NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Grupo de las ONGs para la Convención sobre los Derechos del Niño

Groupe des ONG pour la Convention relative aux droits de l’enfant

Annual Report for 2005
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson’s Message</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing the Committee on the Rights of the Child</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to the Global Study on Violence against Children</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening capacities of NGOs and Child Rights Coalitions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Voice for Child Rights in the Commission on Human Rights</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan Mid-term Review</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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INTRODUCTION TO THE NGO GROUP FOR THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child is a global network of NGOs, including professional associations, workers unions and philanthropic organisations, explicitly committed to promoting children’s rights as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Formed in 1983 as the Informal Ad Hoc NGO Group for the drafting of the CRC, the network is a leading international forum for advocacy on children’s issues within and outside the United Nations.

The NGO Group is a registered network with the mission to facilitate the promotion, implementation and monitoring of the CRC. This mission is translated into the following aims:

- Advocate on behalf of children by raising awareness about the Convention
- Promote and facilitate the full implementation of the Convention through specific programmes and actions
- Facilitate the flow of information between the Committee on the Rights of the Child, concerned United Nations bodies and the NGO community
- Facilitate cooperation and information-sharing within the NGO community on monitoring and implementing the Convention
- Draw up policies and strategies and undertake action in fields covered by the Convention
- Contribute to the monitoring work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

In 2005 the NGO Group had a membership of sixty-nine organisations. The members meet at least once a year for the General Assembly. Through the formation of platforms for action called thematic subgroups and working groups, the members pursue a range of actions aimed at fulfilling the network’s mission. Convenors of subgroups form the executive body whose mandate it is to carry out the decisions of the membership. In addition to the voluntary work of members, the NGO Group has a Secretariat and two Programmes (the Liaison Unit and Focal Point Programmes) staffed by a highly experienced team of professionals.

NGO Group for the CRC
UBS Bank Account
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Swift Code: UBSWCHZH80A
Bank Account No. 279-230010.01M
The global environment for children continues to be affected by the increasing polarisation between powers as an effect of the continued war on terror. The discharge of child rights is not an immediate priority for the powers of today and we see a persistent neglect of some issues concerning children. This is in particular the case for issues related to juvenile justice. We receive alarming information, which unfortunately is not given the serious attention it should by governments and authorities in charge of children and adolescents targeted for disciplinary actions. Another urgent issue concerning children is the increasing violence against children and it is with great expectations that we are looking forward to the Report on the UN Study on Violence Against Children.

In view of all the issues concerning children that are still neglected and would need more attention, it is on the other hand worth noticing that we see a growing awareness of approaching children’s issues from a child rights perspective. This approach, commonly known as the rights based perspective, is fundamental in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The concern for involving children in issues that concerns them is now high on the agenda of many NGOs involved in the implementation of the CRC. The ethical implications of involving children as one of the fundamental child rights, needs however to be kept open for reflections and analysis to assure that the involvement of children is done in an ethical way and that it serves its basic purpose and does not merely become a sign of tokenism and satisfaction for the adult world.

It is with pleasure that we note a continued resilience of NGOs working in cooperation for the promotion of child rights. The network involved in the NGO Group is constantly trying to find ways to mobilise joint resources and common agendas in the promotion and implementation of the CRC.

NGOs have forcefully expressed a major thrust towards ascertaining a renewed commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, which to a certain extent has resulted in the over-shadowing of the World Fit For Children commitments. Governments need to be reminded of the promises made to children and the seriousness by which the goals and the commitments need to be attended to.

We have recently experienced the attempt to reform of the much discredited Human Rights Commission and jointly identified the challenge child rights NGOs face in the uncertainty of the new Human Rights Council. It is not evident which degree of recognition that will be given to the Rights of the Child in the new human rights set-up. Mobilisation of input and lobbying with governments is currently on the agenda of the NGO Group. A similar potential threat might the discussions in OHCHR on the creation of a unified standing treaty body provide. There might be a risk of downgrading the attention to child rights and the mainstreaming of child rights in the human rights system.

With this brief sketching of some of the trends today, it has without questioning become even more necessary to focus the energy of the NGO child rights community on advocacy and specific strategic actions in order to strengthen the NGO Group’s
commitment to forging ahead for the advancement of child rights through a comprehensive implementation of the CRC and accountability by those responsible for the implementation.

