

UN Special Session on Children



New York, 8-10 May 2002

Newsletter

No. 5

October 2002

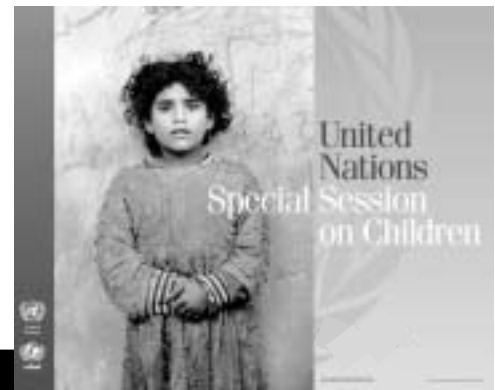


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CHILDREN CALL FOR ACTION AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Children made history on 8 May 2002 when two child delegates from the Children's Forum addressed the opening session of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children in New York. It was the first time ever that children formally addressed the General Assembly on behalf of children.

The Special Session, which continued through 10 May, was itself a landmark, the first such Session devoted exclusively to children and the first to include them as official delegates. It was convened to review progress since the World Summit for Children and re-energise global commitment to children's rights.

"We are the world's children," began Gabriela Azurduy Arrieta, a 13-year-old delegate from Bolivia. Together with another delegate, 17-year-old Audrey Cheynut from Monaco, she read from a statement developed over three days by 404 children and young people who attended the Children's Forum in New York 5-7 May, before participating at the Special Session itself. At the Forum, young delegates discussed issues critical to the rights and well-being of children and developed a joint call to action, 'A World Fit for Us'.

The three-day Children's Forum was an historic event that offered a unique opportunity for children and adolescents to make their voices heard from a global platform. It also allowed decision-makers to experience first-hand the children's passionate and articulate views through the Children's Forum statement, 'A World Fit for Us'.



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Gabriela Azurduy Arrieta, 13, from Bolivia presents the recommendations of the Children's Forum at the opening of the Special Session.

As Thomas Burke, an under-18 delegate from the United Kingdom, explained: "At the end of the Children's Forum we explicitly told governments what a world fit for all of us would look like."

'A WORLD FIT FOR US'

We are the world's children.
We are the victims of exploitation and abuse.
We are street children.
We are the children of war.
We are the victims and orphans of HIV/AIDS.
We are denied good-quality education and health care.
We are victims of political, economic, cultural, religious and environmental discrimination.
We are children whose voices are not being heard: it is time we are taken into account.
We want a world fit for children, because a world fit for us is a world fit for everyone.

For the full text of the Children's Forum statement, go to: www.unicef.org/specialsession/ (Children and adolescent participation page).

Of the 404 children between the ages of 7 and 18 who attended the Children's Forum 242 were girls and 162 were boys. A total of 263 children had been selected by their own governments to be members of official delegations from 148 countries to the Special Session. The other 141 children came as members of the 91 different non-governmental delegations. In all, the children represented 154 countries, forming a truly global constituency.

All of the participants were selected at the national or regional level through competitions in schools or communities, for example, or through membership in youth parliaments, involvement in the 'Say Yes for Children' campaign, or affiliation with non-governmental organizations. Many of the children had participated in national or regional preparatory meetings, where their peers selected them to participate in the Children's Forum.

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PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN - A BREAKTHROUGH AT THE UN

The massive and active participation of children was one of the most impressive features of the Special Session. Overall more than 600 children attended the Session, including 50 young journalists who covered the various events. Children participated in the Children's Forum and addressed the General Assembly. They also took part in the Special Session itself as part of government and NGO delegations. And they were prominent participants in many official and supporting events, just as they had been during the preparatory process at the national, regional and global levels. The following are highlights of their participation at the Special Session:

Children were involved in three high-level round-table discussions where they spoke directly with Heads of State and Delegations. *"I am the voice of all the children who have suffered throughout the world... you who are members of mankind – why have you let these things happen?"* said Marie-Claire Umuhoza, 17, from Rwanda, who spoke about the impact on children of genocide. *"Give us - your children - a good today. We will, in turn, give you a good tomorrow,"* said Toukir Ahmed, 16, from Bangladesh.

