



## Oral Statement at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council

### Item 6: UPR Outcomes of India

Date: 24 March 2023

Delivered by: CONSTANTINE DABREU

Mr. President

Edmund Rice International, VIDES, IIMA and PRATYeK commends the constructive participation of India in its 4<sup>th</sup> UPR.

Concerning **children at risk of separation and in need of alternative care**, we welcome the acceptance of recommendation 151.305 and **highlight the importance of reintegrating children in families whenever possible**.

We welcome the acceptance of recommendations 151.256, 279 and 285. However, we are concerned about the increase of child marriages and teen pregnancy during the pandemic **and recommend that India reconstitute Village and Neighbourhood level Child Protection Committees, to monitor and address child labour, child marriage, child trafficking and sexual abuse**.

We regret that recommendations 151.203 and 204 were only noted as the pandemic has worsened critical educational issues, as shown by low enrolment, high dropout rates and shortage of qualified teachers especially in rural areas. We urge India to make mental health education and counsellors mandatory in all schools and embed the education of the SDGs into the school curriculum. **We urgently call on India to effectively implement the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, ensuring consistency of States' legal frameworks**.

We welcome the acceptance of recommendation 151.35 and urge India to delay no further, and appear for its Treaty Body review before the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

We welcome the acceptance of recommendations 151.37 and 38 and urge India to fix dates for the visit of the SR on Human Rights obligations and the Environment.

We call on the State to declare a climate emergency, reverse the weakening of laws, practices and institutions that protect the environment and include earth rights into the Indian Constitution.

Finally, we urge India to engage children in reviewing the National Policy for Children 2013 and include their environmental rights in the same.

Thank you.