Agneta Ucko
Chairperson
NGO Group for the CRC
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child wishes to acknowledge the support and contribution made by the following organisations. The list is by no means exhaustive and does not include the names of many stakeholders across the world that work tirelessly at national and regional levels for the promotion of child rights. To them we are most indebted and appreciative.

The United Nations
- The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Secretariat to the Committee
- The Special Rapporteurs and their assistants on the rights to education, the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.
- The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children
- Professor Paulo Pinheiro head of the UN Global Study on Violence and the Secretariat for the Study
- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples Issues
- UNICEF European Office and NGO Liaison Unit
- UNHCR NGO Liaison Offices and other departments
- ILO
- WHO
- OHCHR Desk on the abduction of children in armed conflict
- United Nations NGO Liaison Service (UNGLS)

Donors
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland
- Plan International
- Oak Foundation Inc.
- Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway
- Save the Children Alliance
- Save the Children (Denmark)
- Swedish International Development Agency (Sida)
- Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
- UK Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Partner Organisations
- Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)
- CONGO
- Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers
- DoCip (Centre de documentation, de recherché et d’information des peuples autochtones)
- Inter Agency Coordination Panel on Juvenile Justice
- International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
- Lutheran World Federation
- Child Rights Coalitions and NGO worldwide involved in child rights
INFLUENCING THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Being the most ratified human rights convention, the Committee on the Rights of the Child workload had been excessive in recent years, resulting in a backlog in the pace at which State reports were examined. Through the introduction of the two-chamber system in 2005, the Committee sought to bring their State monitoring process up to date. As the NGO Group’s Liaison Unit Programme continues to be the primary NGO link with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, enabling nationally based NGOs across the world to participate in the reporting process, the change in Committee’s methodology resulted in changes in the working methods of the NGO Group. This section outlines the work of the network in relation to the Committee for the period of 2005.

Sustaining NGO involvement in the reporting process

The NGO Group’s Liaison Unit Programme (LUP) was set up to facilitate the practical application of the network’s commitment to supporting the participation of NGOs and child rights coalitions at national level in promoting, monitoring and implementing the CRC. LUP also contributes to fostering partnerships and community building among NGOs across the globe concerned with child rights issues, empowering them through outreach, training and information services.

The NGO Group’s involvement in the CRC reporting process broadened with the revitalisation of the Focal Point Programme on Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Abuse of Children (FPP). With FPP there have been new developments in ensuring qualitative NGO input in the reporting process on Article 19 and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. See [http://www.againstsexualexploitation.org](http://www.againstsexualexploitation.org) for further information on FPP. Both Programmes worked cooperatively in this regard. The table below illustrates the result of the Programmes enabling NGOs/coalitions involvement in the CRC reporting process.

### The involvement of NGOs/coalitions in reporting on the Convention and the Optional Protocols in 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 CRC sessions</th>
<th>Countries in Pre-session</th>
<th>National NGOs’ Reports</th>
<th>NGO Reps. at Pre-sessions</th>
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<td>39</td>
<td>105</td>
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<td>2 OPs</td>
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In addition, the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) is an important collaborator and medium for disseminating CRC reporting information to NGOs worldwide. Through CRIN, the CRC alternative reports prepared by NGOs/coalitions are placed on the section of the website devoted to the work of the Committee. To better inform the child rights community, reports of country examinations were prepared and sent to CRIN throughout the Committee’s sessions.
Member organisations were also actively involved in the CRC reporting process, such as IBFAN, DCI, APPROACH, OMCT, Save the Children, and Human Rights Watch. LUP played a facilitative role with respect to members making submissions to the Committee.

Studies carried out by the NGO Group showed that the reporting process is critical to the work of national NGOs/coalitions in several ways. It sets their agenda for advocacy and monitoring, as the recommendations contained in the CRC concluding observations provide concrete proposals for action intended for greater compliance to the CRC. Participation in the reporting process is an empowering experience for NGOs/coalitions who often feel weak in the face of the challenges and resistance they perceived among government officials and other powerful institutions. The chance to meet with an external group of experts interested in their issues make the Committee a crucial mechanism for NGOs/coalitions to sustain their work in the direction of full implementation of the CRC.

