



CRIN NEWSLETTER

Child Rights Information Network Number 14 / June 2001

The Special Session on Children

Photo: Lisa Taylor / Save the Children



Features

'The Special Session - so good so far' Per Miljeteig

'A critical review of the Special Session' Philip Veerman

'Spotlight on child rights' Jo Becker

The Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) is a membership-driven organisation and network of over 1,100 child rights organisations around the world. It strives to improve the lives of children through the exchange of information about child rights and the promotion of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.



CRIN Newsletter

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Editor | Andrea Khan |
| Co-editor | Laura Greenwood |
| Editorial adviser | Bill Bell |
| Management team | Sven Winberg Janet Nelson Bill Bell Youseff Hajjar |
| Sub-editor | Maisha Frost |
| French translation | Isabelle Fernández, SOL language |
| Spanish translation | Francisco Ariza, Planet Translations |
| Design | Greenhouse |



CRIN Newsletter Number 14

The Special Session on Children

5 Editorial

6 News round-up

9 Follow-up on macroeconomics

9 Figuring out the true picture by Kalle Elofsson, Kenneth Melin, and Sven Winberg

12 Poor excuses for child poverty by Marie Wernham

15 The Special Session on Children

15 The Special Session - so good so far by Per Miljeteig

17 Factfile: Resolution 54/93 - Special Session of the General Assembly in 2001 for follow-up to the World Summit for Children

19 A critical review of the Special Session by Philip Veerman

21 Factfile: What has happened in the ten years since the World Summit for Children?

23 Say Yes for Children by UNICEF

24 Spotlight on child rights by Jo Becker

26 Conflict and small arms - keeping up the pressure by Christina Torsein

28 'Making an arab world fit for children' by the Arab Resource Collective

29 Preparations of Central and Eastern Europe the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States for the UN Special Session on Children

31 Breaking down the barriers by Graeme Thompson

32 A decade fit for adolescents by Jessica Nott

34 Listening to young voices by Clare Feinstein

36 Publications

36 Key documents relating to the UN Special Session on Children

38 Membership form

39 Calendar of events



Photo: Howard Davies / Save the Children





Editorial

Within months, the United Nations will call a meeting that is the first real opportunity in ten years to move the human rights of children to the top of the world agenda. The Special Session on Children will be convened by the UN General Assembly in New York from 19-21 September 2001. It will bring together Governments, Heads of States, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other relevant actors. This edition of the CRIN Newsletter focuses on that meeting and the preparations that lead to it.

The purpose of the Special Session on Children is two-fold: (1) to review progress made for children since 1990 specifically by returning to the achievements of the goals of the World Summit for Children; and, (2) to assert a renewed commitment to children and develop a new global agenda for them in the forthcoming decade.

CRIN is an information network that supports the needs of the child rights community and the Special Session on Children provides an important focus of work for many of our members. To date, national, regional and international preparatory events have taken place so that the final plan of action from the Special Session can take into account views and perspectives of many different actors. In this changing climate, the importance of being able to access and effectively exchange information within the child rights community cannot be over-emphasised.

CRIN has developed a virtual theme desk on its website and a regular email service for the Special Session. Both provide regional updates, as well as the latest news, events and documentation regarding this important event. All information from the Child Rights Caucus is available on CRIN's website. At the preparatory meetings themselves, CRIN provides daily coverage by email and in printed format.

In this issue Per Miljeteig opens the suite of articles on the Special Session with a considered yet optimistic reflection on the benefits of involvement in the Special Session process. However, Philip Veerman introduces a note of caution regarding the process and questions whether the wide scale participation in the Special Session will actually do anything to promote child rights at all. Will it bring about increased government commitment and resulting shifts in economic policy to invest in children's well-being nationally.

This warning is to be taken seriously. With the second draft of the Outcome Document 'A World Fit for Children', recommendations to have a more rights-based approach were ignored. There were improvements in the third draft but Member States failed to agree on a final Outcome Document.

An article from the Child Rights Caucus outlines how this group (on behalf of hundreds of NGOs) has formulated a 'Children's Rights Agenda for the Coming Decade'. This group

is advocating for an Outcome Document that is in effect an action plan for the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In addition, we bring together a wide range of diverse views to illustrate the multifarious activities, different agendas and voices that all connect to the Special Session in some way. There are regional case studies and another author reminds us that many issues need to be addressed before there is meaningful participation of children and young people in international events. We also look at the Global Movement for Children – an initiative spearheaded by six large organisations and Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel. And one author urges the child rights and the small arms communities to redouble their efforts, and calls on them to bridge the gap between two related UN meetings: the Special Session on Children and the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects.

The Special Session will focus on a number of clear goals and targets. One of these goals – infant and under-five mortality – seems likely to reiterate the promise made in 1990. But three of the goals (malnutrition, maternal mortality and access to safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation facilities) actually retreat from 1990 promises.

The end-decade review of follow-up to the World Summit for Children is expected to announce that some progress was made since 1990, but that actual achievement of its targets was less than impressive. Infant and under-five mortality only declined by 14 percent (rather than the goal of 33 percent), malnutrition declined by 17 percent (rather than 50 percent), there was little reduction in maternal mortality (rather than a 50 reduction) and universal access to safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation facilities is far from a reality.

Government commitment to a global agenda for children must be measured, first, by actual achievements of the goals of the World Summit for Children. Tempered with this sense of realism the second litmus test should compare goals of the Special Session on Children with promises made at the World Summit for Children.

If the world community, the UN General Assembly and Member States are truly to renew this commitment to children then they should not retreat from the 1990 goals.

The real challenge to NGOs, young people and other parts of civil society will be to ensure that the UN General Assembly and Member States make a commitment to real action that can, and will, be monitored, measured and implemented. Their promise to the world's children must build on promises of the past as articulated both by the World Summit on Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



News round-up

New Global Initiative to end all corporal punishment of children

A new Global Initiative has been launched to speed up the prohibition of all corporal punishment of children internationally. Its key message is that children have the same human right as adults to be protected from any form of violence, which includes being hit and humiliated.

In most States world-wide, many children, including babies, continue to be subjected to corporal punishment, significant numbers of whom suffer serious injury as a result. In many countries outside Europe, teachers continue to have authority to beat pupils and in at least 50 countries, whipping of juveniles is still used as a sentence of the courts or as punishment in penal institutions.

Through its work, the Global Initiative aims to:

- launch a wide information and education campaign to promote proper caring for, and eliminate violence against, children;
- forge an international alliance of human rights agencies, key individuals and international and national non-governmental organisations to unite against corporal punishment;
- make corporal punishment of children visible by building a global map of its prevalence and legal status, ensuring that children's views are heard, and charting progress towards ending it;
- lobby governments to systematically ban all forms of violence including corporal punishment and to develop public education programmes; and,
- provide technical assistance to support states with these reforms.

This initiative was launched during the Human Rights Commission session in Geneva in April 2001 and is already supported by the High Commissioner for Human Rights amongst others. Further information is available from the following website: www.endcorporalpunishment.org. The Global Initiative is now asking NGOs to sign up to its statement of aims. Further information about this can be obtained by emailing: info@endcorporalpunishment.org

Source: info@endcorporalpunishment.org

Macedonian mayors commit to children

The recently formed Mayor's Association, comprising mayors from each of Macedonia's 123 municipalities, and young people from UNICEF supported Babylon youth centres, attended the launch of Macedonia's 'Say YES for Children' campaign as part of national level activities relating to the Global Movement for Children on April 26 2001. Amongst the many activities which took place at the launch was the adoption of 'The Declaration of an Agenda for Children' and an announcement of the 'Mayor's Alliance for Children'. Delegates at the launch committed themselves to following the principles enshrined in

the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the five-year strategy plan of the Mayor's Association, which will be co-ordinated with the nation's Ombudsperson for Children. The Mayor's Alliance for Children includes commitments to further the welfare and rights of the country's children. These include reviewing and including goals for children in the Association's strategy; providing training in child rights; development of local action plans with children; using the Mayor's Alliance to establish child-friendly cities and including young people in citizens' meetings or on the boards of decision-making councils. For further information, contact Monique Thormann. (mthormann@unicef.org)

Source: UNICEF

'The Berlin Commitment - pledging to create an environment fit for children

The Conference on Children in Europe and Central Asia, hosted by the Foreign Ministries of Germany and Bosnia and Herzegovina with the support of UNICEF, (May 16 – 18 2001) served as a regional prelude to the first ever UN General Assembly Special Session on Children. Delegates from over 51 countries across Europe and Central Asia and the Holy See made a special pledge known as 'The Berlin Commitment' to create an environment fit for children in the region.

The 'Berlin Commitment' outlines goals for further development of child-friendly policies in the different States over the next 10 years. The conference is the culmination of a series of consultations between governments, civil societies, NGOs, young people, UNICEF, other UN agencies, the EU, the Council of Europe, OSCE and other regional bodies, all dedicated to improving the lives of children. Continued discussions in Berlin, in addition to the 'Berlin Commitment', will also result in a detailed report outlining strategies and recommendations for action. This is the first time that governments from Europe and Central Asia have come together and jointly committed themselves to further the efforts of implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In brief, the 'Berlin Commitment' recognises that children:

- are citizens in their own right;
- must be consulted and involved in issues concerning them; and that
- investing in their development is the key to building a peaceful and prosperous society.

Furthermore, it focuses on the importance of:

- adjusting national legislation;
- providing the necessary funding;
- monitoring progress; and,
- taking other action necessary to realise the rights of children.

The 'Berlin Commitment' comprises a 20-point plan which lists key undertakings to combat and address poverty and social exclusion, violence and abuse, the severe impact of



transition in many countries, health and environmental questions, inter-generational justice, the state of education and the importance of on-going participation of children and young people in decisions that affect their lives.

Source: UNICEF www.unicef.org/newsline/01or47.htm

United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS

Alarmed by the accelerating epidemic and its global impact, the United Nations General Assembly has decided to convene a Special Session on HIV/AIDS at the highest political level. To be held from 25 to 27 June 2001 in New York, the Special Session aims to intensify international action to fight the epidemic and to mobilise the required resources. At the Special Session, high-level national delegations will discuss which action plans have proven most effective in addressing the AIDS situation in their own countries and what next steps are needed. Interactive round-tables will bring together government leaders, AIDS activists and experts and private sector partners to focus on key issues. Given the urgency of the epidemic, governments at the Special Session are expected to agree on a Declaration of Commitment that will outline priority areas where stronger action must be taken. These are likely to include prevention, improved access to care and treatment, care of children orphaned by AIDS, expanded public/private sector partnerships, the need for an accelerated multi-sectoral response to the epidemic and for resources commensurate with the crisis. In addition, it is expected that the Special Session will set a number of new concrete targets for action to fight HIV/AIDS, building on goals adopted at previous United Nations fora. These include the target agreed by some 150 heads of State and Government at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015.

Source: UNAIDS www.un.org/ga/aids/

The situation of children in Sudan

In a report issued on 16 May 2001, Save the Children (UK), a leading international children's charity, said that time is running out to prevent a major disaster in west Sudan. In the worst affected areas, one in three children are already suffering from malnutrition. Despite repeated warnings to the UK Government and the international community, children are dying due to lack of food, water and emergency medical treatment. Almost one million people are directly affected by a two-year drought in Darfur in west Sudan. The nutritional status of children is now at alarming levels with no prospect for improvement unless immediate action is taken. It will be six months before any harvest is due and all coping mechanisms are now breaking down. Over 400,000 people are critically short of water. More and more people are moving

into the towns in search of food to survive. It is expected that rates of malnutrition, destitution and mortality will continue to rise over the next few months.