Five intergenerational dialogues took place between participants of the Children's Forum and Heads of Delegations (in some instances Heads of State and/or Government) and UN agencies.

The Security Council pledge came after powerful testimony by children affected by war and by experts on the issue of children and conflict. Eliza, a 17-year-old girl from Bosnia and Herzegovina, conveyed a message to the Security Council from the Children's Forum, saying, *"War and politics have always been an adult's game, but children have always been the losers."*

A number of children represented children's parliaments at the Parliamentary Forum on children's rights, convened to mobilize parliaments in both industrialised and developing countries to take action on children's issues. A number of children highlighted the importance of adopting a child rights perspective in all legislative matters in their presentations.

Children also gathered with government and NGO representatives to review the proceedings and outcome of the Children's Forum and the issues it had covered. The event was planned and conducted entirely by the children themselves, who outlined the issues and then suggested the actions governments and young people could take to address them. The children recommended the establishment of leadership training workshops as well as national, regional and international children's councils. These councils would meet regularly to monitor governments' efforts to fulfil their promises to children.



Group portrait of delegates to the Children's Forum

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Three representatives from the Children's Forum were chosen to join the Forum on Women's Leadership for Children, where they presented a statement. *"Coming away from this experience, it is our hope that more progress will be made in the next 10 years than was made in the last,"* said one child participant.

On the eve of the United Nations Special Session on Children, the UN Security Council made a commitment to double its efforts to protect children affected by armed conflict.

In all, a number of important precedents were set for future communication between the young people and the officials who represent them, with a number of leaders pledging to continue the dialogue back home.

For more information, see <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/> (Children and adolescent participation page) and <http://www.unicef.org/young/>. See also <http://www.unicef.org/voy/>.

WORLD LEADERS 'SAY YES' FOR CHILDREN

High-ranking government delegations, including about 70 Heads of State and/or Government and other summit-level representatives, came to New York to take part in the Special Session. Four governments had youth representatives address the General Assembly on behalf of their respective countries (the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Togo).

A total of 187 government representatives took the floor during the plenary debate at the General Assembly. Leaders took stock of progress for children made since the 1990 World Summit for Children and stressed that much work had been accomplished but much still remained to do.

In addition, the Special Session benefited greatly from an extraordinary array of leaders from civil society, including NGOs and cultural, academic, business and religious groups.

In total, more than 7,000 people participated in the most important international conference on children in more than a decade, at which the nations of the world committed themselves to a series of goals to improve the situation of children and young people.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressed the children at the General Assembly. *"We, the grown-ups, have failed you de-*



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United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan addresses delegates at the opening of the Special Session.

plorably,..." he said, adding, "One in three of you has suffered from malnutrition before you turned five years old. One in four of you has not been immunized against any disease. Almost one in five of you is not attending school.... We, the grown-ups, must reverse this list of failures."

Carol Bellamy, UNICEF Executive Director, echoed her concern for the need to accelerate progress for children. *"If we want to overcome poverty and the instability it breeds, we must start by investing in our young people," she said. "I implore national leaders to seriously examine their records on children. Are you getting all your children into the classroom? Are you protecting all your children against disease? Are they safe from abuse, exploitation and violence? Unfortunately, we already know the answers. We know we have work to do."*

'A WORLD FIT FOR CHILDREN'

The Special Session culminated in the official adoption, by some 180 nations, of its outcome document, 'A World Fit for Children'. The new agenda for - and with - the world's children, includes 21 specific goals and targets for the next decade.

The document's Declaration commits leaders to completing the unfinished agenda of the 1990 World Summit for Children, and to achieving goals and objectives, in particular those of the UN Millennium Declaration. It reaffirms leaders' obligation to promote and protect the rights of each child, acknowledging the legal standards set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. All of society is called upon to join a global movement to build a world fit for children, based on a 10-point rallying call that also formed the core of the Say Yes for Children campaign.

