

# Human Rights Council

19<sup>th</sup> Session

Item 6: UPR: Zimbabwe

15 March 2012



Speaker: Ms Robyn Young

Please check against delivery

---

Madame President

Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI) and Franciscan International (FI) welcome the Zimbabwe delegation here today. We would like to acknowledge and congratulate Zimbabwe on its detailed and constructive participation in the UPR process.

**We wish to comment on the right to a quality education for every child in Zimbabwe.**

We are pleased to see the acceptance of Brazil's recommendation (93.64) to implement school meals and link them to local food production as this will encourage school attendance. Nonetheless we are concerned about the limited scope of the school curriculum which is a major cause for school drop-out rates.

Whilst the government has a policy for universal access and compulsory basic education, we are concerned that access is limited to many children because of the obligation to pay tuition fees as well as a development fee in many schools. To this end we endorse Morocco's recommendation to "continue the free access to education, notably for girls and vulnerable children (93.68)"; ensuring that every child can exercise their right to enjoy a basic education and gain access without discrimination.

We call on the Government to significantly increase its education budget to provide more schools, eliminate tuition fees and improve the education infrastructure. Hopefully this will address the issue of `hot-seating` which significantly detracts from providing a quality education for all. On this matter, it is pleasing to note that Zimbabwe has accepted Namibia's and New Zealand's recommendations to continue to invest heavily in education at all levels (93.73) and to provide additional assistance to orphans and vulnerable children (93.69).

During the UPR there was a failure to note the ongoing exodus of teachers to neighbouring countries. We wish to bring attention to the poor working conditions of teachers and call on the government to implement policies that will immediately improve their working conditions and to provide salaries that will reflect the importance of their role in society in educating children.

Thank you, Madame President