Source: Save the Children Press Office, Tel: +44 (0)20 7716 2280; Email: press@scfuk.org.uk

Côte d'Ivoire focuses on integrating Liberian children in education

Many Liberians sought refuge in Côte d'Ivoire during the 1990s as civil war tore their country apart. The end of the war made voluntary repatriations possible, and these began in 1997, organised by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). However, about 120,000 Liberians opted to remain in Côte d'Ivoire. For the past 10 years, UNHCR and other agencies have been paying for the refugee children to go to schools administered by the Adventist Relief Aid Agency (ADRA) and run according to the Liberian education system. However since the Liberians' situation is no longer an 'emergency', UNHCR proposed that the Ivorian government take over their schooling. The proposed integration of these children into schools prompted a recent meeting of officials of the Ivorian Ministries of Education and Defence and Civil Protection, Liberian and other education specialists and representatives of UN agencies and international NGOs. Côte d'Ivoire's authorities hope to integrate some 20,000 Liberian children into the education system in the next school year, which starts in October but has misgivings about how this project can be fully supported. In addition, participants at this meeting (Yamoussoukro, 15 May 2001) noted that, for the successful and complete integration of Liberian children in the Ivorian education system, a number of hurdles must be overcome. The meeting enabled participants to examine the technical and socio-psychological obstacles facing the proposed project. Participants suggested a series of recommendations to ensure the successful implementation of this project.

Source: UN's IRIN Humanitarian Information Unit. Email: IRIN-WA@irin.ci - 15 May 2001

SADC moves to eliminate child labour in South Africa

The quest to stop the most abusive forms of child exploitation has entered a new era with the implementation of the International Convention to Eliminate Child Labour after a speedy ratification by more than 40 countries, seven of them Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states. These SADC members, Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa and Zimbabwe, ratified the convention by 16 January. SADC Executive Secretary, Prega Ramsamy said the region was committed to the elimination of all forms of child labour. "Our member states are continuing to take various measures, including



ratification of relevant conventions and the establishment of data banks to address the matter". According to the ILO, 250 million children between the ages of five and 14 work in developing countries and about 80 million of these are in Africa.

Source: Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SADC)
www.sardc.net/editorial/sanf/2001/Iss6/Nf1.html

Egyptian Parliament partially approves African Children's Charter

The Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kamal el-Shazli announced that Egypt's Parliament has recently approved most of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Children's Charter). However, some parts have been rejected as they are contrary to Islamic law and Egyptian tradition. The Organization of African Unity (OAU)-sponsored charter, which has been in force since November 1999, aims to protect children from economic exploitation, child abuse and substance abuse. El-Shazli cited certain clauses as being objectionable such as for example, clauses permitting adoption, setting the minimum marriage age for girls at 18 and outlawing death sentences for pregnant and nursing women. He said Islam forbids adoption and that Egypt allows both marriage at 16 years of age and executions of women as early as two months after childbirth. Further information about the African Children's Rights Charter can be viewed at www.unhcr.ch/refworld/legal/instruments/children/afr_e.htm.

Source: UN Foundation, 11 May 2001 (Reuters/CNN.com, 6 May)
<http://www.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/meast/05/06/rights.egypt.children.reut/index.html>

Jordan conference calls for the end to recruitment of child soldiers

A conference on child soldiers in Amman, Jordan, concluded with a call to end the recruitment of children, including girls, as soldiers and for the protection of children living under occupation. The three-day meeting was organised by UNICEF, the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers and the Jordanian Institute of Diplomacy. Its final declaration called on states to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child that deals with the use of child soldiers before the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children takes place in September 2001. The conference's final declaration noted the correlation between child soldiers and the supply of small arms and also called on governments to prevent companies from promoting the use of children in conflict situations. However, with the case of Palestine, participants concluded that Palestinian children had not been systematically recruited to fight but had been caught up in violence in the region (Barbara Plett, BBC Online, 10 Apr). "It is fair to say the situation in Palestine has cast a long shadow

over this conference," said Rory Mungoven, Coordinator of the child soldiers coalition. "But at the same time, we are concerned for children everywhere. Children are fighting and dying in every region of the world and we owe it to all of them." With more than 300,000 child soldiers fighting in armed conflicts worldwide, it is hoped that this call for putting a stop to the further recruitment of child soldiers will be successful.

Source: UN Foundation – www.unfoundation.org

A gift to the children of the 21st century - global campaign to eradicate polio

As we enter a new millennium, the world has an historic opportunity to take concerted global action on behalf of the world's children and their future. Polio is caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system, resulting in paralysis and sometimes death. Throughout history, polio has crippled millions of people, mostly very young children from all social classes, both rich and poor. Today, between 10 and 20 million people of all ages are living with polio paralysis, which is almost always irreversible. And while thousands of new cases occur each year, more than 150 nations are now polio-free, and the disease has been eradicated in 90 percent of the world. The global polio eradication effort, co-ordinated by the World Health Organization (WHO), is a collaboration of many public and private partners, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which provides the oral polio vaccine; the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which offers technical expertise; and the service organisation Rotary International, whose 1.2 million members in 159 countries have made polio eradication the main focus of their fund-raising and volunteering. There are five steps which must be taken to eradicate polio: routine immunisation, mass immunisation, establishment of a surveillance system (to report suspected cases early on), 'mop-up' campaigns to keep the virus at bay, and finally, certification.

Source: The UN Foundation. www.unfoundation.org/spotlight/polio.cfm



Figuring out the true picture

New studies of national budgets have shed fresh light on just how much is being done for children. Kalle Elofsson, Kenneth Melin, and Sven Winberg report.

Save the Children Sweden has been involved in the area of macroeconomics and children for some years. As independent consultant Stefan de Vylder points out in his article *The Big Picture* (CRIN Newsletter 13, November 2000), each area of macroeconomics has an impact on children. Here we look at the role of fiscal policies, an area of growing interest and one closely linked to Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Embedded in national and regional budgets are the answers as to how States parties 'to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation' (Article 4 of the CRC) translate their commitments to children into actual resources.

Ten years on from the Convention's signing, questions are being raised on just how much is being done for children and how policies are reflected in budget allocations.

To provide more much-needed information about this, Save the Children Sweden launched the International Child-focused Budget Study Project supporting initiatives in seven countries (Ethiopia, El Salvador, Palestine, Peru, South Africa, Sweden and Vietnam) to undertake analyses of state budgets. For all the participants in the study (except South Africa) it is a first step towards understanding how state budgets are built up and

how children figure in policies and especially budget expenditure.

Some initial findings from the study show the following.

Generally, the intentions from the states favour the implementation of child rights. Many have increased spending towards fulfilling the rights of children, but in most cases, the increases are insufficient or insignificant. Most of the budgets lack detail on how big a share of the budget is directed at children in the health and social welfare sectors.

In Ethiopia, where an ambitious National Programme of Action for Children and Women was developed, it was found that this programme was not used at all by implementing agencies and the Government in terms of budget allocations and activities.

In South Africa, children in general and poor children in particular have been given attention, both in terms of policies and in actual budgeting. Education expenditure favours children and has been redirected to the poorer segments of the society. Thirty percent of the health budget is directed to services for children, a share that is set to increase. However this is not enough. Service delivery towards children's rights in health, nutrition and education is still poor compared with other countries with similar income levels.



Photo: Eli Reed / Magnum Photos



In Palestine, a National Plan of Action for children was backed by the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Expenditure on basic education has increased dramatically as a result and participation in basic education rose by 43 percent. However, social welfare spending has decreased and only recently have children been seen as a priority.

In Vietnam, a National Plan of Action for children was adopted in 1991 with four top objectives including education for all children. Spending on education grew from 12 to 15 percent of the state budget between 1990 and 1997 - a dramatic increase in real terms; the country's gross domestic product (GDP) went up by 75 percent during this period. The increased spending also resulted in more school pupils being enrolled; from 89 percent in 1992 to 97 percent in 1997. However, those vulnerable poor children remain excluded.

In Sweden, a country that is considered one of the better countries in terms of child rights, children were still adversely affected by welfare cuts resulting from the financial crisis in the early 1990s. It was children in particular, who felt the effects of this crisis, which is not in line with the Convention.

The lack of detail about how children are targeted in the budgets makes it hard to estimate to what extent increased spending on social services actually benefits children. It is generally assumed that such spending does benefit them. Poor specification also makes it harder to see the links between what was actually spent at the local levels on children compared with national policies. The studies revealed the poor data concerning children. Not only was it difficult to see how much was actually spent, but it was even harder to see to what extent spending adequately addressed children's needs and secured their rights.

In several of the countries decentralisation is going ahead, something positive for children, as it means that decisions about who gets what would be at a local level and closer to those it concerns.

In Sweden, where decentralisation has developed further, the study pinpointed certain problems with this process. While the responsibility for the budget priorities moves down to local levels, it is still the State that has signed the Convention. Local authorities have their own agendas and priorities and, in this context, it becomes increasingly difficult for the State to guarantee a quality education for all.

Photo: Neil Cooper and Jan Hammond / Save the Children





It requires competence and effort to get an overview and understanding of the complicated state budget and its process. Aggregated data, several ministries sharing responsibilities, foreign development assistance with programmes targeted at children and domestic programmes outside the regular budget all make understanding this process even more complicated. However, it is worth the effort, since some of the studies from the project indicate openings and possibilities as to how the budget process can be influenced. Helping politicians understand the implications can shift attention in children's favour.

The ratification of the Convention in the countries participating in the study (except for Palestine) put a focus on children's rights at both the policy and planning levels. Spending has increased in some areas that affect children, most notably that of education (although not Sweden). However, it seems likely that increased spending still fails to reach a country's poorest and most vulnerable young people.

The next step

Economists in the field of children's rights have introduced new ideas about identifying and understanding the structural mechanisms that violate children's rights. Progress is being made but much work remains to be done. Informal networks between all those involved in children's rights work have to be tightened and multidisciplinary approaches must be developed. Precise data regarding children's lives can help put their needs at the centre of the macroeconomic debate, but this requires contributions from different sources.

Kalle Elofsson and Kenneth Melin are programme officers at Rädda Barnen. Sven Winberg is a senior advisor at Rädda Barnen.

Issue 13 of the CRIN Newsletter on 'Children and Macroeconomics' can be downloaded in electronic format from www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/CRINvol14e.pdf. Hard copies available from CRIN (see address on back cover or email us at info@crin.org).



Poor excuses for child poverty

Marie Wernham introduces the International Action Against Child Poverty Initiative.

A major conference on child poverty held in London on 26 February 2001 sparked a series of questions and led to an unusually broad spectrum of NGOs and faith groups joining together in an on-going attempt to answer them. Action against child poverty is urgent, complicated and largely ignored or misunderstood in macroeconomics. Targets have been set and the justification for immediate action based on the best interests of the child is clear.