The Plan of Action sets out three necessary outcomes: the best possible start in life for children, access to a quality basic education, including free and compulsory primary education, and ample opportunity for children, and adolescents, to develop their individual capacities. There are strong calls to support families, to eliminate discrimination and to tackle poverty. A wide range of actors and partners are called upon to play roles, including children themselves; parents, families and other caregivers; local governments; parliamentarians; NGOs; the private sector; religious, spiritual, cultural and indigenous leaders; the mass media; regional and international organizations; and people who work with children.

The Plan of Action also reaffirms previous goals and targets relevant to children endorsed by world summits and conferences, including the UN Millennium Summit. The 21 goals for children cover four priority areas of action: promoting healthy lives; providing quality education for all; protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence; and combating HIV/AIDS.

"We have learned from previous meetings that setting goals is a crucial step. With goals, we have something to strive for. Without them, we have no way of measuring our successes and failures." - Patricia Durrant, Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session.

To achieve these goals and targets, 'A World Fit for Children' calls for the mobilization and allocation of new and additional resources at both national and international levels. It supports the pursuit of agreed-upon global targets and actions, such as the 20/20 Initiative and the allocation by industrialised countries of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) for official development assistance, as well as the development of local partnerships.

The document concludes with a section on follow-up actions and assessment to facilitate implementation and to ensure monitoring, periodic reviews and reporting. UNICEF is requested to prepare and disseminate information on progress made.

For more information, see: <http://www.unicef.org/> (A World Fit for Children page).

NEARLY 95 MILLION PEOPLE 'SAY YES'

In preparation for the Special Session, a public campaign deemed the largest pledge drive of its kind took place around the world. As part of this *Say Yes for Children* campaign, nearly 95 million people pledged to change the world, affirming that “*all children should be free to grow up in health, peace and dignity.*” One by one, beginning in April 2001, people of all ages added their voices to what has become a resounding and unprecedented plea for action for, and on behalf of the world’s children.

Those who pledged *Yes* also called for action to be taken on 10 imperatives for children, rating the relative importance of each as follows (as of August 2002):



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Nelson Mandela holds stories on how some of the nearly 95 million *Say Yes for Children* pledges were gathered.

1. Educate Every Child - 14.8%
2. Leave No Child Out - 11.7 %
3. Fight Poverty: Invest in Children - 10.4%
4. Care for Every Child - 10.1%
5. Stop Harming and Exploiting Children - 10.0%
6. Fight HIV/AIDS - 9.8%
7. Listen to Children - 9.1%
8. Put Children First - 8.2%
9. Protect the Earth for Children - 8.0%
10. Protect Children from War - 7.8%

But *Say Yes* was far more than a simple sign-up campaign. Behind the numbers was a campaign that seized the imagination of communities and leaders worldwide, inspiring and driving a massive mobilization of human resources and will.

Children and young people lent these efforts their vibrant energies and innovative ideas, shaping and directing campaigns and inspiring community support.

In a special ceremony at the close of the Children’s Forum on 7 May, children entrusted the global results of the *Say Yes* campaign to Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel, time-honoured activists for children and inspirational leaders of the Global Movement for Children. Flanked by children holding a symbolic string of actual pledge forms, a 12-year-old Children’s Forum participant implored Mr. Mandela and Mrs. Machel:

“When you talk with government leaders ... tell them millions of people are expecting leadership ... and are ready to support leaders who are committed to children. Tell them, please, that this is the first step of a long journey that we are ready to make with them.”

Two days later, Mr. Mandela handed over the results of *Say Yes* to the President of the UN General Assembly.

Updated results per country can be accessed at www.netaid.org. Continue to pledge at www.gmfc.org, by e-mail to pledge@netaid.org, or through the participating organizations.

NGOs - A STRONG PARTICIPATION

NGO participation in the Special Session was unprecedented in a number of ways. First, in record attendance for a child rights event, more than 1,700 representatives from 117 countries and from 700 NGOs took part. This was a vast improvement over the number of NGOs attending the Preparatory Committee meetings - and went far beyond all expectations. Second, the NGO contingent included not only those accredited by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), as is customary at UN conferences, but also representatives of NGOs who were partners of UNICEF at the national level.

This meant that large numbers of grassroots NGOs that would not normally have had a voice at the UN were able to offer their experiences and provide a “reality check” regarding what works and does not work on the ground.

