

standards for day-care and other facilities established for the care of the child also represent important aspects of the Convention.

Of fundamental importance in the Convention is the recognition that the child is indeed a human being capable of having and enjoying human rights. This notion would seem self-evident and, indeed, one of the early criticisms of the Convention was that children already enjoyed rights set out in the Covenants and other international human rights instruments. More importantly, there was a recognition that the child needed special protection above and beyond that provided in other instruments - hence the need for this Convention. To ensure such special protection, an important concept was developed that provides a binding thread throughout the patchwork of the Convention. The notion of the "best interests of the child", although a subjective factor, is to be of primary consideration where the state must intervene to protect the rights of the child. It does allow intervention in those unfortunate situations where proper parental care is not being or cannot be provided. Another important thread of the Convention is its melding of different types of rights - economic, social and cultural with civil and political - while maintaining the vital recognition that each set must be implemented in a different manner.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to pay tribute to some of the people, organizations and states that have worked so diligently and conscientiously to ensure that the Convention has reached this stage. The government of Poland deserve much credit for their longstanding commitment to the protection of the rights of the child. When speaking of the Polish contribution to the Convention, one is bound to mention the invaluable work done by Professor Adam Lopatka who served as Chairman/Rapporteur of the working group. Without his strong commitment and determined patience, there are many who doubt that there would have been a Convention.

A number of organizations also played an important role in the realization of this Convention. UNICEF has been extremely active in providing both substantive and logistical support to the working group and in promoting the Convention. Other UN organs and specialized agencies also played useful roles, as did the many non-governmental organizations which participated actively in the working group. These organizations are too numerous to mention, but I need only state that they can take pride in the fact that their valuable advice and support added