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ADOPTION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Letter dated 14 July 1989 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to
the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that Venezuela has institutionalized the third Sunday in July of each year as "National Children's Day".

I attach the text of the message delivered by the First Lady of the Republic of Venezuela, Mrs. Blanca Rodríguez de Pérez, on the occasion of the celebration of National Children's Day on 16 July of this year (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the message distributed as a document of the General Assembly under item 109 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Adriana PULIDO S.
Minister Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/44/50/Rev.1.

ANNEX

Message delivered by the First Lady of
Venezuela, Blanca Rodríguez de Pérez,
on National Children's Day

As a way of making children feel that they are the real protagonists of our lives, the great men and personalities of the future, we in Venezuela have decided to institutionalize the third Sunday in July as National Children's Day.

Caring for children and surrounding them with joy are day-to-day duties. In this way, we peoples of the world will be taking up the challenge and major responsibility that is ours, as we daily face new needs and new circumstances, to create awareness and guarantee children daily assistance, care and protection.

Children are potential adults and bear within their minds the seeds of tomorrow's greatest spiritual possibilities and the loftiest traces of their future intelligence. The child's successful transition to adulthood is ensured by a good education, adequate nutrition and the harmonious blending of his innate characteristics with those he gradually acquires in a favourable environment in which there is no gap between his parents and his own internal world.

The provision of adequate and necessary assistance in an atmosphere of happiness and affection will find extraordinary reflection in the full development of the child's psyche, leaving on it an indelible imprint which will be reaffirmed in all subsequent actions in his life.

Children do not always grow up in an atmosphere of peace or happiness, however. We know that throughout the world, and in our own Venezuela, millions of children live in exceptionally difficult conditions, without their basic needs being met. That is where Governments' social policies must implement and enforce measures to assist and protect children.

In Venezuela, the National Constitution - the Magna Carta of the Republic - envisages the moral and economic advancement of the family. Article 74 of its chapter IV on social rights requires that the State, which is responsible for ensuring the well-being of Venezuelan children, shall enact the necessary measures to afford all children, without discrimination of any kind, comprehensive protection from conception to full maturity, so that they can develop in favourable material and spiritual conditions.

This special attention paid by Venezuelan law to the rights of children matches the spirit of my social programmes implemented through the Children's Foundation and other institutions. One of these is the day-care centre programme which, by decree of my husband Carlos Andrés Pérez, President of the Republic, is being given priority under the State Anti-Poverty Plan and will meet the needs of over 500,000 children. There are also other additional and alternative programmes devoted to children, such as the preschool centres with their new open classroom approach, nursery schools, children's homes and children's television.

At the international level, I should mention such vitally important initiatives as the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted 30 years ago on 29 November 1959. Like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international covenants and bodies concerned with the well-being of children, it recognizes that, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, the child needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.

The draft Convention on the Rights of the Child, proposed in 1979 by the Government of Poland during preparations for that year's International Year of the Child with a view to drawing up an international instrument for promoting the rights of the child and reinforcing national and international measures for the protection of children, states that children need special safeguards beyond those provided to adults and a better environment for their survival and development, and emphasizes the importance of the family setting.

Because of its noble aims, I support the draft Convention as has Venezuela through its active participation. I would like to take the opportunity of the celebration of Children's Day in Venezuela to express the hope that the draft Convention will be finally adopted by the United Nations General Assembly next September. Anything we do for children will be repaid us by the just and noble actions of the adults of tomorrow.

On this Children's Day, we have a duty to guarantee on a daily basis the material and emotional well-being of our children, without barriers or restrictions. We have an inescapable responsibility to preserve the enchantment of a child's life lived to the full.