Another highlight of NGO activity was the involvement of 248 children and young people who served as NGO delegates to the Children’s Forum and the Special Session. This NGO participation of children set a record for a major UN conference.

Addressing NGOs at their plenary session, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, “*You non-governmental organizations give life and meaning to the concept of ‘We, the Peoples’, in whose name our United Nations Charter was written ... If we are to live up to the title of the outcome document, and build ‘A World Fit for Children’, we must also build it with children.*”

An unprecedented number of NGOs had also been involved in the Special Session since its inception at the national, regional and international levels, and NGO views strongly influenced the outcome document.

Two themes dominated the statements given by 15 NGOs in the official proceedings - the key role of child rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in the follow-up action to the Special Session, and the daily, pervasive and crushing impact of violence on the lives of children.

In addition to organizing their own supporting events, NGOs participated actively in events organized by UN agencies, governments and other constituencies. NGOs also coalesced by regions and around specific issues, including the rights of girls, early childhood education, HIV/AIDS, child and youth participation, and children in armed conflict.

See <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/ngo/index.html> and the NGO Committee: <http://www.ngosatunicef.org> and their Report of NGO Activities at the Special Session, entitled “NGOs Helping to Make a World Fit for Children”. See also Child Rights Information Network (CRIN): <http://www.crin.org> and Advocacy Project: <http://www.advocacyproject.org>.



Credit: Advocacy Project

Mary Diaz briefs NGOs on the Special Session, in her capacity as a co-chair of the NGO Committee on UNICEF.

SUPPORTING EVENTS

More than 120 events took place in support of the Special Session on Children, in addition to 36 regional and thematic NGO caucuses. These diverse activities were organized by governments, UN agencies, international organizations, NGOs, civil society organizations, and children themselves.

- *Children's Forum (5-7 May)*: This forum, held immediately prior to the Special Session, gathered 404 children, some as national delegates, others as representatives of NGO delegations (see page 1 story).
- *Celebration of Leadership for Children (9 May)*: Almost 95 million pledges made during the global campaign *Say Yes for Children* were officially presented during this event, attended by world leaders. The Children's Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela and the UNICEF World Chorus were the main musical performers in this celebration, which featured musical and spoken tributes to the leaders of the Global Movement for Children.
- *Intergenerational dialogues*: 44 government leaders, including 7 Heads of State and/or Government, held direct dialogues with child delegates.

Constituency events

What came to be known as 'constituency events' brought together key professional or sectoral partners with major roles to play in building a Global Movement for Children. Religious leaders, mayors, paediatricians, women's leaders, corporate leaders, among others, undertook some specific commitments in a series of high-profile workshops and dialogues.

- *Religious Leaders' Symposium (7 May)*: The symposium gathered 12 leaders of the world's major religions for an inter-faith service and discussions on the role that religions should play in promoting the rights of children.
- *Forum on Women's Leadership for Children (9 May)*: 50 First Spouses and 32 other distinguished guests joined Mrs. Nane Annan in an informal exchange of views on the theme of Women's Leadership for Children.
- *Parliamentary Forum on Children's Rights (9 May)*: The Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNICEF hosted a forum of over 250 Parliamentarians from 75 countries, who discussed the impact of legislation and budget allocations on the well-being of children.
- *Child-Friendly Cities: Working to Fulfil the Rights of Children (8 May)*: The panel brought together mayors, NGOs, UN representatives and children to highlight good practices in urban areas and identify strategies for local governments to advance the Global Movement for Children.
- *International Pediatric Association (IPA) - Healthy Children for a Healthy World (10 May)*: Over 200 participants, including children and young people, attended this event, which included a Call to Action to mobilize the support of over 500,000 paediatricians in all regions of the world.
- *Public-Private Partnership Dialogue (9 May)*: Organized by the core partners of the Global Movement for Children,

the Dialogue brought together Heads of State, UN officials and corporate, foundation, media and civil society leaders to discuss ways to build a world fit for children.

