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AMERICA/ECUADOR - Children and adolescents at risk: new scenarios require new responses

Quito (Agenzia Fides) - The forum "Children and adolescents at risk in the current socio-political realities of Ecuador" opened yesterday, June 20, in Quito. Sponsored by the Salesian Polytechnic University of Ecuador UPS, which houses the works, and by the Salesian Project Ecuador, the forum, which ends on June 22, wants to be an area of deep analysis of issues that bring boys, girls and adolescents that find themselves in risky situations in the current socio-political context of the country, as well as comparing and planning how to give answers, on behalf of the public and private, to ensure respect for the rights of minors.
According to information Fides Agency received, the Rector of the Polytechnic University, Fr. Javier Herran, sdb, in his opening speech at the forum, said that the issue presents new scenarios compared to the past: "Today the State is present, it legislates starting from a vision of development and of the country, it intervenes, authorizes private activities but regulates their actions. All this is framed in compliance with international agreements, in the definition of rights, in development plans ". However, said the Rector, "the reality of children and adolescents at risk continues to be present, and the solution of the causes that determine it does not seem easy."
Fr. Francisco Sánchez, Project Coordinator of Salesian Ecuador, has been carrying out his activities with street children and adolescents since 1977. The project is currently present in 7 cities (Quito, Guayaquil, Cuenca, Esmeraldas, Santo Domingo, Ambato and San Lorenzo) and deals with about 5000 children and adolescents, working for the prevention, restitution, and the exercise of children's and adolescents' rights. In addition to the direct action with children, adolescents and families, he is also committed to developing institutional and inter-institutional strategies of analysis and debate on these issues. In his speech Fr. Francisco Sanchez said that "the current moment Ecuadorian and Latin American society is experiencing, challenges us to understand and to urgently address the changes that occur at a social and political level, and that, of course, involve the world of childhood, and naturally have their repercussions on children and adolescents living in high-risk or high vulnerability situations (street life, abuse, labor exploitation, rape, drugs ...). In this context, we take the challenge and responsibility to create, at an institutional level and civil society, the opportunities for reflection that guide activities and institutional models. For this purpose it is essential to count on the participation of all protagonists involved in this problem, and that of course are also an active part of the necessary changes and institutional innovations." (SL) (Agenzia Fides 21/6/2012)

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