

Human Rights Council

16th session

Item 6: UPR: The Republic of Malawi

16 March 2011

Speaker: James Jolley

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Mr. President,

Franciscans International¹ welcomes the presence of the delegation from the Republic of Malawi here today. We are encouraged that Malawi has accepted several recommendations to strengthen its efforts to fight against any form of child labour² and human trafficking especially in women and children, including the effective prosecution and punishment of traffickers³.

We strongly endorse the accepted recommendation made by Malaysia to undertake more effective measures to ensure the accessibility of crucial public services such as education, health care and social benefits to the population living in rural areas, in particular rural women and children (Rec. 102.48).

In the area of education, we are heartened to hear of Malawi's 'free lunch' program aimed at improving school attendance, and of Malawi's intention to make education one of its top priorities (Rec. 102.60). We endorse efforts to strengthen vocational education and training opportunities, aimed at reducing the drop-out rates in school.

However, it is regrettable that Malawi has rejected several recommendations relating to compulsory primary education⁴, in contravention of Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Education is a major gateway to eradicate poverty and all its citizens are deserving of free and unencumbered basic education. Whilst the policy of Malawi is for 'free' primary education, this has not achieved the goal of ensuring that all children attend school – a right that every child should enjoy.

¹ This statement is also made on behalf of Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI).

² A/HRC/WG.6/9/L.2, Recommendation 102.33 (Holy See)

³ A/HRC/WG.6/9/L.2, Recommendation 102.32 (Slovenia)

⁴ A/HRC/WG.6/9/L.2, Recommendation 102.33, 102.34, 102.36, 102.37, 102.38,

A major drawback to quality education has been overcrowding and poor teaching in many schools. We strongly recommend that Malawi increases its education budget to improve its infrastructure and teaching resources, to provide a higher output of fully trained teachers to help reduce overcrowded classrooms and to provide teachers who are well equipped to deliver quality education to the children.

Thank you Mr. President.