**Contributing to the working methods of the Committee**

Besides the consideration of State reports, the Committee on the Rights of the Child took a number of initiatives aimed at following-up the implementation of the concluding observations. The NGO Group contributed to the Latin America meeting held in Argentina in November 2005 and a representative from the NGO Group’s LUP also attended. That meeting allowed both the Committee and Government representatives to hear firsthand the commitment of NGOs/coalitions to the CRC’s promotion and implementation, as well as their concerns.

Written contributions were made on the draft, revised guidelines on the CRC periodic reporting. The guidelines are valuable to the child rights community for they not only outline the areas where information is needed, but also give an insight on the Committee’s interpretation of the CRC. Contributions were made to the elaboration of draft general comments on the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children, children with disabilities and corporal punishment.

Toward the beginning of the year a Working Group was established in light of the Committee’s recommendation to the Commission on Human Rights to set up a Working Group to develop international standards for children without parental care. The Committee also indicated its plan to address this theme at their 2004 general day of discussion. In order to maximise NGOs input a Working Group was formed to:

- prepare and undertake advocacy and lobbying initiatives in a coordinated manner in order to secure a positive response from the Commission on Human Rights (Spring 2005),
- to draft an annotated outline of the international standards, demonstrating the potential scope and explaining the main issues that they might cover,
- to prepare a joint statement made under the appropriate agenda item of the Commission on Human Rights
- to prepare coordinated NGO inputs for the discussion day.

During the CRC Discussion Day, the Working Group submitted the “annotated outline” of the proposed guidelines as a working document for this Day. It further
asked Emmanuel Sherwin, IFCO Youth Chair, to make the opening statement in plenary on behalf of the NGO community in which he strongly promoted the need for the guidelines. This need was well reflected in the recommendations from the meeting.

During the course of the year the Working Group went beyond the initial objectives and received the Committee’s agreement to be a formal collaborator in the pursuit for the establishment of UN guidelines for the protection of children without parental care. The Working Group prepared an initial draft text of the international guidelines as the basis for continued work with the CRC Committee, UNICEF and other interested international players.

The Subgroup on Indigenous Children has been active in contributing to the drafting of the CRC general comment on indigenous children. They were instrumental in raising funds from the Canadian government for the project. Through their cooperation with the University of Toronto work began on developing a book review for the general comment and meetings held with the Committee’s chair on the process for developing the general comment.

**CONTRIBUTING TO THE GLOBAL STUDY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

Around the world children are being abused, beaten, violated and exploited. For NGOs working to protect children from such violence, urgent action is needed. The Subgroup on Children and Violence aims to take action that will promote violence prevention strategies and protect children who are vulnerable. In particular the Subgroup focuses on the framework provided by the CRC and works towards the implementation of this instrument as a legal obligation for governments, as well as a core protection tool for children. To this end in 2005 the subgroup worked towards:
- Actively engaging in, informing and influencing the UN Study on Violence against Children, especially in relation to its outcome and follow-up
- Informing and facilitating the involvement of the wider NGO Group in the UN Study
- Serving as a focal point for sub-group members in identifying, influencing, initiating and participating in prospective follow-up activities related to the study, whether these activities are sponsored under UN, other international, national or NGO auspices

The Subgroup held meetings with the Independent Expert Professor Paulo Pinheiro, and Secretariat staff that proved fruitful in facilitating communication with the wider global child rights community. Consolidated feedback was provided on the key overarching recommendations to the Editorial Board due to meet in early 2006. In December the Subgroup’s convenor met the NGO Advisory Group for extensive feedback from the Subgroup and exchange of information between both groups.

