**NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

**Introduction**

The period since the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has seen a major expansion in the quantity and quality of organisations actively working to monitor, promote and protect children's rights. As the most ratified human rights treaty in history, the CRC has a strong base of support not only among NGOs but also among governments, a wide range of multilateral bodies and some sectors of business. However, the record of implementation of children's rights remains highly uneven and much remains to be done. More familiar threats to children's rights such as disease, poverty and conflict have now been joined by new problems such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic and Internet pornography.

In this context, the NGO Group faces an increased demand to facilitate and provide leadership to the international child rights community and to ensure that there is a strong collective global platform for children's rights. The NGO Group provides a rallying point for all those committed to child rights who wish to hold governments and others accountable for their obligations to respect, protect and promote children's rights, providing a platform for children's rights for a powerful voice for advocacy at the international level and support to those advocating for children's rights at the local and national level.

The NGO Group has the following aims:

- to be an advocate on behalf of children by raising awareness about the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- to promote and facilitate, through specific programs and actions, the full implementation of the Convention
- to facilitate a flow of information between the Committee on the Rights of the Child, concerned United Nations bodies and the NGO community
- to facilitate co-operation and information sharing regarding the monitoring and implementation of the Convention within the NGO community
- to draw up policies and strategies and undertake action in fields covered by the Convention
- to contribute to the monitoring work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- to support the implementation of the Stockholm Agenda for Action and Yokohama Commitment
- to facilitate the creation and support the work of National Coalitions for the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Reflecting these priorities the NGO Group has remained focused on its three overarching goals throughout 2004, namely:

1. To become a strong collective global voice for children’s rights.
2. To enhance effective NGO engagement with the human rights system for the benefit of children.
3. To strengthen the NGO Group as an organisation

The Group’s focus is especially significant in a time of increased global connectedness, where events in one country can have implications for many. Children’s rights need to remain at the fore of our concerns as we grapple with the such things as the ‘war on terror’, the impact of the Asian tsunami and the consequences of Darfur. More than ever the promotion of children’s rights to protection, participation, survival and development are paramount.
Main Accomplishments

The NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (NGO Group) developed a strategic plan of action for the period 2004 – 2006 to meet global changes and demands in the field of children’s rights. During 2004, the NGO Group made significant strides in realizing its threefold strategic goals, namely, to become a strong, collective global voice for children’s right, to enhance effective NGO engagement with the human rights system for the benefit of children and to strengthen the NGO Group as an organization.

In achieving the goal of becoming a strong, collective global voice for children’s rights, the NGO Group:

- Produced a second global monitoring report on governments’ commitment to the World Fit for Children goals, in partnership with the Global Movement for Children and UNICEF
- Provided active support and involvement in the Yokohama Congress regional follow-up meetings, that took place in Costa Rica, Thailand and Morocco
- Increased membership, attracting national and regional NGOs from Canada, Ireland, the Philippines, and Togo as part of an ongoing membership drive that began in 2003
- Strengthened its ties with key partners in the field of children’s rights, such as the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) and the Global Movement for Children.

In achieving the goal of enhancing effective NGO engagement with the human rights system for the benefit of children in 2004, the NGO Group:

- Provided greater resources that enabled more representatives from national NGOs and child rights coalitions to participate in the reporting process of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Increased its involvement in the Commission on Human Rights in order to raise children’s issues under other agenda items; influenced the negotiations on the resolution on the rights of the child in order to advance as well as to preserve the standards contained in that resolution.
- Facilitated active participation of NGOs in the United Nations global study on violence against children.
- Through membership on the Steering Committee, contributed to the Leave No Child Out’ project for strengthening country commitment to the CRC in the CEE/CIS, Baltic States and Central Asia regions.
- Produced and distributed capacity building guides and working papers to the child rights community such as Networking for Children’s Guide – A guide to NGOs.
- Made significant strides in mobilizing the child rights communities in Europe, Asia and West Africa towards holding regional meetings for NGOs and child rights coalitions on children rights issues in 2005 and 2006.

The third strategic aim which is to strengthen the NGO Group as an organization saw:

- The re-establishment of the Focal Point Programme against Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Violence of Children.
- A successful year of fundraising that has brought increased financial resources and staffing. (See the 2004 Financial Report)
- The consolidation of the activities of the thematic subgroups to ensure greater coherence in advocacy and outreach.
NGO Group for the CRC Activities in 2004

Thematic Subgroups

The NGO Group’s thematic subgroups aim to ensure that children’s rights issues are advanced on the international stage and in particular the United Nations. Through a variety of methods the subgroups have been effective in promoting children rights at the international level. The subgroups also play an important role in facilitating the flow of information between the Committee on the Rights of the Child concerned United Nations bodies and the NGO community. The table below outlines the main targets the subgroups seek to influence and key outcomes in 2004.