The conference in London was convened by the UK Chancellor, Gordon Brown, and the UK Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short and thereby acknowledged the trend to integrate development and finance policy. It was also attended by the leaders of the World Bank, the IMF, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as well as representatives from developed and developing countries, NGOs and faith groups.

An informal coalition of 16 NGOs and faith groups joined together to produce a comprehensive discussion paper for the conference entitled 'A Six Point Plan for Eliminating Child Poverty' based around the International Development Targets (IDTs). This contained a framework of action and adopts a child-centred approach which addresses the following areas holistically and coherently: macroeconomics (including more sustainable and predictable expenditure, untying aid, increased debt cancellation); education; health; HIV/AIDS; trade and investment; and the root causes of conflict and violence.

Discussions included specific proposals for a global purchase fund to provide cheap vaccines against childhood diseases; tax incentives to accelerate research into affordable drugs and vaccines for the poor; tax credits on donations of drugs and vaccines from the pharmaceutical industry; and new funds for universal primary education by the UK and Italian governments.

The NGOs and faith groups greeted these developments with cautious optimism. The widespread acknowledgement of the centrality of children to poverty reduction and the commitments made by different groups of actors on the day were strongly supported. However, in response, the group requested greater specificity on the health and education initiatives, especially on Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property rights (TRIPs), delivery systems, the integration of the new funds with nationally-owned education strategies and the need for quality, appropriate and accessible education. The issues of monitoring progress, the need to internationalise the initiative and concern at the omission of environmental and arms control issues were also raised.

Some key questions which the NGOs and faith groups are specifically interested in are:

- Who bears responsibility for the achievement of the 2015 IDTs especially those relating to child poverty?
- How can actors as diverse as the World Bank, the IMF, the UN, governments from developed and developing countries, NGOs, faith groups, the research community and the private sector work together to end child poverty?
- Is such collaboration feasible?
- Is it possible or even desirable to run a global campaign on child poverty? Child poverty is an extremely complex issue which cuts across a range of processes and macroeconomics themes, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), debt, trade and aid and their impacts on education, health, livelihoods and conflict.
- Can we recreate 'Jubilee 2000' - a global movement against child poverty or are we in new campaigning territory?

Photo: Jenny Matthews / Network and





However, despite the fear that this would prove to be yet another case of 'business as usual' once the players left the room, it was apparent that this conference offered something different. This could be seen from the sheer diversity of actors involved and the presence of so many 'heavyweights' from the international financial sector. This inspired NGOs and faith groups to form an official coalition, International Action Against Child Poverty on 24 April. This coalition intends to move the initiative forward, maintaining pressure on the actors present at the February conference. It will work towards the achievement of the IDTs, but also aims to influence the way in which these processes take place, in order to ensure the mainstreaming of children into decision-making at all levels and the meaningful participation of those affected by such decisions.

In order to help manage the coalition, sub-groups will help the group move forward in terms of structure, funding and defining its relationship to the Global Movement for Children (GMC). They will also look at an action-oriented programme of work which is linked to forthcoming events, such as the annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF, the G8 meeting in Genoa in July and of course, the UN Special Session on Children in September. The coalition seeks to use existing frameworks, such as these meetings, to monitor progress. It will campaign for child-centred, holistic approaches to poverty reduction to be included in all meetings of the financial sector.

A strategy of consultation to facilitate ownership of the initiative by southern civil society, children and young people themselves is being developed.

One thing that is becoming increasingly clear amid the questions and complexities is that unless all the processes and themes of poverty reduction are treated more holistically, with the rights of the child mainstreamed during policy making decisions, then it is likely that 2015 will come and go with a predictable, if shameful, lack of cause for celebration. International Action Against Child Poverty is committed to ensuring that this will not be the case in the belief that there is no excuse for child poverty in the twenty-first century.

Marie Wernham is the advocacy officer at the Consortium for Street Children, a group of over 30 NGOs that supports projects for street-living and street-working children and children at risk of taking to street life in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. The Consortium for Street Children is a member of the International Action Against Child Poverty coalition.



Photo: Dan Feeding / Save the Children





The Special Session - so good so far

Per Miljeteig is closely involved in the preparations for September and here offers an insider's view of the process

The UN General Assembly Special Session on Children is a high profile meeting of Heads of States, Governments, UN bodies and other agencies including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that will take place in September 2001 in New York. This meeting has been convened to review and evaluate the progress achieved for children since the World Summit for Children in 1990 which took place less than one year after the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted. Such a momentous event cannot be prepared for overnight and indeed, since the Special Session was convened in 1999 (Resolution 54/93), many preparations at national, regional and international level have taken place, the results of which will feed into the Special Session itself. The process is particularly interesting since participation from a wide range of stakeholders is encouraged, resulting in the involvement of NGOs (at both international and grassroots levels), faith groups, youth groups, alliances and coalitions of organisations as well as the more traditional involvement of Governments and relevant UN agencies.

Safely returned from New York, the epicentre of distorted proportions, it is time to reflect and bring things back to their right place. What felt like a big and boisterous fair when I was still in the middle of the second Preparatory Committee meeting for the Special Session gradually takes on different meanings. There are three Preparatory Committee meetings in advance of the Special Session itself, which took place 30 May to 2 June 2000, 29 January to 2 February 2001 and 11 to 15 June 2001.

The most potent image is that of the magic that happens when you bring together different people of all ages from all parts of the world. After a week of wall-to-wall meetings in the stuffy and not-so-glamorous basement suite of conference rooms in the United Nations building, a lot of energy is generated. There are endless meetings with heated negotiations and arguments over linguistic details. And then there is the noble art of reading accreditation passes that enable participants to see where in the hierarchy they have been placed and which doors they might open. Some of the energy that is created during this process evaporates but some is highly positive and communicates itself to others.

One could wonder what the point of getting involved in the UN hype is. It is worth spending the time and energy on such things that are so far removed from the daily reality that most of us face? This question remains to be resolved, as we have not come to the end of the Special Session process yet.

Being over half way through the process, my feeling is that it is worth being involved. It makes sense to invest energy in this process and to participate in it. NGOs in particular have a special responsibility to be even more alert and energetic in the subsequent rounds. There are several reasons for this and I will mention some below.

First, this is one of the rare times when the UN is invaded by hordes of real people, including children, who shake up the usual diplomatic patronage. The Special Session process is unique because it is open to, and encourages the participation of, grassroots NGOs that would otherwise never get close to the UN. The enormous and diverse body of expertise that these people represent together adds a much broader perspective to the discussions than are normally seen at UN conferences.

Second, those who came to the second Preparatory Committee meeting were all highly committed representing large constituencies. That means that they are not only speaking for themselves, but for millions of others. They also have a lot of people to work with on their return from New York. In that way, the Special Session and its preparations have a ripple effect with an impact on a large number of people. Equally a very large number of people, through their representatives, have a big effect on what is going on in New York, as these representatives come, not only from the big, international NGOs, but also from small, grassroots organisations or national coalitions of NGOs.



I am convinced that, despite its chaotic appearance, child rights NGOs have never operated in so orderly and focused a manner at a UN meeting before. There is a long tradition of constructive collaboration between NGOs to promote children's rights and to join forces to influence governments and the UN. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has become our guiding tool and provides a framework for the work that we do. This is demonstrated effectively with the example of the Child Rights Caucus, an alliance comprising a large number of NGOs which now appears with a 'no compromise' agenda aiming to give children's rights the highest and sharpest possible profile in the Special Session. However, on several occasions recently, some groups with extreme views tried to take over this agenda, yet they failed because they promoted views that were against the spirit of the CRC. They also failed because they underestimated the

coherence among the other NGOs even when they tried to overtly influence the process. Whilst they generated a lot of annoyance and created unpleasant situations, they did not manage to have the impact they expected.

The Child Rights Caucus is an excellent example of what NGOs can achieve if they work together. It has already had a significant impact on the draft Outcome Document and the revised versions of this draft. This Plan of Action 'A World Fit for Children', will outline a renewed commitment and pledge for specific actions for children for the coming decade. The Child Rights Caucus has managed to establish a position vis-à-vis UNICEF and the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee, which means that their views are carefully listened to. The almost endless work of a small Caucus drafting committee throughout the week might seem like a waste of time and energy, yet the fact is that this work greatly helped the official drafting committee, because it gathered and put in place comments and suggested amendments to the original text, paragraph by paragraph. These comments respond directly to the weaker parts of the draft, and are framed in language that promotes and strengthens the principles of the Convention.

Finally, I am hopeful because of the commitment that governments seem to have to this process. Large numbers of experts from the world's cities filled many of the delegations' seats. They listened attentively. Of course, there was a lot of ritual UN speak, but this enormous mobilisation shows that governments feel compelled to take the Special Session and its preparations seriously. Despite the many, and sometimes completely unrelated, agendas that might inspire governments' engagement, the NGO community should interpret this as a positive development. Our role in the rest of the process, and its follow-up, will be to serve as constant reminders of the commitments that the Special Session will finally formalise this September: commitments that speak to all of us – government and non-government alike, at both the global and local level.

Per Miljeteig is leader of the Forum for Barnekonvensjonen - The Norwegian NGO coalition for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For more information about the Special Session, visit UNICEF's website at www.unicef.org/specialsession or CRIN's website at www.crin.org/specialsession

Photo: Neil Cooper and Jan Hammond / Save the Children





Factfile

Resolution 54/93 - Special Session of the General Assembly in 2001 for follow-up to the World Summit for Children

The General Assembly, the highest policy-making body of the United Nations, issued Resolution 54/93 on 7 December 1999 to convene a Special Session on Children to be held on 19-21 September 2001 in New York, USA.

The resolution comprises 22 paragraphs that outline the Special Session and the process running up to it.

Why have a Special Session on Children?

The resolution states that the purpose of the Special Session is to review the achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children. Furthermore, it calls for a renewed commitment for future action for children in the next decade, in the light of the resulting review of progress achieved since the World Summit for Children. It invites the participation of Heads of State and Governments in the Special Session.

How? – What is the Process?

The resolution emphasises the importance of establishing a participatory process at national, regional and international levels and encourages partnerships between a wide range of

stakeholders, including children and young people, so that momentum required to take forward children's rights and needs will be achieved. It also sets up the process of an open-ended Preparatory Committee comprising member state representatives, so that organisational issues can be addressed (including the participation of a broad range of actors, agenda setting and preparing for the outcome of the Special Session itself).

Who should Participate?

The resolution encourages the full participation of member states and furthermore, invites Heads of States and Governments to assign personal representatives to the Preparatory Committee.

It requests that the Secretary-General, with support from UNICEF, provides regular and substantive input to the preparatory process as well as at the Special Session itself. This includes the preparation of a report outlining emerging issues for consideration at the first Preparatory Committee meeting.



Photo: Julio Echart / Save the Children



By this resolution, other organisations and bodies of the United Nations system are invited to actively participate in the preparations for the Special Session and it requests that a co-ordinated response resulting from this wider participation is provided to the Special Session. Furthermore, it invites the Committee on the Rights of the Child to provide its input to the preparatory process and at the Special Session itself.

In addition, the resolution also invites other relevant experts to participate in the preparatory process, such as the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and other relevant actors in the implementation of the Plan of Action, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This is particularly important from the NGO perspective, as the importance of their active involvement in the preparatory process is formally emphasised.

