



**Franciscans International**

A voice at the United Nations

**Human Rights Council  
16<sup>th</sup> session  
Item 6: General Debate  
Benin, USA**

18 March 2011

Speaker: Morse Caoagas Flores

*Please check against delivery*

Mr. President,

Franciscans International (FI) would like to draw the Council's attention to the implementation and follow up of UPR recommendations on both Benin and United States.

For Benin, FI continues to be deeply concerned about the ritual infanticide of so-called "witch children" and the lack of concrete action by the Government, to address traditional beliefs which result in the death of innocent children. The issue of "witch children" was already raised during the UPR of Benin in 2008, resulting in recommendations accepted by the Government.<sup>1</sup> However, we deplore that, after almost three years from the review, the Government has not yet made any progress to effectively address this issue. **We urge the Government of Benin to reinforce measures to prevent and eliminate ritual infanticide by:**

- **Recognizing the importance of the issue;**
- **Ensuring stronger presence of state authorities in the areas affected;**
- **Address infanticide based on witchcraft as a separate crime.**

As for the United States, FI wishes to emphasize the need for a more comprehensive policy ensuring that human rights of undocumented migrants are upheld during the entire process of apprehension, detention and return to their countries of origin. FI urges as well the US Government to address the issue of trafficking in persons, including migrant workers who work in slavery-like conditions.

Finally, FI welcomes the recent commitment of the US Government to ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on Persons with Disabilities. This reflects the US continuing endeavour to protect and promote human rights.

Thank you Mr. President

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/WG.6/2/L.5, § 19 and 22, Recommendation 11.