To fulfil the second aim, the Subgroup sought to consistently inform and mobilise NGOs/coalitions around the global study. The newsletter produced by the UN Study
Secretariat, coupled with CRIN’s web-page (http://www.crin.org/violence/) devoted to the Study were two valuable and complimentary tools for ensuring that the NGO community received accurate information. For the Subgroup’s part the NGO community was kept informed in the following ways:
- Through close collaboration with other NGO Group subgroups on common objectives, in particular regarding National Coalitions, Child Labour, Children in Armed Conflict and Displaced Children, Sexual Exploitation, Commission on Human Rights and Juvenile Justice.
- By encouraging subgroup members to work with their national and regional affiliates to actively engage in both the UN study on violence against children and in alternative reports to the CRC that highlight violence against children
- In close collaboration with the NGO Advisory Panel on the Study on common objectives
- Efforts that sought to engage and influence the Special Expert for the UN study, his office and the editorial board members
- By creating influential relationships with various UN agencies, in particular Committee for the CRC, UNICEF, WHO and OHCHR

FPP conducted a study of NGO alternative reports to the CRC from 1995 to 2004 on NGO/coalition reporting on violence issues. The findings of the study is expected to be a defining factor for the subgroup’s work in the follow-up to the UN Study

STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES OF NGOs AND CHILD RIGHTS COALITIONS

A range of activities was pursued through the Liaison Unit (LUP) and Focal Point Programmes (FPP) for strengthening the growing capacities of NGOs working in the field of child rights and exploitation issues.

The Follow-up to the Yokohama Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

The FPP was involved in the preparation of the Europe and Central Asia Regional Conference for the Follow-up to Yokohama held in Ljubljana, Slovenia in July 2005. Through the FPP and Terre des Hommes, the NGO Group was an official partner of the Council of Europe in the organisation of the Conference. FPP and ECPAT were in charge of NGO mobilisation and contributed to background documentation, programming and reporting. Staff members participated in the conference and chaired the workshop on “Support to victims of sexual exploitation”. FPP also provided financial support for two persons from the CIS region (Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan).

Guidelines for reporting on the CRC Optional Protocols

Guidelines for reporting under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography for use by national NGOs/coalitions and regional networks have been finalised. These guidelines are based on:

- A comparative study of the first country report submitted on the optional protocol (Morocco, Italy, Andorra, Kazakhstan, Norway),
- On a meeting with the experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child about this comparative study,
· The Committee’s session with reporting State parties (Norway, China)
· Alternative reports from NGOs and their discussions with the Committee during the pre-sessional meeting (Italy and Morocco),
· On the guide made by LUP of the NGO Group for alternative report on the Convention at the whole.

**Re-establishment of a Website on Sexual Exploitation issues**

FPP undertook to establish new website ([www.againstsexualexploitation.org](http://www.againstsexualexploitation.org)). The website provides information in both English and French and contains:
- Information on international instruments and their possible use by national and regional NGOs,
- News on the sexual exploitation; violence and abuse on children around the world classified by regions
- Pages on each geographic region with particular emphasis on Africa, Western and South Asia, as well as Central America

**Work with regional partners on sexual exploitation issues**

FPP re-established relationships with NGOs that actively work on exploitation issues at country and regional levels. In November this culminated with a meeting at the NGO Group. In attendance were regional facilitators from Bangladesh, Cameroon, Costa-Rica, Indonesia, Mozambique and Yemen. FPP expects to work closely with these partners in 2006 on a range of areas including regional follow-up to Yokohama, training and information mobilisation.

**Regional Meetings on the CRC**

Bringing together NGO/coalitions at regional level that were involved in the CRC reporting process was a major focus of LUP work during 2005. These regional meetings serve as an important mechanism for training and building collaboration among NGOs and coalitions within the regions. The first of these regional meetings took place in Brussels on March 8-10 and attracted representatives of child rights coalitions throughout the EU region including new EU member states and non-member states such as Albania, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. This was the fourth occasion that NGOs/coalitions in this region met following the previous occasions in Berlin (1998), Stockholm (1999) and Vilnius (1992). Topics addressed during the conference included the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and cooperation with NGO/coalitions; children as partners in the CRC monitoring and advocacy processes, balancing between CR action and study, the role of the European Union in promotion child rights, developing and monitoring National Plans of Action for children and the relationship between NGOs and governments. LUP contributed in several ways including participation in the planning group, funding as well as written and oral contributions at the meeting.

