**5.6 *I Belong*** Extract

The strongest message to emerge from the consultations with children and youth on *Statelessness*, was that **they exist** and **want to be recognized**.

“I am a human being;”

“It’s a fact, before your eyes, that I exist;”

“I am a part of this society;”

“We are all of this earth,”

were among the common feelings they expressed when interviewed.

Despite not being recognized as nationals of the countries in which they were born, and have lived their entire lives, almost all the children and youths we spoke to felt deeply loyal to their country:

“I feel Dominican … regardless of documents,” says Paloma, from the Dominican Republic.

Stateless children and youth are not asking for special treatment.

They are only asking for **equal treatment**: the chance to have the same opportunities as other children.

It is our responsibility to give them this chance.