How to Participate in the Special Session

The resolution broadly outlines key ways in which stakeholders can participate in the Special Session and the preparatory process. This includes the following. Governments and other relevant organisations, particularly UNICEF, are invited to undertake progress reviews since the World Summit for Children and are encouraged to develop preparatory activities at national, regional and international levels. This will contribute to the preparations for the Special Session and will also facilitate partnerships for and with children.

The resolution reiterates its request for the Secretary-General to submit a review of the implementation and results of the World Declaration and Plan of Action. This should emphasise best practice and problems encountered during the implementation phase. To ensure an even broader range of stakeholders involved in the process, States members of specialised agencies that are not members of the UN are invited to participate in the Special Session process as observers.

Equality in Participation

The importance of full participation of least developed countries in the Special Session process was recognised and in order to support the attendance of such countries, it was recommended that Governments be invited to make contributions to a trust fund with this purpose in mind.

Assistance in Implementation

The resolution requests that the Secretary-General assists national Governments in their assessment of, and reporting on, the implementation of the World Summit for Children Plan of Action, if they request such support.

Information and Communications/Documentation

The Secretary-General is also requested to work closely with UNICEF to mount a public information campaign so that awareness of children's needs and rights and the Special Session itself are heightened. Governments are encouraged to do this on a national basis.

Adapted from: Special Session of the General Assembly in 2001 for follow-up to the World Summit for Children, Resolution 54/93, adopted by the General Assembly on 7 December 1999. [A/RES/54/93, dated 17 December 1999]

[Source: www.unicef.org/specialsession/document.html]



A critical review of the Special Session

What's the point of attending the Special Session? Philip Veerman poses some searching questions.

Nearly 200 world leaders and a staggering 3,683 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are invited to participate in New York in the United Nations Special Session of the General Assembly on Children in September. The purpose is to reconfirm a global commitment to children at the onset of the new millennium. However, whilst the Special Session might bring together Heads of State and NGOs and will undoubtedly be accompanied by a storm of publicity and photo opportunities, the question is, what will it actually do to promote children's rights?

Will it bring about the 'momentous shift in national investments for child survival and development' called for by UNICEF's Executive Director, Carol Bellamy? Will it bring about more commitments by governments and reconfirmation of previous yet unmet commitments and put children higher on the political agenda?

It doesn't look like either will happen.

The political will seems to be lacking to use this General Assembly Special Session to change course and to announce major commitments. This might include rich countries giving debt relief to poor countries. Jan Vandemoortele, formerly a chief policy analyst of UNICEF, now working for UNDP, wrote that 'if the world were to invest an extra 30 cents out of

every \$100, then all children could be healthy, well-nourished and in primary school' (CRIN Newsletter 13, pp 30, November 2000).

By the end of May flurries of preparatory meetings had resulted in a second revised draft Outcome Document for the September meeting. The document, ambitiously titled 'A World Fit for Children', which is now being presented to diplomats and NGOs, is full of nice words but makes little mention of government responsibility. The document states, for example, that 'access to education is a human right' but does not mention a commitment to public education. This thereby provides an escape clause for governments. And it is worth noting that 113 million children (most of them girls) are currently out of school.

The document also calls upon the nations of the world to 'put children first' and states that "In all undertakings, the best interests of the child shall always be our primary consideration".



Photo: Paternella Platense / Save the Children



My organisation, Defence for Children International, actively participated in the drafting of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Since it was adopted in 1989, this human rights treaty on children has been ratified by all countries in the world except Somalia, which lacked a central government to do so, and the United States. During the drafting process (and for good reason) we never asked to 'put children first' but simply that the rights of the child be taken no less seriously than those of other human beings.

The Convention took ten years to finalise and the individuals that drafted it succeeded in establishing a human rights approach for children and marked the end of a mainly charity-based approach to children's issues.

The second revised draft Outcome Document, which was released 17 May, is a weak text that hardly mentions the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In fact, in some ways it is weaker than its previous version because the number of references to the Convention on the Rights of the Child has actually been reduced. The rights perspective has not been strengthened; and it is expected that many members of the Child Rights Caucus will be disappointed with this version of the document.

Furthermore, the second revised draft Outcome Document almost completely bypasses a very urgent problem: the number of children in prisons, reform schools and remand homes is growing at an appalling rate and the pendulum has swung back to a 'punishment' approach, not the needed rehabilitation approach.

There are reasons to worry that the Special Session will not meet its mark. In May the government of the United States discussed the document with UNICEF. This seems to be an embarrassing attempt to weaken the text even further.

The second revised draft Outcome Document is elaborately decorated with well-turned phrases, but lacks substance.

Twelve years after the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted, we live in a world where:

- 30 million infants receive no immunisation and 11 million die annually from preventable causes;
- 200 million children are malnourished;
- 250 million children (between five and 14) are 'economically active'; and,
- 50-60 million children are engaged in intolerable forms of child labour (300,000 of them being child-soldiers).

This late in the game, can things still be corrected? Can the outcome from the Special Session on Children be improved? The Third Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee held in June is the last preparatory meeting before the world leaders finally meet in New York in September. NGOs will continue to push for a more rights-based approach at these meetings, but to date most of the alternative text for the revised Outcome Document seems to be ignored.

All of this raises one critical question that we must ask ourselves: why be involved in such a costly event when the outcome seems scandalously low?

Dr. Philip Veerman is the president of Defence for Children International (DCI), an independent NGO set up during the International Year of the Child (1979) to ensure on-going, practical, systematic and concerted international action particularly directed towards promoting and protecting the rights of the child.

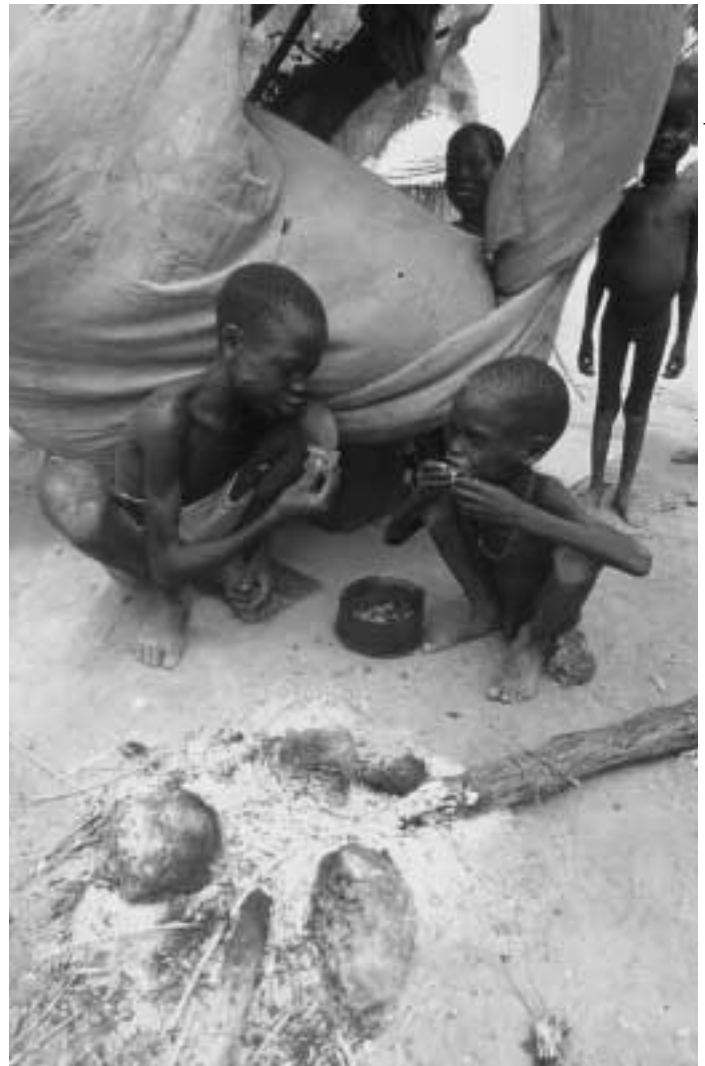


Photo: Neil Cooper / Save the Children



Factfile

What has happened in the ten years since the World Summit for Children?

Photo: Mike Godwater / Network



In the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children (WSC) 1990, targets to improve the well being of children worldwide were established. The question to consider now is whether the last decade has seen significant progress in the achievement of these goals.

Some progress has certainly been made, although there is also evidence of significant shortfalls. Generally speaking, following both the WSC and the adoption of Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), children are now higher than ever before on public and political agendas. After the World Summit, for example, 155 countries developed national programmes of action (NPAs) aimed at implementing the Summit goals. There has been significant follow-up that has been comprehensively monitored by a variety of agencies, including UNICEF.

Furthermore, there is increased awareness and commitment to child rights with the success of the Convention. This has included significant new international standards in such areas as child labour, children in armed conflict and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in promoting implementation of the Convention must also be noted.

In more specific terms the following progress has been made.

- Peri-natal mortality has significantly decreased
- Two-thirds of neo-tetanus deaths have been prevented
- Polio has been almost completely eradicated
- Use of Oral Rehydration Therapy is now wide-spread
- The use of Vitamin A supplements and salt iodisation has increased

However, during the last decade, various factors have worsened the situation for children. These have included the HIV/AIDS pandemic, political instability and armed conflict, debt, social exclusion and insufficient development assistance. The persistence of poverty in particular is a major barrier to the achievement of the World Summit goals. The statistics are daunting: only one-third of low-income countries achieved the major goals of the World Declaration and Plan of Action for Children. A summary of gains and unfinished business in achieving the major goals is shown in Box I.

With the Special Session for Children in September 2001 comes an opportunity for the international child rights community: an opportunity not only to review progress achieved since the 1990 World Summit, but also to make a renewed commitment to the children of the world.

Issues previously excluded from the agenda, such as the right of the child to participate, will need to be supported. Issues requiring a clearer mandate, such as child protection and the rights of children in difficult circumstances, will be better articulated.

The process will benefit from the recognition of the need for clearer targets that will address all situations children endure today. Building on past experience, the UN Special Session for Children should commit itself to developing a new global agenda for children, supported by renewed vigour and commitment from the international community to protect and nurture the children of the world.



