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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Thirty-fifth session
Agenda item 13

QUESTION OF A CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Report of the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

1. Page 2, section II.C

Below International Association of Youth Magistrates, insert
International Catholic Child Bureau

2. Page 5, paragraph 5, line 4

After Category II: International Association of Youth Magistrates,
insert International Catholic Child Bureau,

3. Page 22

Before INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS insert the following text:

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC CHILD BUREAU

[Original: English]

[31 August 1978]

... there is nothing which should make this convention undesirable. However, there is a danger linked with this procedure: a convention is a legal instrument which only binds those who have signed it and it is foreseeable that in the first years many countries will not immediately sign the convention and might thus consider themselves to be not at all bound by some principles concerning the rights of the child. Attention should be drawn to the fact that even if there is a convention, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child remains. The Declaration is a moral document appealing to the consciences of all individuals and of governments.

The content of the draft Convention

Since the text of the draft convention takes up the text of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and since this latter is a very good text which is generally appreciated, one cannot make objections to the content of the draft Convention.

Whether 1979 is the opportune time to discuss the draft Convention

Many studies and inquiries are being carried out within the framework of the IYC on the rights of the child and the Declaration and also several seminars and other working groups on the rights of the child have been organized on the occasion of the IYC. Some of the findings of these different activities might be interesting and worthy of being taken into account on the occasion of the final drafting of the convention. But these findings will only be known at the end of 1979.

Furthermore, some of the problems now under examination might be raised at the meeting of the Commission on Human Rights, or at the Economic and Social Council or at the General Assembly if the draft Convention is under discussion in these different bodies during the IYC. Without the results of the IYC studies and inquiries to focus on as a basis, these debates could become very diffused and digress from the immediate concerns of IYC and the child. For these different reasons the International Catholic Child Bureau finds it extremely desirable not to have a debate on this draft convention before the end of the IYC:

1. This will allow those who are now working on the rights of the child and the Declaration to develop and complete their activities as planned before the Year.
2. It will further make it possible to take the findings of the on-going activities into account when the draft of the final text of the convention is drawn up.

Only under these circumstances will it be possible to say that the draft convention is really the result of the IYC.