- *Financing a World Fit for Children (9 May)*: Organized by UNICEF, this event on budgetary decisions drew together experts to discuss the most crucial measures that financial authorities need to take to ensure sufficient and sustainable financial resources for child-focused poverty reduction.
- *First Global Meeting of Independent Human Rights Institutions for Children (7 May)*: This event, facilitated by UNICEF, was the first global meeting of Independent Institutions – Children's Commissioner, Defenseur des Enfants, Ombudspeople for Children – established in more than 30 States to promote, protect and monitor the human rights of children. Participants discussed ways to improve cooperation and encourage the development of similar institutions around the world.

Priority theme events

In addition to the key 'constituency events' above, 115 other events took place during the Special Session, covering different aspects of the four priority themes of the outcome document.

- *Promoting Healthy Lives*: Healthy mothers, healthy babies; The last mile to end polio; The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization; Eliminating iodine deficiency; Reducing the impact of malaria on child health; and Environmental impact on health.
- *Providing Quality Education for All*: Achieving Education for All; Improving the quality of education; Achieving gender parity; and Early childhood care and development.
- *Protecting Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Violence*: Child labour – an obstacle to Education for All; Beyond Yokohama: Combating commercial sexual exploitation of children; Countering child trafficking: A united response to a global problem; Preventing discrimination against children: Ensuring inclusion for all children; Protecting children from violence; *"I wish I could really be home..."*: Juvenile justice and children deprived of their liberty/children in residential care; Children affected by armed conflict; Security Council meeting on children and armed conflict; Protecting boys and girls during armed conflict; Reclaiming our children: the UN responds to the situation of child soldiers; and Refugee and IDP children: One day we had to run.
- *Combating HIV/AIDS*: Preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV; HIV prevention among young people; Orphans and other children affected by HIV/AIDS; and Strategies to combat HIV/AIDS through education. For more information, see <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/> (Supporting events page).

TWO YEARS OF INTENSE PREPARATIONS

The adoption of the challenging agenda included in 'A World Fit for Children' is the result of a number of preparatory activities that took place at the national, regional and global level.

At the national level, more than 150 countries conducted an extensive review to assess progress and setbacks in implementation of the 1990 World Summit for Children Declaration and Plan of Action. Reviews also took place in all regions.

At the global level, the Secretary-General's end-decade report, *We the Children: Meeting the promises of the World Summit for Children*, drew on all these reviews and fed into the final Declaration and Plan of Action of the Special Session. In addition, the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session organized four sessions in 2000 and 2001.

All these activities not only helped lay the groundwork for the Special Session but also contributed to the building of partnerships for and with children as part of the Global Movement for Children.

The following highlighted commitments and comments were made at regional meetings:

"Make every necessary effort so that children and adolescents have opportunities to fully develop their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social capacities and to guarantee and promote respect for human rights." (Kingston Consensus)

"...Today's children are tomorrow's future generation, who must be enabled and equipped to achieve their full human potential and enjoy the full range of human rights in a globalizing world." (Beijing Declaration)

"We commit ourselves to meeting our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and thus to ensuring that all children in Europe and Central Asia enjoy their rights." (Berlin Commitment)

"We agree that children are the future of our nations and, therefore, investing in children should be a national priority." (Kathmandu Understanding)

"Today's investment in children is tomorrow's peace, stability, security, democracy and sustainable development." (African Common Position)

"...The children of the Arab World, more than half its current population, are presently our greatest resource and most valuable asset for the future. We need to listen to their views and take them into consideration when designing future plans." (Cairo Declaration: Towards an Arab World Fit for Children)

For more information, see <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/> (Special Session on Children - highlights page). See also previous Special Session Newsletters Nos. 2 and 4.

In addition, in the run-up to the Special Session, nearly 40,000 children and young people were interviewed on issues related to their lives, families, schools, communities and governments, as well as their hopes and dreams for the future. Girls and boys in 72 countries in East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean participated in these opinion polls organized by UNICEF. The polls reflected the views of some 500 million children, ages 9 to 18, living in these regions.

For more information, see <http://www.unicef.org/polls/>.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION: SPURRING MOMENTUM FOR CHILDREN

1. CRC - A CORNERSTONE OF FOLLOW-UP ACTION

During discussions that took place at the Special Session, there was a consensus that the Convention on the Rights of the Child was a cornerstone for all follow-up action to the Special Session.

