

Glossary of Terms

Children - Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines 'children' as persons up to the age of 18. In doing so, it was hoped that the Convention would provide protection and rights to as large an age-group as possible, especially since there was no similar United Nations Convention on the Rights of Youth. Cf. "Youth"

CIDA - Canadian International Development Agency.

Covenant - Similar to a convention, this is a legally binding agreement. This means that if countries have signed and ratified the covenants, they agree to uphold the principles defined by the covenant in their own states.

Convention - Legislature that is theoretically legally binding on member states. In ratifying a treaty or convention, states are required to change their national laws so that they reflect the provisions of the convention, and to develop appropriate structures in society that echo these legal changes.

CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Declaration - The implementation of Declaration and Platforms for Action, through national laws and the formulation of strategies, policies, programmes and development priorities, is the sovereign responsibility of each State. It is not legally binding, but places a moral commitment on the State.

DFAIT - Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Early Childhood - From age zero to three. (Some definitions vary, covering the range zero to six or zero to eight).

Early Childhood Development (ECD) - Also called Early Childhood Care and Early Childhood Education and Care, it refers to "a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to eight years of age, their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child's rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential. Community based services that meet the needs of infants and young children are vital to ECD and they should include attention to health, nutrition, education and water and environmental sanitation in homes and communities." State of the World's Children 2001, p.17.

The Girl Child - The CRC calls on States to respect and ensure the rights of each child irrespective of "his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status" (art. 2, para. 1). However, in many countries available indicators show that the girl child is discriminated against from the earliest stages of life. The reasons for the discrepancy include, among other things, harmful attitudes and practices, such as female genital mutilation, son preference - which results in female infanticide and prenatal sex selection - early marriage, including child marriage, violence against women, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, discrimination against girls in food allocation and other practices related to health and well-being. (Art. 259, Beijing Platform for Action).

IDB - Inter-American Development Bank.