Table 1 – Thematic Subgroups’ Impact in 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroups</th>
<th>Targets for Impact</th>
<th>Key Partners/Stakeholders</th>
<th>Key Outcomes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armed Conflict and Displacement</td>
<td>UNHCR, Security Council, OHCHR</td>
<td>Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers</td>
<td>1) Lobbied for the inclusion of children’s issues on the agenda of the UNHCR Ex Com agenda 2) Worked with OHCHR in follow up to CHR resolution on Abduction of Children in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Labour</td>
<td>ILO and CRC Committee, World Bank</td>
<td>CRC Committee</td>
<td>Completed the first phase of staging a joint meeting with ILO, CRC Committee in 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission on Human Rights</td>
<td>Member States to the Commission</td>
<td>Human Rights organizations, Women’s Caucus, Congo, other subgroups, CRIN</td>
<td>1) Contributed to negotiations on the omnibus resolution on the Rights of the Child at an early stage of the Commission 2) Facilitated NGO work on other resolutions 3) Organized discussions on children’s rights issues between NGOs, children, UN key players and some State delegations in several side events 3) Organized daily briefings and informational notes for the Child Rights Caucus members 4) informed the wider child rights community on the CHR through CRIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Literacy and Media</td>
<td>OHCHR, CHR, Violence Study</td>
<td>Special Rapporteur on Education</td>
<td>Re-established a dynamic thematic subgroup. Developed a new and better relationship with the Special Rapporteur on Education</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Juvenile Justice

| CRC Committee, CHR resolution on the Administration of Justice | DCI Netherlands/DCI-International Secretariat, Innocenti Centre | 1) Continued to explore with the Committee on the Rights of the Child and other stakeholders on ways the subgroup could enhance country contributions to the CRC reporting process on juvenile justice 2) Staged a side event panel discussion at the CHR on the situation of children in prisons 3) Adopted recommendations at the regional preparatory meetings, in view of the Bangkok UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice |

### Right to Health

| WHO, CHR resolution on the Right to Health; treaty bodies in particular the CESCR & CRC; input into the MDG review | Professional associations, specialized NGOs and health networks, other Subgroups | 1) Raised awareness of all stakeholders on the child’s right to health (which also includes infant and adolescent nutrition) as a fundamental right and component of all other human rights 2) Improved monitoring of the child’s right to health by treaty bodies 3) Advocated for the implementation of treaty bodies recommendations and concluding observations dealing with health issues by national and regional NGOs |

### National Coalitions

| National coalitions at country level | Liaison Unit Programme | 1) Participated in the planning process for the European regional child rights coalition meeting due to take place in Brussels, March 2005 2) Participated in preliminary discussions on other regional meetings in 2005-2006 |

### Follow-up to UNGASS

| UNICEF, Governments | Global Movement for Children, UNICEF, CR coalitions | 1) Produced (in conjunction with partners) a second global monitoring report on the implementation of the World Fit for Children Commitment |

### Sexual Exploitation

| Organizers of regional Follow-up to Yokohama | Focal Point Programme, NGO regional organizers | 1) Engaged with regional organizers on the Follow-up to Yokohama the NGO Group’s support to the regional meetings in 2004 |

### Violence and Children

| UN Study, UNICEF, WHO, OHCHR, national governments, NGOs worldwide | NGO Advisory Group Youth leaders, UNICEF, WHO, OHCHR, CRC Committee | Contributed significantly to the UN Study on Children and Violence – including input to the study outline, thematic expertise, child participation expertise, input to the regional consultation processes |
The Liaison Unit Programme

The Liaison Unit Programme committed itself to providing technical support to 95 percent of the countries being reviewed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and attendance at 80 percent at the pre-session and 40 percent at the Session during 2004 to 2006. The outcome the reporting period is as follows:
Categories of NGOs that Received Financial Support to attend CRC Meetings in 2004 (16 NGO Reps)

- Child Focused NGOs
- CRC Coalitions/netwks
- Human Rights NGOs
- Youth Groups
- Women’s/other

The graphs illustrate the effectiveness of the Programme in engaging NGOs/coalitions in the reporting process. A significant percent of the NGOs reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child are doing so for the second and third time. They continue to rely on the Programme for technical support and guidance. The table below shows the number of child rights coalitions that are in existence and have participated in the CRC reporting process. These coalitions form the primary target group with which the Liaison Unit Programme provides technical, information and child rights training services.

States parties to the Convention and the number of national child rights coalitions in these countries (Nov. 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Americas</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Western Europe</th>
<th>C/E Europe</th>
<th>Middle East</th>
<th>Oceania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>States Parties</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRC Coalitions</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the course of 2004 the child rights community benefited from the work of the Liaison Unit Programme in the following ways.