Box 1: Meeting the seven major goals adopted by the World Summit for Children balance sheet

| Goal | Gains | Unfinished business |
|---|---|--|
| Infant and under-five mortality: <i>reduction by one third in infant mortality and U5MR</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 60 countries achieved the goal of U5MR. • At the global level U5MR declined by 14 percent. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U5MR rates increased in 14 countries (9 of them in sub-Saharan Africa) and were unchanged in 11 others. • Serious disparities remain in U5MR within countries: by income level, urban vs. rural, and among minority groups. |
| Malnutrition: <i>reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among under-5 children by half</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malnutrition declined by 17 percent in developing countries. South America achieved the goal with a 60 percent reduction in underweight prevalence over the decade. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 149 million children are still malnourished, two thirds of them in Asia. The absolute number of malnourished children has increased in Africa. |
| Maternal mortality: <i>reduction between 1990 and the year 2000 of the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) by half</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been heightened awareness of causes leading to high MMR, but little tangible progress. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence that maternal death rates have declined significantly over the last decade. • 515,000 women still die every year as a result of pregnancy and childbirth. A woman in sub-Saharan Africa faces a 1 in 13 chance of dying during pregnancy and childbirth. |
| Water: <i>universal access to safe drinking water</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 816 million additional people obtained access to improved water supplies over the decade. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some 1.1 billion people still lack access. Global coverage increased by only 3 percent, to 82 percent. • Water quality problems have grown more severe in a number of countries during the decade. • Coverage in low-income areas remains low, especially in informal settlements. |
| Universal access to basic education: <i>achievement of primary education by at least 80 percent of primary-school-age children</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net primary school enrolment has increased in all regions and reached 82 percent globally. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 100 million children of primary school age remain out of school, especially working children, children affected by HIV/AIDS, conflict and disability, children of the poor or ethnic minorities and rural children. |
| Adult literacy: <i>reduction of adult illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 rate, with special emphasis on female literacy</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult illiteracy has declined from 25 percent to 21 percent. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absolute number of illiterate adults has remained at about 880 million over the last decade worldwide, with numbers of illiterates increasing in most regions. • Illiteracy is increasingly concentrated among women, especially in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. |



Photo: Howard Davies / Save the Children

Adapted from:
 'We the Children'; End-decade review of follow-up to the World Summit for Children, Report of the Secretary-General (advance unedited copy)
 Presentation by Dr. Lincoln Chen, Deputy Executive Director of the Rockefeller Foundation - First Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly for Follow-Up to the World Summit for Children in 2001, 30 May 2000. Summaries of Panel discussions at the First Substantive Session - excerpt from the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly in 2001 for the Follow-up to the World Summit for Children on its First Substantive Session (A/55/43/(Part II)) Source: www.unicef.org/specialsession



'Say Yes for Children'

UNICEF reports on the launch of the Global Movement for Children

'Say Yes for Children' was the theme of rallies, parades, concerts and street theatre, TV and radio spots in April and May of this year, as local and national campaigns in more than 70 countries kicked off the Global Movement for Children. This is an international collaboration of governments, organisations and individuals committed to improving the lives of children everywhere.

This movement is represented by two international champions of human rights, Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel, who are reaching out to all leaders and sectors of society worldwide. It is the initiative of six organisations: the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Netaid.org Foundation, PLAN International, Save the Children, the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and World Vision.

The slogan, 'Say Yes for Children' was emblazoned on T-shirts and buttons as well as being printed in newspapers and on leaflets, all for the purpose of expanding and strengthening the circle of those who would change the way the world views and treats children. Activities are planned in at least two dozen other countries leading up to September's Special Session on Children in New York and will bring attention not only to the meeting but also to the conditions facing children and their families world-wide and to the ways they can be bettered.

With the 'Say Yes for Children' campaign, hundreds of thousands of people are signing pledge forms or voting in support of a child's rights to grow in health, peace and dignity. Voting takes place on the Movement's website (www.gmfc.org) where presidents and queens, government officials and celebrities, NGO leaders and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), parents, teachers, children and adolescents themselves are voting or signing pledge forms.

The pledge for children includes a list of ten imperatives or obligations to children, which are:

- Leave no child out;
- Put children first;
- Care for every child;
- Fight HIV/AIDS;
- Stop harming and exploiting children;
- Listen to children;
- Educate every child;

- Protect children from war;
- Protect the earth for children; and,
- Fight poverty by investing in children.

'Say Yes for Children' campaign has already had a significant impact and brought people from around the world together. In Mozambique in early April, film crews taped Nelson Mandela, Graça Machel and Kamo Masilo, a 12 year old South African boy, cast their pledge on the Global Movement for Children's website. This was a prelude to the official launch in London later that month. In Turkey, Mrs. Nane Annan, wife of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, heard child representatives from 41 countries from Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and Baltic States challenge countries to go beyond words and make the protection of children their number one priority. Mrs. Annan then signed the first pledge for that region. In Mexico City, thousands of children, young people and adults gathered at the largest children's museum to make their pledge, while in China, 'Say Yes to Children' was launched at a banquet in Beijing's Great Hall of the People.

Say Yes and the Special Session on Children

The 'Say Yes for Children' campaign is directly related to what happens in September at the Special Session for Children. The ten imperatives for action are core to the declaration of commitment found in 'A World Fit For Children', the document prepared for the Special Session through a series of regional consultations and preparatory committees. The tally of the 'Say Yes for Children' pledges, which come in through the website and on the printed forms will be presented to the delegates gathered at the Special Session. Since those signing the pledge also identify three issues that are most pressing in their country, the disaggregation of these opinions can provide a picture of public aspirations and will serve to inform decisions about policies and programmes.

Beyond the Special Session

But both the 'Say Yes for Children' campaign and the UN Special Session on Children are only the most immediate and most obvious aspects of the new Global Movement for Children. With its roots in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, this new Movement has taken on the challenge of transforming the world into a place where children are nurtured and protected and where each child is allowed to enjoy the fullness of their rights. While the Global Movement for Children is the initiative of six organisations, its collective force is a function of the work of hundreds of NGOs and other international organisations and thousands of individuals, all of whom are driven by their commitment to the rights of children.

UNICEF

For further information on the Global Movement for Children, please visit: www.gmfc.org or www.unicef.org or contact cwoods@unicef.org.

Photo: Giacomo Prozzi / UNICEF





Spotlight on child rights

The Child Rights Caucus is advocating for a child rights focus at the Special Session but, as Jo Becker reports, they can't afford to take the pressure off.

The Child Rights Caucus involves hundreds of national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) around the world that are committed to protecting and promoting the rights of children. The primary goal of the Caucus is to promote full implementation and compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to ensure that child rights are given priority during the Special Session on Children and its preparatory process.

Recognising that the 1990 World Summit on Children focused particularly on issues of survival and development, a focus of the Caucus has been to advocate on behalf of the full range of children's rights as expressed in the Convention. As part of this effort, one of the first activities of the Caucus was to formulate a 'Children's Rights Agenda for the Coming Decade'. This agenda was developed based on intensive discussions during the First Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee and e-mail consultations with organisations all around the world. The document puts forward key issues for priority consideration at the Special Session, together with specific recommendations for action. It was circulated prior to the Second Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee, having been formally endorsed by more than sixty

international and national organisations. Between the first and the second Preparatory Committee meetings, the Child Rights Caucus used this document and the basis for it, in discussions with UNICEF and government on the outcome being planned from the Special Session.

During the second Preparatory Committee meeting in early 2001, the Caucus wrote a position paper to provide a general comment on the first draft of the Outcome Document being considered by governments as the plan of action for children for the next decade. The position paper stressed that the Outcome Document should represent an action plan for the full implementation of the CRC and put forward a set of criteria for the document. It emphasised the need for an action focus, a restructured document, strengthened monitoring mechanisms and also identified significant gaps in the current text. The paper was the basis for an oral statement during a plenary and was distributed to government delegations.

The Caucus, in consultation with other caucuses, prepared an alternative Outcome Document text, in the form of a line-by-line edit of the draft Outcome Document. This text was

Photo: Simon Wood / Save the Children





Photo: Leah Gordon / Save the Children



intended to provide specific and detailed text in order to strengthen the final Outcome Document. It contrasts with the more general comments of the position paper.

The alternative text incorporated inputs from nearly every NGO caucus meeting during the second Preparatory Committee meeting (both thematic as well as regional caucuses) and more than seventy-five individual organisations. It expanded the goals of the document substantially, and identified five main priorities:

- eradication of child poverty;
- education;
- health and HIV/AIDS;
- protection from violence; and,
- participation.

It added text on issues that had not been adequately addressed by the initial draft and proposed language to strengthen monitoring mechanisms and stress the importance of linking the monitoring of Special Session commitments with the monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Members of the Caucus also formed a lobbying sub-group to identify NGO delegates on government delegations, identify and reach out to sympathetic delegations and share information about government positions and government statements.

Every evening during the second Preparatory Committee meeting, the Child Rights Caucus convened a Linkage Caucus, offering an opportunity for thematic and regional caucuses to share information with each other and present inputs to the Alternative Text. During the last few days of the Preparatory Committee meeting, youth delegates also used the Linkage Caucus to share conflicts and difficulties that had emerged within this group.

In the lead-up to the Third Preparatory Committee meeting (11-15 June 2001), the Caucus collected comments from its members on the revised draft Outcome Document issued by the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee in mid-March. These were used to produce a new position paper and alternative text, which were circulated to governments during the informal consultations held in New York from 1-3 May. The Caucus also held a briefing on the two documents for government missions to the UN on 15 May.

During the Third Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee, the Caucus further revised its alternative text and continued to coordinate the Linkage Caucus, so as to enable various caucuses to share information and strategies with each other. It also continued lobbying in favour of an outcome for the Special Session that will be firmly rooted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and which will facilitate its full implementation.

Jo Becker is a member of the co-ordinating group for the Child Rights Caucus and the advocacy director of the Children's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch.

The Caucus is currently coordinated by a co-ordinating group elected at the second Preparatory Committee meeting, which includes representatives from each region and two youth members. Its members are Ming Viado from Plan International (Asia); Benjy Francis, Africa Cultural Center (Africa); Horacio Lagarraga, Argentinian Society of Pediatrics (Latin America and the Caribbean); Youssef Hajar, Arab Resource Collective (Middle East/North Africa); Tom Burke (youth); Sabrina Bandali, (youth); Jo Becker, Human Rights Watch; and Bill Bell, Save the Children UK.

All Caucus documents mentioned are available on the CRIN Website at www.crin.org/specialsession



Child rights and small arms - keeping up the pressure

Christina Torsein discusses the opportunity offered by the UN Special Session on Children and the UN Conference on the 'Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects' to bridge the gap between the child rights and the small arms community.

"During the 1990s, more than two million children died as a result of armed conflict, more than three times that number were permanently disabled or seriously injured and some twenty million were displaced or became refugees" (Article 34, 'A World Fit for Children'. Revised draft text submitted by the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children, A/AC.256/CRP.6/Rev.1).

The impact of small arms proliferation is clear: children around the world are suffering devastating consequences because of conflict in their communities. This year, two specific events will address the impact of small arms proliferation on children. In July, the United Nations will be hosting a conference on the 'Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects' and then, in September, the UN will host the Special Session on Children. The UN 2001 conference, as the small arms conference is commonly referred to, will focus on the proliferation of small arms by addressing the issues of arms brokering and weapon marking, tracing and collection. In a similar light, the Special Session on Children, while discussing issues ranging from education, HIV/AIDS and violence against children also discusses war-affected children.

Both conferences mark a turning point in the areas of children's rights and small arms, as they present an opportunity for states to move forward with concrete action on these issues. Action is needed at every level – whether it is local programmes for children and their families, or regional or national legislation. In addition, the adoption of international agreements and conventions is fundamentally important to the protection of children. The past decade has seen significant advances in this area, such as the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the World Summit on Children; the publication of Graça Machel's groundbreaking study on the impact of armed conflict on children; and the development of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, which has yet to be ratified.

Photo: Howard Davies / Save the Children





There is now increased recognition that children suffer devastating consequences during war. The issue of child soldiers has also been the subject of much focus over the past few years. In recognition of this, the Canadian government hosted an International Conference on War-Affected Children in September 2000. Despite all the work that is being done on these issues, there still remains a lack of dialogue between the small arms and children's rights communities. Furthermore, governments themselves are only just starting to make the link between small arms and their impact on children. Governments and inter-governmental organisations are key actors, since they draw up legislation and implement policies affecting children, in addition to providing humanitarian and development aid.

