Special Session On Children Essay, Research Paper

The Special Session on Children is an unprecedented meeting of the UN General Assembly dedicated to the children and adolescents of the world. It will bring together government leaders and Heads of State, NGOs, children’s advocates and young people themselves from 19-21 September 2001 at the United Nations in New York City.

The gathering will present a great opportunity to change the way the world views and treats children.

A follow-up to the 1990 World Summit for Children

In 1990, at the World Summit for Children, 71 Heads of State and Government and other leaders signed the World Declaration on Survival, Protection and Development of Children and adopted a Plan of Action to achieve a set of precise, time-bound goals. These goals included:

? Improving living conditions for children and their chances for survival by increasing access to health services for women and children

? Reducing the spread of preventable diseases

? Creating more opportunities for education

? Providing better sanitation and greater food supply; and protecting children in danger.

The commitment to realizing the World Summit goals has helped move children and child rights to a place high on the world’s agenda. The Special Session is an important follow-up to the 1990 World Summit.

What does the Special Session on Children hope to accomplish?

? A review of the progress made for children in the decade since the 1990 World Summit for Children and the World Declaration and Plan of Action.

The end-of-decade review will combine national, regional and global reports. The review will not only chart the achievements of the last decade; it will also serve to inform world leaders as they plan future actions for children.

? A renewed commitment and a pledge for specific actions for the coming decade.

World leaders will explore the long-standing challenges of serving and protecting children, as well as the issues emerging in this rapidly changing world. They will be asked to identify strategic solutions to the problems facing children and to commit the critical human and economic resources that will be called for.

Expected outcomes of the Special Session

The Special Session is expected to produce a global agenda with a set of goals and a plan of action devoted to ensuring three essential outcomes:

? The best possible start in life for all children.

? A good-quality basic education for all children.

? The opportunities for all children, especially adolescents, for meaningful participation in their communities.

Partnerships for change

“We cannot waste our precious children. Not another one, not another day. It is long past time for us to act on their behalf.”

– Nelson Mandela and Gra?a Machel

Nelson Mandela, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and Gra?a Machel, expert on children in armed conflict, are working with UNICEF to build broad support to change the world for children.

Together they are calling on leaders from government, civil society and the private sector to form a global movement committed to ending discrimination against children and adolescents.

Their hopes:

? To convince leaders to act

? To inspire and engage the public

? To hear what young people have to say.

From there, the Global Movement for Children will carry this message to the world. The Global Movement will work to provide a united voice for all those throughout the world working to improve the lives of children.

The aim of the partnership formed at the Special Session is to change the world for children and ensure that every child, without exception, is assured the right to dignity, security and self-fulfillment.

Visit the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) for more information on NGO activities and issues, including thematic caucuses (i.e. Child Rights, Children and Armed Conflicts, and Girls Caucuses) and regional caucuses and coalitions. The CRIN covered caucuses that met during the Second Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee of the Special Session on Children (New York, 29 January – 2 February 2000).

A decisive decade of protection

Children’s rights are most fully articulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Created over a period of ten years with the input of representatives from different societies, religions and cultures, the Convention was adopted as an international human rights treaty on 20 November 1989.

New

UNICEF Bhutan has translated the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into a mandala.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Visit the completely revised and updated guide to the Convention to find out about:

? how this historic treaty was created;

? what it means for children;

? the UNICEF commitment to child rights;

? what you can do;

? answers to questions parents often ask;

? full text of the treaty;

? and more.

Publications

UNICEF publications focusing primarily on the CRC and child rights include:

A pamphlet introducing the rights of children, entitled Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Human rights for children and women, a paper on human rights as the foundation of sustainable human development;

Children’s Rights and Habitat, reports focusing on the rights of the young to homes, safe, supportive neighbourhoods and healthy surroundings.

For a list of other related UNICEF publications, go to the publications by theme index and look for ‘child rights’ in the themes list.

UNICEF, an integral part of the United Nations system, has its own governing body, an Executive Board that sets policies, reviews programmes and approves budgets. With headquarters in New York, UNICEF carries out its work through eight regional offices and 125 country offices (figures effective as of 31 December 1998). The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre is located in Florence, Italy. UNICEF cooperates with national governments, non-governmental organizations and other United Nations agencies in 161 countries and territories.

The 37 National Committees for UNICEF, mostly in the industrialized world, are non-governmental organizations that support UNICEF in advocacy for children and fund-raising.

As many as 86 per cent of the 5,594 UNICEF posts are in the field. UNICEF also has an office in Tokyo, and Supply operations based in Copenhagen. Its Private Sector Division commissions, produces and markets the well-known UNICEF cards, calendars and stationery.

UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children’s rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.

UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children’s rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.

UNICEF insists that the survival, protection and development of children are universal development imperatives that are integral to human progress.

UNICEF mobilizes political will and material resources to help countries, particularly developing countries, ensure a “first call for children” and to build their capacity to form appropriate policies and deliver services for children and their families.

UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children – victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation and those with disabilities.

UNICEF responds in emergencies to protect the rights of children. In coordination with United Nations partners and humanitarian agencies, UNICEF makes its unique facilities for rapid response available to its partners to relieve the suffering of children and those who provide their care.

UNICEF is non-partisan and its cooperation is free of discrimination. In everything it does, the most disadvantaged children and the countries in greatest need have priority.

UNICEF aims, through its country programmes, to promote the equal rights of women and girls and to support their full participation in the political, social, and economic development of their communities.

UNICEF works with all its partners towards the attainment of the sustainable human development goals adopted by the world community and the realization of the vision of peace and social progress enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Bibliography

www.unicef.com