- Made aware of the possibility of reporting to other treaty bodies, given guidelines on participating in those reporting processes and encouraged to submit alternative reports. Although this is done systematically there is still much more to be done to attain the level of participation seen in the CRC reporting process. The child rights coalitions and NGOs in New Zealand, Britain and Italy reported to the Committee on Torture.

- Informed NGOs and mobilized them around the UN Commission for Human Rights. This was done in conjunction with the thematic subgroup on CHR. Before, during and after the Commission information and guidelines on Special Rapporteurs’ reports, thematic and country resolutions were sent to NGOs via email, the CRIN website and post.

- Given a unique guide on building and maintaining children’s rights networks, entitled ‘Networking for Children’s Rights – A guide for NGO’ that also provided practical guidelines on monitoring and advocacy based on the experiences of child rights coalitions and NGOs. This guideline is also used by LUP as a training tool.

- Given an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the CRC reporting process and the wider UN human rights mechanisms through the six-week Professional Internship Programme based in Geneva. NGO representatives from Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, Mongolia, the Philippines, Russia and Yemen were trained by the Liaison Unit.

- Received relevant information through a joint project with the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN). On CRIN’s website recent NGO alternative reports, up to date contact list of child rights coalitions, thematic information from the subgroups were posted. They also received a jointly produced report on child rights coalitions and their methods of work based on the research of the Liaison Unit.

- Received support through regional activities, such as the Leave No Child Out project for human rights training in eighteen countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and Central Asia. The NGO Group is a member of the project’s Steering Committee.

- Received on a weekly basis, international and regional information on important developments in human rights such as treaty body reports, deliberations of the working group on the Convention for People with Disabilities, country reports by Special Rapporteurs, and reports from mainstream human rights organizations.

- Received relevant materials produced by NGOs and UN agencies which were sent by post to ensure that those who are unable to access large quantities of information on the internet are provided with relevant materials for their work.
The Focal Point Programme Against Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Abuse of Children (FPP)

The Focal Point Programme restarted in October 2004 after a year of suspension. Two programme staff persons have since been recruited. FPP aims to work with other actors toward the implementation of Art. 19 and 34 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocols to that Convention, the Agenda for Action of the Stockholm World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (1996) and the Global Commitment and regional statements of the Yokohama World Congress (2001). The Programme seeks to build on the remarkable work, outreach and reputation of the FPP over the past years. FPP intends to systematise its relations with the UN system and other intergovernmental bodies. In 2004, the Focal Point Programme accomplished the following:

- Published and disseminated the second edition of a booklet entitled International Mechanisms – A guide for national NGOs to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Provided funding support and participated in the Yokohama Follow-Up meeting for the MINA region that was held in Morocco in December.
- Provided support to Yokohama Follow-up meetings for the South East Asia and Latin American and Caribbean Regions.
- Actively participated in the planning process for the European region of the Yokohama Follow-Up due to take place in Slovenia in June 2005.
- Actively participated in the UN study on Violence against Children at several levels, including the NGO advisory panel, the organization of a European regional consultation, and the compilation of a database on violence against children.
- Began collaborating with Committee on the Rights of the Child on the Optional Protocol, Special Rapporteurs, and UNICEF.
NGO Group for the CRC
Expenses by activity

- Support for NGO participation in CRC reporting: 29%
- Child rights training: 7%
- Networking and information: 22%
- Mobilization on sexual exploitation of children: 29%
- Administration: 13%

NGO Group for the CRC
Expenses be beneficiaries

- National and local NGOs: 53%
- Global child rights community: 34%
- NGO Group members and programmes: 13%
Donors

The NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child is grateful to the following donors for their support in 2004:

- The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Department for Global Affairs
- Oak Philanthropy Limited
- The Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Save the Children Alliance
- UNICEF
### NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Swiss Francs</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Swiss Francs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sida*</td>
<td>359'642.30</td>
<td>CRC reporting</td>
<td>127'750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish Government*</td>
<td>82'720.00</td>
<td>CR training &amp; technical support</td>
<td>178'345.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oak Foundation*</td>
<td>175'194.30</td>
<td>CR tools &amp; guides</td>
<td>23'689.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway Foreign Ministry*</td>
<td>34'837.60</td>
<td>Follow-Up Yokohama</td>
<td>31'233.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Foreign Office*</td>
<td>34'252.00</td>
<td>CRIN project</td>
<td>13'051.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save the Children Alliance</td>
<td>72'275.00</td>
<td>Information distribution</td>
<td>7'266.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>31'572.40</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>57'917.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Fees</td>
<td>31'523.85</td>
<td>NGO Group members’ reserves</td>
<td>29'545.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>749.71</td>
<td>Donor reserves for 2005</td>
<td>353'967.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>822'767.16</strong></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>822'767.16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Funding received for 2004 and 2005.