



Human Rights Office

Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice - IIMA

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

Geneva, March 15, 2012

19TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ITEM 6 UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW THAILAND

Statement submitted by

IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice

and cosigned by

Association Points-Cœurs, Company of the Daughters of Charity of Vincent de Paul, Mouvement International d’Apostolat des Milieux Sociaux Indépendant (MIASMI) et Organisation internationale pour le droit à l’éducation et la liberté d’enseignement (OIDEI) and Voluntarism Organization for Women, Education, Development (VIDES International) .

Madame President,

IIMA, on behalf of the co-signing NGOs, welcomes the constructive participation of Thailand at the Universal Periodic Review.

Nevertheless, we remain concerned about the existence of both direct and indirect discrimination against children belonging to ethnic minorities and children with disabilities. Despite the fact that Thailand has withdrawn its reservation on article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹, we note with concern the difficulty in ensuring the birth registration of the most vulnerable children, especially those belonging to ethnic minorities in the North and North-East regions. This adversely affects the enjoyment of their basic rights and renders them vulnerable to abuse, trafficking and exploitation. Moreover, disparities between main cities and remote areas of the country still persist regarding the access to basic social services, especially education.

While recognizing the Government’s initiatives to improve the situation of children with disabilities, we note that they often encounter serious barriers to the full enjoyment of their rights. In particular, children with disabilities in remote villages do not have access to adequate services for physical therapy, psychological assistance, special education and recreational activities. The number of public infrastructures conducive for children with disabilities is insufficient. These factors prevent them from attaining complete social integration and physical and intellectual development, violating article 23 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

With regard to education, we perceive major issues such as: firstly, the persistence of tuition fees, which prevents free education for all; secondly, inadequate qualification of teachers, especially those working in rural and indigenous schools; and thirdly, bilingual education has not yet been fully achieved.

Therefore, we recommend Thailand to:

- **Take all measures to integrate into the education system children belonging to the most vulnerable groups, in particular those living in rural areas;**
- **Take all necessary measures to improve the quality of education for all children including those belonging to ethnic minorities and children with disabilities.**

Thank you.

¹ On 13 December 2010, the Government of Thailand notified the Secretary-General of its decision to withdraw the reservation to article 7 of the Convention.