

Press Release

Awareness Day for the International Child Day at Dawson College

November 20th 2006,

At Dawson College, George Stamatis (International Youth Rights Activist) will be heading a team of various children and youth organizations in the Upper Atrium of the College. The team will be distributing information on children's rights and will have staff from various organizations to answer questions and educate people about the importance of the International Day of the Child and Children's Rights.

November 20th is the International and National day of the Child, a special day for children worldwide. On this day we celebrate both the adoption of both the 1959 UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child and the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Despite the fact that the CRC is the most ratified treaty in the history of the United Nations (with 192 States Parties) much remains to be done to ensure its full implementation. Canada is not exception. As the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights noted last year in its interim report titled '*Who's in Charge Here?*' *Effective implementation of Canada's International Obligations with respect to the Rights of Children*: "there can be no full compliance, and consequently, no real and comprehensive protection of children's rights without effective implementation. According to the Senate Committee, Canada does not take its international human rights obligations seriously enough: "jurisdictional complexities, the absence of effective institutions, an uncertain approach to human rights law, lack of transparency and political involvement, and a lack of awareness of the rights enshrined in the Convention, have led to ineffective application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Canadian context." (...) "Only when Canada truly lives by its promises of compliance can this country be assured of living up to its international human rights obligations" and truly claim to remain a human rights leader. "A reputation that extends beyond its own borders but does not apply at home is not one worth having", the Senate Committee concluded.

On this International and National day of the Child, we wish to recall the recommendations put forth by the Senate Committee in its Interim Report, particularly that "the federal government shall consider itself bound, with an obligation to comply fully with the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*" and that "Parliament shall enact legislation to establish an independent Children's Commissioner to monitor implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and protection of children's rights in Canada. The Children's Commissioner shall report annually to Parliament."

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