



8 March 2010

EU Ambassador launches Children's Art Competition in New Delhi

On International Women's Day, the European Union (EU) launched a drawing competition for school children between the age group of 8-10 at a government school in New Delhi. In collaboration with Save the Children, this competition will be held in schools across India over the next two months. Equally important, children from the most socially excluded and marginalised communities will take part in the competition.

Similar competitions are being organised worldwide, and the best entries from each country will be sent to the EU headquarters in Brussels where a jury consisting of European children will select the 14 best entries worldwide for eventual publication. These winners will also receive prizes of the value of 1000 euro (about 65000 INR) each. Save the Children and the European Union's Delegation in New Delhi will also reward the best 10 drawings from India.

The theme of the competition is 'Once upon a time there were a girl and a boy; together they wanted to make the world a better place'

Speaking at the launch of the event at the Nigam Pratibha Prathamik Vidyalaya, a co-educational primary school in Janakpuri, the Head of the European Union Delegation to India, Ambassador Danièle Smadja said, "Today, the 8th of March, in this International Women's Day, equal rights, equal opportunities, progress for all is our motto. We should celebrate the economic, political and social achievements of women around the world and raise awareness for ensuring effective gender equality and empowerment of women, as girls and women still have to face discrimination, in the family, in the wider community, at work and on the political scene. But let's not forget that we need and we want men's commitment. It's only together, men and women, boys and girls, that we can make a difference." She encouraged teachers and children to think about how they could address these issues in their daily lives.

Thomas Chandy, CEO, Save the Children, said: "We are very happy to facilitate this drawing competition organised by the EU as it gives an opportunity for some of the most marginalised children that we work with to articulate their vision of a world where discrimination does not exist."

All Member States of the European Union are signatories to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) which was adopted by the UN General Assembly just over 30 years ago. Speaking at the commemoration of this event last December Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European

Commission observed that "states that have ratified the Convention continue to maintain legislation that discriminates against women in areas such as inheritance rights, the transmission of nationality by women or the right to property." She said that the EU will continue to engage with partner countries and organisations on these critical issues.

Last year's drawing competition received over 23,000 entries from 60 countries in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East, the Pacific and Eastern Europe.

For a number of years, Save the Children has been implementing EU-sponsored projects in several parts of India, including in Jammu & Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh. In their focus on education, Save the Children and their partner NGOs have been aiming at inclusion of girls and marginalised groups in mainstream education programmes and innovative learning methods for improving quality of education.

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