



PRESS RELEASE

December 9th: International day of working children

Working children from Bolivia present a bill for their rights. Their goal: Improvement of their working conditions

In Bolivia, children and adolescents have drafted a bill that aims at guaranteeing working children rights and **protecting them from discrimination and exploitation**. While the *International Labour Organization (ILO)* has been trying to prohibit child labour worldwide for decades, the authors of the bill demand recognition of their work and an improvement of their working conditions, reports the children's rights organization *europaNATS* on the occasion of the International Day of Working Children that annually takes place on December 9th.

„The draft bill has been **handed over personally to Bolivia's president Evo Morales**”, tells José Guillermo, representative of the *Union of Working Children and Adolescents of Bolivia (UNATSBO)*. **Several members of congress have already signaled their support** and also some mayors and governors reacted positively to the approach.

One third of children in Bolivia work

UNICEF estimates that around 700.000 children and adolescents in Bolivia work, - roughly one third of the child population. Since the 1980s, children and adolescents have been forming groups in order to collectively improve their situation. Many experience maltreatment and undignified working conditions. **The ILO's goal to eradicate child labour does not help them – on the contrary**: Often harassment and even police persecution are justified by it. And as their work is officially illegal and only in the best case is tolerated, the children and adolescents have so far only few chances to stand up for more rights and better payment as do trade unions.

The draft bill that UNATSBO circulated in December 2010 is **based on surveys** that the organization carried out beforehand in several regions of the country. Support came from *terre des hommes Deutschland* and *Save the Children Bolivia*.

Aside the legal and social recognition of working children, the draft bill contains the provision that **the right to education should be realized for all working children**. A minimum age of working is disapproved of. Instead, the bill **aims at a legal approach treating working children and adolescents equally as working adults and grants them the same protection**. Public authorities are requested to protect children from especially hard tasks and prostitution and prevent these.

Who is europaNATS?

europaNATS is a coalition of European organizations that campaign for the rights of working children and adolescents worldwide. europaNATS supports the movements of working children and adolescents that first formed in Latin America in the 1970s and later on also in Asia and Africa. Also networking internationally, **many thousands of children and adolescents are active in these movements in order to defend themselves against exploitation and achieve a life and work in dignity as well as better opportunities for education**.

Further information: www.pronats.de and www.europanats.org (under construction)