Governments

At the General Assembly, many delegates urged that actions for children be firmly rooted in and framed by the Convention and its Optional Protocols.

Delegates from New Zealand, for example, urged that all strive to implement the Convention *"with the aid of the Platform of Action adopted by this Special Session."* Delegates from Papua New Guinea noted that the Convention implies not only the rights of children but also the obligation of adults towards succeeding generations.

Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, hailed the Convention, ratified by 191 States, as one of the great success stories of multilateral diplomacy and of the human rights movement. She also noted that a human rights approach to the well-being of children required States to make



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Miryam Cunduri, 11, represented Ecuador at the Special Session. The right to education and to protection from exploitation are of particular concern to her.

every effort to eliminate all forms of discrimination against children and to respond effectively to the challenge of HIV/AIDS.

Children

Both at the Children's Forum and the Special Session, children insisted that their rights be respected, protected and fulfilled. They often referred to the Convention when they urged that decisive action be taken to make 'a world fit for children', where children could actively participate in decision making.

“For every day that we’re here, there are children dying, there are children being exploited, and there are children whose rights are being violated.” - Laura Kerstin Hannant, 16, Bolivia.

NGOs

The Convention was also a central and unifying theme among most NGOs. It entered nearly every discussion in the NGO plenaries and other events and played a role in the strong, mobilising work of the Child Rights Caucus.

Formed in early 2000, the Caucus is a group of more than 100 national and international NGOs from around the world committed to proactively protecting and promoting the human rights of children. The Caucus served as a lobby group pressing for a strong rights-based focus to the Special Session and its outcome document, and felt that both could have placed a stronger emphasis on fulfilling the rights of children. The group prepared several versions of an alternative outcome document called ‘A Children’s Rights Agenda for the Coming Decade’.

For more information, see <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/> (Follow-up: CRC a cornerstone page) and Child Rights Information Network (CRIN): <http://www.crin.org>.

2. NATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION - PARTICIPATION IS KEY

The Plan of Action of ‘A World Fit for Children’ includes the development of National Plans of Action (NPAs) and, where appropriate, regional plans by the end of 2003. These plans are to be based on specific, time-bound and measurable goals. More importantly, they must take the best interests of the child into account. Action plans must be consistent with national laws and, at the same time, uphold the human rights and fundamental freedoms set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

NPAs: With children

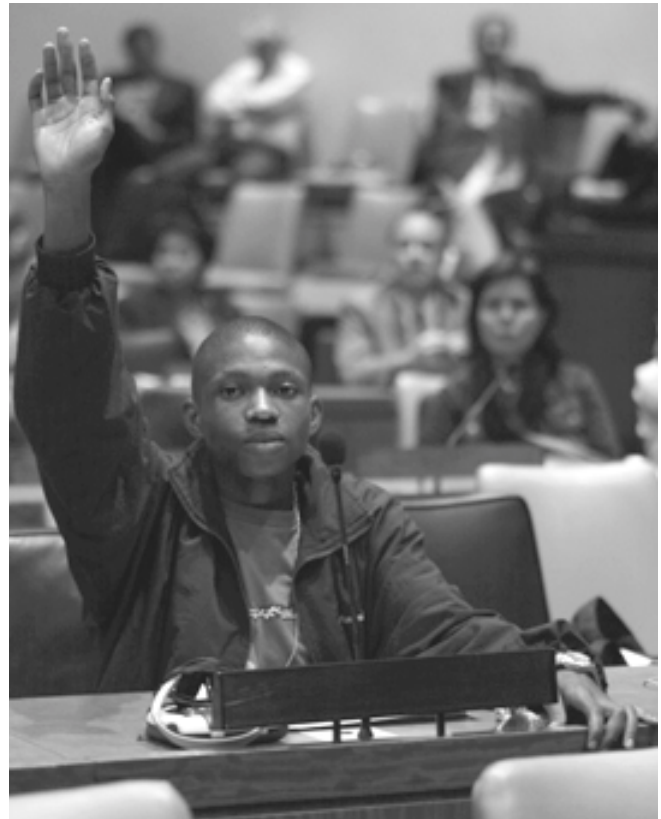
At the Special Session, several events focused on how effective NPAs could be developed and implemented, and how children could be involved in the process.

