



Open Letter to the V. World Congress for the Rights of Children and Adolescents

"Childhood, Adolescence and Social Change"
San Juan. Argentina. October 19th, 2012.

We, a group of working children and adolescents from Mendoza-Argentina, organized in an association named "La Veleta y La Antena", together with the Latin American and Caribbean Movement of Working Children and Adolescents (MOLACNATS) and the fraternal presence of our brothers and sisters, representatives of the secondary student movement in Chile and of social organizations of children and young people from the same country.

Considering that within the frame of international law, the right of children to "be heard and to be listened to", we turn to you in order to express our deep indignation towards the way in which the organizers have violated the full and effective exercise of the active participation of children and adolescents.

In this sense, we want to list the following facts and actions from the viewpoint of our movement so that our voice is heard:

1. The MOLACNATS as an organic body of international representation of rights of working children and adolescents grouped in 9 countries in Latin America and with a history of over 42 years of organization, mobilization and participation of all children and adolescents, was set apart from any official invitation to the event.
2. The members of our organization "La Veleta y La Antena", knowing the way in which international organizations have always left aside the voice of those of us who struggle daily with dignity in our work spaces, felt obliged to ally with other actors to achieve at least one presentation, which is called "Children and adolescents as revolutionary subjects". This paper was accepted, but only under the condition that an adult be the presenter. Unbelievable! How not to become indignant!
3. We had travelled in a large group of working children and adolescents, and as we were excluded from the formal inauguration of the event, we had to mobilize ourselves and shout

slogans and paint our shirts with messages such as “Never again without us”, “Children + adults = participation” and “Our voice is worthy”. All this because it seems at least strange to us to have a conference FOR children, but WITHOUT children.

4. During the fourth day of the conference, as a result of our work and advocacy, we were able participate in ONE of the hundreds of spaces in which the voice, the presence and ideas of children and adolescents should always be present.

Thus we demand that for the next congress an organizing team that includes the presence of organized and representative children and adolescents, on equal terms and with the same number of children as adults, in the aim of creating a horizontal method of operation. Moreover, we also address the governments of the world, the academic authorities, theorists and intellectuals and the entire society, so that we may walk without any hesitation from the paradigm of comprehensive child protection, to the paradigm of the role of children and adolescents as protagonists.

Finally, we reaffirm our commitment to the children at large, to continue marching towards a more just society, more participatory and protagonist for children and adolescents.

"Never Again Without Us"
"Children + Adults = Participation"
"Our Voice is Worthy"

Signed by:

- Children and adolescents “La Veleta y La Antena”. Mendoza, Argentina
- Representatives of the secondary student movement. Santiago-Chile
- Representative of the “Taller Infantil Corazones Valientes”. Población La Legua, Chile.
- Representatives of the Secretariat of MOLACNATs (Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina).