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2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017, Item 3 – Panel Discussion on Climate Change

Speaker: Mary Margaret Mason

## Oral Statement

submitted by

**IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice and VIDES International**

### **Empowering children and youth for effective environmental social engagement for the full enjoyment of their rights**

Thank you Mr. President,

IIMA (Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice) in collaboration with VIDES International conducted a study on the impact of climate change on children's enjoyment of their rights in some of the 94 countries where working for the rights to education and development of children, youth and women.

Many of these countries and peoples continue to experience unprecedented natural calamities and climate. As a result families are impoverished or displaced. Many children leave school and are forced to work. Some die of starvation. Careless mining and commercial activities contaminate lands and water sources, pollute the air, and cause health problems. Children are intrinsically deprived of the full enjoyment of their rights to life, education, nutrition, health, water, clean air, freedom and protection as indicated by the SDGs.

In compliance with the HRC resolution 32/33, we call on member States to:

- review waste policy and legislation to promote the rights of children to a clean, safe, and healthy environment;
- create local and national participation mechanisms for collaborative sustainable ecological actions and for climate engagement of children;
- incorporate environmental education in the educational system, in work places and in local government units to raise awareness, create mindsets and empower children, together with youth and adults, to be co-responsible, critical guardians of the ecosystem;
- mainstream the climate change adaptation into national and local policies, and the UPR.

Ecologically sustainable integral development requires, as Pope Francis says, “enforceable international agreement... Global regulatory norms... to impose obligations and prevent unacceptable actions” (*Laudato Sii 173*). The Council must work to ensure our children live in a safe and healthy world, both now and in the future.

Thank you Mr. President.