

Session on Children

unfinished business



photo: UNICEF

Carol Bellamy with schoolchildren in China

demonstrated that we can achieve all our goals for children.

Canada World View

What do you expect from the Special Session?

Ms. Bellamy

It is the arena where we hope to get the message across to world leaders that there is unfinished business to be completed. With the support of our partners and of citizens worldwide, we aim to demonstrate that people care about children and want governments to keep the promises they make to them. We have learned so much over the past decade; surely we can do better in the next 10 years.

Canada World View

What if the Special Session fails to produce satisfactory results?

Ms. Bellamy

It is crucial that we fulfil our commitments to children. We must never forget that we are our own keepers. History will judge us harshly if we continue to fail to use our knowledge, our resources and our will to ensure that each new member of the human family arrives in a world that respects and protects the invaluable, irreplaceable years of childhood.

Ten imperatives of the Global Movement for Children

- Leave no child out.
- Put children first.
- Care for every child.
- Fight HIV/AIDS.
- Stop harming and exploiting children.
- Listen to children.
- Educate every child.
- Protect children from war.
- Protect the earth for children.
- Fight poverty: invest in children.

The Global Movement for Children is a collection of people and organizations around the world dedicated to promoting the rights of the child. With UNICEF it is spearheading the "Say Yes for Children" campaign. Its spokespersons are Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

In 1989, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is a universally agreed set of obligations spelling out the basic human rights of all children: the right to survival, the right to develop to the fullest, and the right to protection from abuse and exploitation. Defining a child as a boy or girl under the age of 18, the Convention protects these rights by setting standards in health care, education, and legal, civil and social services.

The Convention came into force in record time in September 1990. Today it has been ratified by 191 states, making it the most widely adopted international human rights treaty in history.

UNICEF in action

UNICEF was established in 1946 to meet the needs of children in war-devastated Europe and China. In 1950 its mandate was refocused to address the urgent needs of children and mothers in developing nations.

UNICEF now operates in over 160 countries. In partnership with governments, civil society organizations and communities, it is active in immunization, education, HIV/AIDS, child protection, early childhood development, water and sanitation, nutrition, emergency relief operations, and other areas.

Based in New York, UNICEF has offices around the world. In Canada it has an education, advocacy and fund-raising committee. Last October, the Government of Canada recognized the unique role of the organization by proclaiming October 31 as annual National UNICEF Day. ●—

For more information on all aspects of UNICEF, the Special Session, the Global Movement for Children, the "Say Yes for Children" campaign, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other children's issues, visit UNICEF's Web site: <http://www.unicef.org>
See also the Web site of UNICEF's Canadian office: <http://www.unicef.ca>