projects based on associations and according to performance measurement models. Consensus has been reached within the OAS and other agencies regarding the need to devise project impacts which include the possibility of evaluating outcomes. This need, which has been expressed by the Directing Council on several occasions, is linked both to institutional strengthening and to obtaining resources from a number of different sources, and represents a challenge which should be rigorously addressed.
- A communications policy at the service of a rights-based culture. Establishing the IIN as a regional reference point in rights-based policies for children has its complement in a communications policy which puts within reach of states and organizations working with children, information, tools, studies and productions which contribute to their work.

METHODOLOGY USED TO BUILD THE PLAN

This Action Plan 2015-2019 provides a description of the guidelines, activities and inputs used as the basis for designing the proposal.

Among the guidelines are the mission, vision, overall strategic objective and specific strategic objectives, as well as an analysis of the overarching context – related to the region, the OAS, the IIN and its history and issues involving childhood – and some suggested positioning references and approaches to action.

Some of the activities listed are those that the IIN habitually performs – technical assistance and the strengthening of areas and tools – others are those associated with a new focus arising from the analysis of the context and the positioning proposal.

Among the inputs for the work to be done are the elements identified in the survey conducted in the states regarding lines of action and priority issues.

The planning matrices shown here were developed by the IIN team with the support of a consultant. They were produced for each of the main issues and contain five columns that include certain basic elements such as: topic, objectives, activities, activities for 2016 and target indicators for 2019.

The topics column includes a number of specific issues that arise from the breakdown of the overarching issues determined to be priorities by the states.

The objectives column describes the aims to which it is expected to contribute through the IIN's actions in each of the subjects.

In the activities column there is a description of the steps in which institutional action will be organized, in order to provide a way to trace the actions taken to reach the goals throughout the period. This column includes at least three different types of activity: ongoing, regular (repeated periodically) and specific.

The column for 2016 makes it possible to pinpoint these differences. Activities are included that establish work commitments for the forthcoming year. This allows us to see that in some areas, a whole cycle will be completed – which will be repeated the following year – while in other cases progress will be made only in some activities, and in order to meet the objective, other activities must be performed over the following years.

The column for 2019 indicators sets specific goals which we expect to reach by the end of the period. The purpose of these goals is twofold: on the one hand, they enable a specific horizon to be fixed, which empirically represents the objective; on the other, they establish a reference point for subsequent assessment. Even though this is a first attempt at this type of planning, these indicators aspire to fulfill the demands of current approaches to programmes and projects: they are specific, measurable and established for a specific moment in time, and thus they can be objectively verified.

These matrix charts have been conceived as planning tools. They are not an exact representation of everything that the organization is planning, but they do provide a systematized vision of both the objectives being sought and the work commitments undertaken in order to move towards them.

In this respect, these planning matrices represent progress in the planning process, by establishing a basic reference point, not just for the IIN and its activity, but also for processes involving monitoring and evaluating its action, and for institutional accountability.

The first can be carried out by regularly checking the activities regarding which commitments have been made, while the second can be implemented through the availability of indicators that set targets according to which objectives can be seen to have been reached.

With the systematic use of these tools, accountability becomes part of regular institutional dynamics. The proposal implies that at every DC meeting held during the period there should be an opportunity to review the fulfillment of the commitments undertaken for the year and to discuss new commitments for the following year. Specifically, the DC meeting held in 2016 will

review the matrices adopted in 2015, and similar matrix charts will be submitted establishing work commitments for 2017. Thus, the Directing Council will be able to perform more accurate monitoring of developments and participate in the production of the list of activities committed for the following year.

This method of synchronizing the four-year Action Plan with yearly operational projects seems to be more in line with the institutional reality and to our form of obtaining resources.

II. VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

VISION

To position the IIN as a centre of excellence and a political and technical reference point in the region in matters related to child rights, with linkages within the Inter-American Human Rights System.

MISSION

To contribute to the development of public policies which will ensure the promotion, protection and enjoyment of child rights in OAS Member States, and promote the construction of a culture of rights for children, within a context of strengthened democracy.

OVERALL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

To strengthen the capacity of OAS member states and their respective societies by means of the relevant institutional frameworks, in order to comprehensively safeguard the full enjoyment of child rights.

SPECIFIC STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To develop means and tools which will support the states in establishing efficient and comprehensive strategies and actions for the promotion and protection of child rights.
2. To support the states in their tasks with regard to following up, advocating for and monitoring the fulfillment of child rights.
3. To promote the sharing of experience and lessons learned among the states in the region.
4. To strengthen the IIN's position as a Specialized Organization of the OAS in the area of childhood, regionally and internationally and, at the same time, to create linkages and become a regional reference point for the United Nations System.

ACTIVITIES PERFORMED BY THE IIN

In seeking to reach these objectives, the IIN regularly performs a number of actions that can be grouped, in broad terms, into two main lines: technical assistance to the states and strengthening institutional areas and instruments.

A non-exhaustive list of these activities and processes includes:

- An analysis of significant experiences being carried out in the region in order to extract

lessons to be transferred to the states which request them.

- The production of papers to underpin the transfer of lessons learned and training in relation to issues identified as priorities.
- Establishing links and facilitating horizontal cooperation between states, contributing methodological tools for the transfer of lessons learned, adapting them to the unique features of the receiving state and performing appropriate follow-up of the implementation process.
- Advice and advocacy in law-making processes for the production of appropriate regulatory frameworks to safeguard the rights of children.
- Training staff, which can be done through distance, blended, or face-to-face courses, with a regular supply of yearly courses, or specifically planned training to meet the demands of a state or a number of states.
- Determining the strategies to be used in order to strengthen children's organizations and producing tools to promote engagement and ensure its quality.
- Producing evaluation and rights monitoring systems, with the relevant indicators, and putting them at the disposal of the states.
- Producing technical guidelines on priority issues in the region or in a specific subregion. These guidelines include a position on the issue and technical directives for the state to intervene in ways that are respectful of child rights. They constitute an appropriate instrument with which to link intervention strategies with those of other OAS or international agencies, with common criteria.
- Convening and holding regional or subregional fora and meetings which contribute to sharing experience and determining lines of action on matters that jeopardize child rights.
- Broadcasting, raising awareness and promoting the adoption by the states in the region of international human rights treaties, with a special focus on childhood and adolescence.

As regards the IIN's institutional strengthening, the following actions stand out:

- Establishing links with authorities in the OAS, the Permanent Council and Departments that address child-related and human rights issues.
- Establishing ongoing relationships with representatives of the various states on the Directing Council. This includes organizing the annual regular meeting, as well as specific consulting and sharing in different circumstances.
- The promotion of the states' engagement in the IIN's activities, with a focus on the quality of this participation. In this respect, the IIN will attempt to focus particularly on the subregions with the least presence.
- Forming technical working groups, as appropriate, in order to follow up on issues determined to be priorities. The IIN has working groups and networks of technical reference points on several issues, which furthers collective action and the involvement of the states in their actions and outputs.

- Participation in meetings and activities promoted by other agencies, such as the Global Movement for Children, as well as in regional inter-governmental events (NIÑ@SUR, CARICOM, SICA).
- Developing a communications policy in keeping with its mandate. This includes establishing a regular presence on the social networks, drafting newsletters, issues notes and other communications outputs, as well as restructuring the website and making it more dynamic.

These actions and processes are not determined independently, but are part of strategies in which synergies are promoted between different activities as part of the search for specific outcomes.

III. REGARDING THE PROCESS INVOLVED IN BUILDING THE PROPOSAL

Producing a consistent and sustainable Strategic Plan demands broad consultation in order to establish the foundations for consensus-building among authorities for children's issues in the region, incorporating the contributions of other significant stakeholders, such as the children themselves, other OAS organizations and our strategic civil society partners.

i) STATE SURVEY

A number of regionally significant issues arose from the 21st Pan American Congress, held in December 2014 in the city of Brasilia in Brazil, and the 2nd Child Forum held at the same time. To this were added the actions that the IIN conducts in compliance with the mandates received from its Inter-American programmes and issues that are significant to the organization.

On the basis of this, the first step in producing this proposal consisted in sending a survey to all of the states in the Inter-American System, offering a list of eleven thematic lines arising from the sources mentioned above:

- Violence
- Specialized Juvenile Justice Systems
- Violence and the Sexual Exploitation of Children
- Children Deprived of Parental Care
- International Child Restitution (Abduction)
- Childhood, Adolescence and Democracy
- Early Childhood
- Childhood, Adolescence and Gender
- Natural Disaster Risk Management
- Participation
- Unaccompanied Migrant Children

Respondents in every state were asked to prioritize four issues in descending order and to identify the critical aspects related to these issues. The list on the form cross-cut processes or actions, so that not only was it possible to compile priority issues, but also what was expected of the IIN in relation to each of them.

From the survey conducted among the states¹ we found:

SUBJECT	Working Areas
Violence in Everyday Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening technical capacity for institutions coordinating public policies for children • Rights evaluation and monitoring systems • Strengthening the protagonism of coordinating institutions in the area of the National System for Child Protection • Management of technical tools and information
Violence and the Sexual Exploitation of Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of technical tools and information • Strengthening technical capacity for institutions coordinating public policies for children • Strengthening the protagonism of coordinating institutions in the area of the National System for Child Protection • Rights evaluation and monitoring systems
Specialized Juvenile Justice Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory and procedural frameworks at different levels (laws, regulations, protocols) • Management of technical tools and information • Strengthening technical capacity for institutions coordinating public policies for children • Rights evaluation and monitoring systems
Early Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening technical capacity for institutions coordinating public policies for children • <u>Rights evaluation and monitoring systems</u> • Management of technical tools and information • Strengthening the protagonism of coordinating institutions in the Childhood National Protection System

Also mentioned, less frequently and/or with less weight:

- Children Deprived of Parental Care
- Participation
- Unaccompanied Migrant Children
- Natural Disaster Risk Management

¹ States who sent information: (15) Argentina, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Uruguay.

ii) SURVEYS AMONG CHILDREN

For the first time in the history of the IIN, for the construction of the Action Plan, children were consulted through their Advisory Councils. Children were consulted on the production of the IIN's Action Plan for 2015-2019 by means of the cooperation of childhood agencies in the states of Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

The states were selected by considering those where Children's Advisory Councils or participation programmes were in operation, and that previous consultation, interest was expressed in carrying out this consultation.

The purpose of the survey was to obtain children's opinions regarding the subjects and activities that the IIN will attempt to include in its Action Plan; a similar process to the consultation carried out among members of the Directing Council.

The following preparatory tasks were performed together with the persons responsible for participation programmes in child-related agencies:

- Producing criteria for drafting the survey.
- Adapting the survey tool and systematizing the information.
- Identifying the profiles of the children to be interviewed.
- A roadmap for applying the interviews, systematizing the information and submitting the outcomes.
- One of the main aspects to be dealt with was the right to information. The persons responsible for the programmes attended information sessions in which they were supplied with basic information about the IIN and its mandate and explanations about the purpose and characteristics of the survey, as well as a general outline of each subject and activity included on it.

A total of 112 children were interviewed. Once the information was compiled, the frequency with which issues were mentioned was checked and they were weighted in order to obtain a range of points to facilitate prioritization. The results of the survey were as follows:

SUBJECT	Working Areas
Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthening technical capacity for institutions coordinating public policies for children• Management of technical tools and information• Strengthening the protagonism of coordinating institutions in the area of the National System for Child Protection

Violence and the Sexual Exploitation of Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of technical tools and information • Regulatory and procedural frameworks at different levels (laws, regulations, protocols) • Strengthening technical capacity for institutions coordinating public policies for children
Specialized Juvenile Justice Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory and procedural frameworks at different levels (laws, regulations, protocols) • Strengthening the protagonism of coordinating institutions in the area of the National System for Child Protection • Strengthening technical capacity for institutions coordinating public policies for children
Children Deprived of Parental Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of technical tools and information • Strengthening technical capacity for institutions coordinating public policies for children • Strengthening the protagonism of coordinating institutions in the area of the National System for Child Protection

iii) IIN AUTHORITIES MEETING

On 6 June 2015, a working meeting was held in the city of San Salvador (El Salvador) attended by the President of the IIN, Ms Zaira Navas, the Vice-President, Ms Elizabeth Lewis, and the Director-General, Mr Víctor Giorgi. The purpose of this event was to share the information provided so far by the states and the advisory councils. This information was processed by reordering the issues, analysing subregional differences in some of the prioritizations effected and reviewing the next stage in the production of the Action Plan.

It was the concern of these authorities during their meeting to achieve the conditions to carry out a participatory planning process in which the Directing Council could discuss the contents of the proposal in order to reach an output that would comply with the requirements of the logical framework of an institutional project, which would act as an efficient tool in guiding the actions of the IIN during the forthcoming period.

Subsequently, on 8 and 9 June, during the meeting of the directors of the Global Movement for Children, a preview of the Action Plan was provided, contributions were received and coincidences were identified regarding the priorities suggested by both the IIN and the Global Movement.

Bearing in mind the input from these exchanges and contributions, the Office of the Director-General reorganized the subjects and arrived at the following list of thematic lines, organized in three categories:

a) Priority Issues According to the Surveys:

- Early childhood
- Intersectoral policy

- Strengthening parenting capacity
- Eradicating violence in everyday settings
- Children deprived of parental care – deinstitutionalization strategies
- Sexual violence and sexual exploitation
- Juvenile justice systems
- The right to participation

b) Institutional Strengthening to Promote a Rights-Based Culture:

- Institutional communication strategy
- Strengthening the relationship with the Committee on the Rights of the Child as the body created by the CRC in order to follow up on its implementation in States Party
- Formalizing and strengthening the IIN's Human Resources Training Programme
- Strengthening the Directing Council

c) Issues Related to other Mandates or Prioritized by Subregion

- International child restitution (abduction)
- Unaccompanied migrant children
- Natural disaster risk management

These topics should be articulated with the Sustainable Development Goals approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on September 2015. Through the 17 objectives and 169 goals the document addresses different aspects related to childhood; including the elimination of infant mortality, addressing different forms of malnutrition, the protection of every child against violence, exploitation, abuse; the eradication of child marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful practices as well as child labour. The goals also focus on the access and participation of every child in the education system. The IIN will articulate with the United Nations system and with other departments of the OAS actions towards these goals.

