



Human Rights Office

International Institute Maria Ausiliatrice - IIMA

NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

Geneva, 14 March 2013

22nd SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ITEM 6 UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW SWITZERLAND

Statement submitted by

IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice
VIDES International – International Volunteerism Organisation for Women, Education, Development

Mister President,

IIMA and VIDES International welcome the participation of Switzerland in the second UPR cycle, and its acceptance of several recommendations¹ concerning the rights of children. Nevertheless, we regret its rejection of many other relevant recommendations,² and note that further efforts are required to ensure every child's rights to education and health.

We commend Switzerland's efforts to ensure children's **right to education**, regardless of residence status and welcome its acceptance of recommendation 122.46 aimed at ensuring that children from disadvantaged backgrounds and foreign origin enjoy the best possible level of education. However, we remain concerned that the right to education is not enjoyed equally across all Swiss cantons, especially by foreign and undocumented children, and those with disabilities.

We further regret that other aspects of the right to education were not addressed during this UPR cycle. We remain concerned about inequality in the secondary school system, where poor performance on a single exam at the end of primary school limits opportunities and can preclude access to tertiary education.

Concerning the **right to health**, we commend Switzerland's acceptance of recommendation 123.82 aimed at preventing youth suicide and drug use. Yet we regret that other health-related issues were not addressed by Member States. In particular, we remain concerned about the burden of health care costs on low-income residents.

Therefore, IIMA and VIDES call on Switzerland to:

- **Ensure effective implementation of recommendation 122.46, consistently across all cantons, especially with regard to education for foreign and undocumented children, and those with disabilities**
- **Reorganize secondary education to guarantee equal opportunity for every child.**
- **Ensure effective implementation of recommendation 123.82, especially through comprehensive public programs and awareness campaigns to prevent suicide and drug abuse among youth**
- **Ensure children's right to health by making health insurance more affordable for low-income residents.**

Thank you.

¹Recommendations 122.43 (Uzbekistan); 122.44 (Iran, Islamic Republic of); 122.46 (Paraguay); 123.4 (Slovakia and Liechtenstein); 123.54 (Namibia); 123.55 (Russian Federation); and 123.82 (Nicaragua). See Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, UN Doc. A/HRC/22/11 of 7/12/2012, and addendum of 5/3/2013 UN, Doc. A/HRC/22/11/Add.1.

²Recommendations 123.7 (Slovenia); 123.8-10 (Uruguay); 123.57 (Turkey); 123.79 (United States of America); 123.80 (Uzbekistan); and 123.81 (Liechtenstein). Ibidem