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BRIEF NEWS FROM IBCR

We'd like to introduce you to our new informal newsletter, which will be published on an occasional basis to inform you on the happenings and developments at the IBCR. With these newsletters, we will aim to bring you up to date on our successes, projects, introduce you to some of our collaborators and summarize our more important meetings. We hope that you will appreciate this new form of communication, more relaxed, informal but with the intention of giving you a more open window into the everyday world of the IBCR.

International meetings in Vienna bring good tidings for IBCR!

There were several exciting developments for the International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR) at a recent gathering of experts on human trafficking in Vienna, reports IBCR director Jean-François-Noël, who was in attendance. Here are some of the highlights:

The conference in Vienna, organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in honour of the release of its report on human trafficking, allowed IBCR to connect with its many colleagues in this field of research. The Bureau was introduced to actress Julia Ormond, recently appointed Good Will Ambassador to the UNODC, by a colleague in the team of Judge Renata Winters, of the Special Tribunal for Sierra Leone, where several child soldiers have been called as witnesses. Judge Winters remarked that IBCR is one of the most serious NGOs she has collaborated with, and added that the exceptional *Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime*, drafted by IBCR, have been heavily consulted by the Tribunal.

IBCR also participated in a UN Experts Group Meeting held on April 18-19, 2006, on criminal justice responses to violence against children. This meeting is part of the UN Study on Violence Against Children being conducted by Professor Sergio Paulo Pinheiro, the independent expert appointed by the UN General Assembly. IBCR has contributed to this study through the development of the *Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime*.

The final report of the study will soon be released and it is hoped that the report's recommendations will make specific reference to the UN Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime. The Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, clearly inspired by these guidelines, is already contributing to their

implementation by referring to them and inviting governments worldwide to consult and apply them.

Finally, UNODC, which is in the process of elaborating its strategic plan for the coming years, has also indicated that the implementation of the guidelines will be one of their strategic priorities. UNICEF is also playing a key role, and is putting the final touch to a child-friendly version of the Guidelines.

These recent developments underscore the integral role IBCR has played in protecting the rights of children by drafting these guidelines, and will continue to play in relation to their implementation worldwide, working closely with the United Nations.

To learn more about the activities of IBCR, please consult our website at www.ibcr.com.

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