To coincide with a larger international forum on children and family issues LUP in cooperation with Save the Children (Sweden) and Gurises Unidos, Redlamyc (a Latin American regional network) staged an international workshop for NGOs/coalitions in Lima, Peru on November 18-19. The programme included a review of the situation of child rights coalitions in the Latin American region, the achievements and difficulties in promoting and monitoring child rights, as well as a global overview of CRC monitoring with participants from other regions of the world. The workshop attracted several representatives from the region including Puerto Rico, as well as a few from other regions. Both regional meetings had representatives from the Committee on the Rights of the Child participating as resource persons and presenters. These events
presented an opportune moment for both NGOs/coalition representatives and Committee members to engage in dialogue in a manner that is not possible at the Committee’s sessions. In cooperation with regional partners the LUP was instrumental in contributing to advancing plans for similar regional meetings in West Africa and Asia in early 2006.

Training in Asia
LUP contributed to a training workshop organised by the Arab Resource Collective and Save the Children (Denmark) for the MENA region that sought to encourage NGOs to become more confident in employing the CRC as a tool for monitoring and advocacy. It also served to harness the experiences and lessons learnt in the region from NGO participation in the reporting process for the Committee on the Rights of the Child, with specific focus on alternative reporting and follow up with the Concluding Observations as a tool for monitoring and advocacy. The three-day workshop was held in Lebanon in late September.

At the request of UNICEF in Tajikistan two weeks of training was carried out in September with NGOs and community groups throughout the country. The training sessions informed participants of the CRC reporting process and the potential it brings for empowering NGOs to promote children’s rights. In addition, the training also explored possibilities for developing civil society networks for children’s rights. The Convention was previously unknown to most of the approximately 100 participants in the training programme. The exercises in analysing the application of the Convention proved very useful in stimulating the desire among them to use the Convention as a basis for joint action.

Training on the CRC reporting, follow-up and other areas of human rights
Over the years the LUP Professional Internship Programme has proven worthwhile to NGO activists for child rights in developing their capacities in making greater use of the UN human rights systems, in particular the CRC and pursuing monitoring and advocacy at country level. In 2005 participants in the training came from Benin, Colombia, Mauritius, and Tanzania. One of the immediate evidence of the benefits derived from the six -week training is the improved quality of the NGO alternative reports to the Committee, which was the case with the reports from the four countries.

A VOICE FOR CHILD RIGHTS IN THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The 61st session of the UN Commission on Human Rights (CHR) was overshadowed by the Secretary General’s call for reforms within the Human Rights system not least of all the Commission itself. Against this background the NGO Group’s Children’s Human Rights Caucus and Subgroup sought to highlight child rights issues at a very distracted Commission.

During the Commission the Child Rights Caucus morning briefing sessions brought together many participants and gave NGOs the possibility to meet with government delegations and human rights experts. Thematic and geographic issues that were on the Caucus agenda, such as the right of educations, forced migration and trafficking of children, violence against children and children in conflict with the law. The Caucus
proved useful in enabling NGOs to strategise and lobby for child rights during the Commission.

Prior to the Commission, the Subgroup on CHR prepared a NGO version of resolution on the rights of the child. This alternative resolution formed the basis for engagement and negotiations with the sponsors, GRULAC and the EU. Unlike the previous year, the subgroup found the negotiations more difficult, but also found a few satisfactory outcomes in the final resolution that was passed at the Commission. The improvements in the resolution on the rights of the child were that it:

- Addressed ‘commitments to agreements,’ and not only ratification (PP 5)
- Formally recognised ‘children as rights holders’ paving the way for the mainstreaming of a rights based approach (PP 9)
- Paid attention to ‘violence in schools (OP15a & b) and also devoted more paragraphs on ‘inter-country adoption’ (OP 16 g,h,i and j)
- Recognised the need for ‘guidelines’ for the protection and alternative care of children without parental care. (OP 17)
- Recognised the rights of children and adolescents their ‘rights to express their views freely’ (OP 29 (f)
- Devoted a paragraph to ‘children affected by natural disasters’ and the rights to have access to basic social services (OP31)
- Stated that ‘effective preventive measures’ against sexual exploitation of children in armed conflict (OP 38b);
- Also gave particular attention to ‘education’ as a way of preventing recruitment and use of children in armed conflict (OP 38 b).
- Requested a ‘code of conduct addressing the issues of sexual exploitation of abuse of children’ as a measure for the protection of children in conflict and post conflict situations (OP39).

