



# NEWS ALERT!

Children and Youth Studies Program and  
Children's Studies Center for Research, Policy and Public Service

July 2012

## Optional Protocol to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC), ratified by the United States of America

On May 11, 2012 the Children's Studies Center for Research, Policy and Public Service at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York submitted an [Alternative Report on New York State Measures Giving Effect to the Optional Protocol \(Part I and Part II Legislative Annex\)](#) to the *Periodic Report of the United States of America*, January 22, 2012. (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/136023.pdf>)

On June 18, 2012, for the purpose of discussing its *Alternative Report*, the Children's Studies Center for Research, Policy and Public Service of CUNY Brooklyn College was invited as one of three U.S. non-governmental organizations to attend the Pre-session Working Group meeting and appear before the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) at the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland. Gertrud Lenzer, Founding Director of the Children's Studies Center, attended and participated in the official Pre-session Working Group meeting and hearings in Geneva.

The U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child also met with representatives of ECPAT-USA, of The Center for the Human Rights of Children at Loyola University Chicago, and of the Center for Immigrant Children's Rights at the University of Chicago, which also had submitted Alternative Reports to the Committee.

After the session of June 18, 2012, the Committee sent on July 3, 2012 a "List of issues concerning additional and updated information related to the second periodic report of the United States (CRC/C/OPSC/USA/2)" to the U.S. government with the request for a reply by November 16, 2012.

(<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.OPSC.USA.Q.2.pdf>) In January 2013, U.S. government representatives will meet with members of the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child to discuss the *Periodic Report of the United States of America* (January 22, 2010) in an official session in Geneva.

PS: Preparatory to its Alternative Report of 2012, the Children's Studies Center held its 3<sup>rd</sup> *Child Policy Forum of New York* on the implementation of the Optional Protocol in New York State at the Church Center for the United Nations in New York City on February 9, 2009. The proceedings were published and can be found at: [http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/aca\\_centers\\_children/090901\\_BOOKS\\_ChildPolicyForumOfNewYork.pdf](http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/aca_centers_children/090901_BOOKS_ChildPolicyForumOfNewYork.pdf)



Gertrud Lenzer, Director of the Children's Studies Center at Brooklyn College, and Carol Smolenski, Executive Director of ECPAT-USA, in front of the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights



Left to right: Maria Woltjen, Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights, Katherine Kaufka Walts, Loyola U. Chicago Center for the Human Rights of Children, Jonathan Todres, Professor of Law at Georgia State University College of Law, Gertrud Lenzer, Director of the Children's Studies Center at Brooklyn College, and Carol Smolenski, Executive Director of ECPAT-USA, in front of the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

### UNCRC and the Optional Protocol

As of November 2009, 193 countries have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The only countries that have not ratified it are Somalia, South Sudan, and the United States of America.

While the U.S. has not ratified the UNCRC, it has ratified the "Optional Protocol to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography" (OPSC), an international treaty which requires countries to prohibit the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. (Text and articles of the OPSC: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc-sale.htm>) As part of the treaty obligations, the U.S. must report every five years on its progress in preventing the articles of the Optional Protocol.

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