

Human Rights Council – 18th Session
14 September 2011

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences

Madame President,

Franciscans International welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery focusing on child slavery in the artisanal mining and quarrying sector, and commends her assertion that this kind of work “*qualifies as a contemporary forms of slavery due to the debt bondage, forced labour and economic exploitation of the child.*”

We would like to draw the attention of the Special Rapporteur on children working in mines and quarries in India.

The extractive industry is crucial for India’s economic growth. However, it also represents one of the sectors where child labour is highly employed. Children exploited in extractive industries, and in particular in small scale and informal mines, are trafficked internally and across the borders with Nepal and Bangladesh, and mostly belong to the Dalit and Adivasi.

In average, children start working at the age of 12 and many others are believed to work alongside their parents because their small bodies well fit the narrow coal seams.

Children working in mines and quarries suffer from displacement, lack of food and education, and health threats. They are also exposed to criminality, prostitution, dependency from drugs and alcohol, and caste-based discriminations.

Madame President,

We call on the Human Rights Council to urge the Indian Government to:

- Ratify the ILO C138 Minimum Age Convention, 1973 and other relevant international instruments;
- Adopt an holistic national plan for the protection of children working in mines, with the aim to stop trafficking and other human rights abuses perpetrated against children;
- Ensure that the best interest of the child is the main priority in any policies and laws on mining;
- Extend an invitation to the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences.

Thank you Madame President.