Greater progress was made with the Resolution on the Abduction of Children in Africa (2005/44). NGOs involved in the drafting process included members of the Subgroup on Children in Armed Conflict and Displacement, more specifically World Vision International and the Friends World Committee for Consultation (the Quakers). The collaborative process was an open one and the Subgroup was asked by the African delegation to propose a definition of abduction that was used in the resolution.

The Subgroup on the Commission on Human Rights, with its Child Rights Caucus continued to attract a high degree of participation among the membership and beyond. It remained the single largest civil society focal point in defense of child rights at the Commission. The alliance with the CRIN (http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/NGOCRC/subgroup-CHR.asp) also proved invaluable for enabling NGOs across the world to be kept abreast of developments related to child rights during the Commission.
STRATEGIC PLAN MID-TERM REVIEW

Having arrived at a mid-point in the time of the 2004-2006 Strategic Plan the NGO Group executive and staff met last November to review the network’s progress and also identify areas for further action. The results of the review clearly indicated that both the strategic goals and objectives were being met in the main. They also recognised that several challenges exist, pivotal among them are the need for:

- Defining a comprehensive advocacy strategy for the network as a whole
- Improving the overall communications strategy internally and externally that includes a new name, logo and higher public profile
- Greater outreach to UN institutions and other important global institutions, national and regional partners for advancing children’s rights
- Greater resources for the medium and longer term, as well as
- Strengthening the network’s organisation and structures.

The NGO Group’s Coordinating Committee commissioned a study to determine what it would take for NGO and child rights coalitions to report to other treaty bodies. The survey revealed that NGOs/coalitions that have traditionally participated in reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child have little or no experience in reporting to other treaty bodies. Consequently such a pursuit will involve a substantial resource outlay by the NGO Group in a similar manner to the practice currently used to facilitate NGO participation in CRC reporting. The results of the survey served as a basis for the discussions on how the network may make further advances in mainstreaming children’s rights in the UN human rights system.

The achievements against the 2004-2006 Strategic Plan are to a large extent outlined in this annual report. Among those not previously mentioned are:

- The institution of new systems and procedures for the increased staff compliment. This paved the way for the network to provide an organised work environment that complied with Swiss employment laws and standards.
- The revitalisation of the fundraising taskforce, a sub-committee on the NGO Group’s Co-ordinating Committee to support the new fundraising thrust. Since this event the donor network’s donor base has improved.
- Initial discussions with ECOWAS to explore the terms for a memorandum of understanding for the promotion of child rights in West Africa. Similar discussions with CRIN en route to a formal agreement. These initiatives are in line with the network's objective to mobilise key international players for supporting child rights issues.
ANNEXES

ANNEX 1
NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child
Financial report for January-December 2005

NGO Group Balance Sheet
Dec. 31, 2005

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Thematic Sub-Groups and Working Group Achievements in 2005

The NGO Group members get involved in the life of the network primarily through working in thematic subgroups and working groups. These subgroups and working groups are platforms for information exchange, mobilisation and advocacy. The 2004-2006 Strategic Plan formed the basis for the subgroups’ work objectives. Based on the three overarching goals and activities, subgroups defined their role toward enabling the network to successfully progress in implementing the plan. The list below highlights of the objectives and work of these groups in 2005.

Children in Armed Conflict and Displacement

Through the membership of the subgroup the network was involved in the UNHCR Pre-Excom meetings, collaborated with the UNHCR Liaison Office on a range of matters including the Best Interest Discrimination guidelines, strongly influenced the wording of the CHR resolution 2005/43 on Abduction of children in Africa, as well as the follow-up process. Also through its membership the subgroup established a relationship with the new SRSG of Children and Armed Conflict in the UN and maintained close collaboration with other key international players, particularly the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

Child Labour

The subgroup continues to be the main focal point based in Geneva on child labour issues for the ILO. The subgroup began discussions with the Committee on the Rights of the Child and UN agencies on the proposal for an international conference on ‘poverty reduction and child rights’ at the end of 2005 or in 2006.

Commission on Human Rights

The subgroup was a leading advocate for the rights of the child at the sixty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights. They organised a children’s rights caucus throughout the Commission and informed the global children rights community of relevant developments at the Commission through cooperation with CRIN. The Subgroup was actively involved in the negotiations on the resolution on the rights of the child and others that addressed children. With the coordination and facilitation of the subgroup several side events were held during the Commission.