The two UN conferences provide a forum for discussion for both government delegates and NGOs. They should be seen as the start of a process, rather than the end. Both have involved Preparatory Committee meetings in the run up to their main conferences and both have Programme of Action documents (the working documents produced in the preparations to the main conference). Yet it remains to be seen what the final outcome of both processes will be. Some think that the Special Session is not focusing enough attention on war-affected children. Others within the small arms community feel that the humanitarian impact of small arms is not being adequately addressed during their discussions.

'A World Fit for Children', the working document of the Special Session on Children, recognises the need to protect children from violence and conflict. It states that children have the right to be protected and that societies must ensure that no form of violence against children is ever considered acceptable. In addition, measures should be taken to protect children from violence as well as from the impact of armed conflict and forced displacement, whilst ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law. It argues that all countries should adopt legislation to protect children from violence, including eliminating the use of child soldiers and threats posed by war materials, (e.g. land mines) and curbing the illicit flow of small arms which victimise children. This calls for state action and recognises state responsibility in the protection of children.

Similarly, the UN 2001 Conference Programme of Action document discusses the humanitarian impact caused by the proliferation and misuse of small arms. During the third Preparatory Committee meeting, a number of states called for the preamble of the working document to recognise the impact of the proliferation of small arms on women and children and the threat this causes to human security. Both documents also call for respect of international humanitarian law.

NGOs have been involved in both processes, participating in the Preparatory Committee meetings, lobbying and campaigning, as well as preparing background papers for delegates. Civil society organisations have a recognised role to play in the conference processes as they set a progressive agenda and hold governments accountable to any commitments made. However, the documents that are agreed to at the conferences are not legally binding mechanisms thus raising questions surrounding states' commitments to the final documents.

Regardless of the conference outcomes, it is crucial that both governments and NGOs work together to bridge the gap in the work surrounding the UN 2001 Conference and the Special Session. Follow-up and implementation are key to both processes. The conferences themselves should be seen as the beginning of new dialogue and as an opportunity for further policymaking and agenda setting.

There are review conferences planned for both processes. With this regard, it is key that states keep the issues of war-affected children and the impact of small arms proliferation on children high on their policy agendas.

Christina Torsein is an analyst at the British American Security Information Council (BASIC). For further information on the UN 2001 Conference please visit the IANSA website at www.iansa.org. BASIC, in collaboration with International Alert and Saferworld, is producing a series of briefing papers for the UN 2001 Conference – known as the 'Biting the Bullet' project. See www.basicint.org. One of these briefings, to be published in July for the UN 2001 Conference, is on building a framework for international action to address the impact of small arms on children.



Regional preparations for the UN Special Session

'Making an arab world fit for children' - The Arab Resource Collective presents regional preparations for the Middle East and North Africa region for the Special Session.

A requirement of the United Nations Special Session on Children, as stated by the General Assembly (Resolution 54/93) is that regional reviews regarding progress made for children since the World Summit for Children are prepared. In accordance with this, the Arab world, along with other regions world wide, has held a series of regional preparatory events as part of the Special Session process.

The first of such regional events was a 'Youth Forum on 21st Century Issues', Amman, Jordan, 29 October to 1 November 2000. This forum brought together over 120 young people from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to participate in discussions concerning the Global Movement for Children. From this, a 'Call for Action' on youth issues in the region was prepared.

This was followed by the 'Civil Society Organizations' Forum on Childhood; Rabat, 12 to 16 February 2001. The main objectives of this event were to:

1. take stock of the Arab/MENA region's achievements for children during the 1990s;
2. examine issues related to children's development;
3. develop frameworks, set priorities and identify mechanisms for improving the state of children in Arab countries; and to,
4. expand the circle of partners involved in children's issues and develop a framework for future cooperation.

The outcomes from this meeting were 'The Rabat Declaration' and the Rabat Forum Recommendations, outlining how to improve the rights and well being of children in the Arab World.

At the following 'Regional Symposium on Childhood', Beirut, Lebanon, 24 to 27 April 2001, a 'formal gathering' of Arab Governments and the NGO sector met and produced the Outcome Document 'Trends Towards an Arab World Fit for Children' and 'The Beirut Recommendations'. These will form part of the regional recommendations from the Arab World and will be discussed and revised in a 'High Level Arab Conference' in Cairo in July 2001. The outcomes from this event will then feed directly into the Special Session meeting in September 2001.

To the Arab child rights community and, indeed, to the Special Session process itself, it is very important that preparatory activities occurring at the regional level are linked to those at the international level. This is primarily because of:

- the effect to date of the Arab discourse on children's rights;
- the active participation of the Arab World in this international process; and,
- the Arab contribution to developing a future agenda for children.

The Arab Resource Collective (ARC) has been particularly active linking preparatory activities at the regional and international levels. ARC held a regional workshop from May 31 and June 3, 2001 the objective of which was to increase collaboration with partners in childhood programmes and to contribute to the establishment of the new global agenda for children, particularly its manifestations in the Arab region.

Participants at the ARC workshop discussed the following documents: the revised draft Outcome Document for the Special Session on Children; the alternative text prepared by the Child Rights Caucus; the Rabat Recommendations and the Beirut Recommendations. In addition, ARC drafted recommendations, to be taken to the third Preparatory Committee meeting in New York. The participants of this workshop came from five Arab countries, Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, and Yemen. Many of these will have already participated in the previous two Preparatory Committee meetings as well as the Rabat Forum and the Beirut Symposium.

In addition to the opportunity provided by the Special Session to contribute to a reaffirmed commitment to children, many new partnerships and alliances can be formed, as child rights organisations world wide come out in force. For example, on their return from the second Preparatory Committee meeting (February 2001), participants from Palestine decided to form the Palestine Child Rights Coalition. This alliance of NGOs has now invited other NGOs, which are active in advocacy and support the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to join the coalition. Furthermore, on a regional level, through its participation in regional fora, the Arab World has been able to articulate the needs and requirements of children and societies in its region, which will be fed into the Special Session and the development of a new global agenda for children.

The Arab Resource Collective (ARC) is an NGO supporting children in the Arab World. For further information on the Palestine Child Rights Coalition, please contact Ms. Assia Habash at amanikmi@p-ol.com



Photo: Peter Fryer / Save the Children



Regional preparations for the UN Special Session

Preparations of Central and Eastern Europe the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States for the UN Special Session on Children.



Photo: Howard Davies / Save the Children

In the run-up to the UN Special Session on Children, all sorts of preparations are taking place at national, regional and international levels. Child-rights focused organisations throughout the world are finalising regional statements, commenting on the draft Outcome Document, 'A World Fit for Children' and attending conferences and meetings in preparation for this key global event.

In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the Baltics and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), civil society has participated in a series of NGO consultations. At the national level, the reports from the 'Civil Society – To Russia's Children' conference and the National Civil Society Conference 'Change the World with Children' in Ukraine both list a series of action points for the improvement of the welfare of children in the region. It is hoped that these national civil society experiences will contribute to the new Global Agenda for Children, to be adopted by the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children in September 2001.

At the regional level, several key events have taken place to support consultations between different Civil Society actors. These are as follows.

The Regional Consultation of Civil Society Organisations - Bucharest, Romania, 8 to 10 April 2001. At this event, a new agenda for children and key documents were drafted, including

a regional vision paper, 'A Region Fit for Children' and an open letter, which was later presented to the delegates of the inter-governmental conference in Berlin. 'A Region Fit for Children' is a clear call to action in a number of key areas, arguing that the rights of more than 120 million children and young people are fundamental to the future development of these new and emerging democracies. The Open Letter to Berlin represents the call of civil society to the government leaders meeting in Berlin, providing a concise overview of the most urgent priorities for children in the region.

Towards a Young People's Agenda for Europe and Central Asia – Budapest, Hungary, 23 to 29 April 2001. This conference of young people from all over Europe and Central Asia developed a new agenda, successfully fostered solidarity amongst the young people and prepared recommendations to submit to the Berlin Intergovernmental Conference. Also in the form of an open letter, this added the perspectives of the young participants to the process.

Children's Day Celebration – Istanbul, Turkey, 2 April 2001. This event brought children from 41 countries together to discuss child rights and priorities for action over the next decade. With Mrs. Nane Annan, wife of the UN General Secretary in attendance, it also acted as the regional launch of the 'Say Yes for Children' campaign, mobilising the Global Movement for Children in this region.



Conference of CIS Member States on the preparation for the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children, Minsk, 26 to 27 April 2001. The conference outputs include the Concluding Document of the Conference of CIS Member States, which formalised participants' areas of key focus for the well being of children in their region.

Conference on Children in Europe and Central Asia, Berlin, Germany, 16 to 18 May 2001. Participants discussed summaries of the End-Decade Reviews of progress for children in the region as well as new challenges for children in the next decade. It also considered proposals from NGOs and young people. The Statement of Berlin and a new agenda for children were developed, which will feed into the Special Session.

Generation in Jeopardy conference – Stockholm, Sweden, 18 to 20 June 2001. This conference reviewed trends and issues facing children in the region and strengthened alliances concerned with the situation of children. It produced The Stockholm Statement for the UN Special Session.

Finally, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has given their approval to a political statement for the Special Session. This statement reaffirms the commitment of the governments to the principles agreed to at the World Summit

for Children on September 30, 1990 and, recognises the importance of the standards enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, it re-commits them to comply with its implementation. The statement outlines how they will work for the protection and well being of children through focusing on protecting the rights of the child, promoting a child-friendly society, promoting the status of the child in the actions of the future Council of Europe and through the development of a common agenda for children.

The importance of regional preparations for the forthcoming UN Special Session on Children cannot be over-emphasised. It is only through these that the perspectives and voices of all representatives will be heard and taken into account and ultimately, be incorporated in the new global agenda for children in the next decade.

CRIN would like to acknowledge contribution and support from Robert Cohen, communications officer for UNICEF – CEE/CIS and the Baltic States Region.

Photo: Antonia Reeve / Save the Children





Breaking down the barriers.

There are a lot of benefits involved in preparing for the Special Session. Graeme Thompson discusses the learning curve experienced by PLAN International

PLAN International recognises the responsibility of NGOs and civil society to get involved in the Special Session on Children so as to support practical and urgent commitments to improvements in the lives of children and young people worldwide. Since most of PLAN's programmes directly touch on issues outlined in the World Summit Goals from 1990, PLAN has a keen and vested interest to participate in global decision-making that will affect children in the future.

As a grassroots organisation working in 100,000 communities in 58 countries around the world, PLAN's objectives for the preparatory meetings leading up to the Special Session are to bring the voices of children and their communities to the global forum. In so doing, PLAN hopes to ensure that important issues at the field level are taken into account by governments at the Special Session. PLAN also wants to influence the Outcome Document of the Special Session 'A World Fit for Children', which will inform children's development at national, regional and global levels in the coming decade.

PLAN believes that the participation of NGOs and children themselves in national, regional and global meetings is an important step forward in promoting better policies and programmes for children. The process behind the forthcoming Special Session has led the way in this respect. PLAN's involvement in the Special Session has been three-fold.

