

38<sup>th</sup> Session of the HRC  
Geneva, 2 luglio 2018  
Item 8 – General Debate  
Speaker: Giuditta GUALANDI

38<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
ITEM 8

**General Debate**

Oral statement submitted by

**IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice**

Thank you, Mr. President,

IIMA works with VIDES International for youth empowerment.

On the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, IIMA would like to stress the importance of youth participation in decision making at the national and international levels.

We underline that the VDPA practically rewrote the notion of universality. Universality cannot be achieved without the politics of inclusion and engagement of all. It is by turning the Program of Action into concrete action.

In this regard, we highlight the need for youth participation and empowerment. Young people possess a fresh vision and capacities that can help Governments to analyze problems, find solutions, promote and protect human rights with new strategies in order to face new challenges.

**For these reasons IIMA calls on all Governments and other relevant stakeholders to:**

- **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in order to demonstrate the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights;**
- **Enhance mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making at the national level;**
- **Guarantee a free and quality education for youth, including tertiary education.**

Thank you Mr. President.