IV. THEMATIC LINES

A) PRIORITY ISSUES ACCORDING TO THE SURVEYS:

VIOLENCE AND THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN DIFFERENT AREAS AND LIFE CYCLES

Importance of the subject

Despite the progress made in the consolidation of democracy in the Americas, as well as in the development of protection policies, violence in its various expressions appears associated with most of the threats and violations to the rights of children and adolescents.

In 2011, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (UN) issued its General Comment Nº 13: *“The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence”*. In it, the Committee states: *“A respectful, supportive childrearing environment free from violence supports the realization of children’s individual personalities and fosters the development of social, responsible and actively contributing citizens in the local community and larger society.”*

This concern was taken up by the General Assembly of the OAS at its forty-fourth regular session held in Asunción, Paraguay, from 3 to 5 June 2014. In a declaration entitled, *“On Violence against and Exploitation of Children”*,² the General Assembly recognized *“that violence against and exploitation of children occur everywhere and in all their forms, in all countries and societies and among all social groups, and make no distinction of class, culture, race, religion, gender, or nationality, particularly in vulnerable groups;”* and that, *“such violence takes place in all environments in which children live, grow, develop, and interact, inter alia, in families, at home, in schools, and in communities and the media, within social welfare systems, and in juvenile justice systems;”*

This resolution considers, among other matters, that: *“the OAS, particularly through the Inter-American Children’s Institute, as well as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, has emphasized the importance of effectively promoting and protecting the rights of children in the Americas”*.

And declares: *“That responses to violence against children should be gender-sensitive and of a holistic nature, encompassing prevention of violence against children, [...] enhancing strategies to ensure that violence is prevented, and promoting the creation of community-based child protection networks [...]”*

In December 2014, the IIN, together with the Government of Brazil, organized the 21st Pan American Child Congress, under the title: *“Twenty-Five Years after the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Building Peaceful Environments”*. During the Congress, the importance was reaffirmed of working to eradicate violence in all of its forms and everywhere it occurs.

The following statements feature in the Congress’s resolutions: “To develop plans, projects and programmes to prevent, combat, and eliminate violence against children, including that related to corporal punishments in all environments (family, education system, and institutions dedicated to providing attention and care)”, while urging the States to “promote awareness campaigns, as appropriate, among society on the harmful effects of violence and physical punishments in the education of children and adolescents and to promote an educational environment free of violence, both physical and emotional.”

In her keynote address, Marta Santos Pais, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children called upon the States in the region to ensure

² See full version in: OAS Forty-Fourth Regular Session, Asunción, Paraguay, 3-5 June 2014. Resolutions: *“Violence against and Exploitation of Children”*.

that “the protection of children against all forms of violence continues to be considered a clear priority in the design of the new regional agenda for children”. Among her recommendations, she stated that “There is a pressing need to broaden and implement effectively the necessary legal reforms to fight against child violence”. And she also stressed that “... it is essential to make investing in preventive action a clear priority” in order to build violence-free societies.

For its part, the 2nd Forum recommended: “...should have advisory departments to address and prevent violence in cities and rural areas, [...] in order to help overcome, denounce or avoid any kind of violence against children. [...] these departments should organize game-based activities to promote rights from early childhood, involving families, with a view to preventing possible acts of violence”.³

Lines of Action 2015-2019

The experience gathered by the IIN in recent years, together with the resolutions and mandates issued by a number of bodies, have resulted in proposing for the 2015-2019 period a new line of work focusing primarily on early childhood and closely related to those mentioned above: the eradication of violence in everyday settings. This line is synchronized with early childhood-related actions and aims to eliminate violence from very beginning of life.

This justifies activities with a view to training technicians and specialists in positive discipline, doing away with the myth that “violence educates”. In addition, these activities are accompanied by actions promoting legislative amendments in line with the recommendations of the World Study on Violence.

Legislation prohibiting the corporal punishment of children has advanced, but is still far from being generalized in the region. In some countries, it has encountered major parliamentary setbacks. The first country in the region to adopt a law that specifically prohibits the corporal punishment of children in any circumstances was Uruguay, in November 2007; the most recent was Brazil, in June 2014. Brazil’s enactment of this law increases the percentage of children worldwide who are protected by a legal prohibition from all forms of violence, from 5% to 8%, and there are now 38 countries that have included full prohibition in their legislation. (Santos Pais, M. 2014).⁴

However, we cannot ignore the fact that this is only one expression of a set of violent actions that are expressed in different ways and in different settings, generating a feedback effect and the naturalization of violent behaviours.

Aware of the concerns raised by the representatives of several States in the Directing Council, we have included in the new Action Plan an approach to the issue of children being used in a number of criminal activity modalities. These phenomena take different forms, depending on the

³ See Final Recommendations of the Second Pan American Child Forum. Brasilia, 12 December 2014: [http://www.iin.oea.org/IIN2011/memoria-xxi/archivos/pdf/foro1/recomendaciones/Recomendaciones_finales_Foro_Panamericano_\(ES\).pdf](http://www.iin.oea.org/IIN2011/memoria-xxi/archivos/pdf/foro1/recomendaciones/Recomendaciones_finales_Foro_Panamericano_(ES).pdf)

⁴ In: <http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/srsg/biography>

sub-region: gangs, contract killings, lethal violence, armed violence; the common denominator being the exploitation of the children involved in these forms of violence or the fact that they become their targets.

On this issue the IIN intends to create areas for meeting and exchange between States, civil society organizations and academia, seeking to deepen and broaden understanding of these phenomena, from a rights-based perspective, and move towards the design of intervention models based on the protection and restoration of rights.

Topics	Objectives	Activities	2016	2019 Indicator (as a target)
Violence and the Rights of Children in Different Areas and Life Cycles	1. Eradicating violence in everyday settings	1.1. Training to reduce violence in everyday settings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1.1. Designing a blended course 1.1.2. Working agreements with the states 1.1.3. Conducting the online phase of the training 1.1.4. Face-to-face training sessions by state 1.1.5. Assessment and distance follow-up for the roadmap produced in each state. 1.1.6. Promotion and consolidation of services of reception of delations and guidelines for parents. 	1.1.1. Designing a blended course 1.1.2 Working agreements with three states 1.1.3. Development of the virtual phase of the training 1.1.4. Proposals for a face-to-face stage in the three states 1.1.5. Identify and analyze outstanding experiences in 3 States and disseminate in the region the learned lessons.	5 states have strengthened systems (HHRR and processes) to eradicate violence in everyday settings.
	2. Accompaniment of the legislative process and the awareness.	2.1. General Technical Guidelines and drafting of Bills to avoid corporal punishment and promote non violent forms of discipline in at least three states without these laws and a state has indicated an interest in doing so. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1.1. Identifying legislators in the region committed to early childhood initiatives. 2.1.2. Establishing links with legislators and groups of legislators. 	2.1.1. Identifying legislators in the region committed to early childhood initiatives. 2.1.2. Establishing links with legislators and groups of	3 new states adopted laws prohibiting corporal punishment, or have them on their parliamentary agenda.

		<p>2.1.3. Compiling and systematizing regulatory frameworks.</p> <p>2.1.4. Compiling information on the features of the debates in the states where these frameworks were implemented.</p> <p>2.1.5. Drafting a paper, "Technical Guidelines", on drafting laws.</p> <p>2.1.6. Calling upon groups of legislators to enhance and validate this paper.</p> <p>2.1.7. Adjusting the Technical Guidelines to the reality in each state.</p> <p>2.1.8. Conducting one National Workshop in each of the three states in order to present the Technical Guidelines; entering into a commitment regarding the presentation of the Draft Bill and moving forward in compiling and sharing information for the legal proposal.</p> <p>2.1.9. Conducting one National Workshop in each of the three states in order to validate the Draft Bills.</p>	<p>legislators in three states.</p> <p>2.1.3. Compiling and systematizing the regulatory frameworks of the eight states with legislation on the issue.</p> <p>2.1.4. Compiling information on the features of the debates in the states where these frameworks were implemented.</p> <p>2.1.5. Drafting a paper, "Technical Guidelines", on drafting laws.</p> <p>2.1.6. Calling upon groups of legislators to enhance and validate this paper.</p>	
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	<p>3. Production of knowledge and tools for understanding the rights perspective of different violence involving children and adolescents</p>	<p>3.1. Promote exchanges between States with the presence of civil society and academia to reinforce the understanding of the different forms of involvement of adolescents in criminal violence.</p> <p>3.1.1. Promote the organization of a regional meeting to analyze the problem and exchange experiences.</p> <p>3.1.2. Advance towards the development of intervention models based on the protection and restoration of rights.</p>	<p>3.1.1. Promote a regional meeting to analyze the problem and exchange of experiences. Prepare activities for the realization of the event in 2017</p>	<p>Document outlining significant experiences and proposed lines of intervention.</p>

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Importance of the subject

The American continent is characterized by its high birth rates. Between 30 and 55% of the population, depending on the subregion, is under the age of 18, and between 9 and 21%, is under 6.

These high rates are accompanied by the so-called “infantilization of poverty”. The youngest people are the poorest. This is a type of poverty which, beyond its material aspects, also entails insecure environments, with a multitude of deprivations and violent events, which have an impact on child development from the start of life.

Recent studies on child development confirm that a “good start in life” is essential for children to develop their emotional, cognitive and bonding capacity. Secure attachments influence the development of brain structures, the personality and learning and socialization capacity, as well as the development of sensory circuits, language and the higher cognitive functions. Bonds formed during early childhood are important in order to establish neural circuits and their control/response. Without the favourable development of these aspects at an early age, individuals suffer limitations in attempting to reach an adequate quality of life and other opportunities of growth and personal and social fulfillment.

This has led the states and multilateral agencies to stress the importance of developing efficient social policies in order to ensure that young children undergo positive experiences that contribute to their full development.

Addressing the issue at the IIN

In this context, in 2011 the IIN resolved to include among its priorities the study and production of guidelines and tools to strengthen the capacity of the states of the Inter- American system to design and implement comprehensive protection policies for this age group.

This determination was preceded by a prior accumulation of knowledge and lessons, which led to the identification of certain recurring problems faced by the states when attempting to implement sustainable comprehensive protection policies for early childhood.

As from 2010, as part of the project on the “*Promotion and Protection of Children’s Rights in the Inter-American System*”, which was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the IIN provided technical assistance to the states of Guatemala and Colombia.

In the case of Guatemala, the IIN, together with technicians appointed by the state, took the appropriate steps to include diagnosis, training and the production of a proposal. The paper entitled “*Comprehensive Development in Early Childhood. Guatemala Invests in Comprehensive Development in Early Childhood (2010-2020)*” is a result of this process.

In Colombia’s case, technical assistance provided by the IIN included support for the consolidation of the *De Cero a Siempre* (“From Zero to Forever”) strategy and a comprehensive approach to the family in order to ensure the full development of children, with an emphasis on early childhood. This resulted in the IIN’s

conducting a study on experiences in Colombia, Chile, Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay, which served as the foundation for the papers on: “*Análisis de las experiencias más significativas desarrolladas y orientadas al fortalecimiento familiar para el desarrollo pleno de niños, niñas y adolescentes*” (Analysis of the most significant experiences developed and aimed at strengthening families to enable the full development of children) (Isaza and col. 2011); and *Lineamientos para la formación y acompañamiento a familias de niños y niñas de la Primera Infancia* (Guidelines for training and support for early childhood families) (Nocua, 2012), both of which had been used as background for the *Cero a Siempre* (“From Zero to Forever”) strategy implemented by the state of Colombia.

Further to this process, during the 86th Meeting of the Directing Council of the IIN (Uruguay, 2011), Early Childhood was established as one of the priority workstreams for the period covering 2011-2015. A working group was formed comprising the states of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Suriname, United States and Uruguay. Plan International was also included in the group.

During the course of 2012, the group focused on producing a **paper compiling lessons learned in the implementation of early childhood policies in the region and providing guidelines to overcome the principal obstacles encountered.**

It should be pointed out that one of the agreements reached by the working group was that the recommendations contained in this paper should be put into practice in a number of states in the region as from 2013, with the technical assistance of the IIN. This took place in: Peru, Paraguay and Argentina (Municipality of Córdoba).

Since that time, the contents of the paper have been enhanced on an ongoing basis and it is part of an online course for middle managers with responsibility in the design and implementation of policies, which the IIN offers every year, with an average attendance of twenty students from different states in the region.

In 2013, and in view of the fact that programmes catering to early childhood showed deficiencies in relation to systematic work with families, a paper was produced on: “***Guidelines on the Promotion of Family Care and Parenting Capacity***” (IIN-ICBF CD/doc. 9/13). This paper, which was discussed and validated at the 88th Meeting of the Directing Council (Medellín, 2013), contains strategies and methodologies for working with families, which promote the construction of environments which are suitable for healthy child development, while respectful of the knowledge and experience of each family.

These guidelines have been incorporated into the technical assistance provided by the IIN, as well as in the training carried out within the framework of the Inter-American Programme.

Lines of Action 2015-2019

The consultations conducted reflect, on the one hand, the validity of the issues addressed in relation to early childhood in the previous Action Plan. And on the other, the increasing concern at the existence of violence in the lives of children. This persuades us to suggest four subtopics within the line of work dealing with the rights of early childhood, which are closely related and which are often included in the technical assistance plans to be implemented in the states that request them.

