



RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STATES OF THE AMERICAN CONTINENT ON ENHANCING CHILD PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC POLICIES

We, the fifty-eight children and adolescents from Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay, gathered together on 22 and 23 June 2016, in the city of Pereira, in the department of Risaralda, Colombia, for the meeting on *Child Participation in Public Policies. Latin American Experience Sharing*, organized by the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF), in coordination with the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN) of the Organization of American States (OAS),

In the exercise of participation, which is both a general principle and a set of specific rights contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and which are enshrined as such in the constitutions and laws of our countries,

Having noted during this event the variety, wealth and significance of our contributions to national and local public policy, which bolster not only our citizenship, but also the development and welfare of our communities and territories,

Make the following recommendations to the American States, with the purpose of strengthening the participation of children in the design of public policies, according to the three thematic areas addressed at this event: the public policy cycle, the dimensions of participation, and participation scenarios and opportunities:

1. The Cycle of Public Policy

We recommend:

- Implementing means of consulting children, adolescents, young people and the elderly in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies.
- Ensuring the existence of a budget allocated to children, effectively implemented and whose allocation cannot, under any circumstances, be changed.
- Ensuring that children are informed regarding public policies, establishing opportunities for their dissemination, determining the stages in the public policy cycle clearly, specifically and comprehensibly, and generating joint responsibility opportunities for the States and society.
- Fostering children's advocacy in decision-making at different stages of public policy evolution. The stages involving design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and other aspects which could be deemed to be relevant should be borne in mind.
- Ensuring that children participate in the evaluation of public policies and that such evaluation is documented and serves as an input for subsequent designs.
- Rendering an account to children on the specific forms of their effective participation in the cycle of public policy.



2. The Dimensions of Participation

We recommend:

- Developing programmes to promote participation and strengthen children's capabilities.
- Generating and promoting awareness-raising in the community in order to enable child participation.
- Providing children with information about public policies, with actual data, in user-friendly formats and with a methodology that adapts to the different ages, cultures and contexts, generating suitable environments for this information to be received.
- Consulting children on strategies, the educational model, the syllabus and methodologies to be implemented in schools.

3. Participation Scenarios and Opportunities

We recommend:

- Providing facilities and developing strategies for the participation of children and adolescents from different social groups and with different characteristics in the public policy process. For example: children who work; child offenders; children from indigenous communities or rural areas; children in different situations involving protection, etc.
- Explicitly including, by means of legal amendments, provisions for children's advisory and consultative councils in Children's Statutes and other similarly ranked legislative documents.
- Setting up competitive funds and/or participatory budgets in support of initiatives for children's projects.
- Allocating specific budgets for children's advisory and consultative councils within the country's general budget.
- Positioning children's advisory and consultative councils as bodies representing all the children and adolescents in the country, making them advisers to the highest bodies for children's issues, and ensuring that conditions and channels are in place for direct and ongoing discussion with these authorities.
- Responding in a timely manner to the suggestions made by the children who are attending this meeting and informing advisory and consultative councils, or other similarly ranked children's groups in their respective countries, on the reactions, decisions made and measures taken by their States on the basis of our recommendations and the ideals in this document.

City of Pereira, department of Risaralda, Colombia.

23 June 2016