

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 30th session

Annual Half-Day Discussion on the Rights of Indigenous People

Oral statement delivered by Defence for Children International (DCI)

Mr President,

Defence for Children International commends the Human Rights Council for its commitment to examine the causes and consequences of violence against indigenous people, particularly against girls and women.

Through its work in over forty countries worldwide, Defence for Children International continues to witness explicit acts of discrimination and violence against indigenous girls and women. Children and women remain particularly vulnerable to a number of human rights violations which include sexual violence, neglect, labour exploitation, forced migration, forced recruitment into illegal armed groups and starvation.

In Colombia, research conducted by DCI's national section in the municipality of Mitú Vaupés, demonstrates that an increasing number of indigenous girls and women are subject to violence and sexual abuse. Geographical isolation and lack of public policies, adequate social and psychological services to indigenous people living in this area of Colombia, only reinforce the vulnerabilities of these victims, that in many cases end up abusing alcohol and drugs, and even committing suicide. Furthermore, and of great importance, is the lack of preventive measures to address the root causes of the persistent violence against indigenous women and girls. To this end DCI-Colombia, as part of the '¡Ni una mas! Campaign', works on raising awareness and calling for zero tolerance towards sexual abuse and violence against women in the area of Mitú Vaupés.

Defence for Children International, in order to effectively address the issues of gender based violence and discrimination against indigenous women and girls - not only in Colombia but across the globe - calls upon Member States to:

- ✓ Fully recognize indigenous people and their respective rights in law by harmonizing national legal systems to the specific international standards and protection mechanisms for this specific group.
- ✓ Identify practical steps for implementation of these rights, by carrying out strategic planning, developing monitoring mechanisms and indicators (and identifying what has worked and try to replicate successful experiences). This should always be carried out in collaboration with indigenous groups within the country.
- ✓ Establish a national agenda on reducing violence, strengthening local action through preventive mechanisms at the local levels in order to support girls and women at risk and to emphasise non-violence and gender equity.