



## DECLARATION D'APPRENTIS D'AUTEUIL

### PRE-SESSION DE L'EXAMEN PERIODIQUE UNIVERSEL CONSACRE A MADAGASCAR

6 octobre 2014

Pascale Lemaire-Toquec, International and Prospective Director

Good Morning,  
Thank you for giving me the floor.

I will be delivering this statement on behalf of Apprentis d'Auteuil, Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice, International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development and Franciscans International.

Apprentis d'Auteuil has very recently been accredited at ECOSOC and we are taking the floor for the first time here in Geneva. We would like to thank UPR-Info for giving us the opportunity to do so, and the International Catholic Center of Geneva for its precious advice in preparing for this occasion. Finally, we would like to thank our aforementioned partners and our partners in the field: Enda, Graine de Bitume, Hardi and Le Centre NRJ for their input and for their work with children and families.

We would like to start this statement by noting that we are fully aware that the 2009 institutional crisis in Madagascar has made it difficult for the State to implement all of its commitments, and notably those made during the 2010 UPR session.

This statement will address the following issues: firstly, access to education for children in Madagascar, and secondly children in street situation.

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At Madagascar's previous UPR in 2010, Norway raised concern and recommended that Madagascar "*continue the education reform in order to ensure free primary education for all girls and boys*". This recommendation enjoyed support from the Madagascan Government.

Four years later, our organisations and our partners on the field have noticed that the situation has worsened.

Public spending on children has decreased by 15% per child since 2009. Not enough schools are being built to match the number of school-aged children, especially in poor areas where schools are over-



crowded. The number of teachers who are employed by the State has decreased. They are instead paid by pupils' parents' organisations, which receive very little financial support from the State. Another consequence of this is that the school level has decreased.

In that context, sending one child to school costs in average 50,000 to 100,000 ariaries a year (15 to 30 euros) while a large part of the population's wage is 2,500 ariaries a day (0,76 euro).

The consequence of this situation is that many children drop out of school or never enrol as their parents cannot afford direct and indirect costs. Families with more than one child often have to send only one of them to school: usually the eldest boy. In 2013, it was estimated that 400,000 to 600,000 children aged 6 to 10 were out of school. This number rises to 1 million for children aged 10 to 15.

Although the "Education for all" programme was suspended during the 2009 crisis, "the Interim Education Plan" for 2013-2015 (established during the transition period) and more recent announcements by the current President and Government have sent more positive signals. Teachers were to be recruited and trained and 500,000 pupils were to go back to school for the year 2014-2015. However, these measures seem too ambitious to be implemented quickly and so far, no improvement has been seen. Our organisations are deeply concerned by this situation which contradicts the commitments made by the President during his campaign.

Therefore, we would encourage States to ask Madagascar the following question: what concrete measures will be implemented in order for Madagascar to respect its commitment to ensure qualitative, accessible and free education for all children, and more importantly, how will these measures be implemented?

In that regard, we would recommend the following:

- *To gradually increase the budget devoted to education in order to progressively guarantee education for all.*
- *To intensify efforts to increase children's schooling rate and to reduce their drop-out rate, especially for children living in poverty.*
- *To increase the number and capacities of public educational institutions.*

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Regarding children in street situation, Madagascar committed in 2010 to "establish an institution to supervise and evaluate the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular to put in place a plan of action to protect and reintegrate street children", following Mexico's recommendation.

Our organisations deplore that no such institution or plan of action have been established.



The current situation of children in street situation is extremely alarming. As poverty has increased and as many children have dropped out of school, the number of children in street situation has risen.

Many children and young people live and/or work on the street, working odd jobs in difficult conditions. Their exact number is not known so far because no recent and reliable data is available on this subject. The Civil Society Platform for Childhood initiated the implementation of an Observatory of the Child, which should undertake a statistical study on the number of children in street situation, with results coming out in 2015.

These children are severely affected by their lack of access to food, health, education, housing, water and sanitation, protection and information. They are also exposed to danger in the street: violence, sexual abuse, addictions...

More generally, the situation of homelessness of many families is alarming. Some of them have shelter but usually live in unhealthy and dangerous conditions. Today in Madagascar, 92% of the population is living under the poverty line.

Our organisations would therefore encourage States to ask the Government of Madagascar the following questions:

- *During the 2010 UPR cycle, the Republic of Madagascar committed to better protecting children, including children in street situation. How does Madagascar intend to make this commitment a renewed priority?*
- *How does the Republic of Madagascar intend to combine its housing policy to an efficient socio-economic integration policy towards the most vulnerable groups?*

In this regard, we would recommend:

- *To implement an efficient and coherent child protection system through a strong legal framework and through adequate training for educators working with children in street situation.*
- *To strengthen partnerships with civil society organisations working with children in street situation.*
- *To fight stigma and discrimination against children in street situation by carrying out awareness campaign on children's rights for the general public and for police officials.*
- *To support children in street situation's families on educational, social and economic aspects through prevention actions and through the construction of emergency shelters and social housing.*

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In conclusion, our organisations work with vulnerable children and families on a daily basis. We see the great difficulties they face, especially children who are out of school and live on the street.

Our local partners in Madagascar have told us that “children are helpless, disillusioned, they feel like they have no perspective. Still, they are eager to learn and seize every possible opportunity to get by, even when these opportunities do not match their aspirations”.

As a result, we urge the Madagascar Government to do its best to speedily implement fair and efficient measures in favour of education and child protection, in line with its international commitments, and notably the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. In doing so, the Madagascar Government must consult with civil society, giving a chance to those who are affected by poverty and violation of their rights to be heard.

Thank you for your kind attention.