At one event, organized by the Under-18 Participation Task Force of the NGO Committee on UNICEF, participants identified seven key elements that NPAs should include:

- Timebound, measurable goals
- Regional, sub-regional and local plans of action
- Cooperation between government and civil society, including children and youth
- Cooperation between different sectors
- Focused budgets and adequate resource allocation
- Good communication among agencies and with the general public
- Flexible monitoring and evaluation reports that track progress and yet allow for appropriate correction in courses of action.

In 14 nation-wide surveys conducted by Save the Children on the theme of children’s participation in NPAs, children had

also underscored the need to be consulted. Santiago Garcia Couto, 15, from Uruguay, simply stated, *“We have to be consulted because we live our problems and we are the ones who know the solutions.”*



UNICEF/02-0411/Bronstein

A young participant requests the floor in the Under-18 Forum.

NPAs and NGOs - Guidance from the CRC and Children

“When the Special Session is over,” UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan told NGOs, *“the U.N. will look to NGOs to act as watchdogs and monitor promises made. You must keep us on our toes.”*

NGO members of the Child Rights Caucus and others pledge to work with governments to ensure that the NPAs will contain concrete steps towards the full implementation of the CRC. The Caucus will therefore remain active during the next year while NPAs are being developed, taking a proactive stance wherever possible.

One measure of NGOs’ success will be the degree to which they have encouraged children’s involvement in the planning and implementation of NPAs. Bill Bell, of Save the Children UK, noted that real change will happen at the local level, where NGOs must get youth involved, listen carefully to their needs and their ideas, strengthen child-led organizations, create opportunities for children to participate on their own terms, and provide support for building children’s capabilities.

The Global Movement for Children (GMC) is a vital force for change involving children, families, communities, societies and governments at all levels. As such it plays a crucial role in creating a world fit for children. The groundbreaking coalition aims to challenge complacency, increase accountability and bring about real action for children, encouraging citizen action and the firm commitment of key actors in all sectors of society to fulfil children's rights.

The members of the GMC Convening Committee include BRAC, CARE, NetAid, Plan International, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Vision. The GMC promotes 10 key imperatives for children included in its Rallying Call. The *Say Yes for Children* campaign, launched in 2001, was also built on these core principles. The *Say Yes* campaign was the main focus of the GMC's global activity leading up to the Special Session on Children and resulted in an unprecedented and powerful global demonstration of concern for children - nearly 95 million people demanded action on their behalf. This enormous show of support for children helped galvanise the political will of the world's leaders at the Special Session in making commitments to children.

At the Special Session, several hundred people gathered at a GMC workshop held to discuss the question: "What next?"



Copyright: Johnette Iris Stubbs

An adolescent addresses Heads of Delegations from Africa in an intergenerational dialogue.

Participants agreed unanimously that young people are the main stakeholders of the GMC and that their active participation and leadership in the development, implementation and evaluation of all aspects of the Global Movement for Children is a must. It was decided that a first step in this direction would be to use the declaration of the Children's Forum, 'A World Fit For Us', as the GMC's own statement of purpose.

It was noted that follow-up action to the Special Session would revolve around the 10 imperatives of the Global Movement for Children and *Say Yes* campaign. Participants agreed to analyse their national results of the *Say Yes* campaign and to start a dialogue with their communities about priority issues that need to be addressed. One suggestion was to create 'observatories' including young people in each country who would monitor the progress of the NPAs, meeting with governments on a regular basis to give them feedback. Such observatories could carry out action campaigns focused on the 10 imperatives and help integrate the principles of the GMC into school curricula.

It is expected that the GMC will play a vital role in all follow-up to the Special Session. For more information, see: <http://www.gmfc.org/>

To remain involved...

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English: <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/>
French: <http://www.unicef.org/french/specialsession/>
Spanish: <http://www.unicef.org/spanish/specialsession/>

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Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)

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Chinese: <http://www.un.org/chinese/events/children/>
Russian: <http://www.un.org/russian/document/gadocs/27spec/>