1. Representative participation at significant fora, including interaction through the Internet
2. Promotion of field-level experience at the global level and dissemination of global policy back to the field
3. Networking with partners and lobbying governments at home to influence child-focused development

PLAN is participating and facilitating NGO and civil society participation in a number of events related to the Special Session. To date these include two meetings of the Preparatory Committee of the Special Session and a range of regional meetings in Jamaica, Thailand, China, Kenya, Cairo, and Lusaka.

As previously mentioned, PLAN made a conscious decision to bring field-level staff and NGO partners, as well as children, to these meetings so that global policy work in New York would be taken back to the field. Children's participation was facilitated by both the Internet and their physical attendance at regional meetings. This is an important aspect of PLAN's work regarding the Special Session, since it aims to promote children's participation in development decision-making and children's self-expression, this being a key value of the organisation.

PLAN produced promotional materials built around the concept 'If I tell you, will you listen?' in order to bring children's perspectives and experiences of development into the process. Additionally, PLAN has also promised to share information and experiences from global fora with the field level. To date, PLAN has distributed materials from all the Preparatory Committee meetings, the latest including CDs in three languages with video-bites of government interventions and information about the Global Movement for Children, for children to listen to and act on.

Partnership has been another key to PLAN's successful experience at the Preparatory Committee meetings so far. Bringing field staff and NGO partners from all regions of the world to New York has strengthened relationships with partners, governments and other agencies in the field. Starting with its network of countries, and partner organisations, PLAN has supported colleague-organisations and local platforms to widen the Civil Society base and in so doing, has increased the commitment to children's rights and the Global Movement for Children. In addition, PLAN has proved its worth to other child-focused organisations as a committed long-term promoter of children's well-being, bringing ideas based on practical experiences at the grassroots level to the international debate on child rights.

PLAN has greatly benefited from participation in the Caucus meetings at the Preparatory Committee meetings, which were of particular value to PLAN's regional representatives. PLAN has also been able to strengthen partnerships with many international agencies in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

In conclusion, it seems clear that while NGOs are playing increasing roles in community-based development, there are still many governments which do not recognise them as equal partners. Drawing from PLAN's experience, it would seem that the Special Session process has gone some way to breaking down these barriers, at least in Asia and Central America. However, much still remains to be done to bring governments and civil society actors together to forge a better future for the world's children.

Graeme Thompson is the public relations and communications co-ordinator at PLAN International for the Caribbean and Central America region.



A decade fit for adolescents

Jessica Nott outlines the work of the International Planned Parenthood Federation to encourage greater attention on the sexual and reproductive health rights of children and young people in the Special Session.

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is the world's largest voluntary organisation in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights. IPPF works globally to ensure that the sexual and reproductive health, choices and rights of men, women and young people are firmly placed on the international agenda. We are doing this through active involvement in preparations for the Special Session on Children and the Special Session on HIV/AIDS to be held in June 2001.

IPPF has also been involved in a number of other United Nations conferences including the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and their 5 year reviews.

For the Special Session on Children, IPPF is working hard to lobby for young people's sexual and reproductive health to be included in the final Outcome Document to be endorsed by heads of state in September. As supporters and implementers of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child we are active members of the Child Rights Caucus and will be inputting recommendations on sexual and reproductive health and rights through this body. IPPF colleagues participated at the second Preparatory Committee meeting for the Special Session in January 2001 and will continue to be part of this process. Many of our 139 member Family Planning Associations (FPAs) and our regional offices are involved in preparations for the Special Session. IPPF has been focusing on three main concerns.

1. Highlighting the sexual and reproductive health and rights issues affecting children and young people
2. Campaigning for greater recognition of adolescents in the Outcome Document
3. Ensuring the active participation of children in the consultative process

Photo: Leah Gordon / Save the Children





Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

It is essential that the sexual and reproductive rights of children and young people, including their access to education and information, are recognised and acknowledged. IPPF, together with a coalition of other sexual and reproductive rights organisations, is campaigning to ensure that sexual and reproductive health issues are given due consideration in the Outcome Document.

IPPF calls on the Special Session to recognise the rights of all young people to:

1. comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and education to enable them to make informed choices;
2. accessible, youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, including contraceptives;
3. participate in identifying their sexual and reproductive health needs, in making decisions and in influencing processes that affect their lives.

Adolescent Campaign

IPPF is spearheading a campaign to ensure that the needs of adolescents are not overlooked in the Outcome Document and discussions at the Special Session on Children. Unfortunately, the current version of the Outcome Document 'A World Fit for Children' for the Special Session does not do justice to the situation of more than one billion adolescents around the world.

Particularly worrying is the lack of an explicit goal focusing on adolescent development and health. Therefore there is nothing in the document that provides vision and legitimacy for overall policies and programmes with and for adolescents and young people.

The Participation of Children and Young People

IPPF's positive philosophy aims to empower young people and it is essential that children and young people are given the space, opportunities and support to enable them to participate in key decision-making. Since 1999, 20 percent of the members of IPPF's highest decision-making body, the Governing Council, have been young people under the age of 25 years. IPPF has created the impetus for a dynamic network of young people, working on sexual and reproductive health issues at the grassroots, to feed their views into policy decisions at the family planning association, regional and international level.

At the second Preparatory Committee meeting for the Special Session, IPPF were involved in facilitating the participation of children. Sadly, at that meeting the youth caucus became the battleground for extreme conservative and religious groups

aiming to undermine the gains made at United Nations Conferences in the 1990s. Their objective was not only to attack the child rights agenda but also to discredit the process of children's participation in the meeting. It is crucial that IPPF together with key partners continues its efforts to ensure that children are able to meaningfully participate in the Special Session processes.

Nyantara Kakshapati is an active member of the family planning association of Nepal's youth group and is on IPPF's South Asia Regional Council as well as its Governing Council. As a member of the UNICEF Youth Advisory Group she had this to say about youth participation:

"It was encouraging to see children and young people milling the halls at the UN building and taking part in the on-going activities of the second Preparatory Committee meeting for the Special Session on Children. A handful of government delegations had children and young people on board - an inspiring beginning... Hopefully more (and eventually all!) governments will allow children and young people to participate as official delegates... Youthful idealism maybe, but what will become of this world without some hope?!"

Now we are working with partners including UNICEF, Save the Children, World Vision and Peace Child International to ensure that effective children's participation is not only a key consideration in the Outcome Document but is also put into practice at the Special Session as it was at the third Preparatory Committee meeting in June. As well as consulting with our wide network of FPAs working in over 180 countries, we will be facilitating a consultation with young people on our interactive 'youth shakers' website managed by young people.

Jessica Nott is the assistant technical officer for Youth at the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

For further information visit www.ippf.org where you can sign up to support the IPPF youth manifesto (see www.ippf.org/youth/manifesto) and www.youthshakers.org



Listening to young voices

Clare Feinstein discusses how the participation of children and young people is shaping the Special Session on Children.

“We make up 50 percent of the world’s population and we deserve to be heard”. This was the exhortation made by children and young people attending a preparatory workshop held in New York on 26 to 27 January 2001 before the second Preparatory Committee meeting for the Special Session on Children. Part of a wider message to the world community, it urges adults to listen to meaningful ideas from children about how to address children’s rights.

This is a plea for a greater insight and acceptance of the vital role children and young people can (and do) play in shaping their futures and those of their communities and nations. It will undoubtedly be echoed in countries and regions around the world in the run-up to the Special Session.

In resolution 54/93 of the General Assembly, the participation of children and adolescents was recognised as being essential to the process leading up to the Special Session. UNICEF is currently working with a wide range of partners, including NGOs and young people, to identify the most effective and meaningful way for children and young people to participate in the process leading up to, and beyond, the Special Session. The emphasis is on the national and regional levels, which are closer to children and young people’s everyday reality. Governments and NGOs are being encouraged to involve children and young people both in their review of the implementation of the goals of the World Summit for Children and as members of their delegations.

To ensure that the voices of children and young people are an integral part of both preparations for the Special Session and the conference itself, a diverse assortment of initiatives are planned at national, regional and international levels worldwide. These are directly linked to a continual process to promote children and young people’s participation and an awareness of their rights around the world. The hope is that the Special Session will provide an impetus to long-term efforts to promote children’s participation in decision-making processes and will make progress towards respecting children as equal citizens. Some of these consultations with children and young people are mapped out below.

A high-level regional meeting, hosted by the government of Nepal, was recently held between children and young people, corporate leaders and governments of South Asia. ‘Change Makers for South Asia’ focused on children and macroeconomics and engaged children’s representatives from eight South Asian countries in a dialogue on investment in children with corporate leaders and Government Finance Planners.

In Zimbabwe, a Special Session report, based on research carried out by a group of children aged between 11-18 years, is being published to reflect the opinions of a wide variety of children from different backgrounds. It emphasises giving voice to more marginalised children who seldom have the opportunity to discuss issues that concern them.

Photo: Neil Cooper and Jan Hammond / Save the Children





In Canada, a nationwide consultation with children and young people is being organised via youth-led discussion groups, the results of which will be presented at the Special Session by the Canadian government. Again, this emphasises reaching out to marginal groups, such as minority children, children with disabilities, recent immigrants and children in care.

In Serbia, a series of complementary activities involving children and young people to identify their key issues is planned, including inter-city exchanges between secondary schools, workshops and a Children's Rights Festival 'Listen to Us!' which incorporates children's rights messages as defined by children and young people themselves.

In Nicaragua, extensive consultations have been held with adults, children and adolescents around the revised Outcome Document, 'A World Fit for Children'. Around 1,800 children and adolescents will have been involved in this consultation, which will culminate in national-level discussions to develop a national consensus regarding the Special Session on Children.

In Vietnam, children are engaging with decision-makers to enable them to develop a better understanding of the situation of nation's children.

At the international level, children and young people gathered in New York for the second Preparatory Committee meeting. Most were members of NGO delegations and they were a notable presence in the meeting. Their voices were heard in the formal proceedings and through participation in NGO caucuses and other events. They also had responsibilities as members of their NGO and government delegations.

However, the second Preparatory Committee meeting presented challenges regarding children and young people's participation and there are still many issues to address. Therefore, the following conditions are required to ensure the meaningful participation of children and young people at international events. It is important to:

- provide a comprehensive briefing of the issues for consideration in preparation for the situation children and young people are about to enter;
- provide information in a reader and child-friendly format;
- make translation available at all times;
- provide financial and practical support to facilitate their attendance at meetings; and,
- create space where children and young people can share and exchange experiences and information.



Photo: Howard Davies / Save the Children

At international meetings, the adult participants should accord child and youth delegates the same status and respect they expect themselves. Adults play a key role in both informing young delegates how to participate and ensuring that their participation is fully supported.

The importance of children's participation – the fact that their perspectives are a valuable resource that enriches discussions and decision-making at all levels – is by no means universally accepted. Only when it is finally recognised that children and young people are valuable partners in our common search for action-oriented goals, will our shared commitment to making a real, positive and lasting impact on the lives of children become a reality.

Clare Feinstein is the participation co-ordinator for the Special Session at the International Save the Children Alliance.



