

Complementary Report at the *Sixth Meeting of the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities*, (CEDDIS), Guatemala City, Guatemala, May 3-6, 2016.

Asociación La Familia Importa

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in this meeting.

La Familia Importa is an organization that works as a civic platform in the promotion and defense of fundamental Human rights, the dignity of the human person and the family. We know that every life is worth defending, and protecting, a task that humanity needs to embrace through the correct recognition and application of Human Rights.

La Familia Importa has dedicated strong efforts even before its legal foundation, to the promotion of the recognition of every human life, regardless of sex, economic status, ideology, race, religion, born or unborn, old or young, capable or with special competences. La Familia Importa represents more than thirty five non profit organizations that promote the well being of the human being, and promotes the inclusion of families in the public square.

We strongly believe that international protection of Persons with Disabilities, and of their fundamental rights, constitutes a milestone in the worldwide struggle for recognition, protection and advancement of the human rights of all.

It stems from the very basic principle of the human rights' system, from the fact that each and every person carries and possesses a unique and immeasurable value and original human dignity. This makes International community to compel with the honorable duty to defend - even more strongly and restlessly - the most vulnerable ones.

Persons with Disabilities have often been – and still are – vulnerable. In the course of history, very often, and for several reasons their fundamental rights have been ignored, their dignity was denied, and at times, their own life was threatened.

We therefore join hands to work with and alongside the Organization of the American States, especially with the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (CEDDIS). La Familia Importa earnestly hopes that our joint efforts to protect Persons with Disabilities will bear fruits and will help to edify a world where, truly, “nobody is left behind”.

By means of this statement, however, La Familia Importa wants to denounce that, notwithstanding the important achievements made against some forms of discrimination on Persons with Disabilities by the international community, the

above mentioned life-threats to Person with Disabilities are, sadly, not mere memories of the past.

Dramatically, the violation of the most fundamental right to life of a Person with Disabilities is a feature more commonly, frequently, and socially accepted in the richest, wealthiest and most cultured areas of the world. Regardless of the rights so often proclaimed and defended by international agreements, conventions and declarations, Persons with Disabilities are more and more prevented from “entering” the world: they are murdered in the most vulnerable stage of life, which is inside the womb.

Via the so-called “selective abortion” procedures, the discriminatively called “*unhealthy*” babies are today denied their right to life. Insofar as a “disability” can be diagnosed before birth, the human dignity of Persons with Disabilities is being suppressed by a woman’s desire for a “fit” child.

La Familia Importa wishes here to remind all actors – national governments, international institutions and the civil society– that to consider the results of a prenatal diagnosis as a legitimate reason to terminate an innocent human life is a **violation of international law**. Selective abortion (also known as elective pregnancy termination) lacks, indeed, any sort of international legal legitimation.

In addition, nowhere in international declarations, conventions or resolutions, has a woman’s right to a “healthy child” found legal recognition. Eugenics are supposed to be a chapter of the past, but now it seems that certain groups desire to incorporate such condemned chapter back to domestic and international legislation.

To legitimize eugenic selection on babies – as many countries have done already, and as many others are trying to do – implies setting the “clock of human rights” back to the most obscure and inhumane times of human history, landing once again on a dark age. It may be worth remembering that “eugenic drives” caused the Jewish Holocaust; and that, since the end of WWII, the aim of the International community has been that of creating a world where nobody ever again could be considered “unfit” for life.

Wherever selective abortion is permitted, the prevention of discrimination against Person with Disabilities is a hypocritical concept. Wherever the “prospected quality of life” is a legitimate ground to kill an individual, human dignity is nothing but an empty phrase.

With reference to the Americas, La Familia Importa is today particularly concerned for the recent call for “abortion rights” – and for selective abortions – which is taking advantage of the recent Zika outbreak. Claims based on the risks that this virus poses to the health of the newborn, international agencies, private companies, and even civil society organizations are pressuring national governments and international institutions for the legal recognition of the crime of abortion.

Microcephalic babies, in their view, do not have a right to life. Under such chants and claims, microcephalic babies are not worthy of life, and therefore, those beautiful humans with Disabilities should be banned from living. La Familia Importa brings to the table the notion that no genetic condition or the lack of it – under true Human Rights – can be considered a source of dignity. Therefore, we urge the Organization of American States to consider the promotion of such termination of life based on microcephalic claims, to be a Discriminatory Acts against Persons with Disabilities.

La Familia Importa reiterates that the protection of human life is an inviolable duty of all the States, all members of the international community and the civil society. Protecting the vulnerable and Disabled is an obligation that rooted in the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, reinforced by the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities as well as by the Declaration on the Decade of the Americas For the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006-2016). Selective abortion is not, has not been and shall never be considered a preventive measure. Crimes cannot simply become «Human Rights».

Selective abortion runs counter to many provisions of international law that sanction the protection of human life at all stages, including before birth. For a complete discussion about this state of affairs we invite all to read the San Jose Articles, available at www.sanjosearticles.com.

We conclude with the hope that CEDDIS will not forget that there could be no graver form of discrimination against Persons with Disabilities than that of neglecting their right to exist, especially when the Disabled is to be found in the most vulnerable and noble place on Earth: the human womb.