



INTERNATIONAL REPORT

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand's Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child was submitted earlier this year. It will be considered in the October 14-18 pre-sessional working group and at the CRC's 14th Session, 6-24 January 1997. The 90-page Report was prepared by the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

An Alternative Report has been prepared by a coalition of people associated with the Youth Law Project, Auckland. They initially wrote to 100 NGOs, including those which had made submissions to the Government Report. Meetings were held with NGOs which had not previously been involved with CROC. First drafts of chapters were prepared by individuals with "hands-on" knowledge and/or academic expertise. The full draft was then circulated for comment. Copies of the NZ Alternative Report will be available from the Youth Law Project, Auckland.

This activity around CROC has stimulated increased community concern. A group of about 40 people from diverse backgrounds have formed the Children's Agenda. Their broad aim is to create a climate within which children are valued. Another organisation, the Children's Rights Campaign was launched in Wellington on 18 July. This organisation aims to promote the rights of children, educate and raise public awareness of the Convention, and assist children and young people to participate in decision-making

at all levels. We extend our very best wishes to these organisations across the Tasman and look forward to keeping in touch with them.

THE CHILD AND THE MEDIA

The Committee on the Rights of the Child will hold a general discussion on "the child and the media" on 7 October 1996. This is a public discussion which will be attended by UN bodies, NGOs and journalists. The media have essential functions in promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of the child. They can create awareness of children's rights, help monitor the situation of children and influence perceptions of children and youth. Written input will be welcomed by the CRC (the deadline is 2 September). If you would like to contribute to DCI-Australia's submission, please contact the National Office.

NEWS FROM THE INTER- NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

We welcome new Sections: Angola and Nigeria, and two new Associated Member Organisations: Child Workers in Asia and the National Coalition for Children's Rights in South Africa.

DCI-SWITZERLAND

DCI-Switzerland has for a long time aimed to achieve the ratification of the Convention On The Rights Of The Child (CROC) by the Swiss Government. The government signed CROC in 1989, but it hasn't ratified it yet. In Switzerland, the Convention is controversial. There is a conviction that existing laws and

practises are enough to prevent abuses and some people believe that it could threaten and limit parental control over children.

There is an immigration problem linked with the application of the CROC in Switzerland. Seasonal workers, can enter the country with a special immigration permit which doesn't allow them to bring in the family. If Switzerland ratifies CROC, it should allow these people to bring their children as well. Immigration problems are especially delicate in periods of economic crisis, as now in Switzerland.

The present situation causes further serious problems to foreign children, whose rights are violated. For instance, some seasonal workers bring their children illegally to Switzerland and these children are hidden at home. They do not have any access to services and school. However, some schools are accepting these children, even though they can't legally go to school.

DCI-Switzerland is campaigning to have CROC ratified in many different ways: lobbying, giving interviews and organising a photographic exposition on the rights of the child. This exposition is travelling the country. DCI-Switzerland is also concerned about the problem of protecting children from access through the Internet to information and images intended for adults. It is also working on putting pages about the Swiss Section on Internet.

Barbara Alemagna