

Dr. Francisco Legaz Cervantes

Chairman, International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJO)

Welcome speech, presenting the awardees of the ‘Juvenile Justice Without Borders’ International Award on its 4th Edition, 2016

Dear professionals, colleagues, friends and supporters of the activities of the International Juvenile Justice Observatory,

It is an honour and a great joy for me, as Chairman of the Observatory, to welcome you to this new edition of the ‘Juvenile Justice Without Borders’ International Award, which in 2016 is celebrating its 4th Edition.

With this award, the Observatory recognizes and promotes on a global scale the magnificent work of those people and institutions who, through their actions, contribute to the improvement of juvenile justice systems, and to the protection of the rights of children and youth throughout the world.

This purpose also guides the International Juvenile Justice Observatory, which was established in 2002 with the firm commitment to protect the rights of children and young people, especially those who are immersed in cycles of violence, conflict and crime. To this end, the IJJO develops new sources of knowledge and innovation on the issues that affect these children, and accompanies the different countries in the practical implementation of international juvenile justice standards.

In this regard, our aim is to contribute to improving the effectiveness of juvenile justice systems, policies, programs and models, making them more

child-friendly, more inclusive and always guarantors of children's rights; in this way working to try to improve their lives.

This mission is what has led us to constitute this award, in order to recognize the great work of all those who endeavour for a better present and future for children, addressing the different challenges that affect the lives of millions of them. Challenges among which we can currently find early prevention, implementation of international laws and standards, promotion of children's rights, or the practical realisation of the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty.

It is always important to highlight the work of all those striving to tackle these issues and propose effective solutions to keep moving forward. Undoubtedly, the awardees of this edition are a clear example of this work. To all of them, I offer my sincere congratulations.

At the Observatory we hope that the recognition of these awardees will not only be a reward for their career, but a source of inspiration for the international community, professionals and future generations.

It is a pleasure for me to present them:

- **Judge Emilio Calatayud**, Juvenile Judge from Spain. Awarded for his extensive experience in the application of juvenile legislation, highlighting the value he places on an educational and socialising approach to the law, as well as his work to raise society's awareness of specialised juvenile justice, adapted to the circumstances and needs of the child.

- **The Ministry of Justice and Law of Colombia**, represented by the Honourable Jorge Eduardo Londoño Ulloa, Minister of Justice and Law, and by the Honourable Carlos Medina Ramírez, Vice-Minister of Criminal Policy and Restorative Justice. This institution has been rewarded for the work it carries out for the development of an integral juvenile justice system, consistent with the international standards on children's rights, focused on the prevention of juvenile delinquency and the protection of the rights of children in situations of vulnerability; as well as for its work in the social reintegration of young people in conflict with the law.

- **Datuk Dr. Chiam Heng Keng**, Founding President of the Early Childhood Care and Education Council of Malaysia, and member of the ASEAN Commission for the Protection of the Rights of Women and Children. Awarded for her outstanding work as a researcher in child psychology, facilitating the improvement of the Malaysian juvenile justice system, her commitment as a teacher in the transmission of values and respect for human rights, as well as for her wisdom as an advisor for many national committees working for the rights of children.

- **Judge Sylvie Rousteau**, family judge and former juvenile judge from France. Awarded for her commitment and contribution for more than 20 years to the improvement of the French juvenile justice system, from her work as judge of the juvenile court, as well as her dedication to the protection of children and young people at risk; also emphasizing her professional and personal involvement in the generation of shared knowledge as a basis on which to continue advancing in the improvement of systems and policies that affect children and youth.

- **Professor Ann Skelton**, Director of the Centre for Child Law at the University of Pretoria, UNESCO Chair in Education Law and member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Awarded for her extensive dedication to the defence of children's rights, empowering the child's role through different media, making their voice truly heard. And especially for her outstanding achievements in improving the Juvenile Justice system in South Africa, leading the process of drafting new legislation to protect at-risk children.

- **Dr. Rubén Vasconcelos Méndez**, Director of the Federal Legal Counsel of the Executive Committee of Attention to the Victims in Mexico. Awarded for his intense dedication to the process of reforming and updating the legislative package that composes the Mexican juvenile justice system, faithfully following the principles contained in the Convention of the Rights of the Child; as well as for his personal commitment to the improvement of the situation of children and youth.

- **Mr. Ayub Mohamud Abdi**, founder of the group 'Teachers Against Violent Extremism'. Distinguished with the recognition of **Honorable Award** of 'Juvenile Justice Without Borders' for his dedication to preventing the recruitment of young people by extremist groups, educating new generations in the respect for human rights. As well as for his work to raise the awareness of educational professionals about the need to develop joint strategies to combat extremism in the classroom, providing children with the education they need to become the engine of African society.

I would not like to end these words without congratulating once again the recipients of this award, encouraging them to continue to be an example of a commitment to the rights of children and youth around the world. On

behalf of the International Juvenile Justice Observatory and on my own it is an honour and a privilege to have given you this award.

Thank you and congratulations.

Dr. Francisco Legaz Cervantes

Chairman, International Juvenile Justice Observatory