1. The strengthening of institutional capacity to coordinate intersectoral strategies

The weaknesses of the states, the fragmentation among the different sectors (such as education, health and protection) and the gaps between the various government levels (national, provincial, federal, district and municipal) continue to hinder the implementation of comprehensive public policies. There have been a number of attempts at intersectoral coordination, decentralization and coordination between levels of government. In some cases, there have been attempts by senior government levels to encourage joint action, but these measures lose effectiveness as they filter through the chain of command and fail to be implemented in territories where children and their families need to access the results of such coordination. Several different institutional arrangements have been tried, but no in- depth assessment of them has yet been made. Many experiences involving intersectorality function as parallel operations, with some distribution of responsibilities, but in very few cases does the opportunity to “do together” actually take root.

The goal of transferring lessons learned from paradigmatic experiences to a number of states in the region and moving forward in their implementation has not yet been reached. This motivates the IIN to propose that this line of work should be continued, by means of actions involving:

- Training targeted at decision-makers and policy-designers.
- Technical assistance in the field, producing implementation proposals suited to the various situations by means of dialogue held with the technical experts in the states receiving the assistance.
- Identification of “good practices” and enabling exchange activities between states.

2. Strengthening parenting skills for childcare and child-rearing

An analysis of the background, mandates and experience shows that child protection public policies should act directly upon children’s immediate surroundings as a way to strengthen and optimize the indirect effects of actions performed in wider-ranging social venues, such as care centres and other services offered to this population. When the paper *“Guidelines on the Promotion of Family Care and Parenting Capacity”* (IIN-ICBF CD/doc. 9/13) was adopted, the states were urged to develop systematic strategies to work with families and the IIN was tasked with following this up. Over the course of the next two years, the guidelines were transferred and they were included in training courses attended by technical experts from different states.

For the purposes of this paper, we shall adopt the criteria of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, according to which, “family” refers to a variety of structures that can take charge of caring for and overseeing the development of young children. The term includes nuclear families, extended families and other traditional and modern forms based on the community, so long as they abide by the rights and best interest of the child (Committee 2005).

The task demands that other states be reached and that progress be made in the genuine implementation of these strategies. For the 2015-2019 period we propose:

- Continue transferring the guidelines and including them in our training courses.

- Identify a small number of states interested in their implementation in order to agree on a “roadmap” in this respect.
- Coordinate actions to strengthen parenting capacity with those linked to the eradication of violence as a tool for discipline.

3. The eradication of violence in everyday settings

The experience gathered throughout recent years, together with the resolutions and mandates issued by a number of bodies, have resulted in proposing for the 2015-2019 period a new line of work focusing primarily on early childhood and closely related to those mentioned above: the eradication of violence in everyday settings.

In 2011, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (UN) issued its General Comment N° 13: *“The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence”*. In it, the Committee states: *“A respectful, supportive childrearing environment free from violence supports the realization of children’s individual personalities and fosters the development of social, responsible and actively contributing citizens in the local community and larger society.”*

More recently, the OAS General Assembly in its forty-fourth regular session held in Asunción, Paraguay, from 3 to 5 June 2014, under the heading *Violence Against and Exploitation of Children*⁵ recognizes that *“such violence takes place in all environments in which children live, grow, develop, and interact, inter alia, in families, at home, in schools, and in communities and the media, within social welfare systems, and in juvenile justice systems;”* Among other aspects, it considers that: *“the OAS, particularly through the Inter-American Children’s Institute, as well as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, has emphasized the importance of effectively promoting and protecting the rights of children in the Americas;”*

And declares: *“That responses to violence against children should be gender-sensitive and of a holistic nature, encompassing prevention of violence against children, [...] enhancing strategies to ensure that violence is prevented, and promoting the creation of community- based child protection networks...”*

In December 2014, the IIN, together with the Government of Brazil, organized the 21st Pan American Child Congress, under the title: *“Twenty-Five Years after the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Building Peaceful Environments”*. During the Congress, the importance was reaffirmed of working to eradicate violence in all of its forms and everywhere it occurs.

The following statements feature in the Congress’s resolutions: “To develop plans, projects and programmes to prevent, combat, and eliminate violence against children, including that related to corporal punishments in all environments (family, education system, and institutions dedicated to providing attention and care)” while urging the states to “promote awareness campaigns, as appropriate, among society on the harmful effects of violence and physical

⁵ See full version in: OAS Forty-Fourth Regular Session, Asunción, Paraguay, 3-5 June 2014. Resolutions: “Violence against and Exploitation of Children”

punishments in the education of children and adolescents and to promote an educational environment free of violence, both physical and emotional.”

In her keynote address, Marta Santos Pais, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children called upon the states in the region to ensure that *“the protection of children against all forms of violence continues to be considered a clear priority in the design of the new regional agenda for children”*. Among her recommendations she stated that *“There is a pressing need to broaden and implement effectively the necessary legal reforms to fight against child violence”*. And she also stressed that *“... it is essential to make investing in preventive action a clear priority”*.⁶

For its part, the 2nd Forum recommended: “Every nation should have advisory departments to address and prevent violence in cities and rural areas, [...] in order to help overcome, denounce or avoid any kind of violence against children. [...] these departments should organize game-based activities to promote rights from early childhood, involving families, with a view to preventing possible acts of violence”

Finally, at the Meeting of Directors of the Global Movement for Children it was determined that the priority issue for the coalition over the next two years was the eradication of corporal punishment in the region, advocating for the universal application of laws prohibiting such punishment.

In order to move forward in the eradication of the different forms of violence, it is necessary to change the belief that violence from adults against children is a valid method of instilling values and discipline. For adults to give up these strategies, it is imperative for them to have access to information regarding the harmful effects of violence at all stages in life, and especially at the early stages of development, and they should, at the same time, be able to assimilate resources and tools for “violence-free discipline”. They require tools which will enable them to avoid violence without losing their authority and capacity to guide their children.

This is in line with the recommendation contained in General Comment Nº 13: *“Supporting parents and caregivers to understand, embrace and implement good child-rearing, based on knowledge of child rights, child development and techniques for positive discipline in order to support families’ capacity to provide children with care in a safe environment”*.

It is in this context that the IIN has produced the project *“Early Childhood – Growing Up Free of Violence”*, which will begin to be implemented in 2016. This project includes two complementary outputs.

The first of them consists in training staff in the states’ care programmes for early childhood, so that they can promote among families a critical review of the use of different forms of violence in

⁶ See Final Recommendations of the Second Pan American Child Forum. Brasilia, 12 December 2014: [http://www.iin.oea.org/IIN2011/memoriaxxi/archivos/pdf/foro1/recomendaciones/Recomendaciones_finales_Foro_Panamericano_\(EN\).pdf](http://www.iin.oea.org/IIN2011/memoriaxxi/archivos/pdf/foro1/recomendaciones/Recomendaciones_finales_Foro_Panamericano_(EN).pdf)

everyday life, and the assimilation of tools for “positive discipline”. This process includes a review of gender models, making men responsible for caring for children from the beginning of life and the promotion of stable bonds in which positive feelings predominate. We should bear in mind that the individual acting as a caregiver is a human being who also requires support and affection in order to be able to continue in his or her function.

At the same time and as a second output, we propose to produce General Technical Guidelines for the prohibition of corporal punishment in the region, and to work jointly with groups of legislators on designing draft bills to prohibit corporal punishment in at least three states where laws of this kind have not yet been enacted and where a state has indicated interest in doing so.

4. Children deprived of parental care – the right to a family

During early childhood, a child’s surroundings are particularly significant. The fulfilment of child rights depends to a large extent on the well-being and resources at the disposal of those responsible for their care, who are more vulnerable to illness, trauma, and distorted or disturbed development; they are relatively powerless to avoid or resist difficulties and are dependent on others to offer protection and promote their best interests.

Children who have been temporarily or permanently deprived of their family environment, or whose best interest demands that they do not remain in that environment, have the right to the state’s special protection and assistance (CRC, Art. 20 paragraph 1). In the Americas, the protection given by the state in these situations is often limited to placing children in institutions.

During the 21st Pan American Child Congress, it was pointed out in several of the presentations that institutionalization with the purpose of protection was one of the forms of violence against children in the region. Studies show that poor-quality institutional care rarely promotes healthy physical and psychological development and can have serious consequences for long-term social integration, particularly in children under the age of three, although also in children up to the age of five. To the extent that alternative care is required, early placement in family-based or family-like care is more likely to produce positive outcomes for young children.

This has led the Committee on the Rights of the Child to encourage State parties “to invest in and support forms of alternative care that can ensure security, continuity of care and affection, and the opportunity for young children to form long-term attachments based on mutual trust and respect, for example through fostering, adoption and support for members of extended families”.

In 2013, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights presented a thematic report entitled: *The Right of Boys and Girls to a Family. Alternative Care. Ending Institutionalization in the Americas*, which reiterates the Commission’s grave concern at the situation in which thousands of children still live in the hemisphere. In order to revert these conditions, the report sets out the applicable standards and makes a number of specific recommendations to the states to support families in their parenting responsibilities. It also identifies what

principles and guarantees for protection should prevail, in the event that alternative care is necessary, and urges the states to end the institutionalization of children by means of a planned process which will make it possible to provide appropriate care in response to the needs of protection and best interests of children.

The surveys that the IIN has conducted among the states show that there is concern regarding this issue. There are different experiences in the application of alternative family- based models. While no systematic assessment of these has been performed, it is evident that these modalities provide more favourable conditions for development than the conventional institutional models. However, as yet there has been no wide-scale development of these alternative models. Barriers of different kinds have been encountered in attempting to achieve alternative measures to eliminate institutionalization, at least for younger children, as a first step in the complete eradication of the old model.

In this context, for the period 2015-2019 the IIN intends to:

- Distribute the report *“The Right of Boys and Girls to a Family. Alternative Care. Ending Institutionalization in the Americas”* as widely as possible.
- Develop technical proposals to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations and carry out follow-up in coordination with the IACHR.
- Identify and analyze care experiences involving the implementation of alternatives to institutionalization.
- Promote training and exchange activities in order to create the conditions to move towards a significant reduction in institutionalization with the purpose of protection, and contribute instruments and strategies for the implementation of alternative models.
- Promote horizontal cooperation between states, with a focus on deinstitutionalization.

Topics	Objectives	Activities	2016	2019 Indicator (as a target)
EARLY CHILDHOOD				
Inter- sectoral policies	1. Strengthen the capacity of the states and governing bodies for the development of inter-sectoral strategies	1.1. Course on Early Childhood Policy for Decision - Makers and Planners 1.2. Technical assistance in the field to draw up implementation proposals 1.3. Identification of "Good Practices" 1.4. Facilitation of horizontal cooperation between the states	1.1. Virtual Course on Early Childhood Policy for Decision-Makers and Planners 1.2. Technical assistance in the field in two states 1.3. Identification of meaningful experiences in three states	100 decision-makers and public policy planners trained in inter-sectoral early childhood policies
Strengthening parenting capacity	2. Promote attitude shifts in parents and caregivers in order to optimize comprehensive development conditions	2.1. Continue guidelines transfer (technical assistance missions, events, workshops) 2.1.1. Identify a small number of states interested in its implementation 2.1.2. Implementation 'roadmap'	2.1.1 Missions and activities tending towards implementation of the guidelines in three states 2.1.2. Roadmap in the three states with commitments undertaken to follow it	10 states reached with activities
Children deprived of parental care – deinstitutionalization strategies	3. Promote the eradication of institutional models and facilitate the	3.1. Carry out a campaign to distribute the report "The Right of Boys and Girls to a Family. Alternative Care. Ending Institutionalization in the Americas".	3.1. Produce and disseminate the contents of the paper in user-friendly ways.	Deinstitutionalization experiences in three states.

	<p>implementation of alternative family- based strategies</p>	<p>3.2. Develop a Technical Guide to facilitate implementation of the recommendations in each state of the report The Right of Boys and Girls to a Family. Alternative Care. Ending Institutionalization in the Americas.</p> <p>3.3. Follow up progress in coordination with the IACHR.</p> <p>3.4. Identify and analyse care experiences involving the implementation of alternatives to institutionalization.</p> <p>3.5. Promote horizontal cooperation between states, with a focus on deinstitutionalization.</p>	<p>3.2. Identify and analyse care experiences involving the implementation of alternatives to institutionalization.</p> <p>3.3. Develop a Technical Guide to facilitate implementation of the recommendations in each state.</p> <p>3.4. Hold regular meetings with the IACHR to following up on the dissemination and implementation.</p>	
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SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Importance of the subject

The sexual exploitation of children, on the basis of both financial exchanges and the imbalance of power, is a very ancient practice. It has been present in all cultures throughout the ages, modifying its modalities and forms of expression according to the transformations taking place in society.

Together with the changes in the format of SEC, there have also been transformations in the way that societies and the international community itself view this form of child rights violation and in how they act. Evidence of this is that in recent years, concern regarding the subject has been gaining ground in the agendas of the states and international agencies, with a significant number of actions taking place both in society and in legislation.

While in 1969 the American Convention on Human Rights had already stipulated in its Article 19 that “*Every minor child has the right to the measures of protection required by his condition as a minor on the part of his family, society, and the state*”, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, of 1989 was the first international law to recognize specifically in its Article 34⁷ that children have the right to be protected against sexual violence: “*States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent: (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.*”

Seeking to ensure an increasing fulfillment of the purposes of the CRC, in 2000 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, in order to reinforce and complement the provisions of the CRC, particularly with regard to children’s right to special protection from commercial sexual exploitation.

Together with these regulatory developments, the international community has mobilized against this scourge, among other ways, by holding global and regional congresses and meetings with the purpose of shedding light on the problem and to establish commitments between countries.