Publications

*Further documents and resources relating to the Special Session can be found at:
www.crin.org/specialsession and www.unicef.org/specialsession*

Key Documents for the UN Special Session on Children

UNICEF (May 2001), 'We the Children' - end-decade review of follow-up to the World Summit for Children - Unedited Advance Copy, UNICEF
From the Internet: www.unicef.org/specialsession/review.htm

UNICEF (May 2001) Second Revised Draft Outcome Document 'A World Fit for Children' UNICEF. From the Internet: www.unicef.org/specialsession/draftoutcome-rev2-16may.pdf

The Child Rights Caucus (May 2001) 'A World Fit for Children' – Alternative Text prepared by the Child Rights Caucus for Third Substantive Session of The Preparatory Committee for The Special Session UN General Assembly on Children 11-15 June 2001 (May 2001), Child Rights Caucus.
From the Internet:
www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/Alt_txt_May22_01.pdf

The Child Rights Caucus (October 2000) 'Child Rights Agenda for the Coming Decade' Statement of the Child Rights Caucus for the 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children.
From the Internet:
www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/child_rights_agenda.pdf

Save the Children UK (April 2001) 'A World Fit for Children' - Child-friendly Version of Revised Draft Outcome Document.
From the Internet:
www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/may17cfd.pdf

Regional Consultation Documents for the UN Special Session on Children

A Region Fit for Children. – Civil society organisations' vision for children in Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltics Region. Global Movement for Children – text from the Regional Consultation of Civil Society Organisations held in Bucharest, Romania, 8-10 April 2001. From the Internet:
www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=1667

'A World Fit for and by Children' - Our point of view as African working children, African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY).
From the Internet: www.enda.sn/eja/amwcyonungass.htm

NGOs comments on the Issues Paper 'A Region Fit For Children' – Vision of the Movement in the Interests of Children. Save the Children Tajikistan and UNICEF Tajikistan (2001)

Documento de Kingston - documento elaborado por los adolescentes y jóvenes participantes de la V Reunión

Ministerial en Kingston Latin America and Caribbean Caucus for the 2001 UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (2001)
From the Internet:
www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=1584

Posición del Caucus Regional de América Latina y El Caribe en relación al documento final provisional. Un mundo apropiado para la Infancia. (Febrero 2001). Latin America and Caribbean Caucus for the 2001 UN General Assembly Special
From the Internet:
www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/document del caucus.pdf

Propuesta de las organizaciones no gubernamentales a la agenda futura en el marco de la V reunión ministerial sobre niñas y política social en las Americas (2001)
Latin America and Caribbean Caucus for the 2001 UN General Assembly Special Session on Children. From the Internet:
www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/propuesta_ONGS.pdf

Background Documents to the UN Special Session on Children

Statement at the Second Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (30th January 2001): presented by Dr. Paulinus L.N. Sikosana, Head of Delegation for Zimbabwe
From the Internet:
www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/session2_Zimbabwe.pdf

Statement at the Second Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (30th January 2001) presented by Mrs Veena S. Rao, Joint Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India.
From the Internet:
www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/session2_India.pdf

Statement at the Second Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (30th January 2001). Intervention by the Pakistan Delegation.
From the Internet:
www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/session2_Pakistan.pdf

UNICEF (April 2001) Newsletter on the UN Special Session on Children
From the Internet:
www.unicef.org/specialsession/Newsletter_No1_ENGL.pdf



Children and Armed Conflict Caucus (January 2001) Oral Statement at Second PrepCom from Children and Armed Conflict Caucus

From the Internet:

www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/children_armed_conflict_statement.pdf

**Background Documents available from
www.unicef.org/specialsession**

Convention on the Rights of the Child - Resolution 44/25 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 September 1989 (A/RES/44/25)

World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and Plan of Action: World Summit for Children, 30 September 1990

Special Session of the General Assembly in 2001 for follow-up to the World Summit for Children, Resolution 54/93 adopted by the General Assembly on 7 December 1999 (A/RES/54/93, dated 17 December 1999)

Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on 25 May 2000, in Resolution 54/263: Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict; Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography



Membership form

Please photocopy and return to CRIN

Name of organisation _____

Acronym/abbreviation _____ Year established _____

English translation of name of organisation _____

Name of director _____

Name of main CRIN contact in your organisation _____

Postal address (include country) _____

Tel (include country codes) _____ Fax (include country codes) _____

Email _____ Website _____

Number of staff _____

Languages used _____

Does your organisation have capacity to receive email regularly? _____

Does your organisation have capacity to visit websites regularly? _____

Number of CRIN Newsletters required in English, French and/or Spanish _____

Please give a short description of your organisation's aims and activities
(please continue on a separate sheet, if necessary)

List countries in which your organisation works
(please continue on a separate sheet, if necessary)

Please tick the appropriate box

How do you describe your organisation?

- Non governmental organisation (NGO)
- United Nations agency
- Community based organisation
- Research institute
- International organisation
- Governmental organisation

Does your organisation?

- Work directly with children
- Lobby governments and the United Nations
- Work in partnership with other organisations
- Provide training on children's rights
- Provide funding to other organisations
- Undertake research on children's rights
- Work with the media and press
- Undertake legal casework on behalf of children

Which age group does your organisation target?

- Children 0-4
- Children 5-15
- Children 16-18

Does your organisation have expertise in any of the following themes?

- Children in care, fostering and adoption
- Children living with HIV/AIDS
- Child labour and working children
- Individual cases of violations
- Children in armed conflict
- Children in conflict with the law
- Reporting and monitoring on the CRC
- Children and the media
- Children with disabilities
- Participation of children in decision making
- Children and education
- Refugee and unaccompanied children
- Environment and habitat
- Sexual exploitation of children
- Children and health
- Children working and living on the street

Signature _____ Date _____

Please return this completed form along with any relevant publications, newsletters, annual reports and brochures to:
Child Rights Information Network, c/o Save the Children, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD, UK
Tel +44.(0)20.7716.2400 Fax +44.(0)20.7793.7628 Email info@crin.org



CRIN
CHILD RIGHTS INFORMATION NETWORK

Joining CRIN is free. CRIN's membership policy requires that you (1) work for an organisation that supports the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (2) are involved in child rights activities, (3) are committed to sharing information. CRIN is an open network of members and therefore holds no official status beyond that of its member organisations. CRIN is unable to accredit any member organisation or provide funding for its members, unless funding is directly related to one of CRIN's projects approved by CRIN's management team.



Calendar of Events

Events for June – December 2001

June 20 to 24, 2001

6th International Conference for Health and Human Rights
Cavtat, Croatia
Ksenija Kontak, Organising Committee, Society for Psychological Assistance, Prilaz Gjure Dezelica 27, 1000 Zagreb, Croatia
T +385 1 48 26 111/ 112 F +385 1 48 26 113
E organiz@ishhr-conf-2001.org

June 25 to 27, 2001

UN Special Session on HIV/AIDS
New York, USA
UNAIDS, 20 Avenue Appia, Switzerland
T +41 22 791 4461 F +41 22 791 4165
E pascale@un.org

June 28 to 30, 2001

IV Child and Family Policy Conference - Children and Young People: Their Environments
Dunedin, New Zealand
Children's Issues Centre, University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand
T +64 3479 5038 F +64 3479 5039
E cic@otago.ac.nz or karen.nairn@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

July 15 to 20, 2001

OAU Summit - Children in Armed Conflict
Lusaka, Zambia
T +1 212 326 7000 E netmaster@unicef.org
W www.unicef.org

August 1 to 2, 2001

National Meeting with Children and Government Delegates
Vietnam
Save the Children Sweden - Vietnam Office, 6 Ton That Theip, Vietnam
T +84 4 8232393/4112 F +84 4 8232394
E rbhanoi@netnam.org.vn

August 18 to 22, 2001

Second International Conference on Children's Rights in Education: Creating a Culture of Human Rights, Democracy and Peace in the New Millennium
Victoria, Canada
Natasha Blanchet-Cohen, Coordinator, Child Rights Education - International, Centre for Global Studies, University of Victoria, B.C. Canada, V8W 2Y2
T +1 317 274 6805 F +1 317 274 6864
E credintl@iupui.edu

August 24 to 27, 2001

ISPCAN VIII European Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
Istanbul, Turkey
The Turkish Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

Contact: Professor Dr. Esin Konanc,
Chairperson, Local Organising Committee
T +90 212 230 00 00 F +90 212 248 40 30
E magister_pco@turk.net
W www.ispcan2001-istanbul.com

Or contact:
International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
Suite 500, 200 N, Michigan Avenue, Chicago IL 60601, USA
T +1 312 578 1401 F +1 312 578 1404
E ispcan@aol.com W www.ispcan.org

August 31 to 7 September 2001

The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance
South Africa
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, OHCHR-UNOG, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
T +41-22 917-9000 F +41-22 917-9016
W www.unhchr.ch

September 19 to 21, 2001

United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children
New York, USA
Secretariat for the Special Session on Children, UNICEF House, 3 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA
T + 212-963-4475 F 212-963-0071
E inquiries@un.org W www.un.org or www.unicef.org/specialsession

24 September to 12 October 2001

28th Session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child,
Geneva, Switzerland
State party reports being considered: Cameroon, Cape Verde, Gambia, Kenya, Mauritania, Qatar, Paraguay, Portugal, Uzbekistan.
Secretariat for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Palais Des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
T +41 22 917 9301; F +41 22 917 9022
E pdavid.hchr@unog.ch
W www.unhchr.ch

28 September 2001

Day of General Discussion: Violence against Children in the Family and in Schools
UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - Committee on the Rights of the Child, OHCHR-UNOG, 8-14 Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
T +41-22 917-9000 F +41-22 917-9016
W www.unhchr.ch/html.menu.2/6/crcdod1.htm

October 1 to 2, 2001

Second World Conference on Family Violence, National Council for Child Abuse and Family Violence
Prague, Czech Republic
National Council on Child Abuse & Family Violence (NCCAFV), 1155 Connecticut Avenue NW, Fourth Floor, Washington, DC 20036, USA
T +1 202 429 6696 F +1 831 655 3930
E nccafv@aol.com

October 5 to 10, 2001

6th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific,
Melbourne, Australia
Contact: Secretariat, c/o ICMS Pty Ltd, 84 Queensbridge Street, Southbank, Victoria 3006, Australia
T +61 3 9682 0244 F +611 3 9682 0288
E 6icaap@icms.com.au
W www.icms.com.au/6icaap

October 23 to 25, 2001

Second Annual TACR RMT, UNICEF
Panama
UNICEF, UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA
T +1 212 326 7000
E netmaster@unicef.org W www.unicef.org

October 23 to 25, 2001

Child Labour in South Asia,
Jawaharal Nehru University, New Delhi
Event Organiser: Indo-Dutch Programme on Alternatives in Development and Amsterdam Foundation for International Research on Working Children
Contact: Anthr-Soc Centre, University of Amsterdam, Oudezijdsachterburgwal 185, 1012 DK Amsterdam, The Netherlands

November 21 to 24 2001

XIth Ibero-American Summit of Presidents and Heads of State
UNICEF, UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA
T +1 212 326 7000
E netmaster@unicef.org W www.unicef.org

December 17- 20 2001

Second World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
Yokohama, Japan
UNICEF; The NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ECPAT.
Contact: NGO Forum for Combating Sexual Exploitation
E info@focalpointngo.org or ecpatbkk@kscl5th.com
W www.focalpointngo.org/Global/English/2wc.htm