Education, Literacy and Media

The subgroup has been playing an active role in the planning process for the staging of the third International Conference on Children’s Rights in Education scheduled to take place in Lithuania. ‘Prevention of Violence in the School Community’ is the theme of this conference. The subgroup has re-established a constructive working relationship with the office of the Special Rapporteur on Education.

Indigenous Children

This is the youngest member of the family of subgroups. This group was formed with the aim of:
1) Seeking and promoting the active participation of Indigenous children, young people, families, and communities.

2) Cooperating proactively on an international level with Indigenous knowledge holders, professionals, academics and their associated institutions; Indigenous young people and their institutions, UN bodies, NGO’s, and State Parties on the inclusion, interpretation, observance, and monitoring of the evolving human rights and Indigenous rights instruments and discourse affecting Indigenous children, young people and their families.

**Against Sexual Exploitation**

Among its other activities during the period, the subgroup produced a publication entitled ‘Semantics and Substance – Towards a shared understanding of terminology referring to the sexual exploitation of children’ was produced. This represented an important step in creating a shared language for non-governmental organisations, governments and international bodies such as the United Nations to use to speak frankly and openly about the abuse and exploitation of children. The publication was launched at the sixty-first Human Rights Commission. In addition the subgroup organised a side event on that occasion.

**Juvenile Justice**

The sub-group on Juvenile Justice serves as an information and exchange forum for organisations and professionals working in the field of juvenile justice. It aims to bring the issue of juvenile justice on the international debating agenda by means of coordinated action. The sub-group on juvenile justice function as a coordination desk and engage in lobbying activities. During the Human Rights Commission the subgroup staged a side event on the 6th of April, a discussion panel on the topic “How can Juvenile Justice Reform be brought on to the international agenda?” This event was organised jointly with the Sub-group on Violence against Children. Among the panelists was Prof. Pinheiro the Independent Expert on the UN Global Study on Violence against Children.

**Violence and Children**

The subgroup is regarded by the Secretariat of the UN Study on Violence as a critical interlocutor with NGOs and civil society organisations in Geneva, as well as an important link with the global child rights community. The subgroup has made substantive input to the study and facilitated NGO participation at regional level. Details are explained in the body of this report.

**Right to Health**

The subgroup’s continued monitoring of the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child has resulted in increased reference to early childhood health in the concluding observations made by the Committee to states parties. The subgroup has also undertaken to develop a framework identifying reporting gaps to ensure more comprehensive reporting of the child’s right to health by national NGOs. Its membership also actively contributes to the shadow reporting process of some other relevant treaty bodies. The subgroup works actively towards building dialogue with WHO with the aim of supporting child rights perspectives in its activities and has established concrete partnerships with NGO networks dealing with health to advocate for a child’s rights approach to health.
**National Coalitions**

The SG on NC aims to bring greater support to the creation and sustainment of national child rights coalitions across the world. It works to strengthen the link between national NGOs, international NGOs and relevant UN mechanisms. Through the NGO Group membership and the Liaison Unit Programme (LUP), the subgroup works to build a strong child rights civil society movement. During the course of the year the subgroup was actively engaged in the staging of regional meetings for child rights coalitions in Europe and the Latin America and Caribbean regions.

**Follow-up to UNGASS on Children**

The Sub-Group on Follow-up to the Special Session on Children aims to create accountability among governments and others for the promises made to children at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children in May 2002, as well as for complementary promises made at other international meetings. The Sub-group believes that such promises should be seen in the context of the principles, standards and implementation process for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The work of this subgroup was however suspended in part due to the UNICEF’s shift away from the World Fit for Children goals to the Millennium Development Goals.

