

Declaration in support of the Chilean students' movement and rejection of its criminalization by the State

CLADE expresses solidarity with the current civil society mobilizations in that country

The Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education – CLADE, regional civil society organizations network which articulates national education forums in 15 countries, regional networks and international non-governmental organizations expresses its solidarity with the massive current mobilization of citizens in Chile, requiring a State policy intended to effectively enforce the right to free, equal, universal and non-discriminatory public education.

We make a request to the Chilean State to ensure the integrity of the manifold expressions of pacific protest led by the students and condemn any kind of violent repression or disrespect to the right to mobilization each citizen is entitled to in a democracy.

CLADE joins the ensemble of demands of the Chilean students' movement for free education, the abolition of every kind of social economic discrimination and segregation in the educational system, against profit making which is illegally practiced and for the development of an educational system which is capable of securing that public education is available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to all Chilean citizens. Not only do these demands stand as coherent and legitimate ethics and policies but they are also embraced in the commitments undertaken by the Chilean government insofar as this country is signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Human right to education is encompassed in the States' commitments under international human rights law, that is, it is justiciable and obliges States to respect, protect and ensure education in conditions of equality and non-discrimination, securing public budget to fully accomplish these goals.

We decry the attempts of privatization of education so frequently witnessed in several Latin-American States, insofar as they place corporations' profit and interests above the interests of citizens, conducing to the dismantlement of the responsibility of State and public powers in securing human right to education.

Notwithstanding that, the commitments are still in force, both in the international normative of human rights and in most constitutions of the countries in the region, in such a way that citizenship is assigned an active role of requiring enforcement of these rights. This way, it stands as an obligation of States to respect and to protect the pacific mobilization, which constitutes a fundamental human right.

In view of the escalating repression against the Chilean students movement in the last weeks, CLADE expresses its peremptory rejection to any attempt of disrespect or criminalization of dissension and points out that the nature of a democratic society grants to social protest and dissension the status of structuring features of public debate; instead of denying them, it embraces them in its legitimacy, recognizing the several voices of citizens in the process of debate and formulation of public policies.