The First World Congress against CSEC was held in 1996, in Stockholm, Sweden. Delegates to this meeting agreed on a *Declaration and Agenda for Action*⁸ which established the foundation for the first National Action Plans against sexual exploitation and agreeing on specific lines of action, which are still current: 1. Coordination and Cooperation; 2. Prevention; 3. Protection; 4. Recovery and Reintegration; 5. Child Participation.

In 2001, just after the adoption of the Optional Protocol, the Second World Congress was held in

⁷ See also Articles 19 and 39.

⁸ Available from: http://www.annaobserva.org/web/public/ratificaciones/Estocolmo_ING.pdf

Yokohama, Japan, during which participating governments and organizations signed the document known as the *Yokohama Global Commitment*⁹ Six preparatory meetings were held prior to the Second Congress: Bangkok (Thailand); Dhaka (Bangladesh); Rabat (Morocco); Montevideo (Uruguay); Budapest (Hungary) and Philadelphia (United States). The IIN was responsible for leading the meeting held in Montevideo.

Finally, in 2008, the Third World Congress was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It was characteristic in that it included all forms of sexual violence, not merely CSEC. On that occasion, participating governments and organizations ratified the *Rio de Janeiro Declaration*¹⁰.

In this context, in 2007 the Directing Council of the IIN adopted resolution CD/RES.10 (82-R/07), which created the *Inter-American Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, and Smuggling of and Trafficking in Children*, subsequently renamed the ***Inter-American Cooperation Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Exploitation and Smuggling of and Trafficking in Children***; resolution CD/RES 04 (87-R/12). In 2008, the General Assembly of the OAS adopted resolution AG/RES. 2432 (XXXVIII-O/08) in which it welcomed the decision made by the Directing Council of the IIN. Henceforth, the IIN submitted annual progress reports on the Inter-American Programme, which have been taken up by the General Assembly of the OAS and given rise to the relevant resolutions: AG/RES. 2486 (XXXIX-O/09), AG/RES. 2548 (XL-O/10), AG/RES. 2686 (XLI-O/11), AG/RES. 2707 (XLII-O/12), AG/RES. 2771 (XLIII-O/13) and AG/RES. 2828 (XLIV-O/14)¹¹

The currency and relevance of the issue was reaffirmed at the last General Assembly but one: *“That the sexual exploitation and smuggling of and trafficking in boys, girls, and adolescents of both sexes continues to have a considerable impact on our states and, therefore, that it is necessary to continue implementing effective policies and strategies to combat those criminal acts...”* (AG/RES. 2828 [XLIV-O/14]).

*In its Final Resolution, the 21st Pan American Congress also considered: “That it is imperative to maintain and increase efforts at coordination and cooperation to strengthen the progress being made in the Americas, where children continue to be those most affected by violence, which prevents the recognition and full exercise of their fundamental rights and freedoms; [...] That child trafficking and sexual exploitation, one of the serious forms of violence that significantly continue to affect the region, is one of the principal activities of criminal organizations, whose existence represents a threat to democracy, making it necessary to advance towards its immediate eradication; [...]” (CPNNA/RES 1 (XXI- 14))*¹²

And resolved, inter alia: “[...] 8. To urge Member States to prioritize actions against sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, in all its manifestations, through the creation and strengthening of specialized actions and services at institutional and inter-institutional levels both

⁹ Available from: <http://www.unicef.org/events/yokohama/outcome.html>

¹⁰ Available from: http://www.annaobserva.org/web/public/ratificaciones/Declaracion_Rio_ESP.pdf

¹¹ See resolutions at: Organization of American States. General Assembly. Declarations and Resolutions: http://www.oas.org/en/sla/general_assembly_resolutions.asp

¹² CPNNA/RES 1 (XXI- 14). Unified Resolution on the Twenty-First Pan American Child Congress. “Childhood and Adolescence: Building Peaceful Environments”

with national and international reach, for the implementation of prevention mechanisms and the harmonization and effective coordination between administrative and judicial systems, and for comprehensive restoration of the rights of children and adolescents, in particular of those who are most at risk or affected. 9. To urge Member States to strengthen regional and national mechanisms to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially children and adolescents, [...]. 13. To promote cooperation among Member States, especially horizontal, south-south and trilateral cooperation, as well as with international organizations, by fostering the production of systematic studies, opportunities for sharing good practices and the training of human resources in order to strengthen their capacity to develop peaceful environments and eradicate the different forms of violence against children, with an emphasis on the areas previously mentioned.”(CPNNA/RES 1 (XXI- 14).

For their part, the children meeting in the Pan American Child Forum recommended that: *“1. The States should draft laws to ensure that children are protected in border areas sensitive to child sexual exploitation, generating detection and control systems at points where children are most vulnerable, watching particularly over their movements in these places. They should also punish those who offer these services as well as those who request them, and provide surveillance in areas where child sexual exploitation is presumed to occur. 2. The States should ensure that their budgets are sufficient to carry out programmes involving awareness- raising, prevention, and care and reinsertion for children affected by SEC. 3. They should set up programmes to raise the awareness of society and teach the difference between child sexual exploitation and prostitution. To this end, the States should conduct studies and provide updated information and statistics. Prevention should also be fostered through education and training, particularly through art and the use of technology in creative and innovative ways. In addition, we recommend that institutions should provide specialized services in education, health, protection and justice, with qualified staff to handle registration, and swift and efficient care for victims. The States should continue to ensure that services exist to deal with the reinsertion of victims and their families in society.”*

This shows how significant the issue of violence and sexual exploitation has been and continues to be worldwide and regionally. It is a recognizable fact that some progress has been made, but at the same time, challenges persist in addressing this problem comprehensively. Because of this, it is understood that the IIN, in its role as a specialized organization of the OAS for issues involving children, must continue working together with the states of the Inter-American System, and other strategic partners, to contribute to the eradication of this scourge.

Addressing the issue at the IIN

As we have said, in 2007 the Directing Council of the IIN adopted resolution CD/RES.10 (82-R/07), which created the *Inter-American Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, and Smuggling of and Trafficking in Children*, subsequently renamed the *Inter-American Cooperation Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Exploitation and Smuggling of and Trafficking in Children*; resolution CD/RES 04 (87- R/12). Since then, the IIN has submitted yearly progress reports on the Inter-American Programme to the OAS General Assembly and has received new mandates from it.

Bearing in mind the substantive aspects of the mandates received, the *Inter-American Programme* is organized into three working areas:

Working Area 1: Compilation and systematization of meaningful and updated SEC- related information, with particular emphasis on material produced in the region, and placing it at the disposal of states, organizations and other interested parties. The reference tool for this area is the *website of the Inter-American Programme*: www.annaobserva.org, the maintenance of which has the support of a *network of technical liaison officers appointed by the states* (indispensable in all of the activities carried out within the framework of the Programme) and *exchange agreements with organizations that are pacesetters in the subject*.

Working Area 2: Production of knowledge and tools to boost the states' capacity to address the sexual exploitation of children. This area includes: *the production of brief articles disseminated by means of Issues Notes; an annual report to the OAS Secretary General on actions undertaken by the states in this field*¹³ *regional meetings to share good practices*.¹⁴

Working Area 3: Increasing the capacity of the states to confront SEC, through technical assistance and training. This area includes: *technical assistance to the states*¹⁵ *and a yearly blended course on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*.¹⁶

Lines of Action 2015-2019

In the light of the fact that according to the survey conducted among the various stakeholders, violence and sexual exploitation continue to be priority issues for the states, international agencies and the children themselves, in accordance with the agreements reached and recommendations made by childhood authorities and children at the Pan American Child Congress and the Pan American Child Forum respectively, and also bearing in mind the IIN's background in working on these issues, **we propose for the period covering 2015-2019 to**

¹³ As from 2010, these reports began to be perceived as an opportunity to focus on an issue which is specifically significant, and/or which the States have demanded. The following reports were drafted as a result: 2010 - Tenth Report. The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and the Internet; 2011 - Eleventh Report. Strategies and Models for the Restitution of the Rights of Child Victims of Sexual Exploitation in the Americas; 2012 - Twelfth Report. Framework of Reference for Reparation and Restitution of the Rights of Child Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation with a Gender Perspective; 2013 - Thirteenth Report. The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism; 2014 - Fourteenth Report. National Action Plans against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Region.

¹⁴ 11 Four meetings have so far been held: Costa Rica (2010), Jamaica (2011), Paraguay (2012), El Salvador (2013). A final paper is produced on the basis of the contributions of the presenters which, together with their presentations, is published in the "Good Practices" series.

¹⁵ We should emphasize the technical assistance provided to the state of Paraguay in producing its National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of CSEC 2012-2016, as well as to the state of Chile in producing and implementing its Second Framework for Action against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children 2012-2014, which took place in 2011 and 2012, respectively. At present, the IIN has actively joined Uruguay's CONAPEES in evaluating its Action Plan and producing a new version.

¹⁶ Hundreds of operators involved in the protection of children against commercial sexual exploitation have taken part in our training courses over the last few years. The course has been successfully completed by participants from Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

continue the activities of the Inter-American Programme for the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Exploitation and Smuggling of and Trafficking in Children, bolstering some of its working areas in keeping with new requirements (such as training for specific groups) and setting up new strategic partnerships.

In the different expressions of sexual violence it results ineludible the gender approach in every phase of the interventions. The deconstruction of the gender models and the attention to the needs and different modalities in which boys and girls are affected by the violence should be a central element in the strategies to develop. In this sense, the IIN will give special importance to the identification and analysis of experiences that take into account this perspective and will include the gender lens in every action.

We should also point out that to mark the 20th anniversary of the “Stockholm Declaration”, 2016 is to be declared **World Year against Child Sexual Exploitation**. The IIN intends to support this initiative by joining efforts with other organizations in order to design an agenda that will have an impact on the subject. In this respect, we draw attention to coordination within the OAS with the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, the Inter- American Commission of Women and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Similarly, we wish to highlight our relationship with the Committee on the Rights of the Child and specialized rapporteurs. As regards strategic partners in civil society, we are coordinating with ECPAT International and the Global Movement for Children.

Topics	Objectives	Activities	2016	2019 Indicator (as a target)
Sexual Violence and Sexual Exploitation	1. Compile and disseminate significant information on SEC from the states in the region	1.1. Maintain the Inter-American Programme website: annaobserva.org (particularly, the OBSERVATORY section) 1.2. Strengthen the network of technical liaison officers.	1.1.1. Build a database of local institutions (and contact information) where official information can be found regarding the issue in each state. 1.1.2. Carry out a fortnightly review of sources indicated on the database in order to obtain information of interest to circulate or which could enhance the site. 1.1.3. Maintain monthly contact with the network of technical liaison officers in order to exchange papers/information of interest to circulate or which could enhance the site. 1.1.4. Upload IIN papers/information whenever there are new developments. 1.2.1. Address with the Directing Council of the IIN the confirmation or appointment of new technical liaison officers for this issue.	20 states participating actively in the Network
	2. Produce tools to boost the states' capacity to address the sexual exploitation of children.	2.1. Produce and circulate quarterly Issues Notes	2.1.1. Determine issues to be addressed. 2.1.2. Produce paper. 2.1.3. Translate. 2.1.4. Circulate.	There is an Information and Support System on the Sexual Exploitation of Children, in Spanish and in English, regularly communicating with all

		<p>2.2. Produce Annual Report to the Secretary General of the OAS on action undertaken by member states to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children in the Americas.</p> <p>2.3. Conduct a First Regional Meeting on the "Prevention, Protection and Restitution of Rights in the face of CSEC: Experiences for Reflection".</p>	<p>2.2.1. Determine issues to be addressed.</p> <p>2.2.2. Consult the states, through the network of technical liaison officers and/or the Directing Council of the IIN.</p> <p>2.2.3. Produce paper.</p> <p>2.2.4. Translate.</p> <p>2.2.5. Circulate.</p> <p>2.3.1. Establish a framework agreement for working with a civil society partner (ECPAT International) in order to organize a wide- ranging regional meeting, on the 20th anniversary of the Stockholm Declaration.</p> <p>2.3.2 Set up cooperation agreements with other partners</p> <p>2.3.3. Determine and address venues and date of the event</p> <p>2.3.4. Establish agenda</p> <p>2.3.5 Send out invitations to lecturers and participants</p> <p>2.3.6 Deal with logistics regarding lecturers and participants.</p>	the IIN's states.
	3. Deliver training for human resources	3.1. Deliver training for human resources	3.1.1. Invite the states, through the network of technical liaison officers and/or the Directing Council of the IIN.	1000 persons from 15 states trained on sexual exploitation issues

		<p>3.2. Deliver extended blended course for states requesting it.</p> <p>3.3. Deliver training activities adapted to and targeting specific audiences (AMERIPOL, police officers, judicial officials, GARA, and others).</p>	<p>3.1.2. Update content of online stage of course.</p> <p>3.1.3. Deliver online stage of course.</p> <p>3.1.4. Conduct follow-up and support the face-to- face stage in each state.</p> <p>3.2.1. Deliver online stage of course for participants in Ecuador (as per request).</p> <p>3.2.2. Conduct follow-up and support the face-to- face stage in Ecuador.</p> <p>3.3.1. Establish working agreements with specific bodies: AMERIPOL and GARA.</p> <p>3.3.2. Design the course, adapting it to the specific target audience.</p>	
	<p>4. Providing guidance and technical assistance to the states</p>	<p>4.1. Technically assist states that request it for different tasks (e.g. Designing and evaluating National Plans; participation in CONAPEES)</p> <p>4.2. Take part in events/sessions organized by the states and/or other organizations</p>	<p>4.1.1 Take part in fortnightly meetings of the National Committee on the Eradication of Commercial and Non-Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Uruguay, as advisor.</p> <p>4.2.1. Co-organize the 9th meeting of the Regional Action Group for the Americas (GARA), to be held in Uruguay, along with the Tourism Ministry.</p>	<p>15 states received advice and technical assistance from IIN on sexual exploitation issues</p>

		<p>4.3. Provide the states in the region with information and advice on subjects considered to be of interest by the Institute</p>	<p>4.3.1. Generate and circulate information on international legal instruments related to CSEC: the Lanzarote Convention, the Convention on Cybercrime.</p>	
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JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Importance of the subject

The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a document which is legally binding for the states that have ratified it, has given rise to extensive and comprehensive legal reforms, or reinterpretations of current regulations. As a result of the provisions of Articles 37 and 40, this process could not fail to include the matter of juvenile justice systems for the administration of this specialized justice.