**Working Group on Children without Parental Care**

The Working Group’s main aim is to promote and contribute to drawing up international standards for the protection of children without parental care, and to secure the adoption of such standards by the UN General Assembly. To this end the Working Group’s first objective during 2005 was to ensure that the need for international guidelines on children without parental care figure strongly in the recommendations of the CRC Committee’s Discussion Day, and thereafter to play an appropriate role in producing a draft text of the instrument as a basis for wider consultation.
Annex 3 - Publications

2005


Semantics or Substance – Towards a shared understanding of terminology referring to the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, Subgroup Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children, March 2005

Previous Publications

A Profile of National Child Rights Coalitions – Finding of the NGO Group for the CRC survey of national child rights coalitions, NGO Group for the CRC & CRIN, May 2004

International Mechanisms – A guide for national NGOs to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse, Subgroup on Sexual Exploitation, 2003


Working with companies to prevent the exploitation of child labour – guidelines, Subgroup on Child Labour, 1997


A Right to Happiness – Approaches to the prevention & psycho-social recovery of child victims of commercial sexual exploitation. ICCB for the NGO Group for the CRC, August 1996

A Guide for Non-Governmental Organizations Reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, NGO Group for the CRC, 1994
Annex 4: NGO GROUP FOR THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

COORDINATING COMMITTEE 2005

Agneta Ucko
Chairperson & Convenor - Subgroup on Education, Literacy and Media
Arigatou Foundation

Jennifer Philpot-Nissen
Treasurer & Co-convenor - Subgroup on Children in Armed Conflict & Displacement
World Vision International

Eylah Kadjar-Hamouda
Secretary & Ad Hoc Member
International Federation ‘Terre des Hommes’

Peter Newell
Ad Hoc Member
APPROACH

Helen Sackstein
Ad Hoc Member & Co-Convenor – Subgroup on the Right to Health
International Alliance of Women

Klaus Heidel
Convenor – Subgroup on Child Labour

Bill Bell
Convenor – Subgroup for the Follow-up to UNGASS
Save the Children Alliance

Carlos Pampin-Garcia
Convenor- Subgroup on Juvenile Justice
DCI International Secretariat

Carmen Madrinan/Jo de Linde
Co-Convenor – Subgroup against Sexual Exploitation
ECPAT

Monique McClellan
Co-Convenor – Subgroup against Sexual Exploitation
International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE)

Roy Laifungbam
Convenor – Subgroup on Indigenous Children
Centre for Organization Research and Education (CORE)

Cindy Blackstock
Co-Convenor – Subgroup on Indigenous Children
First Nations Child & Family Caring Society (FNCFCS)

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International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)

Concepcion Ballesteros
Convenor – Subgroup on National Coalitions
Plataforma de Organizaciones de Infancia

Margaret Mc Callin
Co-Convenor – Subgroup on Children in Armed Conflict and Displacement
BICE

Roberta Cecchetti
Convenor – Subgroup on Violence against Children
Save the Children Alliance

Simone Ek
Convenor – Subgroup on the Commission for Human Rights
Save the Children (Sweden)

NGO Group Staff in 2005

Secretariat
Denise Allen (Jamaican)
Michele de Gennaro (British)
Michele Kiper – accounts consultant (Swiss)

Liaison Unit Programme
Lisa Myers (Swiss)
Laura Theytaz-Bergman (American/Swiss)
Denise Allen

Focal Point Programme
Séverine Jacomy (French)
Bruno Romazzotti (French)
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34. International Federation "Terre des Hommes"
35. International Federation of Business and Professional Women
36. International Federation of Social Workers – IFSW
37. International Inner Wheel
38. International Movement "ATD Fourth World"
39. International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism
40. International School Psychology Association
41. Jesuit Refugee Service
42. La Voix de l'Enfant
43. Lutheran World Federation
44. Mani Tese
45. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
47. Norwegian Refugee Council
48. Penal Reform International – PRI
49. Plan International
50. Plataforma de Organizaciones de Infancia
51. Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect – RAPCAN
52. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Human Rights Association - SVGHRA
53. Save the Children – Alliance
54. Save the Children – Sweden
55. Soroptimist International
56. SOS-Kinderdorf International
57. WAO - Afrique
58. Werkstatt Ökonomie
59. Women's World Summit Foundation
60. World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)
61. World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts - WAGGGS
62. World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women
63. World Federation of United Nations Associations
64. World Jewish Congress
65. World Organisation Against Torture / SOS Torture
66. World Organisation for Early Childhood Education - OMEP
67. World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations
68. World Vision International
69. Zonta International

**Programmes and Observers**

1. NGO Group for the CRC - Focal Point Programme Against the Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Violence of Children
2. NGO Group for the CRC - Liaison Unit Programme
3. International Committee of the Red Cross
4. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
5. UNICEF