

A testimony from Australia

Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 30

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

“The quality of life for children in Australia varies drastically depending on specific region, and as such, blanket statements and policies are often difficult to implement to great effect. For example, the recommendation published by Slovenia, indicating the desire to establish a Compensation Tribunal for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were negatively affected by the Assimilation Policy of the fifties may be beneficial in some cases, but does not take into consideration the pertinent issues within Aboriginal communities relative to misuse of welfare and government payments. As such, it is my belief that any sort of change in attitude or stance pertaining to the rights of children needs to reflect the individual location and circumstance of the case in question.

With this in mind, the recommendations made by Morocco and Switzerland, which entail adapting and strengthening federal legislation in order to combat discrimination and ensure greater safety for women and children, would do well to be considered by authoritative bodies.

Out of all the recommendations presented in the document, perhaps the most contemporarily relevant is the Brazilian: ‘Ensure that no children are held in detention on the basis of their migratory status and that special protection and assistance is provided to unaccompanied children.’ With recent revelations and insights as to the poor treatment of children in asylum seeker detention centres under the currently strict immigration policy of the government, this recommendation should be taken into serious account as the country moves forward.

In summary, it is my opinion that the best recommendations presented by the nations are the ones that are focused and allow for a case-by case analysis for children being affected by disadvantage and poverty in our modern Australian society”.

Darcy Bowers, Marist student.