After the ratification of international instruments and the enactment of the relevant national bodies of law by the member states, useful efforts were made to develop public policies tending to support the special systems established, and, within their framework, policies to enable the promotion of plans to strengthen the social reintegration of juveniles with respect for their rights.

There are still areas to be improved in this process, to bring them into line with international standards and facilitate the establishment of the “responsibility model” or, the “justice model”. Among them:

- Reduce the number of children in contact with the system, by means of alternative measures.
- Promote the use of non-custodial penalties, restricting custodial penalties to measures of last resort.
- Increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility and the maximum age for non-imputability, or at least, avoid lowering them.
- Generate training processes to enable operators working in the criminal liability system to be adequately trained in order to ensure that care is provided with a full enjoyment of rights with a differential approach and a line on providing support for caregivers.
- Include gender perspective in the work with the adolescents in all the intervention justice system process as well as in the execution of the non custodial sanctions.
- Focus on identifying and eliminating threats of violence against adolescents in contact with the systems, as well as on establishing and/or improving procedures used to report violence and to establish protection from it.

Regarding the regulatory framework, it should be noted that the Inter-American Commission and Court have acknowledged the existence of a corpus juris of the rights of children, and that the concept of a corpus juris of International Human Rights Law is formed by a set of international instruments with differing content and legal effects (treaties, conventions,

resolutions and declarations), as well as by the decisions adopted by international human rights agencies.¹⁷

In this context, the principal specific bodies of law which include the rights-based approach at an international level are:

- The International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by means of Law N° 74 of 1968.
- United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules, 1985).
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (The JDL or Havana Rules, 1990).
- Resolution 45/115, issued by the General Assembly of the UN - prohibits the instrumental use of children in criminal activities; requests member States to adopt measures (1990),
- United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (The Tokyo Rules, 1990).
- United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (The Riyadh Guidelines, 1990).
- General Comment N° 10 of the CRC, "Children's rights in juvenile justice" (2007).
- The Brasilia Regulations Regarding Access to Justice for Vulnerable People (2008).
- The UN Bangkok Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (2009).
- General Comment N° 11 of the CRC, "Indigenous children and their rights under the Convention" (2009).
- General Comment N° 12 of the CRC, "The right of the child to be heard" (2009).
- General Comment N° 13 of the CRC, "The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence" (2011).
- Resolution 69/194 adopted by the General Assembly of the UN. The United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (2014).

The following papers are also significant:

¹⁷ A Court H.R., "The Right to Information on Consular Assistance in the Framework of the Guarantees of the Due Process of Law". Advisory Opinion OC-16/99 of 1 October 1999. Series A, No. 16, par. 115; IACHR, The Rights of the Child in the Inter-American Human Rights System OAS/Ser.L/V/II.133, doc.34, 29 October 2008, par. 39; IACHR, Juvenile Justice and Human Rights in the Americas, OAS/Ser.L/V/II., doc. 78, 13 July 2011, par. 16

- Report on Juvenile Justice and Human Rights in the Americas. OAS/Ser.L/V/II. Doc. 78, 13 July 2011, of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.
- The United Nations Secretary-General's 2006 Study on Violence against Children.
- The joint report by the OHCHR, UNODC and SRSG-VAC on the "Prevention of and responses to violence against children within the juvenile justice system", of 2012.
- The United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, of 2013

Lines of Action 2015-2019

Since 2011, the IIN has been carrying out actions in this area, targeted at protecting and promoting the human rights of adolescents who come into contact with the juvenile justice system, in the conviction that the ultimate purpose of this system, rather than being a system for criminal repression, should be one that establishes measures in keeping with the best interest of the adolescents involved and ensures that the harm caused is repaired.

In this context, the IIN designed technical guidelines on the implementation of non-custodial penalties and on post-penalty support, and produced a comparative analysis of the laws in this area. In addition, it generated technical assistance and training, tasks that need to be continued and adapted to the different realities of the member states.

Bearing in mind the actions that have taken place so far, the survey conducted with the states, Resolution CD/RES 03 (87-R/12) "Juvenile Justice Systems" issued by the Directing Council of the IIN, and the outcomes on the subject of the 21st Pan American Child Congress and 2nd Child Forum, especially:

21st Congress:

"3. To encourage Member States to follow up and implement the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's 2006 World Report on Violence against Children, the joint report of OHCHR, UNODC and SRSG-VAC on 'Prevention of and responses to violence against children within the juvenile justice system', and the 'United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice'..."

*"4. To advance towards the implementation of policies and actions to prevent and combat violence against children in juvenile justice systems for young offenders, by **favouring alternative measures to criminal prosecution and non-custodial alternatives to deprivation of liberty**, by promoting specialized systems that give priority to social re- education measures, and by promoting networks and judicial and administrative systems which are duly articulated to ensure reintegration of adolescents into society with real opportunities for their development."*

2nd Forum:

*"1. We recommend that OAS countries should **establish the age of eighteen as the minimum age at which a person may be subject to criminal penalties such as deprivation of liberty, and implement restorative justice** measures when children break the law..."*

*"2. That a **method other than deprivation of liberty should be sought**, and that deprivation of liberty should be a measure of last resort. **Alternative measures involving community service** should be implemented, work should be done with adolescents, their families and the community, and the media should publicize restorative measures rather than foster punitive responses."*

And on the basis of the technical actions that the Institute carries out in its support of the states, the IIN will focus its efforts, in coordination with the member states and depending on budget resources available, on:

- Producing and disseminating tools with which to build protocols for alternative measures and non-custodial penalties, including a restorative approach when appropriate.
- Producing and disseminating tools in order to develop or strengthen procedures used to report violence and provide protection from it to adolescents in contact with juvenile justice systems.
- Providing transfer and support to the states with regard to putting into practice the tools generated, with training for system operators as a fundamental focal point.
- Supporting states in the process of legal reform, where applicable, in keeping with their need to bring their laws into line with international standards.

Topics	Objectives	Activities	2016	2019 Indicator (as a target)
Juvenile Criminal Liability	1. Strengthen the capacity of the states to execute alternative measures to the judicial system and to apply penalties having in account the particularities of the gender approach that include restorative justice, protecting and safeguarding the human rights of adolescents in contact with the system.	<p>1.1. Promote linkages between the institutions that should collaborate to achieve the appropriate operation of the juvenile justice system (SERPA, in Spanish):</p> <p>1.1.1. Produce a guide for the formation of a SERPA interinstitutional coordination panel.</p> <p>1.1.2. Establish institutional technical liaison officers.</p> <p>1.1.3. Establish institutional agreements on forming an interinstitutional panel.</p> <p>1.2. Generate guidelines for public policy, action plan and protocols for alternative measures and the application of non- custodial penalties:</p> <p>1.2.1. Develop guidelines for the establishment of a public policy plan and an action plan.</p> <p>1.2.2. Develop protocols for each alternative measure and non- custodial penalty that prioritize the social and community reinsertion and its punitive character, taking in account the gender approach.</p>	<p>1.1.1 Produce the guide</p> <p>1.1.2 Establish technical liaison officers for institutions in one state</p> <p>1.1.3. Establish institutional agreements on forming an interinstitutional panel in one state</p> <p>1.2.1. Develop guidelines for the public policy and action plan for the Juvenile Justice Systems.</p> <p>1.2.2. Draft the protocols</p>	<p>8 states have SERPA coordination panels formed and in operation</p> <p>There is a comprehensive policy proposal for alternative measures and the application of non- custodial penalties in the process of implementation in eight states.</p>

		<p>1.2.3. Provide support to the states for the establishment of implementation proposals.</p> <p>1.3. Support the increase of the SERPAs' capacity to respond to violence against children in contact with the system and to protect them from it.</p> <p>1.3.1. Develop regional surveys on existing mechanisms on this issue.</p> <p>1.3.2. Develop general guidelines to reduce violence in the SERPAs.</p> <p>1.3.3. Make a diagnosis with selected states regarding their procedures to detect violence, reporting and protecting adolescents in contact with SERPAs.</p> <p>1.3.4. Devise a proposal for improvements to (or for creating) the detection, reporting and protecting processes.</p> <p>1.3.5. Provide support to the states for the establishment of implementation proposals.</p> <p>1.4. Strengthen the technical resources of the states.</p> <p>1.4.1 Develop a general course on juvenile criminal liability.</p>	<p>1.2.3. Provide support in one state</p> <p>1.3.1. Develop regional surveys.</p> <p>1.3.2. Develop general guidelines.</p> <p>1.4.1. Deliver one instance of the course.</p>	<p>8 states created and/or improved their procedures to detect violence and address it within the juvenile justice system.</p> <p>80 staff members from 8 states attended the course.</p>
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		1.5. Identify positive practices and develop actions to set in motion horizontal and triangular cooperation working plans.	1.5.1. Develop a matrix for needs identification (supply and demand matrix chart)	3 processes establishing cooperation initiated.
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CHILD PARTICIPATION

Importance of the subject

Participation is enshrined as one of children's rights from the very beginning of life. While it may take different forms according to children's evolutionary stages, its effective fulfilment has an impact on developing their personalities and their ways of establishing relationships. It contributes to the development of citizen awareness, reinforces the bonds of solidarity, favours understanding of the notion of general interest and facilitates involvement in public affairs, which are no longer seen as the problems of others, and become our own.

Participation engages people fully and develops their life skills, while also contributing to the transformation of environments. People become protagonists with regard to their own rights and gain awareness of the significance of their roles in society. In this respect, promoting participation is a pressing need in order to overcome the notion of children as "subjects without a voice" and allowing them to assume their status as full holders of rights.

"The promotion of children's right to participate is a substantial part of the process of acknowledging their citizenship and providing practical respect for their human rights; it thus determines the applicability of democracy as a reality." (IIN, 2012)¹⁸

When it has been incorporated in every way, it opens paths towards the exchange of ideas and becomes a form of teaching for different generations, as well as an ongoing activity.

Addressing the issue at the IIN

The Institute's work in promoting child participation as a human right and a democratic value has involved a number of processes. For example, designing technical tools in keeping with the perspective of comprehensive protection, implementing them by means of projects executed in the states and forming collaboration networks with the incorporation of state operators, experts and academics, as well as children. These networks have given rise to horizontal cooperation, regular training, regional meetings and other activities.¹⁹

With the support of the Directing Council, progress has been made in certain valuable aspects such as the production of a framework of reference for the region and other technical tools, such as a theoretical model on participation²⁰ diagnoses by means of country reports, public policy guidelines, monitoring systems and promotion techniques, to name only a few. Regular reports

¹⁸ *Words to Deeds. A guide for the design of participation public policy*, IIN, 2011.

¹⁹ A significant precedent in the IIN's promotion of child participation is the Children's Forum, "My Right to Participate", held in the city of Querétaro, Mexico, in April, 2008. This forum constituted an opportunity for discussion and self-expression for the children of thirteen states in the region who joined in the IIN's initiative. By placing on the agenda of the Directing Council an issue which demanded the wider intervention of the governing bodies for children, the event paved the way for the celebration of the 1st Pan American Child Forum in 2009, an event attended by 22 delegations.

²⁰ The background to the participatory model developed by the IIN dates back to 1985, with the proclamation of the "International Youth Year". At the time, the rights-based approach for children did not exist as such and it would take four more years for the Convention on the Rights of the Child to be adopted by the United Nations. However, there were already indications that participation would become one of the key focal points of citizenship and it was being promoted within the framework of the rebirth of the Latin American democracies.

have been submitted to the Directing Council on the training carried out with the purpose of strengthening the capacity of technical experts, states and civil society organizations, with a view to building a rights-based culture which encourages participation as a principle of the Convention.

As we have said, the 2nd Pan American Child Forum was held within the framework of the 21st Pan American Child Congress, with the cooperation of the Government of Brazil and a significant number of institutions. The Forum was basically conducive to assessing and making visible the experiences, interests, demands, feelings and opinions of children in relation to their rights in the Americas. One of its outcomes was the production of recommendations which, together with the resolutions issued by the Congress, have a significant place in the political agreements on childhood in the hemisphere.

General Comment N° 12²¹ of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which provides an interpretation of the right to participation in the application of public policies, states that *“The concept of participation emphasizes that including children should not only be a momentary act, but the starting point for an intense exchange between children and adults on the development of policies, programmes and measures in all relevant contexts of children’s lives”*.

Thus, the IIN wishes to continue mainstreaming the right to participation in all of its areas and lines of action, developing processes that will enable the assimilation of a participation culture in which giving opinions, listening and deciding are jointly responsible for identifying children as holders of rights. This implies not only acting in the company of children, but also training adults in order to shift preconceived ideas, generate personal resources to promote participation and analyze current contexts to foster the enjoyment of this right to the full.

Lines of Action 2015-2019

In view of this, during the forthcoming period the IIN intends to continue its work in promoting the right to participation along two complementary lines:

1. Opening up increasing opportunities where the voices of children are included, with a special focus on their opinions on public policies, programmes, projects and other actions of which they are the principal targets.
2. Continuing reflection and the ongoing production of tools and methodology to contribute to the quality of participation. Opening opportunities and developing a culture of listening implies that work must be done on strengthening methodologies and training qualified staff to handle and promote genuine levels of participation.

In this respect, the following focal points stand out:



Children’s Advisory Councils.

Experience regarding these councils has been increasing in recent years, after the 1st Pan American Child Forum, and there are currently at least seven National Councils, representing a means of including child participation in public policies. It is necessary

²¹ Committee on the Rights of the Child. Fifty-first session. Geneva, 25 May-12 June 2009

to continue promoting and seeking official regulation for the Councils, providing them with qualified staff and resources which will enable them to continue to be relevant and effective. To this end, technical cooperation between states which have made progress in the implementation of these councils is essential, as is the production of monitoring tools and legal assistance. Regular reports should also be produced for children on topics on which they have shared opinions. Some of these topics are violence against children, sexual exploitation and juvenile justice; with a focus on such aspects as public spending and the amendment of laws, issues that were addressed at the 2nd Pan American Forum.

- Promoting participation within the education system:
This being a strategic sector, the reflections and recommendations arising from the 2nd Forum took into account the fact that participation should be mainstreamed in schools and that its scope should be broadened to include initiatives such as helplines and learning about how violence is addressed, particularly in remote areas. Unquestionably, education provides an opportunity to make participation encompass more children, a challenge which persists in the region and regarding which institutions cannot delay acting.
- Promoting participation at the IIN's own events and areas, providing opportunities for its inclusion in surveys, as well as in fora, meetings and activities through the social networks.
- Promoting child participation within the OAS, at such opportunities as the General Assembly and the Permanent Council, and in coordination with other programmes related to democratic strengthening.
- The promotion of inclusive experiences incorporating children with disabilities, original peoples and afro-descendants.

Topics	Objectives	Activities	2016	2019 Indicator (as a target)
Children's Right to Participation	1. Produce tools and train technicians and facilitators in the right to participation	<p>1.1. Update and regular delivery of the distance participation course for staff of child-related institutions.</p> <p>1.2. Production of technical tools on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic elements in generating a participation culture. • Specialized application of the right to participation throughout the life cycle. • The right to participation at school, and in families and communities. <p>1.3. Production of content for awareness-raising on the right to participation.</p> <p>1.4. Inter-generational events to promote Participation.</p>	<p>1.1.1. Delivery of 2016 online course.</p> <p>1.1.2. Transfer to one state of methodology used to train staff on participation.</p> <p>1.2.1. Paper on basic elements in generating a participation culture.</p> <p>1.3.1. Content for awareness- raising on participation produced and circulated over the websites and social networks.</p>	100 persons from 10 states attended events and/or had access to material on the right to participation.
	2. Strengthen children and adolescents for the auto- protection of their rights	2.1. Events and activities that bring tools and knowledge to the children and adolescents to confront different risk situations.	2.1.1. Co-organization of the Inter-Generational Meeting on prevention of teenage pregnancy with the ICBF – Colombia.	
	3. Promote participation as a cross-cutting process in	3.1. Produce a face-to-face course on the evaluation and monitoring of participation.		Participation processes supported in ten States.

	institutions and states	<p>3.2. Production of technical tools on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines for setting up advisory councils • Guidelines to develop state participation programmes • Strategies for the promotion of participation in national elections <p>3.3. Support for the states in surveys and other exercises in participation in public policies</p> <p>3.4. Child participation in the OAS and the IIN.</p> <p>3.5. Follow-up to the recommendations arising from the 2nd Pan American Forum</p> <p>3.6. Organization of 3rd Pan American Forum.</p>	<p>3.2.1. Follow-up on existing ACs and advice to the states requesting it for the formation of others</p> <p>3.3.1. Support for at least two states in participation related to public policies.</p> <p>3.4.1. Children's opinions included in the IIN's events and resolution opportunities</p> <p>3.5.1. The recommendations publicized through graphic and digital material</p>	
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B) INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING TO PROMOTE A RIGHTS-BASED CULTURE

Supporting an Action Plan such as the one we are proposing makes it necessary to undertake a process of institutional strengthening in which the defence of the Regular Budget provided by the OAS is key, but this must be complemented by specific funds from different sources. To efforts to obtain financial resources we should add strengthening our relationship with other areas of the OAS and with the United Nations System, as well as with strategic partners in civil society.

This task will be possible to the extent that the IIN positions itself as a regional benchmark on issues related to child rights and provides visibility for its actions and potential. To this end, we propose the following lines of work.

INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

This line of work is linked to one of the specific strategic objectives established for this period: *“To strengthen the IIN’s position as a Specialized Organization of the OAS in the area of childhood, regionally and internationally and, at the same time, to create linkages and become a regional reference point for the United Nations System.”*

The IIN must buttress its communications regarding the promotion of the enjoyment of child rights, shedding light on technical and political contributions in relation to the current regional context. For this it will be necessary to step up the dissemination of theoretical material produced by the IIN and the states in the region, as well as the various significant experiences and practices implemented during the Institute’s missions, by member states, strategic partners and various civil society organizations.

In relation to political contributions, it will be useful to make each regional action visible in terms of moving forward on agreement and consensus regarding the various priority issues. In this respect, the IIN should take particular care in disseminating detailed accounts of every specialized event occurring in the states in the region, be they promoted by the states or by non-governmental organizations, particularly if the voices of children are included.

The Communications Area will advance in the integration of the Institute’s various actions in order to achieve an orderly and regular dissemination of institutional content, as well as to set up smooth channels of communication with the states, seeking to position the IIN as a beacon in the field of child-related issues in the Americas. This objective should be consistent with the quality and aesthetics exhibited on institutional sites as well as on the social networks, and requires permanent links with the states. To this end, we are promoting the establishment of a network of technical liaison officers in communications (RIEC).

Topics	Objectives	Activities	2016	2019 Indicator (as a target)
Communications policy at the service of developing a rights-based culture	1. Give visibility to the IIN's actions as the OAS body working for child rights.	<p>1.1. Ongoing updates for the IIN's website and specialized sites.</p> <p>1.2. Translation into the OAS's official languages of the Issues Notes or website content.</p> <p>1.3. Agreements with the states and regional organizations for the use and dissemination of communication outputs produced by the IIN.</p> <p>1.4. Recovery of the IIN Newsletter, proposal for continuity and relaunching.</p> <p>1.5. Formalization and dissemination of the IIN's Training Programme</p> <p>1.6. Reinvigorate use and access to the library</p>	<p>1.1.1. Produce and disseminate content on the IIN's website and specialized sites.</p> <p>1.2.1. Translation of issues notes or website content to two official OAS languages</p> <p>1.3.1. Initiate discussions with three states and regional organizations to use and disseminate the IIN's communications output, with accessibility criteria for vulnerable groups.</p> <p>1.4.1. Recovery of the IIN Newsletter, proposal for continuity and publication of Issue</p> <p>1.5.1. Formalization and dissemination of the IIN's Training Programme.</p> <p>1.5.2. Publication of the IIN's 2016 courses within the framework of the programme</p> <p>1.6.1. Produce a reinvigoration proposal for the use of and access to the library.</p> <p>1.6.2. Adapt the regulations on using the library to the reinvigoration</p>	As from 2015, a 10% annual increase in the number of recipients of the institutional newsletter and new visitors to the Web.

		<p>1.7. Strengthen actual and virtual access to material.</p> <p>1.8. Design and develop open activities for children who can gain access to the IIN headquarters, or virtually for the Americas.</p>	<p>proposal.</p> <p>1.6.3. Disseminate the library's rules and material.</p> <p>1.7.1. Develop proposal and regulation of access to materials in person and virtual.</p> <p>1.7.2. Publicize library proposal, rules and material.</p> <p>1.8.1. Design open activities for children who can gain access to the IIN headquarters, or virtually for the Americas.</p>	
	<p>2. Position the IIN's website as a regional pacesetter on child rights and public policies.</p>	<p>2.1. Redesign the IIN website to give greater visibility to the actions of the Institute, member states and strategic partners</p> <p>2.2. Creation of institutional and other videos to reinforce the initial rights promotion strategy.</p> <p>2.3. Make OAS's and strategic partners' content available on website and social networks.</p> <p>2.4. Ongoing and planned</p>	<p>2.1.1. Full overhaul of the IIN's website.</p> <p>2.1.2. Give greater visibility to news and actions of the Institute, member states and strategic partners.</p> <p>2.2.1. Produce an institutional and other videos to reinforce the initial rights promotion strategy.</p> <p>2.2.2. Disseminate the videos produced.</p> <p>2.3.1. Disseminate OAS's and strategic partners' content on website and SNS</p> <p>2.4.1. Produce and develop institutional communication strategy</p>	<p>A 10% annual increase in the number of IIN followers on the social networks.</p>

		<p>presence on social networks (SN):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invigorate thematic content of the IIN website, of specialized sites, newsletters, publications, resolutions on regional activities. • Anniversaries and special dates. • Regular information and news items. 	<p>in order to invigorate thematic content of the IIN website, of specialized sites, newsletters, publications, resolutions on regional activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anniversaries and special dates. • Regular information and news items. <p>2.4.2. Disseminate the institutional communication strategy.</p>	
	<p>3. Facilitate access to productions and experience in child- related issues with a rights-based perspective.</p>	<p>3.1. Form an Inter-American Network of Technical Liaison Officers on Communication (RIEC, in Spanish).</p> <p>3.2. Create a virtual area on IIN's website on "Culture and Rights".</p> <p>3.3. Regular update of state-related information, through the RIEC</p>	<p>3.1.1. Hold discussions with the states on the appointment of liaison officers to the RIEC in at least 50% of member states.</p> <p>3.2.1. Create a virtual area on the IIN's new website entitled "Culture and Rights".</p> <p>3.2.2. Obtain, through the RIEC, content for the area on Culture and Rights from at least six states in the region At least one of these from the English-speaking Caribbean.</p> <p>3.3.1. Establish smooth discussions with states where liaison officers have been appointed to the RIEC.</p> <p>3.3.2. Obtain updated information from 50% of the states actively incorporated into the RIEC.</p>	<p>Half of the states send some content through the RIEC.</p>

STRENGTHENING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AS THE BODY CREATED BY THE CRC IN ORDER TO FOLLOW UP ON ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN STATES PARTY

The approval of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the United Nations on 20 November 1989, and its swift ratification by nearly all of the states in the world not only made it the human rights instrument with the greatest level of international consensus, but generated a number of effects regarding the ways childhood is perceived, the place of children in society, the responsibility of the states and other social stakeholders in guaranteeing these rights and the means of ensuring accountability and monitoring the extent to which it is fulfilled.

The CRC introduces means of monitoring and ensuring transparency nationally and internationally. In particular, in its Article 43, it states that *“For the purpose of examining the progress made by States Parties in achieving the realization of the obligations undertaken in the present Convention, there shall be established a Committee on the Rights of the Child, ...”*

As a specialized organization of the Inter-American System working with the CRC as one of its main resource tools and which includes all of the states in the region, the IIN must aspire to become a reference point for the Committee as well as for the rest of the United Nations System. This acknowledgement of the IIN’s role in the region must be gained by means of serious and rigorous work.

For the period covering 2015-2019, the IIN intends to consolidate and strengthen its relationship with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, by means of regular contact with its members, and supporting the activities it leads by contributing a regional perspective.

As specific actions, we propose contributing to the Committee’s debates and General Comments, and providing technical assistance to the states in fulfilling their obligation to submit regular reports.

In its Article 44, the CRC states that State Parties must submit a report on the measures adopted and progress made in the implementation of the CRC within two years of the entry into force of the Convention in each country and, thereafter, every five years. On the basis of these reports and also bearing in mind the reports submitted by civil society, the Committee suggests to the states a number of comments and recommendations, requesting the states to circulate these as widely as possible²² In this respect, it is the IIN’s intention to provide technical assistance to the states at all stages of the cycle, including the adoption and implementation of actions based on the recommendations.

On the other hand, the Periodical Reports carried out by the Committee to the State Party Report presented by the States as well as the General Comments constitute a valuable input in the moment of defining and implementing childhood and adolescence Policies in the region. It is the interest of the IIN to promote the most exploitation of these inputs by the States.

²² The same applies to the Convention’s Optional Protocols.

Topics	Objectives	Activities	2016	2019 Indicator (as a target)
Strengthening the relationship with the Committee on the Rights of the Child as the body created by the CRC in order to follow up on its implementation in States Party	1. Position the IIN as a regional benchmark to accompany and support the implementation of the CRC	<p>1.1. Maintain ongoing communications with the members of the Committee from the region</p> <p>1.2. Contribute a regional overview to discussions and General Comments produced by the Committee</p> <p>1.3. Systematize the Committee's comments and recommendations to the states in the region and use them as reference points to provide technical assistance to the states</p> <p>1.4. Provide technical assistance to the states during the whole of the process of producing and submitting their regular reports</p> <p>1.5. Disseminate and promote adherence to the Optional Protocols in the region</p> <p>1.6. Follow up on ratifications in every subregion.</p>	<p>1.2.1. The IIN takes part in drafting the General Comment on investment in childhood (General Comment N° 19)</p> <p>1.2.2. Develop regional activities to disseminate the General Comment N° 19 and promote its incorporation in the policies of the states of the region.</p> <p>1.3. Systematize the Committee's comments and recommendations to the states in the region and use them as reference points to provide technical assistance to the states</p>	The IIN is able to build a relationship entailing ongoing exchange with the CRC, through interinstitutional events and communications.

FORMALIZING AND STRENGTHENING THE IIN'S HUMAN RESOURCES TRAINING PROGRAMME

One of the significant aspects among the actions that seek to bolster the states' capacity to protect the rights of children is the training provided for operators, technical experts and decision-makers on a number of issues addressed with a rights-based perspective, as well as the transfer of skills for the implementation of training programmes adapted to the requirements of each state. This will attempt to establish a "critical mass" on which institutions can base their strategies for change and strengthen their rights-based perspectives.

The IIN has been carrying out several activities related to training human resources, from its range of online and blended annual courses, to being part of the OAS's internship system, which results in the constant and updated presence of a team of young professionals. Recently, and as part of the technical assistance we provide, we have concluded an agreement with the states to provide methodological transfers, with the purpose of establishing in each country the necessary skills for the sustainable delivery of courses. In this case, the IIN provides the use of an online course delivery platform and contributes ongoing technical support.

In relation to the actions which the Institute has already undertaken, for 2015-19 we propose to strengthen the formalization of the IIN's Training Programme, as well as enter into other agreements with the states for methodological transfers that will contribute to multiplying professional skills and disseminate awareness regarding these issues. Similarly, we suggest that the IIN's training programme be synchronized with the training provided by the OAS through its Portal of the Americas, maintaining technical independence, but facilitating access to the various alternatives through that portal.

In this context, the IIN expects to establish online or blended courses on all of the Action Plan's priority lines, as well as on wide-ranging issues related to the rights-based perspective and gender approach, such as An Update on Child Rights, or The Media and Child Rights. To this we shall add other subjects which, while not included among the priority lines, are known to be of interest to some of the states, as they have indicated in the surveys (natural disaster risk management; international child abduction). Likewise, it should be noted that in 2015, eight technical experts from the fourteen Caribbean states attended courses, which shows a definite interest and entails a challenge owing to the need to increase courses delivered in English.

Topics	Objectives	Activities	2016	2019 Indicator (as a target)
Training human resources	1. Assist the states technically in training public officials and professional practitioners in various issues related to child rights.	<p>1.1. Formalization of the IIN's Training Programme.</p> <p>1.2. Training Programme: aesthetic design for its presentation.</p> <p>1.3. Aesthetic design for each of the IIN's courses.</p> <p>1.4. Establish links to the Portal of the Americas (OAS) in disseminating the IIN's Training Programme.</p> <p>1.5. Disseminate the IIN's list of courses through all of the Institute's means of communication (website, SN) and with support from RIEC and strategic partners.</p>	<p>1.1.1. Produce documentation to formalize the IIN's Training Programme.</p> <p>1.2.1. Training Programme: aesthetic design for its presentation.</p> <p>1.3.1. Use the same design for the courses delivered during the second half of the year</p> <p>1.4.1. Establish dialogue areas with the Portal of the Americas (OAS) and present the IIN's Training Programme</p> <p>1.4.2. Establish agreements for the mutual dissemination of courses offered</p> <p>1.4.3. Initiate evaluation discussions on alternatives for the enhancement and coordination of courses offered by both institutions</p> <p>1.5.1. Disseminate the IIN's list of courses through all of the Institute's means of communication (website, SN) and with support from RIEC and strategic partners.</p>	<p>Enrolment in the IIN's courses reached 2000 participants</p> <p>The courses offered in English tripled</p> <p>25 states reached through the courses</p>

		<p>1.6. Delivery of courses</p> <p>1.7. Determine and produce new online course, according to the priority issues on the Action Plan.</p> <p>1.8. Broaden the courses offered in English, in answer to specific demands from the states.</p> <p>1.9. Offer blended courses to the states in the region with which agreements are reached and counterparts established</p>	<p>1.6.1. Select participants for the open courses offered</p> <p>1.6.2. Adapt content</p> <p>1.6.3. Deliver course</p> <p>1.6.4. Tutoring for online courses</p> <p>1.6.5. Produce final report by course and annual report on Training Programme.</p> <p>1.7.1. Determine and produce one new online course.</p> <p>1.8.1. Add to the Training Programme at least one course in English.</p> <p>1.8.2. Generate in consultation with the English, French and Portuguese speaker States a route plan with priorities tending to offer a major accessibility to the courses in the 4 official languages of the OAS.</p> <p>1.9.1. Offer states blended course.</p> <p>1.9.2. Agreements with at least six states to provide counterparts for the delivery of courses</p>	
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			(appointment of coordinator by state, sending applicants, delivering face-to-face stage)	
	2. Promote knowledge and awareness of the Inter-American System and its reality in matters of child rights to advanced students and/or professionals in the region.	2.1. Ongoing contact with the OAS's internship programme 2.2. Regular identification of the Institute's needs 2.3. Selecting applicants. 2.4. Intern management	2.1.1. Ongoing contact with the OAS's internship programme. 2.1.2 Identifying the Institute's needs. 2.3.1. Assessment, interviews and selection of at least six applicants from those offered by the OAS Programme, covering different subregions. 2.4.1. Receiving interns and induction in the subject matter and the institution. 2.4.2. Joint determination of the objective of each internship. 2.4.3. Support each intern during his/her internship. 2.4.4. Evaluation and report on each internship to the Programme.	28 persons take on positions as interns at the IIN, with a positive evaluation.
	3. Promote agreements with the states for the methodological transfer and installation of national capacity to deliver courses.	3.1. Promote the installation of professional capacity in the states in the region in order to generate national systems. 3.2. Establish working agreements with the states	3.1.1. Initiate discussions with at least three states. 3.2.1. Establish agreements with at least three states.	6 states develop national course systems on the IIN's platform.

	<p>4. Promote permanent training on the technical team of the IIN in issues considered relevant to the development of the Action Plan.</p>	<p>4.1. Develop regular training activities in coordination with other organs of the OAS and strategic partners.</p>	<p>4.1.1. Develop specific training for the IIN's technical team in gender approach, especially on its application to childhood and adolescence policies.</p>	<p>The IIN counts with a technical team trained to develop an Action Plan with gender approach and multicultural approach.</p>
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STRENGTHENING THE DIRECTING COUNCIL

The IIN is the only one of the OAS's specialized organizations with a permanent forum composed of the highest authorities in their field from all of the states of the Inter-American System. Throughout its long history, this has strengthened its role as an area for political and technical coordination.

Hence, if our purpose is to reinvigorate the IIN and position it as a regional agency acting as a reference point for issues related to child rights, we need to strengthen the Directing Council as a venue for discussion and the building of agreements which will bolster its capacity for joint action in the comprehensive protection of children. This means moving beyond the practice of holding regular meetings, to establish a network of smooth and ongoing exchanges among senior officials responsible for childhood policies in the states of the Inter-American System.

From their position in the offices of the governing bodies for children in their countries, representatives will be in touch with the IIN regarding the following tasks:

- Provide updated information on their states' authorities on child-related issues.
- Transmit information on legislation, policies, strategies and national events related to children.
- Take part in online fora and technical activities on children, and cooperate with the IIN in selecting topics.
- Collaborate with the IIN in identifying NGOs, academic institutions and other strategic partners in their countries.

Topics	Objectives	Activities	2016	2019 Indicator (as a target)
Strengthening the States' Participation	1. Expand their participation in the IIN's activities for an increasing number of states in the Inter-American System	<p>1.1. Maintain smooth and ongoing communications between the IIN and the states' representatives.</p> <p>1.2. Focus particularly on and provide follow-up to states that participate less, or intermittently.</p> <p>1.3. Promote horizontal cooperation based on the potential of the States of the region.</p> <p>1.4. Amend Article 6 of the Rules of Procedure.</p>	<p>1.1.1. The states have appointed representatives and "focal points" to facilitate communications</p> <p>1.1.2. Bimonthly contact established with each appointed representative</p> <p>1.1.3. Promotion of virtual meetings with the members of the Directing Council organized by subregions.</p> <p>1.2.1. Elaborate a necessity matrix expressed by the States and offer horizontal cooperation.</p> <p>1.3.1. Procure agreements with the international Cooperation Agencies of the Inter American System.</p> <p>1.3.2. Appointment of a full-time member of staff to coordinate with the Caribbean states.</p> <p>1.4.1. Dissemination and implementation of the amendment to Article 6.</p>	The number of states taking part in the IIN's activities increases
	2. Establish representatives to the DC as a liaison between the IIN and their respective countries during periods between meetings	<p>2.1. Draft and disseminate the "representative's profile".</p> <p>2.2. Coordinate with OAS Country Offices to provide support in child-related issues.</p>	<p>2.2.1. Draft and disseminate the "representative's profile".</p> <p>2.2.1. Each Country Office is informed about activities and agreements reached between the IIN and the relevant state.</p>	Representatives and focal points in each participating state.

c) ISSUES RELATED TO OTHER MANDATES OR PRIORITIZED BY SUBREGION

INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION

Importance of the subject

The increase of human mobility, the result of current migratory flows which take place for a number of reasons, such as financial or family motives, is one of the leading causes of the increase of cases involving the wrongful removal or retention of children in states which are not their place of habitual residence.

In its Article 11, the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes the obligation of the states to adopt “*measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad*”. For its part, Article 10 of the CRC provides for a very important aspect, which is that “*a child whose parents reside in different States shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis, save in exceptional circumstances personal relations and direct contact with both parents*”.

Two international conventions have been adopted on these matters: the Inter-American Convention on the International Return of Children²³ adopted in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 15 July 1989, and The Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

The Inter-American Convention establishes that the IIN, “*As a Specialized Organization of the Organization of American States, [...] shall be responsible for coordinating the activities of the Central Authorities within the scope of the Convention and for receiving and evaluating information from the States Parties in respect of application of the Convention. It shall also be responsible for cooperating with other international organizations competent in the matter.*”

In addition to the Inter-American Convention, the General Assembly of the OAS adopted the *Inter-American Programme on Cooperation to Prevent and Remedy Cases of International Abduction of Minors by one of their Parents* - AG/RES. 2028 (XXXIV - O/04). In its resolution, the General Assembly, urges “*...member states to promote the application of the Inter- American Program and to invite the Inter-American Children’s Institute to lend its technical support, in particular through coordination with the central authorities...*” and instructs the “*...IIN, to continue their attention to the issue of the international abduction of children by one of their parents*”.

The Programme’s Component 1, on “Prevention, legal treatment, and rehabilitation of victims through national systems for the implementation and application of the conventions” mandates the IIN to urge member states to adopt measures related to: ratifying or acceding to the Conventions, adopting procedural national laws, strengthening national, judicial and administrative proceedings, training and dissemination for judges and other public authorities. Despite the existence of these international instruments, difficulties persist with regard to the

²³ CD/RES. 03 (82-R/07) 7. To recognize that the term “child”, as used both in the text of The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction and in the background documents that the IIN promotes for its various activities, should be responsive to the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and encompass boys, girls, and adolescents. The Offices of the IIN are encouraged to make this use of terms explicit in the different working papers they produce which refer to this resolution point

lack of expedited procedures, obstacles that hamper coordination between central authorities, difficulty in the interpretation of foreign laws that the authorities responsible for the resolution of cases must perform, and difficulties in including the participation of protection systems in the cases and to the extent required, while the abduction-related circumstances prevail.

Overcoming the absence in some of the states in the region of laws and/or specific procedures that the central authorities can apply in the execution of their duties in the return process, including coordination with other bodies involved, is viewed – together with the adoption of national procedural regulations – as a key factor in the improvement of return procedures and, therefore, requiring special attention.

The increasingly serious nature of these issues makes it necessary to boost investigation, the systematization of experiences, and the promotion of cooperation between states for prevention and for handling cases, so that return can be swift and in adequately safe conditions, together with providing multidisciplinary follow-up of the child's circumstances.

Lines of Action 2015-2019

The international conventions that address these problems seek to safeguard children from any wrongful removal or retention, to which end mechanisms are established which tend to restore the legal order which was infringed, while promoting unity among State Parties regarding the criteria which must prevail.

Bearing these matters in mind and after concluding that serious challenges persist in addressing and resolving these issues according to international human rights standards, we propose the objective of contributing to improving the effectiveness of procedures applied by the member states, in order to ensure the swift and safe return to their countries of habitual residence of children who were abducted or wrongfully retained.

In order to improve the application of the conventions, it is necessary for the IIN, in coordination with the states and depending on budget resources available, to focus its efforts on:

- Training: train government officials (judges, police officers, migration staff, public defenders, foreign office staff and other personnel working in these areas) on return procedures and requirements and the appropriate way to proceed when attempting to remedy cases. This should include prevention, in order to prevent children from being abducted or retained abroad, circulating information, mainly among parents, on the risks and violation of rights that these actions represent.
- Interinstitutional coordination: promote coordinated work, involving the central authorities, as well as other institutions, in order to improve results and resolve a larger number of cases, bearing in mind that the responsibility is shared.
- Appropriate application of instruments: ensure that international agreements on child protection are applied appropriately in order to enable children's prompt and safe return to their country of habitual residence; mainly by adopting operating protocols and by drafting and adopting internal regulations inspired by the Convention's

guidelines and expressed in the model law, and urging non-member states to ratify the Convention.

- Broadening the regulatory framework of reference: promoting the states' need to ratify the Convention.

Topics	Objectives	Activities	2016	2019 Indicator (as a target)
International Child Abduction	1. Strengthen the capacity of the states in the “prevention, legal treatment and rehabilitation of victims by means of national systems for the implementation and application of the conventions”. (Component 1 of the ICA Programme)	<p>1.1. Strengthen the capacity of central authorities to execute proceedings for the international return of children.</p> <p>1.1.1. Draft an operating handbook with the states’ central authorities in order to address ICA cases.</p> <p>1.1.2. Hold training sessions and discussions between bodies involved in return procedures.</p> <p>1.2. Strengthen public awareness in member states regarding the ICA phenomenon.</p> <p>1.2.1. Ongoing updates of the IIN’s website with the information determined by the ICA Programme.</p> <p>1.2.2. Support the states in disseminating communication outputs on the issue.</p> <p>1.3. Training for public officials on ICA.</p> <p>1.3.1. Online Inter-American Course on International Child Abduction - in Spanish and in English.</p>	<p>1.1.1. Draft an operating handbook in two states.</p> <p>1.1.2. Hold a training session in each state (two states)</p> <p>1.2.1. Maintain the website updated.</p> <p>1.2.2. Support for two states in producing communications material.</p> <p>1.3.1. Deliver Spanish version of the course.</p> <p>1.3.2. Design the course in English.</p>	<p>The central authorities of eight states have appropriate operating manuals to address ICA cases</p> <p>Updated website</p> <p>Eight states have circulated communication material on the issue.</p> <p>80 staff members from 8 states attended the course.</p>

MIGRANT CHILDREN

Importance of the subject

Migration is an increasingly widespread phenomenon in the region, marked by the search for better opportunities and a better quality of life. The causes that lead children to migrate are varied and are mainly rooted in economic, cultural and family-related circumstances, or are the result of activities related to organized crime.

At the core of these causes is the inequity that persists between states or regions. Migratory flows move from poorer territories or states to those that supposedly offer opportunities for a better life.

Migration may be regular, orderly, irregular, or forced. The last alternative stands out for the high vulnerability to which children are exposed, particularly in some specific areas in the Americas.

Four different situations involving irregular migration can be identified in the migratory processes that children experience:

- Children who migrate with their parents or close family members as part of a family plan.
- Children who migrate in the company of an adult who is not their guardian or a family member: defined as separated migrant children.
- Children who migrate alone, unaccompanied by either of their parents or other responsible persons: unaccompanied migrant children.
- Children who have been separated from their parents or responsible persons during the migration.

Of these cases, the last three have been the main focus of attention from the principal regional and international rights monitoring agencies, owing to their high vulnerability and exposure to trafficking and smuggling, to commercial sexual exploitation and even to loss of freedom, in addition to the risks involved in the journey and the vulnerability that their circumstances entail (discrimination, lack of access to food, housing, healthcare and education). Unaccompanied girls and/or girls who have been separated from their families during their migration are particularly exposed to gender-related violence and sexual abuse. In some cases, children are unable to gain access to appropriate identity documents and registration. They cannot apply for documents, or request that their families be located, or gain access to any guardianship systems or legal advice.

The problem of unaccompanied migrant children must be considered comprehensively as a circuit in which we can identify several critical issues related to the violation of rights.

- A situation in the child's place of origin which promotes expulsion. This is related to no access to services, a lack of opportunities and, fundamentally, to a failure on the part of the children involved, and often their families and surroundings, to visualize any

chance of engaging in a project for a decent life in that place. A fundamental motivation for migration is based on the tradition that older siblings or people they know left and were able to achieve certain goals.

- The journey and the border crossing, which expose children to a number of risks and abuse, both from the criminal organizations which make a profit from unlawful migration and from the border authorities themselves.
- If children manage to cross the border, their integration when they arrive at their destination is precarious; they undergo discrimination, no access to services and other violations related to the absence of documentation and their irregular status.
- If children are repatriated, they return to the situation they were attempting to escape. This is experienced as a failure and their plans for the future involve trying “the trip” again. It is therefore essential to have programmes to receive these children in their countries of origin and set up protection plans which, in addition to safeguarding rights, are also capable of generating the roots that they so far lack.

Several international instruments have been issued on these matters, and others which are indirectly related, within both the universal system and the Inter-American system, among which the most interesting are: “Inter-American Program for the Promotion and Protection of the Human Rights of Migrants, Including Migrant Workers and their Families” - AG/RES. 2141 (XXXV-O/05). In it, the IIN appears as one of the programme’s stakeholders and within its specific activities is entrusted with including “...in its activities the special situation of unaccompanied migrant children.” And, “...the protection of juvenile victims of trafficking in persons”.

There are areas in the hemisphere where child migration has reached alarming proportions from a humanitarian point of view. In others, the phenomenon is less visible, but it is also worrying to human rights agencies and governments. Proof of this is the decision made by senior authorities on human rights of the MERCOSUR to request an “Advisory Opinion” from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Advisory Opinion OC-21/14 “*Rights and Guarantees of Children in the context of Migration and/or in need of International Protection*”, issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in August 2014, inter alia, refers to: “*Procedures to identify international protection needs of migrant children and, as appropriate, to adopt measures of special protection*”, to “*Guarantees of due process applicable in immigration proceedings involving children*”, and to “*Characteristics of the priority measures for the comprehensive protection of the rights of child migrants and guarantees for their application*”.

The IIN took an active part in the process that led to this Advisory Opinion and at present is part of an interinstitutional group engaged in its dissemination and follow-up.

Lines of Action 2015-2019

In the case of unaccompanied migrant children, the authorities should adopt a specific approach as regards the protection of their rights and integrity. They should provide immediate attention in order to learn about their situation and determine what path to follow and provide comprehensive protection. It is important to bear in mind that these children probably carry the

burden of rights violations prior to the moment of migration, and that it is therefore key to coordinate between the protection systems of both the receiving country and the country of origin.

Through their laws and public policies, the states are working on the different situations involving the phenomenon of irregular or forced migration, in order to develop an appropriate framework in which children can fully enjoy their rights. However, this matter is still a significant challenge for the states.

The IIN has experience acquired during the project on the *“Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Unaccompanied Migrant Children”*, conducted with the states of Mexico and Guatemala, the purpose of which was to contribute to strengthening institutional capacity for the care and protection of the rights of unaccompanied migrant children. Two protocols were produced as a result, one binational and the other national, as well as a guide on activities to use with migrant children, and an educational game, which complement the roadmap for children and the roadmap for institutions, which were produced in support of the care provided to children involved in migration, and were by-products of the protocols.

This experience will serve to underpin the IIN’s intervention in the support and technical assistance it provides to the states for the promotion and protection of the rights of unaccompanied migrant children, which, in coordination with other OAS agencies, member states and other strategic partners, and depending on budget resources available, will focus on:

- Promoting, together with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter American Commission of Women, technical guidance aimed at the states, reaffirming the need to protect the rights of children who migrate without adult caregivers.
- Developing protocols and putting them into practice for the care of unaccompanied migrant children, including levels of listening and legal representation (consular assistance).
- Strengthening the technical capacity of personnel in relation to the human rights of children, and in the areas arising from the guidelines and protocols to be designed.
- Identifying positive practices in the region and establishing horizontal technical cooperation.
- Together with academia and the civil society, disseminating and following up on Advisory Opinion OC-21/14 “Rights and Guarantees of Children in the context of Migration and/or in need of International Protection”, issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in August 2014.

Topics	Objectives	Activities	2016	2019 Indicator (as a target)
Migrant Children	1. To promote the rights of migrant children, especially those who are unaccompanied.	<p>1.1. Disseminate and follow-up for advisory opinion OC-21/14 "Rights and Guarantees of Children in the context of Migration and/or in need of International Protection".</p> <p>1.2. Development of the Technical Guide on the issue.</p> <p>1.2.1. Elaborate the Technical Guide.</p> <p>1.2.2. Disseminate the Technical Guide through the IIN's Website and through different spaces of coordination on the issue.</p> <p>1.3. Development of the protocols for prevention, attention and protection.</p> <p>1.3.1. Make a diagnostic on the existent protocols and determine the ones that are needed.</p> <p>1.3.2. Develop the protocols.</p> <p>1.4. Identify positive practices and develop actions to set in motion horizontal and triangular cooperation working plans.</p>	<p>1.1. Promote initiatives to circulate and follow-up on the advisory opinion</p> <p>1.2.1. Produce the Technical Guide.</p> <p>1.2.2. Disseminate the TG via the IIN's website and the various existing coordination venues.</p> <p>1.3.1. Make a diagnostic on the existent protocols and determine the ones that are needed.</p>	<p>Protocols were produced, validated and disseminated for the care and protection of migrant children.</p> <p>2 processes establishing cooperation initiated.</p>

		<p>1.4.1. Produce the Technical Guide.</p> <p>1.4.2. Disseminate the TG via the IIN's website and the various existing coordination venues in.</p> <p>1.4.3. Promote agreements with the cooperation agencies of the States of the Inter American System.</p>	<p>1.4.1. Develop a matrix for needs identification (supply and demand matrix chart).</p> <p>1.4.2. Promote agreements with the cooperation agencies of the States of the Inter American System (1 State).</p>	
	<p>2. Strengthen the technical capacity of protection and migration human rights systems for children and in the care and protection of migrant children, especially those who are unaccompanied.</p>	<p>2.1. Conduct an Inter-American Course on the care and protection of migrant girls.</p> <p>2.1.1. Design n on-line course</p> <p>2.1.2. Provide the on-line course</p>	<p>2.1.1 Design an online course.</p>	<p>80 officials involved in these issues, from Eight different states attended the course</p>

THE PROMOTION OF CHILD RIGHTS IN DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Importance of the subject

Protecting and safeguarding the rights of children exposed to disasters and emergencies is an issue regarding which the states' concern and dedication are increasing, in view of the serious consequences and impacts of this type of situation on this group, which requires priority care.

The international community has sought to generate a shift in the approach to the issue, with an emphasis on "disaster risk management and on the need to invest more and better in the phases of prevention and preparedness for disaster as a means to mitigate its effects".

To this end, agreements have been signed, frameworks for action have been established and fora have been held, in order to help the states be more efficient and timely in designing public policy to address disasters. Among them: The Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance (AG/RES. 1101 (XXI-O/91), Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, that succeeds the Hyogo Framework for Action for 2005-2015, OAS resolutions: AG/RES. 1682 XXIX-O/99, AG/RES. 2610 (XL-O/10), CP/RES. 792 (1277/01), the Children's Charter for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR), the Department of Sustainable Development (OAS/DSD), through its Risk Management and Adaptation to Climate Change section (RISK- MACC).

Lines of Action 2015-2019

The key objectives of the IIN's work in this area have comprised the production of a Policy Framework containing current, useful and specific guidelines for the design of public policies targeting comprehensive care, the promotion of rights and the protection of children in disaster risk management and addressing emergencies with a rights-based approach, in the understanding that governing bodies should boost their involvement in national systems for disaster and emergency risk management, As an accessory to these policy framework guidelines, three complementary guides were produced, whose purpose is to support the process of putting the specific issues addressed in the Policy Framework into operation.

Based on previous experience, and in coordination with other OAS areas, member states and strategic partners, and depending on the budget resources available, the IIN will focus on supporting the states in strengthening their technical capacity, by:

- Dissemination and transfer of the policy framework and its guides.
- Training on these tools.

Topics	Objectives	Activities	2016	2019 Indicator (as a target)
The Promotion of the Rights of Children in Disaster Risk Management	1. Strengthening the technical capacity of the states in designing and/or improving public policy for child care in disaster emergencies, with a rights-based approach.	<p>1.1. Dissemination of the policy framework and its guides.</p> <p>1.2. Deliver course on “Protection of Children’s Rights in Disaster Risk Management” in Spanish and in English.</p>	<p>1.1.1. Disseminate the TG via the IIN’s website and the various existing coordination venues in the area.</p> <p>1.2.1. Deliver one course in Spanish and one in English.</p>	At least 100 officials from 10 countries trained in the specific nature of caring for children in DRM and in the application of the policy framework and its guides.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE ACTION PLAN

As it is described in the introduction of this work document, we gathered inputs from different sources and it has been enriched for different consults.

The first draft was sent to the states to gather inputs on September 15 2015, with the note DG 107/15. On October 9th a second draft is sent with the inputs received until then, through note DG 117/15. October 23rd (30 days previous the meeting as the rules of procedure require) we sent a third version, with note DG 120/15.

In this process we have received inputs and written comments from: Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Panamá, Trinidad and Tobago and Dominican Republic; and verbal inputs from other group of states.

Among this comments, that appear incorporated in most of the cases in this last draft, it is reiterated the concern for two aspects on which we think appropriate to give a brief comment.

Surveys carried out with Advisory Child and Adolescent Councils

In accordance with the guideline principles of the Plan and taking into account the exercise of the Right to participate, in this chance the IIN carried out consults with the organized adolescents through those states on which we have information and keep working relations through a technical liaison formally named by the respective State. Through the network of technical liaisons, specifying the process of consults with those that expressed their interest.

The result of this process is that, we were able to include the voices of children and adolescents from various states we were not able to achieve a regional balance in this sense. As it is pointed by the states in their comments, voices of children and adolescents from the Caribbean and North America were not included.

It is of interest to the IIN overcome this limitation in future consults, but for this we require to count on with information on the participation experiences that are developed in the different states as well as the technical liaisons to establish the contacts.

In the coming weeks the IIN will make a recollection of testimonies of children and adolescents on some of the relevant issues and for that we want to count with these liaisons being our expectation to be able to reach the entire region.

Financial aspects

The main source of funding for the IIN is the Regular Fund. It is approved annually by the General Assembly.

The 2016 budget, up to today October 23 has not yet being approved.

The proposal that will be voted in the coming weeks is similar to the approved for 2014. This means:

➤ Regular Fund: U\$S 1,073,800

Object 1 corresponds to Staff Human Recourses with an amount of U\$S 791,400

The Assigned Budget to objects 2 to 9 (including Operating expenses, maintenance, infrastructure, equipment, missions, contracts by result and support staff) is of U\$S 282,400

➤ To this we sum the funds given by the Argentinean Republic to the International Abduction of Children and Adolescents for U\$S 5,000

It is anticipated that for 2016 the IIN will receive this budget. We have preferred not to suggest a proposed distribution of funds until the General Assembly approves the budget and until the Directing Council has approved the Action Plan.

It's important to be clear that most of the actions proposed for 2016 count with funds from counterparts, being these states, strategic partners of civil society or other multilateral organizations. These funds do not necessarily include monetary transfers to the IIN, but are based on the distribution of funds required for each activity. These amounts are not precisely defined yet since this will be possible only when the organizations and the states define their 2016 budgets, but potential funding does exist to support these actions.

It is the intention of the IIN to define a draft budget distribution in the first trimester of the next year, which will be shared with the members of the Directing Council.